

Contentious Subjects: Non/violence as Topic and Trope
in the Occupy Movement

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington
2014

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Program authorized to offer degree:

English

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Abstract

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Why was there such heated disagreement within the Occupy movement around the word nonviolence, and why was this disagreement so generationally marked? Why were the social movements in the 2011 global wave of unrest so suddenly disruptive, even violent, almost always involving riots? What does this have to teach us about the rhetorical power of embodied, contentious rhetorics, and what does it tell us about the characteristics of movements to come?

Social movements are faced with exigencies under neoliberalism to which they often respond differently than the large-scale demonstrations of previous eras: a) protesting counterpublics often make their appeals immediately and intensively rather than extensively through mass media, b) challenging the status quo more in terms of power (in its aspects of agency, capacity, and possibility) than in claims of justice, and c) often do so in part by performing antagonism with existing institutions of enforcement: namely, police. Nonviolence discourse is inconsistent with the rhetorical strategies best suited to these conditions, although in its “strategic” rather than “principled” variants, it shares more in common with them than is usually thought: strategies, social processes enacted, goals, and the aversion to inflicting injury to bodies. Rioting has proved central to recent movements because it is exemplary (though not exclusive) of how such strategies are enacted, and bears out in

condensed form their logic: necessarily embodied and risky in the discursive action of transgressing previous semiotic systems, articulating new contentious subjects through physically confronting old foci of power. Like the more confrontational aspects of the Occupy movement, future movements are likely to perform power in similar ways, fostering a complementarity of diverse, innovative approaches, broaching semiotic expectations, and not relying on the categories of victimhood and innocence which have proven central to previous generations of social movement rhetoric.

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Introduction

“I have a hard time understanding what their goals are and how they intend to use these tactics to achieve these goals.” – Chris Hedges, September 15, 2012 (“Occupy Tactics” 2012)¹

“I sure wouldn’t dictate what Syrians or Tibetans may or may not do. But petty violence in public in this country doesn’t achieve anything useful.” (Solnit, in Taylor & Gessen 150)

On May 1, 2012, I found myself in the glitzy downtown shopping area of Seattle, marching with several hundred protesters in the Anticapitalist Breakaway March as part of a larger Occupy Seattle May Day event. Four and a half months before, many of the marchers had been evicted from the Occupy public encampment and had not seen each other since, so in some sense the event felt anachronistic, even nostalgic. And yet, May Day was something new, a day of profound excitement, a chance to come together through collective grief and rage after the loss of what for so many had proven profoundly transformative. Banners fluttered all around; one announced in glittering, cursive pink letters, “Anything is Possible,” beside an image of a fire-breathing unicorn with a police officer impaled on its horn. Within the march of perhaps 500 protesters, perhaps 100 were indistinguishably clad in balaclavas and matching black clothes, the “black bloc” attire associated with anarchists, but adapted by a wide variety of protesters out of a wish to protest without registering themselves on surveillance for doing so, an understandable concern after the legal harassment which had attended Occupy locally and nationally. In one moment, a pronounced, moist thud echoed out, then another. Windows on each side of the street began to cascade like waterfalls, as rioters² hurled rocks and

¹ A separate Introduction Works Cited is attached at the end of the introduction.

² As an ongoing federal investigation into these events was underway at the time of research and writing, I was careful in my interviews to never ask any of my interviewees about participation in illegal activity. “Participants” in this study refers to *movement* participants exclusively, and never to participants in rioting. Interviews sought to

swung cudgels at the windows of Forever XXI, American Apparel, Niketown, and a Federal Courthouse, among scores of other targets. Police later estimated the damage done in the perhaps 15-minute period at approximately \$200,000. As we ducked through gathering clouds from protester smoke-bombs and dodged falling glass and police pepperspray, everyone in the larger march that I observed apparently was gleefully cheering on the destruction. What was happening?

As a rhetorical scholar, I could not help asking, “What are these people trying to say?” The issue of protest violence had already proven highly contentious in Occupy before any such event occurred; within days of the loss of the camp, the most devout Occupy Seattle participants had split with each other in intense acrimony over debates on nonviolence – belying, incidentally, the frequent claim that such conflicts are the work of “outside agitators.” Some participants insisted that the movement’s General Assembly meeting sign onto a nonviolence agreement as a *sine qua non* of continued participation, and could not understand how any person in their right mind might disagree with the idea. Others, generally younger, were mystified by this insistence over a term which held little significance for them; they noted that the nonviolence proponents were unable to even define their term or explain the sudden need for the agreement, given that no single act of public violence had yet occurred in an Occupy Seattle event. The events of May Day only deepened my curiosity: was this what the nonviolence proponents had feared, and if so, why had they not said so? What was it about riot that seemed indispensable to some, abhorrent to others, and unspeakable by all?

understand participant subjective and affective processes, rather than any narrative of factual events. Rioters at all events for which I was present were impossible to distinguish, being masked and in rather fastidiously similar attire, so even if I were willing (I am not) to identify riot participants, I would not even be capable of doing so.

Scholarly Context

Seattle was not alone in such expressions; as political scientists Johnston and Seferiades attest, Since [the youth riots in Greece in] December 2008, violent [though largely noninjurious] protest has broken out in such dissimilar – and ‘unlikely’ – countries as Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Iceland, France and Britain in Europe; Thailand, India and Bangladesh in Asia; Mozambique, Tunisia and Libya in North Africa; and Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain in the Middle East – and the list is obviously not complete.” (2012, 149)

Since their essay, the trend toward violent protest has continued in a great number of countries, notably including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Bosnia, Ukraine, Turkey, and Brazil, where, for example, the teacher’s union officially declared support for Black Bloc involvement in education protests. (“Brazil: Teacher’s Union declares”) Social movement rhetoric is becoming incontestably more conflictual, although this shift has gone effectively unnoted in most of the scholarly literature on protests and rhetoric. As Frances Fox Piven, whose work is a major inspiration for this study, states: “Violence often is a critical factor in the emergence, development and success or failure of social movements. But we have for some time not given it the attention it merits. American scholars in particular have been reluctant to acknowledge the role of violence” (Piven, 19 in Seferiades & Johnston 2012). She goes on to reprimand this tendency towards scholarly neglect, for:

sympathies aside, the effort to justify political movements by ignoring the violence with which protest is associated is a mistake, because the largely unexamined axiom that movements are non-violent distorts our analysis. Episodes of rioting or other forms of collective violence are simply excluded from study by definition. . . . The long history of protest movements is in fact mainly the history of mobs and riots. (20)

Piven also cautions scholars on the presumption that political or social “violence” can form its own isolated object of study, so diverse are its manifestations:

[I]f violence is an elemental human capacity and latent in all sorts of human undertakings, we have to be skeptical of efforts to study violence in general. The variety of precipitating conditions is reflected in the variety of theoretical approaches invoked to explain violence, including ‘micro-explanations that focus on individual frustration, social-structural explanations that focus on inequality in society and the role of institutions, social classes, cultural systems, critical theories, and the like; as well as a mixture of individual psychological factors and the nature of the political system. (22, in Seferiades & Johnston)

Rather, then, than attempting to study recent political violence as an object of study in its own right, this project looks at rioting, primarily those group public performances of property destruction targeting corporate business and government sites, and of group public confrontations with police, in the case studies of the Occupy Seattle and Occupy Oakland movements of late 2011 and early 2012. These two sites are ideal for focus on this topic, for as is especially evident in the Seattle May Day riot and the confrontation with police in Oakland during the “Move-In Day” event on January 28, 2012, these two sites were distinguished nationally as the most openly conflictual manifestations of the national Occupy movement. As a language scholar and participant in both Occupy Seattle and to a lesser degree Occupy Oakland, present as well for the first week of Occupy Wall Street in New York City and some other local movements, I draw on my own experiences and very extensive conversations in this inquiry. Participating as a founding member of the committee which facilitated the nightly “General Assembly” meetings of some hundreds of people for months on end, I draw on collegial relations with the widest spectrum of movement participants in the course of my own scholarly inquiry.

This work first of all sees itself as an intervention in public scholarship. Debates around nonviolence and the place of counterhegemonic violence have proven divisive and acrimonious in progressive and emancipatory social movements as few others have. In explaining the stakes of nonviolence and what it leaves out, clarifying the motives of each side to each other and to itself, this book offers a significant public contribution in moving conversations forward that, in some sense, have made little progress in many years. Defenses and critiques of nonviolence alike are most frequently collections of membership markers, filled with indignant self-assurance and defamation of the straw-man Other, what non-specialists would likely and unfortunately call “empty rhetoric.” In the field of Rhetorical Studies, for example, Ellen Gorsevski’s (2004) *Peaceful Persuasion: The Geopolitics of Nonviolent Rhetoric* never once addresses a single counter-argument by a critic of nonviolence, and casually attributes nefarious motives to the Black Bloc participants of the 1999 Seattle WTO protests without bothering to cite a single source. Notable exceptions to this lack of healthy discussion exist in the field of Strategic Nonviolence, which I engage at length in this study, as well as in Ward Churchill’s *Pacifism as Pathology* (1998) and Peter Gelderloos’ *How Nonviolence Protects the State* (2006). These works are exceptional in taking up a more thorough critique of nonviolence as a social phenomenon and thus form an antecedent to this study. Neither of these works, however, deconstructs the equivalence of body and commodity in nonviolence, reversing it by extolling an equally undefined “violence” and in effect reproducing the liberal equivalency through their critique; I will return to this point at length.

In addressing this gap in public scholarship, I see this project as returning to the commitment of an earlier era of social movement rhetoric, a commitment to study what Haiman (1967) called the “Rhetoric of the Streets.” In his terms, the social movement rhetoric of the time studied “[t]he new rhetoric [which] exceeded ‘the bounds of permissible time, place, and manner’ and the traditional province of rhetoric as ‘verbal communication.’” (Cox & Foust, 606, in Lunsford

et al. 2009) Haiman's commitment to understand the rhetoricity of disruption was continued through a number of books such as Scott & Brockriede's *Rhetoric of Black Power* (1969) and classic articles such as Haiman (1967), Scott & Smith's "The Rhetoric of Confrontation" (1969), Andrews' "Confrontation at Columbia: A Case Study in Coercive Rhetoric," (1969), and Cathcart's "Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form" (1978). These scholars took as their first priority an appreciation of disruption, and even an intellectual advocacy for its actors, as they tried to bring into the words of academic study the voices often easily dismissed as rash and inarticulate. If, in our time, disruption has returned as a significant means of public claim-making, so I believe should scholarly attention to it.

It hardly needs to be said that social theory and analysis has transformed almost entirely since this time, and rhetoric has made great advances in theoretical sophistication since the classic era of social movement rhetoric. Unfortunately, many recent works on social movement and activist rhetoric (Stewart et al 2007, Opt & Gring 2009, Stevens & Malesh 2009) either tend to speak within older frameworks, or generally focus on pedagogical or disciplinary implications of social justice claims. More theoretically sophisticated analyses of social movement rhetoric indeed exist, attending especially to the circulations of images (e.g. Deluca & Peeples 2002; Deluca et al, 2012) and networked rhetorics (Dingo 2012); however, these works often neglect the more *immediate* means of persuasion. While these directions in the discipline have produced valuable contributions, their attention to transmission and mediation of rhetoric imbues their work with a tendency to *only* attend to mediated aspects of social movement and other rhetoric; the intimate, immediate moments of persuasion and articulation, such as occur in acts of public disruption, falls aside in such analyses. In one telling example, Deluca and Peeples (2002) inquire into the violence of the 1999 Seattle WTO protests, but fail to consult even the published words of the participants themselves, thus misinterpreting their communication as primarily addressed to mass media. Participants themselves

unambiguously argued to the contrary (e.g. Deusen & Massot 2007; the communiqués anthologized were originally published at the time of the protests). These scholars still saw the phenomenon primarily as an “image-event,” whereas participants clearly attested to such mediated representations as of secondary importance to them, if at all. One notable exception is Christina Foust (2010), who, while beginning to redress this imbalance by attending directly to rhetorical enactments of transgressions, goes too far in denying that such actions work counter/hegemonically; because her actors do not put forward a hegemonic project, she ignores that their actions clearly have counter/hegemonic effects, effects which in my analysis assume central importance.

Other threads of rhetorical interest bring scholarly focus to precisely these unmediated moments, but generally neglect social movements as a topic of study. These studies of material and embodied rhetorics (e.g. Biesecker & Lucaites 2009, Cintron 1998, Fleckenstein 2003, Hawhee 2012, Marback 1998) and studies in materiality of interest to rhetoricians (e.g. Barad 2007, Bennett 2010) have much to offer the study of less mediated, embodied, contentious social movements; however, the juncture has not been adequately explored. Future research I plan to connect the findings of this project to rhetorical studies of embodiment and materiality, and particularly to recent conversations in rhetorical agency (Leff 2003, Geisler 2004, Greene 2004, Cooper 2011).

Those more recent studies which engage the specifically rhetorical power of violence come from outside the field, as for example Marguerite Feitlowitz’s *A Lexicon of Terror* (2011), Begona Aretxaga’s *Shattering Silence* (1997), Slavoj Žižek’s *Violence* (2008), Elaine Scarry’s *The Body in Pain* (1985); Joel Rhodes’ *The Voice of Violence* (2001), Sarat et al *Performances of Violence* (2011), Alphonso Lingis’ *Violence and Splendor* (2011), Veena Das et al *Violence and Subjectivity* (2000), Ted Honderich’s *Terrorism for Humanity* (2003), William Vollman’s *Rising Up and Rising Down* (2004), Sorel’s classic *Reflections on Violence* (1999), James Gilligan’s *Preventing Violence* (2001), among very many others. Beyond these works which speak directly to rhetoricity of violence, an inexhaustible body of

literature examining violence more as a political, anthropological, or philosophical phenomenon is available to further inform studies into the rhetoricity of violence. I have drawn from many of these works in this study, but as Piven's quote above makes clear, violence so pervades the organization of life in such various aspects as to overwhelm inquiry.

A small but vibrant body of interdisciplinary work studying rioting in particular, which I term Riot Studies (Seferiades & Johnston eds 2012, Thompson 2010, Kaulingfreks 2013, Harvie et al 2010, , Bjork forthcoming, Ball 2012, Shantz 2012, Scholl 2012), has begun to emerge. I view my work as positioned and active in this field, and am so far the only contributor from Rhetorical Studies. As Marilena Simiti (in Seferiades & Johnston 2012) points out: "In riots, not only are the claims of rioters not clearly articulated, but also their right to act as claim-making subjects is severely contested. Thus, riots challenge public definitions and perceptions of 'politics'" (145). For this reason, Riot Studies promises significant contributions to both wider conversations in sociology, political science, and, I believe, rhetoric in particular, as the "challenge" it presents to "public definitions and perceptions of 'politics'" force us to rethink our categories of rhetorical action, agency, and effect. Given current conversations in Rhetoric pertaining to agency – in particular to agencies that happen at the networked scale beyond the scope of individual rhetors – and the rhetoricity of material and bodies, studies into the rhetorical quality of riots have much to say to the current preoccupations of Rhetorical Studies.

Data Collection

In order to study discourses around violence taking place within new forms of social movements - forms which I hypothesize show radically new discursive symptoms yet to be diagnosed, such that potential developments and dislocations in usage may well not yet have left

trace in print – I chose to conduct direct interviews with movement participants. If, as this study hypothesizes, new discursive phenomena might be presenting themselves, many may likely remain below the threshold of written texts; indeed, this project aspires in part to transgress this very boundary. However, the frequently explicit self-reflection on the topics of violence and its negations made to past appeals reminds us, with Bakhtin (1981), that all discursive process takes place in and draws its powers from a living interpretation of antecedence. A comparative multi-modal approach promises to offer fecund research material, in which close attention will be given to consistencies, frictions, and slippages within the written record that may have been found to carry into the current spoken environment, and even emergent disjunctures and trajectory shifts between written records and contemporary speech.

Potential interviewees were selected from the social networks in which I conducted my participant observation; I selected volunteers who approached me with interest in the project, those who I approached because they had already been outspoken on the subject, or those referred to me in “snowball” fashion by mutual acquaintances as participants likely to have strong opinions on the matter. Interviewees were selected attending at each site to a diversity in demographic factors of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and cis/transgender status, though no minors or anyone of vulnerable legal status. Although the topic of study itself touches on legally sensitive material – both local and federal law enforcement agencies were conducting investigations into some of these events at the time of writing – interviewees were only asked the affective and subjective aspects of potentially legally compromising activities, and discouraged from ever disclosing potentially incriminatory evidence – including any names of any fellow movement participants – before and, if necessary, in the course of interviews. I maintained great care in maintaining the security of my records through the analysis phase, after which they were deleted, but by limiting my interviews on such sensitive subjects to participants with adequate experience in what activists term “security

culture,” I intended to insure the damage of a breach of security would still be negligible.

Unfortunately, this may have entailed an exclusion of less-experienced interviewees likely to speak on such topics.

Thirty participants were interviewed for approximately one hour each. Interviews were conducted in an open, informal format, often returning to pre-determined interview questions, but honoring as well the development of the conversation in its own terms. Recordings were stored securely, and I listened to each one before and during the process of analysis at least twice. Portions of interviews which seemed relevant to my research questions were transcribed, as themes seemed to emerge in my earlier stages of analysis. I also looked at and transcribed passages from video recordings of events I had not attended, primarily two debates relating directly to my topic. At first I transcribed manually, but soon improved my workflow by using Dragon NaturallySpeaking, listening to my interviewees in headphones as I repeated their words into a different computer running the program.

Concurrently with conducting and analyzing these interviews, and extending into the analysis phase, I read over a wide survey of discourses on violence and nonviolence in a variety of fields, with an eye to locating parallels, tensions, and disjunctures both within this literature – historical tensions carried into the interview texts - and between the literature and the interview texts. Although a wider genealogical study of the historical discourses (Wodak, 2009) and textual trajectories (Silverstein & Urban, 1996) around non/violence would be of great worth, and may constitute a future direction in my scholarship, I focused on aspects of the literature which illuminated the current conversations under study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Although approaching this inquiry within the tradition of the rhetorical study, I have conducted my research in a decidedly interdisciplinary manner. In the tradition of social movement rhetoric, I interrogate the appeals, arguments, exigencies, strategies, and principles at play as rhetors in a given position as social movement participants face given challenges of audience and situation as they seek to achieve their purpose. In the manner of Political and Critical Discourse Analysis, I study the characteristics of instances of language-in-use with the close attention of a linguist, and read these moves as invoking and involved in resources of macro-social fields of power. I approach my research as a rhetorician when I ask, “What are participants doing? What persuasion of what audience are these strategies attempting to bring about?” Correlatively, I approach my research as a Discourse Analyst when I ask, “What is the discursive field in which this instantiation is occurring, and what are its synchronic and diachronic effects on the field?” This mixed-methods approach is necessary for the purposes of this study, in order to address questions centrally involving reflexively understood discursive contexts and explicitly desired socio-discursive effects, drawn from first-person participant interviews involving intention and deliberation. In the later stages of analysis, I also relied on the Essex School approach to Discourse Analysis, sometimes referred to as “Discourse Theory” to distinguish it from the more linguistically focused field; I return to this distinction below.

In my use of Discourse Analysis in this project, I have encountered gaps in the field which necessitated such an interdisciplinary approach. As Andrea Mayr states, there have been three strands of research that have been identified in the study of the relationship between discourse, institutions and power (Mumby & Clair, 1997: 195): (1) the study of how members of oppressed groups can ‘discursively penetrate the institutionalized form of their oppression’; (2) how subordinate individuals ‘discursively frame their own

subordination' thereby perpetuating it; and (3) analysis of how dominant groups 'discursively construct and reproduce their own positions of dominance' (e.g. van Dijk, 1993). (2008, 3)

Although Mayr's list implies (as any discourse analyst would expect from a list) an equivalency among its members, the third sort of study has largely dominated the field, with nods to capillary power in studies of the second sort. Studies of the first sort, of counterhegemonic strategies, have been sorely lacking in recent political discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, perhaps revealing a tendency inherited from linguistics for the study of moments of language as instantiations of wider systems. Rhetoric may have tended towards the opposite preference: while studies of the oppositional rhetoric of challengers (eg Morris & Browne 2006; Stewart et al 2007; Stevens & Malesh 2010; Bowers et al 2009) have formed a pillar of rhetorical study, the nature of this rhetoric as counter-hegemonic – as occurring both within and against a *system* of power - has not always been prioritized in the field. Analyzing social systems of power *as systems* is perhaps less favored in the humanist tradition which, even through post-humanist phase, influences the priorities of study. Thus, the study of counter-hegemonic rhetorical strategies, in which rhetors act a) consciously as social agents within a b) structure they set out to modify – is best approached through an analytical bricolage. Indeed, I hope by this approach in method to suggest possible points of syntheses for Discourse Analysis and Rhetoric, heretofore more divided geographically and by histories of disciplinarity more than by inherent tensions, and with much to offer the other – as recent scholarship has begun to assert (Powell 2005; Huckin et al 2012).

Within "discourse analysis," two disparate strains persist with surprisingly little reference to one another, both of which I have drawn from in this study. The first, a North American linguistically based approach which has emerged from the study of units "beyond the sentence," (Brown & Yule 1983, Shiffrin 1994, Johnstone 2007, Gee 2010) and related European fields of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2010) and Political Discourse Analysis (Chilton 2004,

Fairclough and Fairclough 2012) have proven most relevant for my purposes. Critical Discourse Analysis takes up a Foucauldian concern with the discontinuous but always historicized (Hodge & Kress 1988) linguistic and para-linguistic patterns of organizing socially signifying meanings, and brings to these social concerns the analytical methods of M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, which tease out the ideational, interpersonal, and cohesion mechanisms at play as semiosis is worked out through language-in-use. By looking closely at the language of movement participants and movement texts (both written and recorded debates and events), these analytics have allowed me to tease out ideational themes and nodal points, interpersonal solidarity and disaffiliative markers, and recurrent textual cohesion devices bearing out discourses in the words of my interviewees and of public voices typical of movement development. Recent developments in critical approaches to Political Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012), issues of argumentation (traditionally more the province of Rhetoric and the humanities) are no longer held apart from issues of CDA, but are found to co-constitute the meanings asserted at the level of textuality, offering another opportunity for reconciliation. Taking inspiration from this approach, I have applied argumentation categories to semiotic processes typically approached through more linguistic analyses, and inversely analyzed linguistic argumentation as discursive artifacts.

The second strain (Torfing 1999) of Discourse Analysis which I utilize is more a child of contemporary post-structuralist and post-Gramscian continental political philosophy, approaching language more at the level of its broad ideological entailments and effects. While sharing the close attention to language as constitutive of sociality and social processes, this school relies more on psycho-analytic tools drawn from Freudian and particularly Lacanian repertoires; rather than cohesion markers, lexical chains, or deagentialization, it is more likely to employ metrics of displacement, condensation, and substitution. The substantial work of the Essex School, as established in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) classic work, has continued to produce powerful

repertoires of analysis (eg Howarth et al 2000), not excluding the work of Slavoj Zizek; although he has long distanced himself from the school over its view of the subject (1990), he continues to employ much of their method. My study has drawn inspiration for the ability of these tools to bring social drives and desires, libidinal attractions and repulsions to the surface through intimately attending to moments of language. As with the larger disciplinary tension between rhetoric and discourse analysis, I hope, by shuttling between these approaches in the course of my investigation, to bind these approaches and suggest broader synthetic means of analysis.

Concern for participant confidentiality has unfortunately constrained me from including any but occasional demographic information on my participants. As mentioned in the Data Collection section, my interviewees varied widely by a number of factors, including gender, sexuality, cis/trans status, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, age, national origin, citizenship status, and political affinity. However, among those interviewees quoted, I have only mentioned demographic indexes when such factors seemed directly relevant to the content of the interviewee's quotation. As the pool of potential interviewees was not large, even apparently innocuous indexical factors could conceivably compromise participant anonymity. I have intentionally chosen ethnically "white" names for aliases for all participants, which I deemed necessary to not compromise anonymity by suggesting ethnic or racial identifiers (and choosing "non-white" identifiers might be read as appropriative.) Gender identities of interviewees have been maintained across aliases, as I did not deem these sufficiently indexical to threaten anonymity, and gender did seem nearly always immediately relevant to interpreting their statements. I have *not* chosen aliases for public figures quoted in publicly available texts, which may give the mistaken impression they are more ethnically diverse than my interviewees – such as in the case of Kazu Haga. While this impression certainly is not the case, I have chosen not to produce data to refute it, in the interest of participant confidentiality.

My goals for this project were similarly suggested by the nature of the inquiry. In equal parts, it may be considered a research study (both ethnographic and textual) and a collaborative theoretical treatise. Grounding my contemporary interviews in discursive-historical analysis, I have tried to make clear the discursive continuities between contemporary social movement participants and historical discourses of non/violence from such figures as Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Angela Davis, and attempted in the course of my argument to provide justification for bringing in such diversity of sources. Beyond simply applying pre-existing concepts and frameworks from Rhetorical and Discourse theory in an extensive case study, I have responded to a need to work out new theoretical framings in order to make sense of my data. As I plan to elucidate in future research, I have also felt compelled by the nature of the project to approach my interviewees not merely as *sources of data*, but as *co-theorists*, and consequently have given their voices sometimes equal prominence to my own, particularly in the form of extended block quotations with sometimes minimal analytical framing beyond what they provide. While the words of some interviewees have been read *symptomatically*, more often I approach them *collaboratively*, and thus hesitate to paraphrase or recast their thoughts excessively. Elements which became key to my final analysis were taken up sometimes entirely from the insights provided by those I interviewed, and this format seemed the only adequate acknowledgement of their contribution. I have, however, been sure to provide consistent scaffolding and signposts to integrate their insights into my own project. If indeed, as one committee member remarked, the work forms a sort of Aristotelian manual, a tour of rhetorical invention through those contemporary means of persuasion that fall outside of nonviolence, a sort of “*On the Various Strategies of Eloquence in Riot*,” the work – like Aristotle’s own – owes much to collaboration, cooperation, and trust, even as those Peripatetic contributors must also remain unnamed.

Dissertation Synopsis

Chapter 1: Neoliberal Exigencies

Neoliberalism has brought about fundamental shifts in rhetorical situation, which Deleuze noted was as transformation from Foucault's disciplinary society to "Societies of Control." (1992) These shifts reveal that the neoliberal state has come to rely proportionally less on the "soft powers" of hegemony and legitimacy claims, though such "force multipliers" (Ginsberg 2013) are obviously still present and essential, and more on open exertions of force. As elite power under neoliberalism demobilizes challengers more through incapacitation (Gilham & Noakes 2007) than by disputing their claims to justice, so these challengers must counter incapacitation on its own terms, rather than complaining that it is undeserved. Social movement rhetors are thus driven increasingly to articulate their claims in terms of *agency*, *possibility*, and *power/empowerment*, rather than in terms of justice. As social movement scholars observed before the onset of neoliberalism (Piven & Cloward 1976), the agency of disprivileged actors, who lack access to more established channels of deliberation and influence, is essentially measured by and achieved through their capacity to enact disruption. The foreclosure of public disruption for much of the neoliberal era has consequently meant the loss of agency for these actors; it should come as little surprise, then, that contesting this loss of agency has entailed the sudden return of disruptive performances on a global scale.

To bear out this claim of a shift in exigencies under neoliberalism, I introduce and analyze three key sites of neoliberal transformation in technologies of social control, drawing on recent work in sociology, urban studies, and political science.

The first major shift in social management under neoliberalism entails the management of dissent. Borrowing lines from the book on colonial social control, tokenistic inclusion of minority leaders in government posts which often lack the power to enact change has confused and demobilized the militancy of recent generations, even in the face of worsening conditions. In

addition, neoliberal economic policies channeled frustration away from contention through an appealing hope in the form of consumerist promise, beginning with the substitution of easy credit and cheap commodities for social wealth and security. Also, the nonprofit sector has ballooned into a level of global governance and industry unrivalled by most historical empires, and has come to dominate what was once innocently known as “civil society” particularly in its progressive-political form. Progressive nonprofits have forestalled effective dissent by appropriating the symbolic resources previously associated with disruption, without actually enacting it. As a result, scholars speak of an accumulated “disruption deficit,” as widespread frustration outpaces the promises of those tasked with enacting change. As dissent is incapacitated through such means of management, challenger social movements are pressured to perform agency and possibility beyond schemata of institutional inclusion and petition.

Secondly, the social place of policing takes on new central significance under neoliberal regimes of social control. While previous generations of movement participants frequently voiced grievance about police suppression of social change processes, these generations would often characterize policing as merely expressive of deeper social antagonisms, rather than itself a site of significant power and contestation. As provisionary and regulatory mechanisms recede under neoliberalism, the state asserts itself all the more aggressively through enforcement, presenting what sociologist Loic Wacquant (2009) describes as a face of “hypertrophied penalty.” Such force, for a time, also works to hold in check the simmering resentments resulting from neoliberalism’s historically unprecedented regimes of dispossession and inequality. Under such conditions, police become a central, rather than a tangential, issue for social movements. As participants increasingly claim for themselves the political right to define their situation, they prefer decentralized, unpredictable, and increasingly disruptive models which position police as social antagonists, rather than as neutral mediators. In wider social contexts, the role of selective enforcement and mass

incarceration in the “war on drugs” makes police synonymous for many with the reproduction of racial inequality. Under such conditions, social movements are motivated to enact public conflicts with police as a means of rejecting these policies, resisting the incapacitating material claims of police force.

Lastly, the neoliberal era has witnessed a centralization of mass-media ownership and a reconfiguration of media-state relations that has rendered ineffective previous truisms of social-movement strategy. While whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg found himself celebrated on the front pages of the 1971 *New York Times*, Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning) finds herself locked away in solitary confinement for a similar attempt at transparency. The My Lai massacre was given gruesome presence across the pages of *Time* magazine, while Fallujah and other contemporary killing fields are not reported by embedded journalists. Rather than relying on the problematic mediation of mass outlets, contemporary counterpublics are motivated to constitute themselves more directly. Such propagation through social media and direct participation favor intensive, intimate appeals which do not easily “scale-up,” and hence little resemble the messages favored by previous generations of social movement rhetoric. A number of measures suggest that this dissimilarity should not be judged as rhetorical failure, but be recognized as effective public constitution by other means. Such ways of constituting publics mirror Hannah Arendt’s idea of direct democracy: suspicion of mobilizing large numbers of people as a mass should not be confused with not mobilizing them at all.

Having laid out this set of shifts in exigency under neoliberalism to which social movements are compelled to respond, I turn in the next chapter to an analysis of the critiques offered by certain voices within social movements to these responses, before analyzing in later chapters the eloquence of those responses.

Chapter 2: The Strange Magic of Nonviolence

In the Occupy movement, two groups of social movement participants often spoke past each other, unable even to comprehend the frameworks motivating each other. More than with any other topic or term, this failed communication occurred around the term *nonviolence*. While for many, often older-generation participants, a refusal to commit to nonviolence triggered a sort of panic response: had those who refused never heard of the victories of Gandhi and Martin Luther King? Who in their right mind would prefer the sort of catastrophic confrontation seen in the past when groups such as the Black Panthers had taken up arms? Others could not understand such fears, or the fetishization of this always-undefined term which somehow was supposed to promise success to the movement, and simultaneously protect it from harm. Some participants who had long espoused nonviolence as a defining ethical and political value began to feel distant from its use, even in some cases renouncing it. Some who practiced what seemed to be exemplary modes of what had once been called “nonviolent direct action” were now reluctant to accept the term, preferring less-laden terms like “not-violent,” and spoke in befuddlement at the “strange magic evoked” by “nonviolence.” What had happened to nonviolence? What did nonviolence mean to these various actors? Why did passions around the word run so high, and so divisive? Why to some did it seem to summarize all that made social movements powerful and effective, and to others did it seem exactly the opposite?

Rhetorical and discourse means of analysis provide rich responses to these questions, which have so long proved bewildering. By not presuming any underlying stability in meaning, instead approaching with forensic sensitivity the strategic deployments and effects of the term in different conditions, this study has been able to offer promising answers to the above questions. Asking first what nonviolence has defined itself in opposition to, and deconstructing the purported opposition of “nonviolence” and “violence,” I note striking developments. After tracing the discursive slippages

of “nonviolence” from Gandhi’s time, through the Civil Rights and Black Power eras, I note significant differences from the use of the term in the Occupy movement. Contemporary nonviolence often stresses the moral equivalence of riot and war, rather awkwardly, given the long history of riot as a means of protesting war. Contemporary critics of nonviolence adamantly distance themselves from the use of arms for a number of very good reasons, but are often reluctant to renounce riot - provisionally defined as a group of people publicly enacting disruption, most frequently property damage and confrontations with representatives of the law - and other forms of generally noninjurious violence. Indeed, by many of the definitions and characterizations offer by adherents of “strategic nonviolence,” riot would seem closer to nonviolence than to resemble war, though I do not make the absurd claim that riots are somehow not violent.

Rather than drawing on any ontological distinction from violence, discourses of nonviolence can be understood as rhetorically enacting, sometimes to great advantage and sometimes with embarrassing futility, a disavowal of their hazily-defined but negatively valued Other. Nonviolence, throughout its history, is seen to disavow “violence” through delicacies of definition and analogy. At length, I pay analytical homage to the indisputable power of the traditional nonviolence which did prove so astoundingly effectual in facilitating social change in overthrowing British rule in India, and in ending the century of white supremacist terrorism in the U.S. South. In critical appreciation of their rhetorical power, I recognize in these moments what Bourdieu (1991) terms “strategies of condescension”: it is exactly in disavowing a power of violence which the audience is aware one has at hand that such powerful enactments of nonviolence were, indeed, more powerful than would the execution of violence have been. Many contemporary adherents of nonviolence forget that the “magic” of nonviolence requires the real presence of violent means, and thus are reduced to attempting to use symbols to induce institutions to action as if they were people. In the absence of traditional nonviolence’s “felicity conditions” (Austin 1975), contemporary nonviolence adherents

are seen to mimic traditional nonviolence's ritual motions of disavowal without managing to evoke any of its power.

Chapter 3: The Eloquence of Targeted Property Destruction in the Occupy Movement

If discourses of nonviolence exclude rhetorical moves perceived as indispensable to many contemporary social movement actors, what exactly is it that these actors perceive as so efficacious? What gets left out of nonviolence which actors see as necessary for rhetorical repertoires under neoliberalism? I choose in chapters 3 and 4 to look closely at moments of riot – particularly of public collective acts of property destruction and of clashes with the police. Although riots are far from exhaustive of movement rhetorical strategy, I analyze them as indicative, in concentrated form, of strategies and values present in wider movement shifts, which I go on to discuss in the final chapter. Often reviled as inarticulate, or at best a liminal case of political expression, as in Martin Luther King's characterization as "the voice of the voiceless," rioting articulates its claims in a powerful eloquence of its own. By analyzing riots through lenses of cultural studies and affect theory and closely examining the testimonies of riot observers, I trace what sort of discursive assertions riots make and how they make them. Movement participants speak repeatedly of the necessity under contemporary conditions to riotously "physicalize" their convictions, revealing the importance of embodiment and materiality in the rhetoricity of riots. Contrary to accusations by some critics that riots seek to work sheerly through force and material power, my analysis of these discursive assertions reveals the thoroughly rhetorical efficacy of contemporary riots, albeit one whose means must be embodied and material.

In the analysis of the rhetoricity of public property destruction, I first attend to the ubiquity of comparisons which inevitably follow rioting. In one example, even as I write this, riots against corruption and austerity measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina have escalated and generalized into

what some political commentators (Mujanović “Spring” 2014) have termed a “general social insurrection.” One communique released by protesters in Sarajevo proposes, in answer to concerns over property destruction during the riots, that “damage resulting from protests [be] cover[ed] with that part of revenue intended for compensation of government representatives.” (Mujanovic “Demands” 2014) The proposal works to force a comparison of scale between the economic destruction caused by the riots, and the destruction (in billions of embezzled public funds) caused by those figures who were the object of protest. Although in some sense the ubiquity of such comparison may be evident enough, I go a step further in asserting that, in *forcing comparisons* of this sort, riots themselves make a rhetorical claim of comparison, rather than merely being accidentally described afterwards with comparisons. Public performances which stir up contention and arguments, such as riots, may themselves be understood as putting forward arguments of value, contesting normalizing processes which give visibility to some phenomena and withhold it from others.

Public acts of property destruction also work to call into question a certain embarrassing ideological moment at the core of liberal ideology, which I term “Locke’s equivalence,” that holds property and bodies to be functionally equivalent. In one symptomatic passage I analyze at length, John Locke establishes this equivalence through the threat of external violence to body and commodity alike. I contend that this – the suturing of the equivalence of body and commodity through threat – is the functional definition of violence within the ideological frame of liberalism. Riotous performances of the destruction of property call this equivalence into question; further, since the equivalence is essentially an embarrassing one due to its inconsistency with liberalism’s purportedly universal-humanist commitments, riots seek to foreground the embarrassing inconsistency at the base of liberal ideology through the arguments they inevitably stir up. Here, it is worth noting that the contemporary preference for noninjurious violence is considerably more

powerful in carrying out this mechanism, as any injury caused in such actions risks reasserting Locke's equivalence, rather than asserting a disjunction in the valuation of bodies and commodities.

Aside from the eloquence enacted through forcing comparisons, public property destruction also articulates a shift in subject positions, which I recognize, after Fanon, as a process of *desubjectification*. In Fanon's famous observation, the body of colonist must experience violence at the hands of the colonized for the latter to come into their own power. While riot enacts an analogous process, it hesitates to inflict harm on bodies, as doing so under contemporary conditions would risk reproducing Locke's equivalence. Rather, by targeting inanimate entities, such as the "soul" of corporations remarked on by Deleuze, discursive resources of subjectivity are "freed up," and new contentious subject positions are made possible, a process I explicate by drawing on the work of Sara Ahmed regarding the circulation of affect and the intensification of surface.

Understood as rhetorical attempts at revaluation, acts of property destruction finally work as performances of *profanation*, undoing the sanctity of commodities which embody the present order of property relations. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben's work, profanation can be understood as bringing back into use sacred items set aside only for use by the Gods. In the context of contemporary performances of property destruction, what is being brought back into use is deliberation itself, over the uses of space and the distribution of agency and possibilities. Profanation of property works to open space for specifically political deliberation, against the administrative manner in which decisions are made under neoliberal hegemony.

Chapter 4: The Eloquence of Police Clashes in the Occupy Movement

Turning to rhetorical strategies enacted through public performances of antagonism with police, this chapter extensively draws on participant testimonies to look at how larger positionalities around privilege are renegotiated in these moments. I recognize four distinct rhetorical strategies at play in contemporary clashes with police: disidentification, disinvestment, empowering reversal, and backlighting. The rhetorics of antagonism with police challenge subjects' relations to privilege, and by extension to audiences who come into contact with the actions. They challenge these relations in various permutations: disidentification with privileges embodied by external figures they identify with; disinvestment from their own privilege; reversal and backlighting when faced with a silencing power of privilege which persuades them to passivity in their own disempowered position. These testimonies articulate the subjective transformations of these moments (cf Gregg 1971) as a central part of "the message" of such moments.

In what I term *disidentification*, participants and publics, through conflict with representatives of authority, come to see a difference between a hegemonic social role and the body performing it. I apply Althusser's concept of misrecognition, which, in Bourdieu's development, relies on certain "liturgical conditions" to produce a disposition in which subjects alienate themselves from their own powers, delegating and then attributing their own inherent authority to an outside figure. By disturbing the liturgical conditions of policing, movement participants interrupt this process both for themselves and other witnesses, reclaiming their own agency in the act of ceasing to attribute authority to state actors. Under conditions such as those faced by Occupy, if Locke's equivalence is to be destabilized, this interruption must occur noninjuriously, humiliating the social position without conflating this with the empathy with a suffering body. To look at these mechanisms through analogy, I examine passages from rhetorical scholar James Darsey and queer cultural critic Wayne Koestenbaum on the 1977 pie attack on antiqueer activist Anita Bryant. Though

Koestenbaum and some in Darsey's account do empathize with Bryant, others in the account empathize more with her noninjurious assailants. Like clashes with police, the incident demonstrates success within its own limits of appeal. Even for those who pity Bryant, this pity may be seen to have somewhat displaced recognition of her authority, the strategy interrupting misrecognition in this sense as well. By interrupting misrecognition and inviting audiences to disidentify with hegemonic figures, clashes with police similarly make empowered agency and possibilities of resistance available.

In a related but distinct process which I term *disinvestment*, conflicts with police lead participants to disaffiliate from their own privileged positions of social power, and come to identify more with subject positions of disprivileged colleagues. This process, in the reflections of interviewees, is seen to be more a transfer of affective commitments and their entailed relations, than of rational opinion. The affective, pre-discursive immediacy of confrontations with embodied power catalyzes reconfigurations in the subject. Taking up fear in the consensual form of risk results in a revulsion towards privilege, first towards the privilege of the brutal Other, and then, by analogy, towards the privilege of one's own position. Although language is absent in the immediacy of confrontations with police violence, such affectual shifts do not become political until language returns: interviewees attest that they often did not know what to make of their own revulsion without attendant conversations with less privileged peers for whom such affectual processes were all-too familiar. Through these conversations, their revulsion was extended to a shared political subjectivity with others. Describing these relationships of extension as peer relations while acknowledging differences of privilege might seem contradictory, but interviewees emphasized that such relations became possible for a moment, under exceptional conditions, conditions resulting from the absence of police.

For those participants who identified as lacking privilege rather than possessing an excess of it, particularly along lines of sex and gender, clashes with police in the Occupy context enacted a different type of subjective transformation, which I term *empowering reversal*. While several of my interviewees were aware of problems with the term *empowerment* (Cruikshank 1999), my analysis reveals that participants reluctantly acknowledge that the term is indispensable in their political projects. By inhabiting spaces of violence, by “playing with” and “trying on” violent subject positions analogous to those by which they have previously suffered, these participants are able to work through disempowering trauma, to “use these spaces that have been formally used against you to actually undo them.” Interviewees repeatedly alleged that such processes are “invisibilized” through dominant narratives that typify riots as necessarily the domain of “tantruming white boys”; such narratives in effect work to contain the transgression of queer/feminist riot. Despite such attempts to contain these subject transformations, participants testify to such transformations of agency as deeply rhetorical processes.

The last riotous rhetorical strategy which I identify occurs with both public property destruction and with clashes with police, and notably when the two occur together. I term this strategy *backlighting*, as it attempts to illuminate the limits and outline of state power. By Loic Wacquant’s (2009) critique, the neoliberal state relies on claims of omnipresence and omnipotence for its spectacular existence, foreclosing possibilities of dissent to the same degree. By challenging the State’s “monopoly on the means of violence within a given territory” (Weber 1958) and getting away with it, participants open a space of possibility for political agency. Though frameworks inherited from previous conditions frequently misconstrue such claims as sheerly material attempts to seize power, riotous rhetors emphasize the deeply rhetorical action of such challenges. Previously invisible everyday violence is made viscerally present, constituting an object of rage which allows the riotous subject a measure of agency in response. For all the gravity of its claims, backlighting

frequently invokes and employs humor; relief attending transgression often erupts as laughter, and as communication scholar M. Lane Bruner (2005) asserts, the “humorless” tendencies of the State make it vulnerable to attack on this front. I conclude this section by conducting visual rhetorical analyses on a series of texts in order to trace out these dynamics in the context of the Occupy movement.

My discussion of the riotous rhetorical strategies manifest in Occupy Oakland and Seattle ends on a note of caution. An analysis of the rhetorical strategies enacted by riot should not be construed as a naïve apologia for it. Several interviewees emphasized that the rhetorical efficacy of such strategies is often accompanied by unfortunate or even disastrous acts. Aporia of wider public reception endure, and riot’s strategic effects are often accompanied by highly unstrategic ones. Riots, for all their particular brilliance, tend towards a certain stupidity. Although not the focus of this study, some strains of contemporary radical political philosophy fetishize moments of riot as synecdoche for wider political processes, in striking symmetry with those nonviolence discourses that rely on “magic.” Rather than preferring either element of the dichotomy, my research suggests that each fetishizes a moment torn out from continuous processes of social transformation. This dichotomy itself has proven needlessly divisive in emancipatory movements for at least half a century. In my final chapter, I suggest that contemporary movements have innovated elements of protest repertoire that offer a transcendence of this dichotomy, elements that include but are not limited by strategies of riot.

Chapter 5: The Characteristics of Movements to Come

In my final chapter, I examine the wider characteristics in social movement strategy revealed through these exceptional moments of riot, but by no means exclusive to them. I begin by

addressing at last the problem of audience, which, for a movement defining itself as participatory, quickly becomes a question of public constitution.

When the diffuse structure of social movements thwarts any attempt to establish a representational center to speak for the movement as a whole, rhetorical functions which constitute collective subjects take place through topics and tactics rather than through the mediation of representative personalities. For this reason, the debate around nonviolence was spectacularly heated in Occupy; together with this debate, arguments over which permissible topics were to be nominated for or banned from inclusion in “the true message of the movement” worked as contests over the movement’s demographic make-up. Research (Owens & Occupy Research 2012) has borne out clear correlations: the occurrences of Occupy that clearly identified as nonviolent and stuck to discussions of financial regulation and political representation were identified with a more middle-class, white constituency. Local movements with higher involvement of poor and people-of-color constituencies, like Oakland and Seattle, were more likely to focus on police and evictions, and to distance themselves from nonviolence. New York’s Occupy Wall Street was generally characterized as the former; one internal report from a working group attributed the limited gains of the movement to its having failed to attract a less privileged demographic, who might be more invested in deep social transformation. Given that people of color and the poor do not actually prefer violence, what was it about certain topics and tropes – especially nonviolence – that discouraged participation of the disprivileged? What, contrarily, can we learn about the character of those movements which proved more inclusive?

According to a number of contemporary feminist and critical race scholars, as well as a number of my interviewees, the assertion of victimhood and innocence and as characteristics meant to appeal to publics holds increasingly little purchase for audiences under neoliberalism, particularly for less privileged audiences. As the category of victimhood has always been coded with thick

constructions of race and gender, evoking innocence works to reenact exclusions and dispossessions all-too familiar to those targeted. As the “hypertrophied penalty” of the neoliberal state manifests itself through incarceration in numbers unprecedented in history and policing becomes a central point in the reproduction of racial inequality, equating social justice with innocence risks throwing those suffering the greatest injustices under the bus. Even “strategic nonviolence” discourse makes clear its dependency on categories of innocence and victimhood, thus unsuited for such conditions. As scholar Michelle Alexander (2012) urges, contemporary social movements must be open to the hurt and rage of those most targeted under current regimes of dispossession; whether or not their actions are likely to be violent, their passions certainly must be. I claim that it is a disavowal of just these categories of victimhood and innocence which was at stake in Occupy’s conversations around nonviolence, and which was rhetorically enacted through Occupy’s conflictual actions.

Returning, finally, to the question of agency and possibility necessarily at the core of social movement responses to neoliberal exigencies, it becomes clear that movements manifest these values through public performances of transgression. In the struggles of semiosis, I term *defiguration* the power to rhetorically disrupt hegemonic discourses, deforming the status quo figures of speech. By doing so, actors discursively enact semiotic transformation, fostering agency in the process. As I write in my final chapter,

If potential to disrupt forms the material power of the disenfranchised, performances of transgression, acts which defigure the symbolic forms of the status quo, make up its rhetorical counterpart; if long-term influence is the sociological phenomenon brought about by this power, agency is its subjective apparition.

Taking defiguration as key to the rhetorical repertoire of contemporary social movements, I turn to certain criticisms of militancy in the Occupy movement, which allege that transgressive appeals risk alienating “the mainstream.” In response, I note claims by other participants that transgression is

intended as an appeal not to any pre-constituted public, but to a public which emerges in the very act of its identification with transgression. While, for critics of militancy, easy translation into status-quo symbolic systems is a prerequisite of success, those espousing transgression often view such easy translation as evidence of failure. It is not that those enacting semiotic transgression are uninterested in appealing to a broad audience, but that they seek to constitute a new public out of this audience in the moment of sympathetic contact with their appeal. Though certainly not guaranteed of success, enacting semiotic transgression seems to be a necessary element in “making space,” of constituting the sort of subject, ecstatically self-aware of its own agency, capable of answering to the challenges neoliberalism poses to emancipatory projects.

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Chapter 1 - Neoliberal Exigencies

Yea, inhabit that power, right, it's about power, because capitalism is about a struggle over agency. To live a life of capitalism, for absolutely anyone, is to be perpetually unstable in your own agency, because at any moment you could lose that agency, cause there's this outside structure of money that governs it beyond you, and so that sort of power play is at the core of capitalist psyche. Playing with that power is so key, transgressing that power is so key, taking it for yourself is so key, because that is in the end the fundamentally anticapitalist thing, is to do something that expands your own agency or that exercises your own agency, against logic, against rules, and will, and that's important to me. I think the powers that be understand that clearly, deeply and clearly... That's why Occupy was a threat, and hopefully still is. That's why general strikes are a threat, because they're people being like, oh yea, there's way more of us than there are of you. And we can do whatever the fuck we want. And that's amazing. (Jenny³, Interview)

The long year of 2011 - spanning from December 2010 in Tunisia through the first few months of 2012 in Oakland, and even into 2013 - witnessed the most disruptive wave of global contention to occur on a global scale since 1968, with revolutions or major social upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Israel, Greece, Italy, Spain, Chile, the UK, Canada, the United States, Turkey, Brazil, and Bosnia, among others. These and other regions have witnessed large-scale protests drawing from strikingly similar repertoires of what Kaulingfreks (2013) has termed "unruly politics." This study will focus on the global unrest's manifestation in the United States as "the Occupy Movement," and primarily in Oakland, California, and Seattle,

³ All names of interviewees have been changed.

Washington. The participants in these global phenomena of deliberative social disruptions, very self-aware and self-referential in their lines of continuity and precedence, formed precisely what Michael Warner (2002) terms a *counterpublic*; though always tailored to local conditions, participants performed a self-aware and reflexive addressivity drawing on shared resources of rhetoric, technology, tactics, and identity. Although these resources were in some respects reminiscent of those from 1968, observers should not be surprised to note essential differences, occurring after nearly half a century, due to the widespread implementation of neoliberal mechanisms of social control (Chriss 2007). These mechanisms were meant to forestall precisely those concatenations which had previously succeeded in coercing concessions through disruption. The public actions making up this wave were remarkably similar in their shared characteristics as contentious⁴, disruptive, immediate, and, with the exceptions of Libya and Syria, non-lethal, at least on the demonstrators' behalf. However, social movement scholars, particularly in the field of rhetoric (e.g. Gitlin 2012; Deluca, Lawson, & Sun 2012) have yet to adequately grapple with the differences of 2011 from the past, both in movement rhetoric, or in the exigencies which have conditioned these responses. In setting out to fill this gap, this study will first survey recent works in sociology, urban studies, political science, legal studies, contemporary philosophy, critical race theory, and gender studies, as well as attending to the

⁴ "Contentious politics" (Tilly & Tarrow 2007, McAdam et al 2001) is an active interdisciplinary field which looks at the employment of disruption for political ends. It is distinguished from, on one side, the "everyday acts of resistance" studied by James Scott (1999), and on the other, conflict between institutions, state and non-state. Although social movement theory has largely been subsumed within the study of contentious politics, specifically rhetorical studies of social movements have been notably absent. Although many classic works of social movement rhetoric frequently looked at the rhetorical implications of disruption employed by contemporary social movements, contemporary studies of counterpublics have tended to favor studies of less disruptive social movements, even as movements were themselves becoming incontestably more disruptive. This study hopes to position itself within this gap in rhetorical studies, allied with an emergent set of Riot Studies in political theory (eg Kaulingfreks 2013) and economics (Harvie 2010).

words of participants in the contemporary social movements of Occupy Oakland and Occupy Seattle, to better attend to these shifts in rhetorical situation and response.

That this eruption of public disruption came as such a stark surprise to social movement observers is, itself rather surprising in retrospect; indeed, in view of the insights of many scholars, what is more surprising is that these disruptions did not occur sooner. Nor should their ultimately violent - though not injurious - character come as unexpected. In the analysis of Harvard psychiatrist James Gilligan (2001), summarizing his findings from three decades of studies of the most violent prisoners in the US, “Structural violence is not only the main form of violence, in the sense that poverty kills far more people (almost all of them very poor) than all the behavioral violence put together, it is also the main cause of violent behavior. Eliminating structural violence means eliminating relative poverty.” (102) As neoliberalism has overseen the greatest unequal redistribution of wealth in human history, relative poverty - that is, poverty in the face of wealth, measured by inequality in distribution rather than absolute wealth – assumes the form, in Gilligan’s view, of a historically unprecedented violence, notwithstanding the definitional gerrymanderings put forward by some of neoliberalism’s apologists (Pinker 2012). So, rather than wondering why the contentions of 2011 were often intensely conflictual, one might initially ask why it is that those most affected by neoliberalism’s inequalities have remained so quiescent for so long, rather than responding in turn with a violence analogous to that of previous eras, such as Thompson’s (1971) “moral economy” of 18th century rioting used to fix prices in the face of capitalist innovations.

The absence of violent response to intensified relative poverty is particularly puzzling when compared to the proliferation of massive urban riots in the United States during the 1960s

and 1970s. Historian Michael Katz, seeking to understand this question in an essay aptly titled “Why Don’t American Cities Burn Very Often?” (2008) elucidates this process in the American context in a convincing analysis, focusing on the *incapacitation* – the means of making powerless, of foreclosing agency - of dissent. Katz, while authoring the article, was called up for jury duty in his home city of Philadelphia. The trial involved the murder of an elderly African-American man by one of his friendly acquaintances, in an argument over a loan of five dollars, taking place in a neighborhood of apocalyptic poverty only blocks away from Philadelphia’s glitzy Center City. Gilligan’s analysis offers a powerful insight how neoliberalism’s widespread social incapacitation, an essentially *humiliating* powerlessness, might end even in a tragic murder among acquaintances:

The German word for attention - Achtung - also means respect. And that makes sense: the way you truly respect someone is to pay attention to them, and if you are not giving them your full attention, you are disrespecting them... we all need attention. When we get it, we know that we are being respected. That also helps to explain the etiology of violence: assaulting people is a foolproof way to get their attention. Since everyone needs respect/attention, if they cannot get it nonviolently, they will get it violently. (Gilligan 122)

Bearing Gilligan’s analysis in mind, Katz’s inquiry might be understood as asking how such violence, so predictable in neoliberal era’s intensification of relative inequality, becomes systematically displaced from public to interpersonal spheres, as in the murder trial for which he sat in jury. Thus, not only does Gilligan show how the same humiliating violence which of such evidently social origins might express itself through interpersonal violence, but indeed reminds his reader of the palpable stakes of the worsening income inequality of which Katz speaks;

ultimately, the conditions which sparked urban riots of the 60s and 70s, and which have only worsened since, displace their often invisible effects into visible instances of interpersonal violence. Why, then, do people not strike back at these social causes on a social, rather than an interpersonal, manner? Katz begins with just this question. “In the decades following the Kerner Commission⁵, with the notable exception of the Vietnam War, most of the conditions identified in its report as precipitating civil violence did not disappear,” (Katz 188) but indeed worsened to a severe degree:

Poverty, inequality, chronic joblessness, segregation, police violence, ethnic transition, a frayed safety net: surely, these composed a combustible ensemble of elements, which a reasonable observer might have expected to ignite. In 1985, two sociologists who studied crime and violence observed: “the ghetto poor were virtually untouched by the progress that has been made in reducing racial and ethnic discrimination.... We thus face a puzzle of continued, even increasing, grievance and declining attempts to redress grievance through collective protest and violence.” [20] Writing in 1988, Tom Wicker pointed to the same puzzle. The “urban ghetto is, if anything, more populous, confining, and poverty-ridden than in 1968.” Yet, the “urban riots that generated so much alarmed attention twenty years ago have long since vanished – rather as if a wave had risen momentarily on the sea of events and then subsided.” [21] Why did no one light the match? (189)

Katz sets about answering this puzzle by proposing a set of six “mechanisms”, for what he calls “the management of marginalization”: “selective incorporation, mimetic reform, indirect rule,

⁵ The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders investigating the causes of the 1967 riots.

consumption, repression, and surveillance.” (193) Across their different logics, Katz notes, “Together, they set in motion a process of de-politicization that undercuts the *capacity* for collective action,” (192, my emphasis) a capacity which, in the terms of this study, I will address as a form of agency. It should be noted that each of Katz’s mechanisms for “the management of marginalization” in no way attempts to assail the apparent *righteousness* of social movement actor claims; rather, each one works at rendering collective political subjects *powerless*. The focus on incapacitation of movements, rather than the justice of their cause, can be understood as the most significant shift in social control in the neoliberal era. Looking for instance at the foundational 1962 Port Huron statement which established Students for a Democratic Society, it is evident that movement rhetorical strategies of the time were primarily successful in contesting the *justice* of the status quo:

Many of us began maturing in complacency... As we grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss... Not only did tarnish appear on our image of American virtue, not only did disillusion occur when the hypocrisy of American ideals was discovered, but we began to sense that what we had originally seen as the American Golden Age was actually the decline of an era. (SDS 1962)

Reading these words now, their pained sincerity is no less moving than their absolute, infinite distance from our own times. Regardless of one’s social position or political affiliations, the 1962 subject position of complacent, un“penetrated” comfort, untarnished virtue, and a supposed Golden Age left behind by these disillusioned youths is no longer even available as an enunciative modality. Those on the Right who bristle at mention of “the hypocrisy of American ideals” are no longer likely to argue that the country is in an untroubled, untarnished Golden

Age; rhetoric of disillusion and decline is indeed now more typical of the Right than among Left critics. The very potency of righteousness articulated against the constitutive Other of hypocrisy, decline, and tarnish has indeed been appropriated by the descendants of the political position which SDS set out to critique. In vectors of historical discourse overdetermination well beyond the limits of this study (Lakoff 2002; Fairclough 1992; Block, Gray, & Holborow 2012) the commonplace of righteousness has slowly been abandoned by liberals and the Left in favor of processual and distributory discourse, abandoned to and appropriated by social conservatives. In the loss of “the Great Society,” the discursive role of righteousness has moved from normative, universalist claims, to resentment generally emanating from claims of social power lost; not invoking a Golden Age as present, but as lost, with its former critics now bearing the blame for its destruction. Neoliberalism, seen from its aspect as social control, leaves behind Foucault’s famed “disciplinary power” in favor of what Gilles Deleuze (1992) called “societies of control,” managing “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault 2000) more through incapacitation of opposition than by asserting a hegemony over moral claims; moral claims work as cover for the use of force, rather than contesting legitimacy. As the exigencies presented by this shift condition the responses that form the core of this study, I will return to develop this point at length.

That Katz speaks of the absence of riots in particular, and of social disruption more generally, as a measure of general social incapacity of the poor, may need an additional moment of explanation. In such claims, Katz may be seen to be speaking in the vein of Piven and Cloward’s classic 1977 work on the sociology of social movements, *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. In the authors’ analysis of a series of counter-hegemonic victories in American history, “[I]t was not formal organizations but mass defiance that won what was won in the 1930s and 1960s: industrial workers, for example, forced concessions from industry and

government as a result of the disruptive effects of large-scale strikes; defiant blacks forced concessions as a result of the disruptive effects of mass civil disobedience” (xv). If organizations such as the AFL-CIO are largely associated with the gains of labor history, or SNCC and NAACP for those of Civil Rights, Piven and Cloward argue that such institutional strength is more the effect of popular force than its cause: “While ... symbolic gestures give the appearance of influence to formal organizations composed of lower-class people, elites are not actually responding to the organizations; they are responding to the underlying force of insurgency” (xxi). For Piven and Cloward, capacity for disruptive intervention is the measure of such “force of insurgency,” and hence of the political power of those without other access to institutional deliberation processes:

“It is our judgment that *the most useful way to think about the effectiveness of protest is to examine the disruptive effects on institutions of different forms of mass defiance, and then to examine the political reverberations of those disruptions...* By our definition, disruption is simply the application of a negative sanction, the withdrawal of a crucial contribution on which others depend, and it is therefore a natural resource for exerting power over others... Indeed, some of the poor are sometimes so isolated from significant institutional participation that the only ‘contribution’ they can withhold is that of quiescence in civil life: they can riot.” (24-25, emphasis in original)

For workers at a site of production, the most effectively leveraged disruption as the “withdrawal of a crucial contribution” might take the form of a slow-down or strike; students might walk out from their school; soldiers may flee into the wilds or attack their superiors. Those with only minimal institutional affiliation, not only the poor but the much wider “precarariat” reproduced

under neoliberalism's economic restructurings, are left with few resources for political intervention but direct interruption in urban processes of the reproduction of daily life. Such an analysis hardly romanticizes public shows of violence; rather, these are revealed as symptomatic of a final, desperate refusal of powerlessness, an acknowledgment of the severe distance from channels of influence inscribed in the very position of the marginal subject's daily life:

The poor do not have to be historians of the occasions when protestors have been jailed or shot down to understand this point. The lesson of their vulnerability is engraved in everyday life; it is evident in every police beating, in every eviction, in every lost job, in every relief termination. The very labels used to describe defiance by the lower classes - the pejorative labels of illegality and violence - testify to this vulnerability and serve to justify severe reprisals when they are imposed. By taking such labels for granted, we fail to recognize what these events really represent: a structure of political coercion inherent in the everyday life of the lower classes. (26)

As an exponential intensification of the "structure of political coercion inherent in everyday life" effectively blocks neoliberal subjects from disruptive activity, the basis of their political power is undermined absolutely. In Katz's analysis, and my own parallel inquiry in the second half of this chapter, neoliberalism's means of social control can be seen to rely on factors essentially different than those faced by earlier social movements. In turn, I will go on to examine what allowed the contention of 2011 to overcome just this "structure of political coercion" after nearly half a century of failures to do so.

Recognizing this centrality of disruption to coercing social concessions, political science scholars Seferiades and Johnston (2012) identify a "disruptive deficit" as endemic in neoliberal

regimes of governmentality, co-constitutive of and multiplied by a “reform deficit” resulting from neoliberalism’s administerial abolition of political dissensus. This results in the impossibility of “conflict,” equivalent to what Chantal Mouffe (2000) terms “agonism,” the clash of interests and perspectives mediated through a functioning deliberative sphere; instead, conflict is replaced by “violence,” equivalent in Mouffe’s terminology to “antagonism,” a uncommunicative, unmediated animosity that knows only force:

[A] key element ... is the extent to which ‘conflict’ (as non-violence) is premised on claimant *disruptive propensity*, that is, the tendency of contentious actors to act transgressively (though not necessarily resorting to violence) in order to further their goals. Even if states are reform-prone (and, nowadays, many seem viciously counter-reformist, both socioeconomically and politico-institutionally), ‘conflict’ is not possible *unless* protest is sufficiently pungent to disrupt the workings of the system: to exert pressure on opponents, bystanders and authorities... Prolonged periods of *conflictual irrelevance*, a state of affairs where either claimant actors fail to adequately express grievances, or the state proves perpetually unable (and/or unwilling) to be responsive - what may be construed as a *reform deficit* - leads to ‘conflict’s’ eventual collapse (if it had ever emerged). This is where *violence* begins to set in. ... [T]his *disruptive deficit* may lead to a great paradox: in seeking conciliation through exclusively conventional protest, institutionalized claimants end up inadvertently fomenting the kind of political violence they most dread and despise. Indeed, this is all the more so, considering that this disruptive deficit coincides with the *reform deficit* characterizing contemporary neoliberal policies. (Seferiades & Johnston 5-6)

In terms of social movement rhetoric, mechanisms of neoliberal social control, so successful for four decades at accumulating deficits of disruption and reform, form the central factors of the rhetorical situation within which contemporary social movement participants have no choice but to formulate their articulations. As each of these mechanisms works to block disruptive capacity of the marginal subject under neoliberalism, the consistent exigency presented in their variety is one of *incapacitation*, the correlate of the neoliberal state's own exigency to articulate its own forces as omnipresent (an exigency to which I will return in the section on policing.) Disciplinary mechanisms of the Welfare State functioned under the discursive sign of "the Great Society," positing *righteousness* as a common ethic incumbent on each of its subjects, as a force holding together a social body bound with moral ties. Under such circumstances, social movement rhetoric dealt firstly with offering contested claims to the nature of such righteousness, both as characterizing its own identity, and as necessitating certain sympathies or actions by external agents. By contrast, the cultural-moral dispersion and discontinuity under neoliberal governmentality, sometimes erroneously described as "the postmodern condition," no longer takes seriously any of its own disciplinary claims towards righteousness as constitutive of socio-political bodies, but, directly reliant on force. As a correlative, contemporary social movement rhetoric, in seeking to overcome the mechanisms of social control appropriate to this regime, is forced to respond primarily by performing *power*, rather than asserting claims of righteousness. Before examining how such rhetoric differs from that of previous eras and the ways it speaks in its own terms, the remainder of this chapter will attempt to trace some central shifts in conditions of governmental technologies under neoliberalism which contemporary participants most frequently cite as conditioning contemporary social movement rhetoric. What is it about neoliberal mechanisms of social control that has so effectively blocked social response to

phenomenal intensification of relative inequality, at least until the explosions of 2011? To what material, institutional exigencies were these rhetorics responding?

Managed Dissent: Indirect Rule, Consumerism, and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex

While Katz's categories of surveillance and repression fall under the more directly punitive category of policing to be considered soon, his first four categories of selective incorporation, mimetic reform, indirect rule, and consumption all may be considered as aspects of what I term *managed dissent*. Deviating slightly from Katz's system based on suppositions of sociological process, I classify those neoliberal mechanisms of social control most relevant in the exigencies they present to social movement rhetoric in categories of their institutional affiliation: indirect rule, consumerism, and the non-profit sector. Rather than forming a unique institutional site of social control, Katz's processes of selective incorporation and mimetic reform occur across institutions, in the political sphere of indirect rule, in the "civil society" sphere of nonprofits, and even through the deferred libidinal capture of consumerism.

Political Institutionalization of Dissent

In the political sphere, the entry of prominent New Left leaders such as Senator Tom Hayden, and evidence of the political heft of other radical elements, such as the Black Panthers successful backing of Jerry Brown in California, and particularly the entry at municipal levels of minority and radical leaders into political positions, to many were measures that yesterday's radicals had finally won deliberative ground and decided to participate in serious politics. However, as a

material corollary of the discursive cooptation of New Left demands for personal freedom divorced from calls against policies of material inequality, such political “successes” functioned, in Katz’s and others’ analyses, as a new means of social control, employed to great effect against the very claims from which they originated. (Omi & Winant 2004) Indeed, Democrat Bill Clinton, or British Labour Party of Tony Blair, pushed through neoliberal reforms often surpassing their more conservative opponents in severity. This bipartisan conquest of the political sphere, characterized by neoliberalism’s discursive presumption of a-political, administerial consensus, defined an enunciative field with little room for openly conflictual approaches. Speaking in the European context with its rather more developed institutional Left, Seferiades and Johnston (2012) argue that

... in contemporary Western democracies, and on a variety of pretexts, official protest organizations, including several [Social Movement Organizations], trade unions, and, above all, the parties of the Left, tend to approach contentious disruption as a relic of the past. Hoping to secure the consensual resolution of pent-up grievances, nominally contentious organizations are increasingly espousing (often in a dogmatic fashion) the modalities of an exclusively conventional protest repertoire... (6)

which, as noted earlier, resulted in what these scholars term a “disruptive deficit.” Quoting foundational social-movement theorist Doug McAdam, these authors describe the narrowing of expression resulting from the institutionalization of both movement leaders and discourses as delineated by what McAdam terms “the pluralist prejudice”, in turn delegitimizing and depriving the marginalized of their most, or perhaps their only, means of expressing their political interest:

As McAdam (1999/1982), among others, has pointedly argued, non-institutional protest was for a long time considered to be pathological owing to what may be construed as the *pluralist prejudice*: the axiomatic assumption that political systems (at least in the West) possessed sufficient expressive channels, which protesters, to their detriment, evaded quite simply because they were 'irrational': 'Why would any group engaged in rational, self-interested political action ignore the advantages of such an open, responsive, gentlemanly political system? [... Because m]ovement participants are simply not engaged in "rational, self-interested political action" ' (p 6). Incorporating insights from social theory and novel research findings (both historical and contemporary), political process and contentious politics approaches have problematized and eventually shattered the pluralist assumption: actors engaged in contentious, non-institutional collective action are *not* irrational; instead their departure from the proper channels reflects systematic channel deficiency and is, if anything, eminently rational." (ibid 4)

Such systematic institutionalization of dissent under neoliberalism results in what Katz terms "mimetic reform", defined as "measures that respond to insurgent demands *without devolving real power* or redistributing significant resources," most notably through an institutionalization of dissent which "not only absorbed the energies of insurgents, it also transformed their protests and rendered them harmless... [It] substituted decentralization for community control, elections for protest, and 'modest but sufficiently tantalizing distribution' for redistribution." (193, my emphasis) As such managed dissent responds to without fulfilling "insurgent demands," neither serving insurgent interests nor allotting them power to do so themselves, the accumulated effects of decades of managed dissent present themselves in a multitude of aspects as a crisis of powerlessness for social movement actors, setting the rhetorical axis of claims directly in terms

of power and not even tangentially along claims of righteousness, which political leaders and insurgents may even share.

Indirect Rule

For many, with the election of a Black president, or selection of Black Secretary of States and Supreme Court judges, and particularly the entrance into politics at the municipal level, minority entrance into public representation has been the most palpable victory won by the Civil Rights movement. Notably, people-of-color representation among business leadership has continued to be considerably more constrained - a tendency itself calling into question a potential disjunction between spectacular, versus material, empowerment; even such limited material gains have evidently not “trickled down” to minority populations at large. In view of the worsening of conditions noted above for large numbers of minorities and the poor, such “selective incorporation” of token elites, by “construct[ing] limited ladders of social mobility” (Katz 193) may well be viewed as an ultimately counter-productive strategy, working to obfuscate without essentially ameliorating the re/production of material inequalities and unequal access. Michelle Alexander (2012), former Racial Justice director of the ACLU, for example, has recently spoken out against affirmative action programs for just these detrimental effects, noting that its limited effect enables a wider-spread degradation in conditions for those not placing at the top of their class, or in an institutional position to qualify for the next grant. However, in terms of the more public exigencies confronted by social movement participants, the selective incorporation of holders of public office, high and low, holds particular significance.

Such selective successes, accompanied first by white flight to the suburbs and later by gerrymandered micro-townships of gentrification, have resulted in what Katz calls “indirect rule”, as the faces of political and bureaucratic rule appear much darker than are the faces actually setting policy at the metropolitan, state, and national levels:

Like colonial British imperialists who kept order through the exercise of authority by indigenous leaders, powerful white Americans retained authority over cities through their influence on minorities elected to political office, appointed to public and social service bureaucracies, and hired in larger numbers by police forces. (Katz 194)

In numerous examples listed by Katz, state legislatures have retained effective control over finances, schooling, and housing, but more diverse representation at the city level “meant that civil violence or other claims on city government increasingly would be directed toward African-American elected officials, African-American public bureaucrats, and African-American police.” (194) This results in a perverse hesitancy to respond, according to Katz, which political elites are able to mobilize, as urban populations identify more closely with the faces, if not the actual forces, of rule. The contradictory effects of such management strategies can be seen in contention around Occupy Oakland, where the Chinese-American (and former neighborhood organizer and self-described communist) Mayor Jean Quan at first attempted to express sympathy with the movement by visiting the camp, only to order the deployment of near-lethal force by hundreds of riot police less than two weeks later. Political and non-governmental elites spoke with assurance that “white anarchists” were marauding through “our [people-of-color] Oakland,” which, though belied by the diverse composition of Occupy, seemed confirmed on the institutional end. The political quiescence resulting from such accumulated hesitation again

presents exigencies of powerlessness for social movement actors, who are often unable to overcome such hegemonic legedmain as they seek to mobilize marginalized populations in their own interest.

Consumerism

Katz goes on to assert consumerism as an additional major factor in the “management of marginalization.” As riot scholar and economist David Harvie (2010) observes, the neoliberal era managed to defer the antagonism resulting from declining real wages with a sudden availability of easy consumer credit, coupled with a drastic drop in the price of many commodities due to the slave-like working conditions of globalized labor. In a framing of social movement claims, consumers were apparently able act through purchasing power in just those ways they were powerless in their agency as political subjects. In effect, this deferral, conjoined with neoliberalism’s characteristic celebrations of mobility, is expressed through a discourse of “hope,” evident for example in Barack Obama’s 2007 campaign slogan. Harvie marks the 2008 economic collapse – precisely as investors lost faith in the solubility of the resulting debt - as an end to this deferral-as-hope, anticipating the 2011 eruption of riots in Britain as a harbinger of new trends in contention. Katz, writing before these events, simply observes that the consumerism/debt cycle has been central in suppressing social means of dissent; whether or not this channel has effectually closed, both scholars agree to its centrality in the management of marginalization: by displacing wide frustration of worldly desires into the arena of consumer choice, neoliberalism methods have proven remarkably effective in blocking collective and properly political agency.

Consumerism as a recuperative mechanism frequently can be seen appearing in regard to contentious protest, in the rush to dismiss intensely contentious public rhetorical practices as “hypocritical,” by evoking a displaced appeal to such consumer power as the only legitimate agency available to neoliberal subjects. When rhetorical scholar Ellen Gorsevski (2004) makes a single passing mention of counter-hegemonic “violence” in her book on nonviolent rhetoric, she quickly and confidently (and without citing a single source) alleges that the true motive of protestors in the 1999 Seattle WTO protests who broke the windows of Starbucks is that they were “shopping for coffee.” (page) (One participant assured me on hearing this quote, “There was free coffee in the convergence center. No one needed to shop for coffee. We were good for coffee.”) Similarly, within hours of the initial 2012 May Day riot in Seattle, with thousands of demonstrators still filling the streets with slogans and banners concerning the police brutality which had traumatically and injuriously closed the Occupy camps, local news stations were quick to relay photographs provided by police that one masked rioter, caught on film swinging a wooden stick at the windows of Niketown, seemed to be sporting the characteristic Nike swoosh on his shoes. Precisely the same trope was taken up as central to the media narration of the WTO protests at the same Niketown building twelve years before: a masked protester had climbed its awning and was kicking down its metal letters, with shoes apparently marked by the same swoosh, and the apparent “hypocrisy” of the action became central to representations of the event. (Big Noise 2000) What is remarkable about these accusations is that they seem to suffice as explanations: what tension is eased by this sneering insight into some anonymous protester’s choice of footwear? Puzzlingly, when I have attested (often) how unlikely Black Bloc participants are to have actually purchased new Nikes from off the shelf (as opposed to, say, shoplifting, picking them out of a dumpster, or purchasing them in a thrift store), conversants

offering such dismissals immediately withdraw their arguments; thus, the inconsistency of riot is seen with the act of purchase, rather than the choice to wear and advertise the targeted brand. The category of “hypocrisy” applies not to simple wrongdoing, but to the *individual* inconsistency between condemnation of an action and enacting the same sort of action. This understanding reveals an interpretation of the smashing of Niketown as a sort of moral condemnation of the personality of the brand (“Nike is bad because it enslaves children in its overseas factories”) or of those consumers implicated in their act of purchase (“You are indirectly enslaving children by buying Nike shoes.”) Such framings depend on an essentially Thatcherite notion of society as constituted by simple aggregation of individual opinions; such an ascription does not cohere with an essentially political collective action against an institution (Kristian Williams, interview). By foregrounding the supposedly damning hypocrisy of purchase with public rhetoric of transgression, the tension produced by transgressive rhetoric is resolved through a displacement, through ironic recognition of “hypocrisy,” into the category of individual ethical consumerism, reaffirmed in its universality.

Institutionalized Dissent as “Civil Society”

The “pluralist prejudice” may not be surprising to find within the spheres of political representation and consumer choice, premised as they both are on the shared assumptions and valuations of mediational institutions. However, the radical and often revolutionary rhetoric often characterizing what is frequently called “the non-profit world” often belies the nearly ubiquitous pluralist prejudice within its own discursive field, a prejudice all the more insidious for its purveyance precisely as “activism.” The non-profit sector which has grown

astronomically in the neoliberal era, from 50,000 organizations designated by the IRS with charity status in 1953 to over one million tax-exempt organizations in 2012 (councilofnonprofits.org). According to one non-profit advocacy group, “If the nonprofit sector were a country, it would have the seventh largest economy in the world... the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year” (ibid). Structurally, that portion of these organizations termed “progressive” might be seen as a grafting of the revolutionary semiotic resources and frequently the same personas of the 1960s-70s struggle to an exclusive legitimization of pluralist-prejudice approaches, by just those which, in Seferiades and Johnston’s analysis, are most responsible for the neoliberal “disruptive deficit.” While the discourses, and often the actors themselves, of the non-profit sector often deceptively carry forth the radical aspirations of disruptive social movements, the nature of their participation in social struggle is ultimately beholden to the funding cycle, and the political agendas of the funding foundations themselves. As such, what recent scholars have termed the “Non-Profit Industrial Complex” (NPIC) represents an under-recognized, yet central exigency of recuperation and powerlessness to which contemporary social movement participants are often consciously in response.

In what must be regarded as an instant classic and on the topic, the Incite! Women of Color Against Violence Collective’s work *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (2007) has brought together a watershed collection of essays bearing out this analysis, widely referenced by contemporary social movement participants. The work itself bears out its topic: in their first several years, Incite! put on a series of well-funded national seminars and authored a widely-acclaimed book bringing together the experiences of women of color organizing against domestic and structural violence. However, when the Ford Foundation learned of their

outspoken support for Palestinian liberation, their endowment was withdrawn, and they were forced to (successfully) replace their funding through grassroots efforts. A full exploration of the book's many brilliant analyses are beyond the scope of this study; *in summa*, it is

...not particularly concerned with particular types of non-profits or foundations, but the non-profit industrial complex ... as a whole and the way in which capitalist interests and the state use non-profits to [bullet-points] [1] monitor and control social justice movements; [2] divert public monies into private hands through foundations; [3] manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism; [4] redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society; [5] allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through 'philanthropic' work; [and 6] encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them. (Incite! 3)

Social theorist Randall Williams (2010) argues that, in the international geopolitical sphere, non-governmental organizations, acting through discourses of "human rights," exercise a monopoly on legitimate response, which enables violence of international "humanitarian" military intervention. Similarly, domestic non-profits, by claiming exclusive right to speak for legitimate "social justice" concerns, enable violence to be committed to those social movement participants who fall beyond the pale of NPIC certification. If, as one movement tract (Crimethinc, "Illegitimacy of Violence, Violence of Illegitimacy") claims, violence is itself "a code word for illegitimate use of force," progressive nonprofits perform an essential hegemonic function in the assignation, nomination, and direction of violence; by saving political leaders the

need to themselves establish the “good protester/bad protester” dichotomy, police violence is certified from within the very ranks of dissidence. NPIC dominance of the legitimation mechanisms of “social struggle,” then, present to social movement participants exigencies not only thoroughgoing, but potentially injurious or even lethal.

Many interviewees testified that discouragement with their previous involvement in non-profit work was a central motivation for their commitment to Occupy’s directly disruptive approaches, attesting that the limitations of the NPIC are fully evident up close, and not only at the structural level. Heather, one member of the Occupy Patriarchy committee in Occupy Oakland, spoke of her brief tenure in one organization as a sort of training in disempowerment:

I was a canvasser for a day and a half for Working Parties Family in Connecticut, and the second day they dropped me off in a neighborhood, and there were three evictions on the street, and so I was like, alright, I’m obviously not going to be canvassing in this neighborhood, instead I am going to help this person move their couch, and so I came back to the person that was running the canvas and I was like, yea I didn’t make any money, I was helping this person move out of their house, and she was like, What? How... that’s not what you’re supposed to be doing. And I was like, so you wanted me instead to go through this working-class neighborhood and badger people for money [to lobby against evictions] instead of helping this person out who actually legitimately needed my help, I quit. I can’t deal with this anymore... It’s like, way to take a bunch of energetic radical kids and turn them into zombies. (Heather interview)

In the words of Mark, one participant in Occupy Seattle, the interpersonal relationships formed across and within differences of race and privilege in the context of his work in an Americorps

“City Year” program were themselves soured from the start, even into “hatred,” by the “non-profit context.” This context was for him an absolute contrast to the immediate, “real and urgent ... breaking-the-law together context” of Occupy, which facilitated deep, sincere bonds between participants through a “sense of shared struggle.”

Mark: The ideas that I was hearing about in Occupy were not necessarily new, exactly, it is a privilege and oppression and all that, but at the same time, for one, doing antiracism in a nonprofit context is totally different from doing it in a we're-breaking-the-law-together context [laughs]... I mean, there was no trust on that [Americorps] team at all. There was between individuals, but as a group there was no trust. And no purpose other than the antiracism, “the work” – that’s how people refer to it, as “the work” - doing "the work", and so all of that anger that can come out of thinking about privilege and thinking about authority was directed toward us as individuals, and that made it really hard to form any kind of real bonds in that space... For me, there was no sense of shared struggle, there was a sense of bitterness and resentment on all, at me and from me... I ended up hating a lot of the people on that team pretty deeply, I'm pretty sure they hated me too, and there was no space to say like, "I am part of this system and I also hate it." How can you tear it down when you're also acting it out?

Shon: Was it that your participation in it was still some form of charity or something?

Mark: *Noblesse oblige*. [laughs] Totally. And that was very evident for all of us, you know? It was like, white people feeling guilty about racism and using the experiences of people of color, who hated having their experiences used to justify that. That was very explicit. We all knew that, we were all talking shit about it, but it was still the case. So it was

always very analytical and ideological as opposed to, like, real and urgent. I bonded with people at Occupy through, not in spite of or because of but through, some of those divides and then I was able to learn, because I trusted those people a lot more... On the other hand, I don't know that I would have had any of the understanding or the patience or the willingness to... I don't even know if I would've had the ability to see like, a lot of the racism that happens within Occupy and from without if I hadn't had some of those experiences from... So I'm very glad that I came in with that background, but Occupy and my experiences in it have crystallized and made it real a lot of what was before abstract, intellectual... Like, now we're talking about my friends, not just some other people, and that makes a big difference. (Mark interview)

Policing as a Non-Tangential Exigency

Policing has always been a problematic and contradictory institution, both despised and spiteful, marbled through with both servitude and sadism. In the words of former slave Harriet Jacobs writing in 1861, “Any white man, who could raise money enough to buy a slave, would have considered himself degraded by being a constable; but the office enabled its possessor to exercise authority. If he found any slave out after nine o’clock, he could whip him as much as he liked; and that was a privilege to be coveted.” (Jacobs 100) However, in the neoliberal era of “societies of control,” policing assumes a place not only key to social control, but absolutely central to the constitution of the State itself. Katz lists “repression” and “surveillance” as his final two categories essential to the current management of marginality essential to the neoliberal order. Loic Wacquant (2009), in his *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*,

presents a thoroughgoing analysis of the discursive and material constitution of the neoliberal state. The neoliberal state finds itself challenged not only by the material insecurities generated by a drastic increase in income inequality and the abolition of the social safety net, but also by a discursive crisis of what rhetoricians Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) term “presence.” As the state in its provisional and regulatory guise progressively disappears under neoliberalism, it is forced to reassert its presence exclusively through the “hypertrophied penalty” of the security state.

Thus is resolved what could appear to be a doctrinal contradiction, or at least a practical antinomy, of neoliberalism, between the downsizing of public authority on the economic flank and its upsizing on that of the enforcement of social and moral order. If the same people who champion a minimal state in order to “free” the “creative forces” of the market and submit the dispossessed to the sting of competition do not hesitate to erect a maximal state to ensure everyday ‘security,’ it is because *the poverty of the social state against the backdrop of deregulation elicits and necessitates the grandeur of the penal state.* (Wacquant 19, emph in original)

In addition to the neoliberal state’s material and discursive needs to assert its omnipotence through omnipresent surveillance and an ever-present potential of repression in society at large, policing scholars Gillham and Noakes (2007) present an insightful look at the role of producing powerlessness in contemporary protest situations. In the complex of social factors which brought to an end the waves of contention in the 60s and 70s, police – whose heavy-handed “escalation of force” responses had entailed a serious loss of political legitimacy from Birmingham to Berkeley –urgently sought a new, less politically costly means of containing

demonstrator transgression. With most dissident formations relatively cowed by recent repression and backing off of confrontational methods, police and protesters settled on a modus operandi termed *negotiated management*, in which protest organizers would consult with police beforehand, notify them of the general outline of the action (including even likely number, names, and method of arrests), and sometimes themselves take on policing functions, acting as “peace marshals.”

With the Seattle protests of 1999 and ensuing waves of alter-globalization contention, claim Gillham and Noakes, the model of negotiated management collapsed: protesters not only refused to notify police beforehand of their plans, but actively (and successfully) strategized to outmaneuver police on the ground. Illegal activity was suddenly no longer limited to pre-determined acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, but included politically embarrassing employments of disruptive tactics – most importantly in Seattle, the successful blockading of delegates from entering the WTO ministerial, in addition to Black Bloc property destruction. Employing new electronic communications media, protest organization became radically decentralized and autonomous, removing the traditional core of coordinators with whom to negotiate or, alternately, target for elimination. Consequently, posit the authors, police arrived at a new strategy of strategic incapacitation; by employing practices of fierce but focused violence, scrambling of communications, preemptive arrests and detention until after protests have concluded, targeting support networks such as medical and legal assistance, seizing of food, interruption of protester sleep, and disruption of coordination locations, police aim primarily to impose limits on the capacity of protesters to carry out their plans by miring them in the muck of logistical dilemmas. Publicly, sites of political action are limited to “free speech zones” far from target activity, while demeaning protesters through intensified media coordination limits

their larger webs of support. As counter-protester policing attempts to become as diffuse and multimodal as the approaches of protesters themselves, demonstrating public enactments of power despite police attempts at strategic incapacitation becomes its own core “message” in the contentious politics of protest.

Anthropologist David Graeber (2007) acutely observes that this mechanism - the assertion of the potency of imagination and the refusal to negotiate the right to define a social situation - is precisely the confrontational trigger in most situations between the anti-authoritarian orientation of many contemporary social movement participants, whose political beliefs center on the constitutive power of political subjects to define their situation, to presence a collective imaginary, and police, who, far more than infractions of the law or disorderly social contact, seek to enter interactions with other social actors through a negotiation of a “reasonable,” agreed-upon definition of the shared rhetorical situation. In Graeber’s view, however lawful, civil or “nonviolent” the conduct of protesters, their interaction will result in (police) “violence” the moment they refuse to a negotiated surrender of definitional agency over the situation. Graeber’s analysis provides a compelling explanation for the otherwise puzzling malevolence inevitably shown by police for the giant puppets favored in the alter-globalization protests; his insights, however, apply equally well to the transgressions of protest violence and the “acting out” of police against them, such as Seattle Assistant Chief Mike Sanford’s breaking of protocol to lunge at May Day rioters with his fists, which I will analyze in Chapter 3.

As Michelle Alexander makes clear, policing has become not only a core topic in the struggle over power of public dissent about social inequality, but in the production of that inequality itself. During her decade-long tenure as the head of the Racial Justice division of the

ACLU, Alexander underwent a radical change of perspective. Policing and prisons are not a “superstructure” of racism in the base, a mere symptom of the dearth of opportunity and severity of need in Black communities resulting from deeper “base” issues of housing discrimination, access to quality education, redlining and other banking policies, and personal prejudicial attitudes endemic among whites. Rather, policing/prison has become itself the primary locus of production of racialized power inequalities in the United States. After the successes of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, in the ideological context of the Cold War and the preceding anti-fascist rhetoric invoked by the US during WWII, legal practices such as the Jim Crow laws which explicitly inscribed inequality by race became discursively unworkable by the late 1960s. However, the material investments of white supremacy did not rest content to disappear, but instead sought a new manner of social inscription: while the Civil Rights Era succeeded in enormously decreasing white vigilante violence which, since Reconstruction, had maintained a Black underclass, police and prisons would soon come to assume the same function. Nixon’s successful “law and order” campaign of 1968, which in the 70s and 80s became an unprecedented assault on communities of color under the “War on Drugs,” became the new home for white supremacy. Rather than explicitly encoding race, these policies inscribed hypertrophied law enforcement powers under the guise of a supposedly race-neutral “War on Drugs”, empowering a discretionary policing which allowed but never acknowledged highly racialized logics of application. In turn, political leaders and pundits, conservative and liberal alike, deflected criticism of the obviously racialized consequences of these policies with an incessant hammering of “colorblindness” - a discursive trick which accused criticism of racial practices with now largely outdated explicitly racially-coded practices of racial reproduction, through the analogy of “discrimination” - that the open

acknowledgement or literal discrimination of racialized reproductions of power inequality were equivalent to the explicit practice of these reproductions themselves. Alexander's critique takes up the discursive insights of Critical Race Theory and rejoins them to the stark materiality of police occupations of communities of color, and the mass incarceration of youth of color, unprecedented in history and core to the maintenance of power inequalities in the contemporary US.

That policing continues to be elided and backgrounded as a tangential issue or in the managed dissent of contemporary "social justice" politics may be particularly surprising given the centrality of "hypertrophied penalty" in the neoliberal social order, but social movement central concern with policing is hardly itself novel. Riot scholar Paul Gilje (1996) documents the Boston Knowles riot of 1747, which reveals a familiar logic of the centrality of policing to issues to which they might at first seem tangential. The crowd, gathered against new policies of forceful impressment into the Navy, threatened to hold several Navy officers hostage, but peacefully surrendered them before the home of the governor. However, "[t]hey did take an under sheriff, physically abused him, and, in a nice bit of role reversal, locked him in the town stocks." (31) As an embodiment of the legal violence forcing them into the conditions of impressment Gilje describes as "practical imprisonment, horrid conditions, and an earlier death," the crowd apparently felt that the body of the under sheriff was more proximal to the trajectory of threat than were members of the beneficiary institution of the offending policy, or the body or home of the governor himself.

The forceful deletion of policing as itself a central concern can be shown in Martin Luther King Jr.'s address to the March on Washington. While the final, "I have a dream"

portion of the speech may well be the most frequently cited act of public oratory of the 20th century, the speech in its entirety is seldom cited, particularly the middle portion in which King extols “[t]he marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community.” (Carson 225) In this formation, police perform an explicit role as the movement’s constitutive limit. Says King, “There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, ‘When will you be satisfied?’ We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality” (ibid). After detailing the particularities of southern segregation, King changes topic to address directly that portion of his audience who have traveled to the nation’s capital from the struggles in the South, again rhetorically constituted explicitly through the violence of policing: “Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality” (ibid). Aside from King’s characteristically unpredictable choice of metaphor, the analyst is struck that police brutality is of such pervasive importance to King that he evokes it as a theme throughout multiple sections of the essay, unlike the incessantly quoted dream of the day when “little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers” (226), which appears once before being referenced as “all of God’s children ... will be able to join hands” (ibid) in the final sentence. While the horrors of police brutality deserved at least equal presence in King’s organization with his dream of children of different races joining hands, the latter image has become metonymic of the entire message of his speech, utterly erasing the particularity of his concerns voiced in the former.

A Bakhtinian attention to the circulation of anti-police phrases under neoliberalism attests to the centrality of the issue. While in the United States, the neoliberal shattering of labor power most famously took place through the mass firing of 11,000 striking air traffic controllers,

the aggressive onset of neoliberal policies in Britain are vividly recalled by the more explicitly violent war on the Coal Miner's strike. Though Thatcher herself was hardly beloved among miner ranks, it was the daily conflict with police which, for many, came to define the extremity of the situation. Images of police waving fat overtime checks in the face of literally starving miners on picket lines (Barry Pateman interview) came to define the time for many. Consequently, in the narrative of some participants, the long-standing motto "A.C.A.B. - All Cop(per)s Are Bastards," a watchword within British prisons since at least the 1920s, came to function as a favorite slogan in the miner's struggles. The slogan has since circulated into widespread global usage, helped in degree by the ubiquitous presence of the slogan as definitive of the youth uprising of 2008 across Greece, and widely manifest in the 2011 wave of global contention.

Similarly, the phrase "Fuck the Police," often abbreviated "FTP," has come for many to stand for a core contentious "networked argument" (Dingo 2013) in global circulation; as one favorite slogan from the Occupy Seattle marches had it, "From Seattle to Oakland, we ain't jokin' / From Cairo, to Greece: Fuck the Police!" The words gained popularity through 1990s political hip-hop, largely itself inspired by the street rhetoric of the 1992 Rodney King riots, for which the phrase served as a slogan. It is worth noting that, after nearly a decade of "War on Drugs" policing and incarceration policies resulting in exponential escalation of incarceration of youth of color and a level of surveillance unrivaled in human history⁶, the Rodney King riots, while discursively falling outside the pale of "Black Power" or other recognized political articulations, *materially* dwarfed *all* previous riots in American history by several orders of

⁶ In some communities in south-central Los Angeles, *every* young Black male was entered into a gang database. (cite)

magnitude: they greatly exceeded each of the famous 1965 Watts riots and the 1967 - 1968 riots in Newark, Detroit and Washington DC in terms of arrests, injuries, deaths, and fires set, and the monetary damage of the 1992 riots totaled *three times* the *combined* damage of the previous three. (Oliver et al, 119, in Gooding-Williams.) The 1992 LA riots were *not*, however, unusual in their cause: other than the riots after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, *every major riot in the United States since WWII has been set off by police brutality*: in Miami and Tampa alone, police violence triggered large-scale riots in 1980, 1982, 1987, and 1989. Nonetheless, the 1992 riots and their legacy of animosity towards policing as the face of hypertrophied penalty, are routinely dismissed as “race riots,” despite their evidently multi-racial constituency (52% of arrests were Latinos, 10% white, and only 38% African-American.) (Gooding-Williams 1993) Similarly, although the Tunisian revolution was triggered by Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in response to humiliation by police, and Egypt's Tahrir revolution by Khalid Said's death by torture in police custody, the issue of policing as constitutive of Arab Spring revolutions has never been acknowledged. In the most elementary Bakhtinian analysis, the ubiquity and quick contagion of both “ACAB” and “FTP” is homologous with the circulation of networked social affects materially manifest in them, drawing this conclusion into question.

The starkly generational disjunction of recognition of policing as a central social movement concern is born out by research summarized in Figure X, (della Porta and Gbikpi 95, in Seferiades & Johnston, 2012). Out of 366 statements culled from *Le Monde* concerning the Paris *banlieu* riots of 2005, the researchers ascertained that by “[f]ocusing attention on the most frequent types of speaker, we can see that the interpretation of the riots (of their causes and remedies) changed.” (94) Older neighborhood residents, spokespeople for the government and opposition parties, and Sarkozy himself favored explanations blaming either personal

discriminatory attitudes, structural exclusion from access, Sarkozy and the parties in power, or, predictably, excessive immigration and youth delinquency. Of the 17 statements by neighborhood youth, *not one* of them mentioned any of these as a related issue; *fully 100%* of their statements attributed the riots either to police (40%), or to other causes (60%) not understood as “political.” *Not one* of the 145 statements by older inhabitants or political figures mentioned police. Experts and volunteer associations, assumably comprising and having contact with both of these constituencies, responded with more mixed responses. That responses by 14 older inhabitants more closely resembled those of opposition parties than their own youth argues for a generational divide, more than (solely) an ethnic, class, or geographical one.

So why aren't police understood as a core concern by older and more establishment respondents? This is a question for future research, but for the purpose of understanding the particular rhetorical situation faced by contemporary social movements, one brief hypothesis will suffice: The centrality of policing, particularly in the neoliberal era of hypertrophied penalty, is not taken up as a legitimate social concern *because of its very centrality*; the purpose of the vast networked apparatus of managed dissent, in its co-constitutive relationship with the “empty publics” of contemporary mass media, might well be understood as *talking around* neoliberalism's constitutive transgression of hypertrophied penalty, both at home and abroad. While I will return later to the discursive slippage of “nonviolence” from a means of conflict with power to an excuse to avoid it, the propensity of such “talking around” the issue at the center of contemporary conditions of repression suggests a tragic, self-defeating hope for risk-free social change.

From Masses to Publics

Why Elizabeth Eckford is Still Alive

On the morning of September 4, 1957, taking the recent *Brown vs Board of Education* at its word, Elizabeth Eckford and eight other black students attempted to attend classes at Little Rock Central High School, but were prevented from doing so by the National Guard, in coordination with a virulent mob of whites. After three-quarters of a century of the rule of white terrorism, undoing the gains of Reconstruction, themselves won by force of armed freed slaves (duBois 1999), Eckford's unarmed dignity and courage might have been expected to be met with immediate and gruesome response. Only two years before, 14-year-old Emmett Till had been murdered and horrifically mutilated in Mississippi for the allegation of flirting with a white woman. However, just as the circulation of Till's gruesome funeral photograph worked as an "image event" to bring the systemic violence of southern white supremacist rule into the national arena (Harold & Deluca 2005), so the mass-media uptake of Eckford's act worked to ensure her survival, and success in the school integration campaign:

The drama ... was played out before a national, even a world, audience. The affair at Little Rock was not an isolated event in a provincial backwater. News cameras and reporters captured every move of both Elizabeth and the segregationists. In the contest for this larger audience, although greatly outnumbered, Elizabeth won... When Elizabeth, joined by eight other black students, reenrolled at Central later that month the reporters were again there. This time the crowd beat four reporters - a sign that racist whites understood the implications of the presence of the media - and officials withdrew the students for their own safety. Again, however, isolation was not possible. On the

next day President Eisenhower federalized the national guard and sent paratroopers to guarantee that the nine African-American youths could proceed with their education.

(Gilje 151)

Strategists of the Civil Rights movement were well aware of their dependency on mass mediation; their articulation of nonviolent tactics was an explicit response to the novel affordances and exigencies presented by television and the still novel technologies of newsreel, radio, and print. Such tools opened opportunities for a heavily disprivileged minority population to turn the local balance of power:

We were not simply addressing our *immediate* opponents. What we were doing was addressing the larger audience, the nation, the world, *because the strategy in nonviolence is that you educate a large number of constituents and win them on your side*. In fact, even though we as African Americans were the minority, no change could happen unless you have the sympathy of the majority, if not the active participation. (AFMP, Pt 1, 20:22, my emphasis)

As with the hegemonic strategies of managed dissent and policing, however, the affordances and constraints in uses of mass publics for social movement rhetoric have been radically reconfigured, as hegemonic forces work to foreclose the sort of opportunities made use of by previous generations. Modern images analogous to those of My Lai are scant when journalists must choose between “embedded” reporting and being shot. The only exceptions are, tellingly, internal leaks. The images of Abu Ghraib seem to have been originally produced for external consumption whose sphere of circulation may have unintentionally widened; Bradley Manning, rather than receiving wide accolades and the Gandhi Peace Prize as did Daniel Ellsberg for his

leak of the Pentagon Papers, instead languishes for a possible lifetime sentence of solitary confinement and pain-compliance detention holds. Coverage of domestic dissent has followed suit; with nearly all media outlets owned by the same few parent companies who set editorial policy, with disastrous consequences for breadth of permissible dialogue on domestic issues (McChesney 2004.) Paired with neoliberal developments in dissent management and policing, the management of mediated circulation works to obfuscate, rather than circulate, the present-day Little Rocks of domestic State violence: the highest rate of incarceration in world history, with a total of seven million citizens under correctional supervision; daily killings of African Americans by police (one African-American death at police hands every 28 hours in 2012, the majority of victims unarmed even by police accounts) (Malcolm X Grassroots Project 2013) daily deaths by enforced exposure along the United States/Mexico border: all are rendered non-issues for public deliberation by stark exclusion from mediated discourse. In a tragic synecdoche of this shift, Elizabeth Eckford's own son was gunned down by police in 2003, receiving a scant paragraph of local coverage for his relation to past – but not present – Black freedom struggles.

Rhetorical scholars, in keeping with larger trends of denial, have tended to speak of the exigencies faced by social movement rhetoric as if they had not changed since Eckford's steps into Little Rock High School. In what is perhaps the most celebrated work of 21st century social movement rhetoric scholarship, DeLuca and Peeples (2002) assert that the spectacular acts of targeted property destruction practiced by the "Black Bloc" in the Seattle WTO protests of 1999 worked as a well-considered rhetorical strategy for bringing attention to the wider protests, constituting an "image event" which, by exploiting the predilections of contemporary mass media, catapulted the alter-globalization movement into international consciousness. In looking at a closely analogous social movement phenomenon, and with the shared goal of analyzing the

rational rhetorical strategies behind behavior often dismissed as merely instinctual or expressive of psychological disturbance, Deluca and Peebles's work has in large measure informed my current research. However, by neglecting to attend to the words of the participants themselves, widely available in numerous published statements, the scholars neglect to appreciate, and indeed contradict in their analysis, the drastic shift in approach towards audience, as tersely asserted in one Black Bloc statement:

[W]e have nothing to hope for from the corporate media, we should expect nothing from them, and we should absolutely not change any of our tactics or messages in order to pander to them. We should instead treat them as the servants of capital, and thus our enemies, that they are. (Van Deusen & Massot 136)

Although perhaps overstated in this case and not to be understood as in any way absolute, such media cynicism has only become more endemic in the years since the alter-globalization movement. In an era of embedded journalism, institutional press releases, and managed "image events," with participants faced not with contention over regional power over which federal power can be evoked, but in issues grounded in nature of federal and international dominance, increased numbers of social movement participants wonder if *the media may no longer be worth attempting to address, however difficult an alternative means of constituting a public may seem*. Part of the overstated antisociality of insurrectionism is involved in this claim, though participants often shift between or remain ambiguous about whether they are attempting to constitute a new public by novel means, or, in extreme case, whether they constitute an illegible *antipublic* with no attempt at appeal to outsiders. While the latter approaches might be taken as a *reduction ad*

absurdum for their absolute hopelessness in *any* mediated appeal, the concerns expressed through such tendencies should not be dismissed.

This is not to claim that previous social movement rhetorical orientations to audience naively expected media to transparently convey their messages. As Ginger, a nonviolence trainer from Occupy Seattle suggests, in an attitude she attests as “old guard,” mainstream media can be seen as reliable as a vehicle of *transmission* even while the *evaluative* component of coverage is likely to be inaccurate. This might be termed the “message-in-a-bottle” approach:

I would never assume that mainstream media were going to cover things accurately but I think maybe I'm old guard in thinking that they still influence a lot of people... I would never do stuff trying to make it look good for the media so that they would put out the right message, because they don't ... I like actions that in themselves embody what we're trying to change, or show without words, without needing words, what we're trying to do. So I think it's definitely worth keeping media in mind, mainstream media in mind to some extent at least, but not designing everything around it. (Ginger interview)

In this view, even if media representations of activist events are likely to be unfair, decisions should still be made with the expectation that mass media will rely on a modicum of referential, factual representation in their coverage. Even such radical approaches as ACT-UP (“How to Survive A Plague” 2012) ultimately rely on this analysis of the available means of persuasion: corporate media cannot be trusted to be sympathetic or accurate, but the media can certainly be trusted to be the media: sensational actions, like ACT-UP's public scattering of the ashes of AIDS casualties on the White House lawn by their militantly mourning beloveds, will not be ignored, and can reliably be made of as a vehicle of counterhegemonic claims.

In many interviews with younger Occupy participants, this *skepticism* of the reliability of media channels for social movement use has evidently been displaced by an utter *cynicism*, a conviction that the media may no longer be worth attempting to address, however difficult an alternative means of constituting a public in their absence may seem. Heather from Occupy Oakland offered the following anecdote to demonstrate the co-constitution of neoliberal policing and media models which indicates a media so manipulated by police as to be useless to social movement appeal:

So, about 900 riot cops roll in and destroy our barricades and arrest about 100 people who are still in camp. I see these three really big macho riot guys take down this line of women. That are all standing there, they're holding hands, there is a big built wooden structure that is in between them and the riot cops, and as the riot cops are coming, they start pushing the structure over on top of these women... and [the police] took [one women] down really really forcefully, and in a really really violent way..." (Heather interview)

Heather went on to tell in gruesome detail how two women, already handcuffed, then attempted to shelter each other from police violence, and in return male officers took turns standing on their necks, then picked up one and forcefully rammed her into a tree.

And so after that, they were holding everyone on the ground, and they bring in two female riot cops, to walk these women who'd just been taken down in this really really violent way, *in front of the media*, to have female riot cops walk the women in front of the media to the arrest line and be their, you know, the cops' liaison... they were using these

really fucked up gender tactics... its like, oh, we handle shit great in Oakland, we use the ladies to take down the ladies... and it's like, no, not so much. (Heather interview)

The November 2 Oakland General Strike, and the December 12 Port Shutdown actions in Seattle and Oakland, were unanimously described as nonviolent by all participants I interviewed, both by those ethically committed to nonviolent, and those not. Nonetheless, Oakland's Mayor Quan widely described the participants of these actions as "economic terrorists" ("Oakland, the Last Refuge"), and *The Stranger's* Dominick Holden summarized the Port Shutdown with the headline "Violence at the Port." Successful efforts of organizers to keep the events nonviolent, however effective for those present, did nothing to prevent misrepresentation in media accounts.

In my own participant observer experience at the West Coast Port Shutdowns on December 12, 2011, only a few days before the Occupy Seattle camp was raided, I was struck with similar evidence for the belief that media representations are so out of reach for activists as to not be worth the effort. After a several-hour standoff across a large impromptu street barricade at Port Terminal 18 in Seattle which succeeded in preventing a shipment from Goldman-Sacks-owned EGT from landing, police on horses crossed the barricade, without provocation, lurching into the crowd and assaulting demonstrators. Hemmed in, demonstrators were crushed as we attempted to escape from the attack through a narrow opening. Some pushed back in their slowed retreat, some tossing empty plastic water bottles and similar objects from the ground to slow the police advance. Reverend John Helmiere of the Valley and Mountain Fellowship, as he yelled 'Keep the Peace!' in his clergy garb, experienced the following:

An officer pulled me down from behind and threw me to the asphalt. Between my cries of pain and shouts of “I’m a man of peace!” he pressed a knee to my spine and immobilized my arms, crushing me against the ground. With the right side of my face pressed to the street, he repeatedly punched the left side of my face for long enough that I had time to pray that the crunching sounds I heard were not damaging my brain.

(“John’s Response”)

Media coverage that night inevitably focused on demonstrator “violence,” generally playing video clips of panicked screams and angry yells from the moments of retreat, punctuated by police concussion grenades, with no actual evidence of demonstrator aggression. Within hours, police provided their own evidence for the narrative, posting a suspiciously Photoshop-like image of a “sharpened rebar” which they absurdly claimed protesters had attempted to spear them with, as well as a “bag of bricks” which would have required superhuman strength to hurl towards them, as they claimed had occurred (“Multiple Arrests”). Given Reverend Helmiere’s status, the *Seattle Times* did give a few words to his claims, but carefully framed by Assistant Chief Mike Sanford: “Helmiere said he was beaten after locking arms with fellow protesters, a tactic that Sanford described as dangerous because it makes it more difficult for police to isolate and arrest a single individual.” (“Occupy Port Protesters Violent”) Other than Helmiere’s claim, the police were the only source cited for the entire *Seattle Times* story. Under such conditions, the decision to move from activist distrust to total disavowal of any media engagement, from media skepticism to media cynicism, is not a hard decision to understand.

We Are the 94%

Taking seriously the concerns voiced by contemporary social movement participants, scholars of social movement rhetoric are left wondering, with movement participants, the question articulated above: If the mass media is, at least in some circumstances, no longer be worth attempting to address, are there alternative means of constituting a public worth considering? Certain moments suggest that the situation may not be quite as dire as it initially seems, and that other means of public constitution may already be well underway.

On February 11, 2012, the *Oakland Tribune* printed the results of an online poll, to which 10,829 voters had responded; the online edition of that day neglected to post the results. The poll posed a simple question: “Do you support the Occupy Oakland movement?” Coming after five months of the paper’s consistently negative coverage of Occupy Oakland, which ranged from an initial bewilderment to later indignation and even outrage, which had quoted Mayor Quan less than two weeks before pleading with demonstrators to “Stop Using Oakland As Your Playground!” (“Jean Quan”) and the voices of local political, business, nonprofit leaders dismissing Occupy Oakland as beyond the pale of legitimate dissent, the audience constituted by the *Tribune* might well have been expected to harbor few warm feelings for the movement. The results of the poll, quietly published in a sidebar then swept aside, may for these reasons have proven surprising: 94% voted “yes,” and only 6% voted “no.” (“Bay Area News Group Finds”) Evidently, whatever 10,829 members of the material public who had responded to the poll bore little relation to the audience constituted through the discursive practices of the paper’s daily practices – a puzzling outcome indeed.

The passivity/activity of mass-mediated publics forms arguably *the* issue of Cultural and Media studies since its inception: If the passive brainwashed consumers of the Frankfurt School's "Culture Industry" depressed scholars with their fatalistic and seamless model of control, Fiske's (2010) "audiences" in their "semiotic democracy" were criticized for their ludic postmodern irreverence which elided neoliberal inequalities of representational access. Arguably, however, *none* of these models can account for the sort of *empty public* which appears, ghost like, in the Tribune's poll. How is it possible, one must wonder, that a material public would not only believe precisely the opposite of the discursively-constituted addressee of the paper's consistent editorial policy, but even to such an extreme degree? An independent survey cited by "Occupy Research" claims similarly surprising results from the businesses surrounding the encampment:

Similarly, there was a charge that Occupy Oakland was hurting local businesses, until a survey of local businesses found 80% of 106 shops within two blocks of Oscar Grant Plaza reported a positive or neutral impact from the encampment. In another instance, Police Chief Howard Jordan worried in email to Mayor Quan about how to share the good news of a 19% crime reduction in downtown Oakland during the Occupy encampment. This fact directly contradicted Quan, the City Council, and Oakland Chamber of Commerce's claim that Occupy Oakland was causing an increase in crime. ("Bay Area News Group Finds")

What these figures, this evidence of a ghostly *empty public*, show is that the sort of claims and rhetorical appeals which issued out of Occupy Oakland, and which found negative reception (if any at all) with mainstream media and leading figures among "indirect rule" political institutions and nonprofits, do indeed resonate with certain, *immediate* publics – those material publics

created by some resonance of actions, but invisible to the channels of mass mediation so relied on as an exclusive measure of contemporary publics. That the sort of choices which virtually ensure antipathy from news editors and political representatives may simultaneously work to constitute publics through other channels was a fact of which Occupy organizers seemed well aware, taking for example this internal organizer email, defending the policy of excluding police from the Occupy Seattle camp:

I do think some choices will need to be made about which community's concerns we prioritize most, but this does [not] mean that other communities need to be shut out of the movement and it does not mean we need to split... For example, I think that this movement should be grounded in, and in solidarity with, the struggles of working class communities of color. Wall St. and the 1% get their profits by exploiting working class people of color more than they exploit working class white people. (Note, when I say working class I don't just mean people who currently work, I also mean unemployed folks, and anyone who has been displaced, dispossessed, or separated from their land and the means of production by colonialism). I do think that this movement will not be relevant to working class communities of color if it relies on the police for safety.

(correspondence)

Notably, this organizer does not lay claim, as author Chris Hedges and other forcible contemporary advocates of nonviolence have, to any pretensions of a universal audience. Rather, he asserts the very rhetorical choice of prioritizing certain “community concerns” over others, framed within the continued aspiration for a widely inclusive movement. Rather than immediately resorting to the efficacy of numbers, this text justifies its claim through consistency

of purpose, prioritizing certain community concerns over others based on an analysis of the shared movement premises of “Wall St. and the 1%.” The claim does not necessarily claim that prioritizing these concerns will lead to an easy, widespread mass mobilization which will quickly lead to the problems being solved, but rather that the shared concerns won’t be addressed until these concerns are met; it argues by foregrounding root problems over what it presents as short-term solutions.

Hannah Arendt and the Direct Demos

The notion that mass-mediated publics are resources better left untapped is not new to contemporary social movement participants; much contention within modern political theory has emerged from this very dilemma. Emma Goldman, who in 1893 was arrested on “Inciting to Riot” charges for exhorting a large crowd of unemployed workers in Union Square to take bread if they were not given work, is hardly a figure famous for elitism; yet the hazards to real democracy presented by the Masses constitutes an ongoing theme in her work. In the end of her essay “Minorities Versus Majorities,” (Goldman 1969) she addresses this apparent contradiction in her concerns:

Not because I do not feel with the oppressed, the disinherited of the earth; not because I do not know the shame, the horror, the indignity of the lives the people lead, do I repudiate the majority as a creative force for good. Oh, no, no! But because I know so well that as a compact mass it has never stood for justice or equality. It has suppressed the human voice, subdued the human spirit, chained the human body. As a mass its aim has always been to make life uniform, gray, and monotonous as the desert... I therefore

believe with Emerson that ‘the masses are crude, lame, pernicious in their demands and influence, and need not to be flattered, but to be schooled. I wish not to concede anything to them, but to drill, divide, and break them up, and draw individuals out of them. Masses! The calamity are the masses. I do not wish any mass at all, but honest men only, lovely, sweet, accomplished women only.’ (Goldman)

Scholars of Goldman have often stumbled over her position, finding her affection for Nietzsche and the archetypal genius of the solitudinous modernist artist in contradiction with her anti-capitalist economic populism, but such passages make clear her stance: it is not in an elitist assertion against the still-differentiated Many that Goldman voices her concerns - what Hardt and Negri (2004) term “the Multitude” or rhetorical scholar Gerard Hauser’s “reticulate public sphere” (2008) – but against their unitary constitution, through representative media of politics, information, or sociological instruments – into an undifferentiated whole. Goldman herself served as the English spokesperson for many years of the Spanish CNT-FAI, consisting at times of some millions of members, but was organized along decentralized, direct-democratic, rather than massist, lines.

No modern political thinker has been so misunderstood for her opposition to massist constitutions of publics as has Hannah Arendt. Both in the guise of “the masses,” overrun with the irrationality of desire, and with their characteristic influence through the overweening modernist sphere of “the Social,” Arendt is consistently terrified about the mass entrance into politics, and views the hypertrophied realm of the social over public and private, with its consequential dominance of the sphere of labor over those of activity and work as a manifestation of mass politics - in her eyes, a generalized condition of totalitarianism. At the

same time, in apparent contradiction, she embraces the direct democratic model of worker councils of Hungary in 1956, in which representative governance is replaced by direct collective self-governance by the workers. How are not these the very “masses” which Arendt fears exerting undue - or perhaps any - influence? Arendt directly answers such critics, who take the critique of modernity’s dangerous predilection for masses as evidence against popular potential for self-governance.

Such statements, difficult to prove, are even more difficult to refute, but the assumptions upon which they rest are not difficult to point out. Theoretically, *the most relevant and the most pernicious among them is the equation of “people” and masses*, which sounds only too plausible to everyone who lives in a mass society and is constantly exposed to its numerous irritations. (1965 274)

Arendt’s philosophy, with its focus on modes of activity (1959) as determining political value, elucidates how the two can be differentiated. Only if some preconstituted “class interests” are posited to delineate this *populus*, in keeping with the orthodox Marxism of which she was so openly critical; or indeed, *any* sociological factor independent of their own self-actualizing definitions achieved through political activity, can there be grounds for conflation. Instead, Arendt posits that the manner of political activity itself constitutes the agent; in this way, the passive “masses” - with all of their political party representation, television watching, and consumption of mass-produced commodities - are indeed the precise opposite to the modern application of ancient Athens’ *direct demos*. Seen from the outside, (Igo 2007) notes how *thin* is this public constituted through Gallup polls, Nielsen ratings, and mass representative voting; this thinness, at its extreme, is precisely what I have termed as the characteristic of an “empty

public.” More akin to the democracy of ancient Athens, in Arendt’s view, are the sorts of assemblies present in workers councils and revolutionary streets. Arendt does not oppose the masses to a preferred professional political elite, as she is often unfortunately read, but opposes the *populus* as a mass to the same bodies constituted by political self-activity, such as that in the ancient Athenian plenum which she consistently offers as a participatory ideal.

[T]he two-party system ... has by no means enabled the citizen to become a ‘participator’ in public affairs. The most the citizen can hope for is to be ‘represented,’ whereby it is obvious that the only thing which can be represented and delegated is interest, or the welfare of the constituents, but neither their actions nor their opinions. In this system the opinions of the people are indeed unascertainable for the simple reason that *they are non-existent*. Opinions are formed in a process of open discussion and public debate, and where no opportunity for the forming of opinions exists, there may be moods ... but no opinion. (1965, 272)

For Arendt, politics and deliberation are inseparable from and unthinkable outside participation, since “[w]henver knowing and doing have parted company, the space of freedom is lost.” (268) Political deliberation, the working-out of the dissensus which can only emerge from collective activity, is the arena in which meaning is produced; outside of its commotion, only “moods,” but not actual “opinions,” are possible. That Arendt has been drastically misread by her followers on the right is nowhere as evident as in her passages on councilism, when she openly calls “for a new form of government that would permit every member of the modern egalitarian society to become a ‘participator’ in public affairs.” (268) Gitlin (2012) is right in noting that Occupy was centrally defined by its embrace of such deliberative forms, which, more openly

than Arendt, he acknowledges as common to revolutionary traditions in Europe for the last two centuries.

Communities governing themselves in assemblies... This phrase rings bells. If it sounds like one of the great (and suppressed) ideals in modern radicalism, from the Paris Commune to the early days of the Russian Revolution, before the self-governing councils of workers and soldiers were smashed by Lenin's Bolsheviks, and the anarchist assemblies in Barcelona crushed during the Spanish Civil War, it is for good reason. They belonged to the same tradition. (133)

Although this work will focus more on Occupy's dependence on disruption than its corollary dependence on deliberation, the necessity of participation as a core element of both can explain the apparent failure of Occupy to deliver a coherent shared message or identity to even sympathetic journalists and local political channels. In terms of its external appearance, participative endeavors have proven notoriously illegible (Scott 1998) to institutional epistemologies of media and political representation. As the following chapters will argue, participants in Occupy were able to eloquently respond to neoliberal exigencies by "opening spaces" through transgressive public performances of agency, simultaneously and ineluctably material and symbolic; rather than being measured as failures by traditional social movement yardsticks, such strategies, understood in terms of the particular conditions to which they were responding, enacted a series of irrefutable discursive victories.

Chapter 2: The Strange Magic of Nonviolence

Introduction: What Happened to Nonviolence?

“I’ve been living my life for twenty years through the word “nonviolence.” After hearing how it was used in Occupy, I think I have to find a new word.” – Ginger, Occupy Seattle participant and nonviolence trainer.

I’ve lost track of what nonviolent actually means at this point. *I* am not violent, as a person, my character is deeply not violent. We certainly didn't do anything that any reasonable person would consider violent inside that bank [lock-down]... In that sense I guess you could say that we were *not* violent. But I don't know if I could say that it was *nonviolent* anymore. At that time I probably would have said it was. We did make a commitment to not actively physically aggress upon either bank employees or customers or the police, and in that sense our tactics were nonviolent ones, but it seems, but I don't know if I would even use that language anymore. In so many conversations, in so many debates over the past few months, I've felt this *strange magic* coming from that word that I don't know if I want to invoke anymore.

– Mark, arrestee in Nov 2 Occupy Seattle “Chase 5” event.

On November 18, 2011, a number of members of the local Occupy movement in UC Davis were peacefully sitting with linked arms in the Quad, when, before a number of cameras, Lieutenant John Pike casually strolled past them and dispensed a voluminous quantity of pepper spray into their faces. The incident went globally viral, as commentators compared Pike to Martin Luther King’s Birmingham antagonist Bull Conner, and the nonviolent nature of the

protestors' conduct was widely cited as a victorious moment for nonviolent protest. The *Washington Post*, for example, characterized the incident as proof of "the power of nonviolent witness." ("UC Davis Pepper Spray") Author Chris Hedges held the incident up as proof of the Occupy movement's nonviolent orientation:

The first principles, of course, were nonviolence and non-property destruction... We don't accept violent language. When you're violent you undermine everything. If the protesters in [Manhattan's] Union Square, who were pepper-sprayed, had been throwing something at the police, you would not have had the movement. It was because they were nonviolent and didn't react when they were being pepper-sprayed that the movement grew. At UC Davis, when those cops just walked down the line and sprayed, the nonviolent reaction by those kids was fantastic. – ("Thank you for Standing Up")

Pike was dismissed from the University, the protesters won a compensation lawsuit of over \$1 million, and the Occupy movement was given widespread sympathetic coverage in an increasingly hostile national media environment. The incident functioned as indisputable testimony to the enduring power of "nonviolence." Or did it?

Justin, one of the recipients of Lt. Pike's generosity, clarified to me the events leading up to the moment recorded in the famous video. Protesters were standing with linked arms around the Occupy tents to protect them against a police raid, and police started grabbing and detaining people from the line. Justin watched as his fellow protesters were helplessly taken one-by-one, cuffed, and sat down on the quad before being loaded into a police car bound for jail. Given the protesters' overwhelming numbers and widespread support he knew they enjoyed, Justin found the passivity frustrating. He realized that, being arrested on Friday, his fellow protesters would

be held in jail over the weekend before being booked. At that moment, he remembered seeing “de-arrests” during the 2003 Iraq war protests, when some protesters wrested others who had been detained out of police custody, and the feeling of empowerment and exhilaration in the crowd at those moments. Justin stepped away from the line and sat down between the detained protesters and the police vehicles which were pulling up to take them away. “I was just thinking about that, about having some of these people not go to jail, if we prevented the cops from transporting these people into the cop cars. Once we were sitting down we were just entrenched and the cops couldn’t move us.” Some sat down and joined him, while others gathered around, worried about confronting the police. The growing number of seated protesters started chanting, “From Davis, to Greece – fuck the police!” After they’d chanted this line about four times, those standing around, whom Justin described as “spectators,” started to yell in a near panic, “Remain nonviolent!” Justin reflected, “They shouted us down, it was so strange, it was like saying ‘fuck the police’ was a violent act.” Justin later interpreted their use of the word “nonviolent” to their own fear at confronting the police, rather than any perceived physical aggression on the seated protesters’ behalf. A few minutes later, Lt. Pike sprayed the faces of the seated protesters. In retrospect, the famous event was as contingent on the protester’s contestation with practices of policing, as it was on their own physical passivity while being sprayed.

Were the seated protesters being “violent” or “nonviolent”? Passively interfering with police conduct, particularly while seated, is in some senses a classical example of nonviolence. And yet, the speech acts of those seated, in labelling their action as specifically antagonistic against policing rather than some more distant issue, and using profanity in doing so, somehow put them outside the category in the eyes of some spectators present. Despite his stated

sympathies with those pepper-sprayed, had he been present, Hedges' own take would likely have put him on the side of those characterizing the anti-police slogan as violence. "I would classify violence as the destruction of property and vandalism, the shouting of insulting messages to the police, physical confrontations with the police. Those are very clear cut acts of violence." (qtd in Dean "Icite") In Justin's account, however, without the confrontation with police, motivated for participants by the same affectual commitments as their chanting of "fuck the police," the political tensions inherent in the moment would never have been made visible.

Justin's experience, and those of the participants whose quotations open this chapter, pose a set of difficult rhetorical questions: what constitutes the tension between "violence" and "nonviolence"? Why would long-time proponents of nonviolence reconsider their commitments in the context of Occupy? How is it that nonviolence has in the past enacted such powerful rhetorical "magic," in the words of both advocates (Gitlin 2012) and critics (Lottie's, above), and what might have caused this efficacy to decline? This chapter will argue that the opposition between nonviolence and its opposite is no way necessary, stable, or meaningful. Rather, nonviolence is to be understood as a rhetorical strategy of *disavowal*, enacted through assertions inhabiting ambiguities of *definition*, given significance through imputations to its Other, of *equivalence* with negatively-valued phenomena, predominantly war. Rather than merely "demystifying" some deep affinity between "nonviolence" and its opposite, understanding this strategy through a rhetorical analysis of both its traditional and contemporary manifestations helps elucidate the heretofore "magical" power of its appeal. Such analysis does suggest, however, that under the rhetorical exigencies elucidated in the first chapter, "nonviolence" as a rhetorical resource has suffered from discursive slippage to the extent that even previously devout advocates of nonviolence have begun to question its relevance to current conditions. Of

primary importance in this slippage is its aversion to contemporary approaches of “unruly politics,” including riot but not exclusive to it, which are analyzed in the remaining chapters.

The Nonopposition of Non/Violence

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Civil Rights, anti-Vietnam War, and Black Power movements of the last century were faced with social conditions quite different than those of the present, but their era’s “terministic screen” often persists in the description and evaluation of movements in the present. As an entry into contemporary discussions of political violence, particularly counterhegemonic violence, it is worth beginning by taking a look at the social conditions which defined violence in the last era of mass social movements in the US, definitions which have outlasted the conditions which brought them about.

In early 1971, a Swedish film crew (“Black Power Mixtape” 2011) visited Angela Davis in prison and asked her if she approved of violence as a means of achieving social change. Davis, a core participant in both the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement which had come to supersede it, responded in a breathtaking exegesis on political violence, timeless and yet marked by the political conditions of her time.

... [Y]ou ask *me*, whether I approve of violence, I mean that just doesn’t make any sense at all. Whether I approve of guns.

I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. Some very very good friends of mine were killed by bombs, bombs that were planted by racists. I remember, from the time I was very small, I remember the sounds of bombs exploding across the street, our house shaking. I

remember my father having to have guns at his disposal at all times because of the fact that at any moment, someone, we might expect to be attacked. The man who was at that time in complete control of the city government, his name was Bull Conner, would often get on the radio and make statements like, ‘Niggers have moved into a white neighborhood, we’d better expect some bloodshed tonight.’ And sure enough, there would be bloodshed. [halting] After the four young girls who were, who lived very, who lived, one of them lived next door to me, I was very good friends with the sister of another one, my sister was very good friends with all three of them, my mother taught one of them in her class, my mother... In fact, when the bombing occurred, one of the mothers of, one of the young girls, called my mother and said, ‘Can you take me down to the church, to pick up Carol, we heard about the bombing and I don’t have my car.’ And they went down, and what did they find? They found limbs, and heads, strewn all over the place. And then, after that, in my neighborhood, all the men organized themselves into an armed patrol. They had to take their guns and patrol our community every night because they did not want that to happen again.

I mean that’s why, when someone asks me [laughs] about *violence*, [shudders] I just find it *incredible*. Because what it means, is that the person who’s asking that question has absolutely no idea what Black people have gone through, what Black people have experienced in this country, since the time the first Black person was kidnapped from the shores of Africa. (*Black Power Mixtape*)

Notably, Davis never takes the position of *advocating* violence; like the contemporary rhetors in the next chapter who utilize a rhetorical strategy which I term “forced comparison,” Davis

instead gives presence to an overwhelming series of images exposing previously invisible violence, inducing shame in the audience with a disproportionality of comparison to the relatively minute measure of revolutionary force aimed at bringing such violence to an end. Notably, Davis self corrects in her one implied positive assertion of counterhegemonic violence – recasting “whether I approve of violence” to “whether I approve of guns” after a moment’s reflection. For Davis, as for Mark, a category of “not-violence” presents itself as opposed to both the true violence of oppression, and the “nonviolence” of the Civil Rights movement. Davis posits the *opposite of nonviolence* as “guns,” leaving aside the question whether counter-hegemonic “violence” should even be considered violence as such. Similarly, although less involved in lethal confrontation than their counterparts in Black communities or overseas, white revolutionary groups of the time, such as the Weather Underground, often used images of AK-47s and slogans like “bring the war home” and “give piece a chance” (Varon 2004, Berger 2006) to call American exceptionalism into question. By espousing guns in their public visual design if not generally in act, such groups asserted solidarity by acknowledging the severity of conflict faced by those in Black communities and overseas, whom they mimicked.

Under the conditions faced by Davis or in the jungles of Vietnam, such armed response seems more than understandable; however, contemporary participants in the US unambiguously attest that taking up “guns” is no longer a tenable “opposite of nonviolence.” Even those identifying as “militants” grow quickly indignant when their opposition to non-violence is conflated with armed struggle. In the words of one self-described “radical” from Occupy Seattle, “It’s important to emphasize that none of the radicals are advocating that Decolonize/Occupy Seattle should take a position of guerilla warfare or armed revolutionary warfare... This is a straw man argument that some liberals have raised to discredit us.” (correspondence) According

to another interviewee, nonviolence proponents tend to read disavowals of nonviolence as commitments to conquer the state by *direct force*, mute of rhetorical claims to social power and legitimacy. In the recent global proliferation of riots, however, material consequences were not even the primary effect. The hundreds of police cars, political party headquarters, and state offices burned in Cairo during the Tahrir uprising (“Solidarity Statement from Cairo”) certainly brought material consequences to the state for their corrupt, exploitative, antidemocratic policies, but their importance were in the affects and values enacted and embodied, argued through practices of embodied, material rhetoric - the fearlessness of youth before police terror and the invisible but very “present absence” of torture, the long-repressed public rage given body in flames and shattered facades. These arguments were only made *more* articulate by the lack of injury which resulted, in stark contrast to the bloodied hands of the Mubarak regime.

Similarly, the thousands of banks, political offices, and police stations destroyed by arson in the uprising of youth across Greece in 2008 touched off by the police killing of 15-year old anarchist Alexandros Grigoropoulos made lyrically articulate the tearful enraged despair of an entire generation. The lack of any injury resulting over a month of massive public property destruction successfully articulated the destruction on the side of life, while implicating the order of police and the prison society they represented as one of *dolophonoi*, or murderers – which became a key term in their chants. The importance of the non-injurious nature of these actions to the social formation so constituted became tragically clear on May 1, 2010, when two bank employees perished in a bank that had been lit on fire; the movement of numerous millions effectually demobilized in shame that lethality had resulted, however accidentally. These events in Greece, for many around the world, defined a new era in repertoires of social movement

rhetoric; their non-injurious character was as integral to their meaning as was their immense unmediated violence against material sites of status quo power.

A few factors are worth noting as likely contributing to this shift away from armed struggle. First, contemporary social movement actors are well aware of the general supersaturation with surveillance under neoliberal governance (Parenti 2003, Amoore 2013, Gambetti & Godoy-Anativia 2013) as well as the exponential increase in community penetration and militarization of police forces (Parenti 2008). These factors alone suffice to make guerrilla warfare, either in the *foco* (Debray 1967, Guevara 1961), or deterritorialized (Taber 1970) variants, unfeasible. Secondly, as will be discussed in the final chapter, *prefiguration* has become a keystone concept in social movements since Davis' time (Cornell 2011); consequently, the tendency for social movements relying primarily on killing as a primary method of political transformation to continue perpetuating lethality long “after the revolution” has become widely acknowledged to the point of cliché. As the next chapter will argue, contemporary social movements frequently point up in their grievances the low value given to human (and nonhuman) life in comparison to the value given to commodities; injurious violence would thus starkly conflict with the movements' own assertions.

Lastly, contemporary social movements since the alterglobalization movement have generally preferred dispersed, diffuse, non- or even anti-authoritarian deliberative structures, for reasons as tactical (Gillham & Noakes 2007) as philosophical. Nonviolence theorist George Lakey (1973) observed that “[s]ecrecy brings divisiveness into movement life because there must always be those who know and those who do not know. Those who are outside feel resentful; those who are inside develop feelings of superiority. Knowledge is a form of power, and secrecy

ensures that there be a power structure with a distinction between the haves and have-nots.”

(97) This has been tragically borne out over the development of the Zapatista insurgency (participant interview) (which has had an inestimable impact on contemporary social movements, down even to the ubiquitous preference of head wear), the severe demands of clandestinity in military confrontations proves profoundly incommensurate with the community-based, anarchic methods of deliberation they espouse. Such methods remain in current favor, whether in the Direct Action Networks and World Social Forums of alterglobalization, or Occupy’s General Assemblies.

Those voices which recognize a function for *insurrectionary* violence often share the intense aversion to arms usually associated with nonviolence adherents. In the words of Michael, one Occupy Oakland participant,

I understand two views of [counterhegemonic] militancy, of violence, one is the Party, the Party is precision, order, precision violence, orders coming down the chain of command to execute some kind of violent action, whether that’s small terrorist cells, or an armed movement, or a guerrilla force. And another is the chaotic riot, the spontaneous action, no one is giving orders, it’s more like, it’s decentralized, it’s horizontal, it’s spontaneous. Those are two [very different] conceptions of violence. I’m against armed struggle, I’m against hierarchical, Leninist vanguard, militant party, stuff like that.

In an essay explaining the centrality of riots as an aspect of contemporary social movement rhetoric, Francis Piven unhesitatingly *agrees* with nonviolence scholars Ackerman and Duval in their description of social change mechanisms:

People power in the twentieth century did not grow out of the barrel of a gun. It removed rulers who believed that violence was power, by acting to dissolve their real source of power: the consent of acquiescence of the people they had tried to subordinate. When unjust laws were no longer obeyed, when commerce stopped because people no longer worked, when public services could no longer function, and when armies were no longer feared, the violence that governments could use no longer mattered - their power to make people comply had disappeared (Ackerman and Duval 2005: 505).” (Piven, in Seferiades & Johnston 28)

Where the rest of Piven’s essay departs from Ackerman and Duval’s analysis is not in their shared rejection of armed struggle, but in the (generally unstated) *assertion of moral equivalence between riot and war*. In recognition of the primacy of *arms* rather than a less-definable *violence*, some advocates of “strategic nonviolence” have begun to prefer the term “unarmed insurrection” to “nonviolence,” (Zunes 1994, Schock 2005) a term with strong resonance to the language of just those in the Occupy movement who reject the term nonviolence. I recognize a reconfiguration of the nonviolence-vs-armed-struggle dichotomy carried down in traumatic condensation from the 1970s, which I believe is being displaced by a more contemporary opposition of, on one hand, anti-authoritarian strategic nonviolence and riotous approaches, and on the other, authoritarian principled nonviolence and armed struggle approaches.

A passing look at the ways contemporary approaches to strategic nonviolence characterizes itself provides strong evidence for this claim. In his 2005 work *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*, which has quickly become a cornerstone of

strategic nonviolence, Kurt Schock asserts the reasons for what he identifies as an ascendance of nonviolent approaches, but voices an analysis quite similar to the Michael above:

Whereas totalizing ideologies and permanent vanguard parties seem more suited to the tasks of overthrowing a state through violence and ruling society from above, oppositional consciousness and temporary organizations seem more suited to rolling back authoritarian relations and building more democratic and just relations through nonviolent action from below. Oppositional consciousness is open-ended, nontotalizing, and respectful of diversity, and it facilitates the mobilization of a broad-based opposition. Widespread resistance is significant in that there is a greater distribution of the risks involved in engaging in collective action, it is more difficult for the state to focus its repressive apparatus on a particular group or organization, and campaigns of noncooperation need broad-based support to succeed. Mobilizing through oppositional consciousness has consequences for organizing as well. It rejects permanent, centralized organizations and vanguard parties, opting for united front politics, shifting alliances, and temporary organizations that engage in struggles as situations arise. (165)

And again, as does Michael, Schock defines this approach through opposing the conjuncture of military force and authoritarianism:

Whereas the goals of violent challenges are often to capture state power or gain control over territory, in the late twentieth century the goals of many of the challenging movements in the third world were not to capture state power or exercise a monopoly of power over a piece of territory, but rather *to roll back the frontiers of the authoritarian state, make the polity more inclusive, and promote sociopolitical empowerment.* (23, my emphasis)

Not only do Schock's characterizations of strategic nonviolence not hold exclusively true for nonviolent actions, but his descriptions of the rhetorical efficacy of contemporary protest observe strikingly similar processes as do the riots I analyze in later chapters. "For the oppressed to engage in collective action, there must first be cognitive liberation, that is, a diminution of fatalism coupled with a perception that conditions are unjust, yet subject to change through collective action". (27) Schock returns time and again to this central importance of *fostering agency* under neoliberal conditions, precisely the goal espoused by those Occupy participants in their advocacy for methods outside "nonviolence," including but certainly not limited to riots. As Schock demonstrates, the *subjective* processes fostered in moments of public performances of confrontation should not be confused with merely *personal* ones, as such processes are intensely productive of social relations:

Protest and persuasion are important in that they may help aggrieved populations overcome quiescence and the fear of repression, and provide them with social visibility while alerting reference publics and third parties to an unjust situation. Moreover, methods of protest and persuasion are often the crucibles in which frames are elaborated and disseminated, solidarity is forged, and members of the aggrieved group are mobilized to participate in other methods of nonviolent action. (39)

Notably, Schock goes on to clarify that "[i]n democracies, protest and persuasion have become more or less institutionalized and therefore *by themselves may not necessarily provide a direct and immediate challenge* to the power of the state." (39, my emphasis) Schock contrasts this to the still-powerful potential of protest in non-democratic states, but nowhere attempts to answer how such challenger effects might be brought about under conditions where conventional protest

forms have been institutionalized. In effect, by questioning the “pluralist prejudice” and working outside of those institutionally-recuperated channels, contentious actors in democratic countries confront conditions not entirely dissimilar to those conditions of non-democratic states analyzed in Schock’s work. This, I contend, is precisely the reason for a return to more conflictual (and precisely *illegal*) means of protest - the need for “transgression as a mode of resistance” (Foust 2010), for just those reasons that Schock lists above.

Advocates of nonviolent approaches also frequently cite the importance of *democratic availability* of methods of nonviolence protest, in contrast to the methods of “violence.” In clarifying the superiority of nonviolence over theories which entrust social change to a vanguard, Schock argues that

a virtue of these methods is that the means for challenging the regime are at hand. Symbolic actions, noncooperation, and intervention can theoretically be implemented by anyone at any time... no special equipment beyond what is typically available to people is needed to undermine state power and legitimacy through nonviolent action. Moreover, although some particular acts of nonviolent action may require more physical strength and endurance than others, just about anyone in the population can participate in nonviolent action: men as well as women, the old as well as the young, the less physically fit as well as the physically fit. This contrasts sharply with violent action, which requires special weapons – weapons that are likely to be monopolized by the state – and military campaigns, in which participation has historically been limited to young, physically fit, ideologically indoctrinated or mercenary males. It also contrasts sharply with theories of social change that privilege a particular class or ‘vanguard’ as the agents of social change,

thus excluding networks of exploited groups from struggles against oppression (Galtung 1980, 396-98). Thus, nonviolent challenges have the potential to allow the maximum degree of active participation in the struggle by the highest proportion of the population. Whereas the arrest or killing of a dozen or so members of a guerrilla cell can devastate an armed campaign, the death or arrest of hundreds or even thousands of nonviolent activists may fail to weaken challenges incorporating mass nonviolent action due to their much greater size (Zunes 1994, 415; Zunes and Kurtz 1999). The greater scale of participation in such challenges also makes it more difficult for the state to differentiate between movement participants and nonparticipants, making targeted repression, which is more effective in quelling dissent, more difficult to implement and indiscriminate repression [sic], which may undermine the regime and promote more widespread mobilization. (40)

Although this (overstated, considering for example the frequency of women in both guerrilla groups and armies) difference in *democratic availability* of repertoire is often held to distinguish between violence and nonviolence, riot is again seen to resemble nonviolence more than armed struggle in the categorization standards suggested by Schock, as within reach of a wide variety of participants. Although the allegation was put forth, particularly around Occupy Oakland, that rioting was the providence of “tantruming white boys with father issues,” (Hedges, “Cancer”; Neumann, “Are We Being Childish”), the history of rioting in the United States gives one reason to pause at this characterization. That riot is generally not associated with racial privilege seems a banal-enough assertion, but was somehow absent from the “indirect rule” discourse emanating from Oakland’s political class, in an attempt to deflect parallels with the revolutionary movements of the 1970s from which its members generally emerged. In a complex move to

maintain its own legitimacy narrative while complying with the elite pressures to evict Occupy, Oakland political representatives attempted to withdraw legitimacy from Occupy by falling back first upon the reductionist “identity politics,” claiming race as a self-realizing substitute for political authenticity, and then labeling the protests as inauthentic and illegitimate through racialized code. This characterization was without a doubt more opportunistic than descriptive: although increasing police penetration did ultimately reduce black youth participation in a stark illustration of the repressive efficacy of those factors named by Katz, and the shifting demographic geography of the East Bay showed itself through Occupy Oakland’s demographic, the camp and protests were never predominantly “white.” This accusation enacted a surprising reversal of traditional assignations of riot, as in Rebecca Hill’s (2008) analysis, where “race became a determining factor in what was defined as violent or insurrectionary activity, as opposed to what was defined as popular justice, and the ability to use violence in an orderly way became evidence of whiteness itself.” (10-11)

In a recent prevalent discourse taking up privilege theory, a related sort of inversion of the traditional racialization of riot occurs, in which riot is associated exclusively with white actors, who “have the privilege” to engage in public disruption. This critique was particularly favored by non-profits in Oakland, which, in the analysis of the collective of people of color, women, and queer folks who authored the “Who is Oakland” (Croatoan 2012) pamphlet, complementing police force by delegitimizing militant social movements.

Indeed, the exponential growth of NGOs and nonprofits could be understood as the 21st century public face of counterinsurgency, except this time speaking the language of

civil, women's, and gay rights, charged with preempting political conflict, and spiritually committed to promoting one-sided "dialogue" with armed state bureaucracies. (page)

Although, as theorist Jackie Wang (2012) points out, people of color certainly face harsher consequences for participation in disruptive performances, this has not and certainly does not equate to impossibility or inadvisability of enacting public disruption: the relative severity of repression may be taken as an acknowledgement of these populations' greater political capacity, a capacity sorely needed to disrupt internal colonialism's physical and material effects, at both the level of the individual and as social practice.

When an analysis of privilege is turned into a political program that asserts that the most vulnerable should not take risks, the only politically correct politics becomes a politics of reformism and retreat, a politics that necessarily capitulates to the status quo while erasing the legacy of Black Power groups like the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army. For Fanon, it is precisely the element of risk that makes militant action more urgent - liberation can only be won by risking one's life. Militancy is not just tactically necessary - its dual objective is to transform people and 'fundamentally alter' their being by emboldening them, removing their passivity and cleansing them of 'the core of despair' crystallized in their bodies.' (Wang 163)

Moving on to the contested gender of riot, Chris Hedges is again worth quoting at length for his allegation that rioting (which, inaccurately, he terms "the Black Bloc movement") in Occupy was the purview of males, equating it to *war*:

The Black Bloc movement is infected with a deeply disturbing hypermasculinity. This hypermasculinity, I expect, is its primary appeal. It taps into the lust that lurks within us

to destroy, not only things but human beings. It offers the godlike power that comes with mob violence. Marching as a uniformed mass, all dressed in black to become part of an anonymous bloc, faces covered, temporarily overcomes alienation, feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness and loneliness. It imparts to those in the mob a sense of comradeship. It permits an inchoate rage to be unleashed on any target. Pity, compassion and tenderness are banished for the intoxication of power. It is the same sickness that fuels the swarms of police who pepper-spray and beat peaceful demonstrators. It is the sickness of soldiers in war. It turns human beings into beasts. (Hedges, “Cancer”)

The history of rioting in America and elsewhere belies such simplistic ascription. The modern GLBT movement began, it should be remembered, with the quite violent Stonewall riots of 1969 (Carter 2010), and the lessor-known 1966 Compton Cafeteria riot of transgender patrons in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district. (Carter 105) The Suffragette movement, precisely as a movement contesting the stricture of access to legal decision-making instruments, was at times synonymous with rioting. (A.K. Thompson 2009, Gilje 1996) EP Thompson’s (1971) classic work on “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century” details an exhaustive rationale behind the era’s plentiful riots, as crowds quite self-consciously sought to exercise the only means of price-control within reach during the onset of capitalist policies; these riots were, again, gendered disproportionately as female. One picturesque passage from Gilje bears repeating.

Crowds also rioted over prices. Women, like in bread riots in England and France, dominated many of these disturbances. In July 1777 about one hundred Boston women went to merchant Thomas Boylston’s shop demanding coffee at a set price. When he

refused, they started to drag him to a wharf for a dunking. Before they could do so, Boylston surrendered the storeroom's keys. The women then left him to get the coffee, which they promised to sell to the poor. Similar disturbances occurred elsewhere. In the state of New York a crowd of twenty-two women and two continental soldiers came to Peter Messier's house in May 1777. Refusing to pay his price for tea, they set a just price and beat him. The same concerns for the good of the local community lay behind some resistance to recruitment during the war. A crowd of approximately one hundred in April 1781 prevented a draft of men in Roxbridge County, Virginia, claiming that they had given enough to the war and feared that they would not be able to get their crops in with a further drain on man-power." (50)

Given the current astronomic intensification of police repression and legal harassment of social movement participants, participants and witnesses to riots are understandably reluctant to come forward and contest characterizations such as Hedges', however passionate their disagreement. One potentially illustrative analysis, with major reservations, might be drawn from arrests after a recent anti-Columbus Day demonstration in San Francisco, which allegedly involved "members of the Criminal street gang, Black Blok" ("SFPD release") in acts of public property destruction, after which police released mug shots of the 20 arrestees in a press release. Without attributing any accuracy to police selection in their haphazard arrest, which video reveals involved grabbing at random protesters in a large march, and additionally admitting the highly problematic nature of reading race and gender in online mug shots, a superficial analysis disputes the "white male" claim: nine of the arrestees appear female-assigned, and nine would likely be "read" as people of color: a racial makeup proportional to San Francisco as a whole. Following chapters will pursue in-depth analysis of gender and the "unruly politics" (Kaulingfreks 2013) of riot.

The evident nonopposition between nonviolence and violence does not apply only to the common priorities of protest repertoire, in the openness, diffuse deliberation, emancipatory processes, and the democratic availability just discussed, but to a longer-term rationale of social transformation as well. These claims sound strange in contemporary context, when the presence of what were called “revolutionary nonviolence” (Dellinger 1970) approaches have all but vanished; those few I interviewed who identified with such approaches all expressed a bewilderment at not finding a place within Occupy. These advocates of “revolutionary nonviolence” were too suspicious of those “militants” who refused to avow “nonviolence,” but found little in common with other “nonviolence” advocates, who were generally averse to conflict and talk of radical social transformation. While contemporary conversations often demonstrated parallels between violence/nonviolence discursive dichotomies and revolutionary/reformist claims, Sharp’s formulation clearly puts forth a revolutionary project sounding very much like the discourse of contemporary “radicals”:

The subjects usually do not realize that they are the source of the ruler's power and that by joint action they could dissolve that power. Failure to realize the role they play may have its roots either in innocent ignorance or in deliberate deception by the ruler. If the subjects look at their ruler's power at a given moment, they are likely to see it as a hard, solid force which at any point may fall upon them in their helplessness; this short-range view leads them to the monolith theory of power. If they were to look at their ruler's power both backward and forward in time, however, and note its origins and growth, its variations and fragility, they would begin to see their role in the genesis, continuance and development of that power. This realization would reveal that they possess the capacity to destroy that power. – (Sharp 1973a, 44)

Ryan, an Occupy Oakland participant, described both the 2008 uprising in Greece, and what occurred over the course of Occupy Oakland, as applications of precisely the same revolutionary process:

What happened in 2008 never happened before in Greece. It was never like that.

Probably right after the junta but like, in collective memory that never happened before.

It kind of came on the tail end of the neoliberal attack against Greece and it had been building for a year, two years, many, many months at the very least, and culminated in an actual insurrection where the government was like, do we call in the soldiers and their like, actually, we can't trust the soldiers - that's an insurrection. It would have been the revolution if they had called in the soldiers, because then, you know, who knows, the soldiers would've turned over their weapons.

So, let's say Oakland, then is an example of the zenith of militancy in the context of the US. What's been happening in Oakland is kind of like a low-grade insurrection. It's kind of an insurrection. The insurrection has come. Now, what does the insurrection mean in the context of California, of the United States, of the Bay Area? It doesn't actually mean car bombs and assassinations by protesters against police or government forces. It doesn't mean that, I think nationally that it just doesn't make any sense, it's not within our spectrum of political horizon. It's not within our collective consciousness as something being possible. But what is possible for the first time is like constant and never-ending confrontation with state forces and with flashpoints of militant street action. Like flagrant disregard for the law, open hostility, a challenge a response to each kind of infraction brought against us by the police, like all these things constitute an

insurrection. It's not just bands of militants, bands of radical people, obviously they exist, but when it's sort of like normal people on the street who will pull over, to help you yell at the cops who are hassling kids... Or the families who aren't like, white radicals, who are just like, black working-class, who are on these foreclosure defense committees and are going on these foreclosure marches, or like students of all shapes and colors coming together actively doing the same thing in terms of challenging state authority, it's an insurrection. No one's dying, but no one really died in Greece either. (Ryan interview)

In rare moments, such similarities are acknowledged by strategic nonviolence theorists, as for example Sharp (1973a), who posits a greater distance between “action” and “nonaction” than between “violence” and “nonviolence.”

It is widely assumed that all social and political behavior must be clearly either violent or nonviolent. This simple dualism leads only to serious distortions of reality, however, one of the main ones being that some people call 'nonviolent' anything they regard as good, and 'violent' anything they dislike. A second gross distortion occurs when people totally erroneously equate cringing passivity with nonviolent action because in neither case is there the use of physical violence... Careful consideration of actual response to social and political conflict requires that all responses to conflict situations be initially divided into those of *action* and those of *inaction*, and not divided according to their violence or lack of violence. – (64-65)

Nevertheless, the patent *nonopposition* between the strategic “nonviolence” purported by Schock, Zunes, Sharp, Lakey, and others does not in any sense imply their acceptance of or reconciliation with the “violence” of riots and noninjurious counterhegemonic violence,

particularly in contemporary contexts. As the remainder of this chapter will go on to argue, however much “nonviolence” discourses attempt to move beyond a simple negation of “violence” and claim inherent positive content, “nonviolence” in its traditional, strategic, and principled variants remains inextricably joined to its Other in just the manner that its name attests, as a gesture of disavowal of an indefinable “violence.” It is precisely through this morphological disavowal of “violence” which nonviolence has accomplished vast rhetorical victories in the past, and upon which it flounders in contemporary applications.

Disavowal by Non/Definition

Attempts to mobilize “nonviolence” as a resource of disavowal of its constituted opposite are further complicated not only as discursive divisions within nonviolence suggest divisions more basic than with its constitutive Others, but also by the instability of any definition beyond the gesture of disavowal. Nothing reveals nonviolence’s essential dependency on the strategy of disavowal more starkly than do its attempts to move beyond it. Time and again, nonviolence practitioners attempt and fail to impute a content positive and independent from its ambiguous Other.

During the video of one training session aimed specifically at increasing the presence of nonviolence in Occupy Seattle, Kazu Haga, a Kingian nonviolence trainer who came up from Oakland for the occasion, attempts to assert a meaning independent of the ambiguity of “violence.” The trainer writes the two words “Non-violence” and “Nonviolence” on a white board, and then asks, “Someone tell me the difference between those two words. ::long silence:: It’s not a trick question.” One audience member, active in Occupy Seattle, responds, “I would

say, non-violence with a hyphen is not violence, and nonviolence below is a positive concept, ahimsa, meaning a certain attitude, a positive one, that you take towards your enemy and towards everyone." Haga responds, "Exactly. I've certainly seen nonviolence written both ways. When you put the hyphen in there, it changes everything, cause all this [*non-violence*] says is it's not violent, it's an adjective, it's the absence of something. Right?" ("Kazu Haga") In the words of his co-trainer,

He heard neighbors in a fist fight. When he looked around, a bunch of people had gathered on the street. They were all technically being "non-violent." Those bystanders were witnessing injustice but standing there meant they were not being violent at the basic level of its definition. But our interpretation of what being truly "nonviolent" would mean goes beyond doing nothing. So Kazu went and intervened. Being truly nonviolent means exposing and doing something to disrupt and prevent a system and circumstance of injustice without using the tools of injustice themselves in order to create peace. It doesn't mean being inactive or passive and watching as inadvertent but nevertheless involved co-habitants of an unjust world. (interviewee correspondence)

Haga's neighborly intervention is certainly commendable, although one might reserve ultimate judgment without knowing the topic of the disagreement. However, what is not clear is why the intervention qualifies as *nonviolence* (without a hyphen), rather than an intervention not involving violence. Would a different neighbor who did not share Haga's convictions be unwittingly engaging in nonviolence if they were similarly to intervene? If the other neighbor is allowed the option of intervening in the fight without unwittingly practicing nonviolence, how is Haga's action, intentions aside, qualify as anything beyond not-violent neighborly intervention? Do not

generals and genociders at times seek to deescalate and resolve conflicts without doing so as nonviolence? The question remains, can the promised positive meaning of nonviolence, this "certain attitude" attested by the workshop participant, be defined apart from an act of disavowal of a persistently indefinable violence?

Haga again attempted to disavow nonviolence's disavowal during a debate in Oakland, beginning with a promise to go beyond simple negation of an undefined other. "One of the biggest misconceptions about nonviolence is that we think nonviolence means not being violent. Nonviolence is a whole lot more than that." (Positive Peace Warrior Network 2012) As he goes on, however, he again attempts to define as positive a content made simply more ambiguous by being displaced from simple "being" onto the terrain of "taking a stand" against an Other still undefined, but equated with "injustice, ... fear, and intimidation," as well as typical of "what the government does," as well as police and corporations:

Nonviolence means taking a stand against violence, and taking a stand against injustice, and taking a stand against this belief that we can use violence, fear, and intimidation to bring about the changes we want to see in our society. That's what the government does, that's what the police, the corporations do, they have this belief that they can just take what they want, and use fear and intimidation to get what they want. Nonviolence means taking a stand against that belief. (ibid)

Haga again does not provide any positive content, instead emphasizing the negativity of the undefined Other being negated. In going on to define "violence" as a *belief* "that they can just take what they want, and use fear and intimidation," Kazu further opens up the ambiguity of its

opposite; the move attempts to lay hold of a power of open definition, with implicature consequences (to be explored in the next section) in establishing value-laden equivalencies.

Todd Gitlin (2012), in his own failed attempt to assert a positive meaning of nonviolence, quickly stumbles back upon a visceral application of such disavowal:

The movement's great majority rightly understand nonviolence not as a negation, the absence of destructiveness, but as a creative endeavor, a repertory for invention, an opening, an identity. Occupy does not take nonviolence for granted. It holds workshops – though perhaps not rigorously enough – to train demonstration monitors as to how to contain provocateurs and control large crowds. MoveOn.org and other supportive groups added their own training on a large scale. When theoreticians crop up to argue for a laissez-faire attitude toward tactics, critics step up to refute the point. (127-8)

The definition of “creative endeavor” and “repertory for invention” seems for Gitlin to end with “refuting” some unnamed “theoreticians” and even forcibly “containing” and “controlling” other protesters; no mention is made of the promised creativity, the “repertoire of invention,” of contention or public act. The promised “identity” demonstrates little content beyond disavowal exercised over other movement participants.

Among theoreticians of “strategic nonviolence,” the difficulties of asserting a positive definition prove no less troublesome. In his foundational list of 198 methods of nonviolent direct action (1973b), Gene Sharp includes a great many which might well be understood, as for example in Haga's definition above, to include “fear and intimidation,” as for example “nonviolent harassment,” land seizures, counterfeiting, dumping, and “disclosing identities of secret agents.” (1973b, xv-xvi) While the inconsistency of Sharp's definition with the definitions

of more “principled” practitioners is not a problem for his own theory, the inevitable presence of violence as a consequence *and component* of many of his methods suggests a critical inconsistency at the heart of his philosophy. Sharp acknowledges that the historical practitioners of these methods (as for example, general strikes in the labor movement) never claimed them as “nonviolent”; for Sharp, this presents a sort of curious oversight. Given the ubiquitous presence of some form of violence in the actual application of these methods, however, participants may have had more obvious reasons for not claiming them as nonviolent: they weren’t.

George Lakey, a contemporary of Sharp, makes a similar claim in his description of the May 1968 events in France: “There was astonishingly little violence by the students and workers, and also less violence by the agents of repression than one might expect in a situation so threatening to the state. Estimations place the number of dead at five to ten, in a month-long struggle by millions! *The three weapons most used in the struggle were strike, occupation, and demonstration - all nonviolent methods.*” (Lakey 36, my emphasis)

Regrettably, defining strikes, occupations, and demonstrations as nonviolent does not make them so. Lakey quickly contradicts himself in typifying demonstrations as nonviolent in his own description of the events in Paris (30) which began with around 100 militants clashing with police. As events escalated, the demonstrations remained noninjurious (though not noninjured – including fatally), but hardly “nonviolent” by any definition:

A major impetus to the movement occurred the night of May 10, when thousands of students returned to the Latin Quarter from a march and *attempted to encircle the police* who were surrounding the Sorbonne. A few of the students began to build barricades. The action spread quickly. Paving stones were torn up, cars were overturned, and any

materials lying around were pressed into service in the dozens of barricades erected that night. The students repeated their demand that the police leave the Sorbonne. Instead, the police began to clear the streets, taking barricade after barricade with the help of concussion grenades, heavy use of tear gas, and truncheons. Indignant residents threw flowerpots at the police and gave water for relief from the tear gas to the students. (31)

Lakey's own analysis makes clear that the very violence of the conflict between students and police was instrumental in the massive escalation of the conflict into a potential revolution. Even if such events are included within Lakey's category of "astonishingly little violence" within certain limited phases of the conflicts, his analysis acknowledges them as integral to the later, less directly violent phases as police had less forceful means of repression available during the mobilizations of millions. Doubtlessly participants prefer to outnumber police such that their force is difficult to repress; can this "nonviolent" phase, though, be isolated from the violence of clashes which brought them about? Both Sharp and Lakey frequently commit such inconsistencies of selection, acknowledged only through the telling ubiquity of qualifiers like "less" and "mostly" in their empirical studies; such inclusion of "little violence" within the category of nonviolence reveals that *violence* is not the essential factor under study in these approaches. If limited violence is not necessarily detrimental, as these passages aver, might it be worth discussing in less dichotomous vocabulary what determines these limits? This inclusion also calls into question the "slippery slope" claims of contemporary nonviolence advocates such as Hedges, even as they cite these studies; for such advocates, to whom this study will soon return, even rude language by suddenly qualifying within an undifferentiated category of "violence," merits easy analogies with murder and catastrophic warfare.

Violence is not only present and instrumental in “nonviolence” of the massive revolutionary sort; indeed, few serious political confrontations have occurred without it in some measure. Regarding labor strikes, held up by Sharp as absolutely central in the history of nonviolent struggle, and a vital proof of its inherent efficacy and overall superiority, the turn-of-the-century anarchist theorist Voltairine De Cleyre writes as a first-person witness:

Now everybody knows that a strike of any size means violence. No matter what any one's ethical preference for peace may be, he knows it will not be peaceful. If it's a telegraph strike, it means cutting wires and poles, and getting fake scabs in to spoil the instruments. If it is a steel rolling mill strike, it means beating up the scabs, breaking the windows, setting the gauges wrong, and ruining the expensive rollers together with tons and tons of material. If it's a miners' strike, it means destroying tracks and bridges, and blowing up mills. If it is a garment workers' strike, it means having an unaccountable fire, getting a volley of stones through an apparently inaccessible window, or possibly a brickbat on the manufacturer's own head. If it's a street-car strike, it means tracks torn up or barricaded with the contents of ash-carts and slop-carts, with overturned wagons or stolen fences, it means smashed or incinerated cars and turned switches. If it is a system federation strike, it means "dead" engines, wild engines, derailed freights, and stalled trains. If it is a building trades strike, it means dynamited structures. And always, everywhere, all the time, fights between strike-breakers and scabs against strikers and strike-sympathizers, between People and Police. (“Direct Action”, quoted by Piven in Seferiades & Johnston, 20)

Even those demonstrations widely touted as examples of “the power of nonviolence” are perhaps only nominally so. Frank, an Occupy Seattle participant who, like the participant whose quotation opened this chapter, was led to question a long commitment to nonviolence through his participation in Occupy, acknowledged long-standing doubts about the honesty of claiming certain “nonviolent” tactics as such. Describing his activity in the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999, he said,

Everything was advertised as strictly nonviolent, the power of nonviolence, but what were we doing? Here we are, these delegates are trying to get into the convention center, and we’re forcibly preventing them from entering, they’re trying to push through our line and we’re actually pushing them back, hitting them with our crossed arms, to keep them from doing so. I mean, it’s fine, but can you really call that *nonviolence*? I’m really not sure.

(Frank interview)

In a work widely acknowledged as *the* reference work in nonviolence scholarship in our time, offering the first serious quantitative study demonstrating the “power of nonviolence” as positive content, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) take a more nuanced stance than their predecessors. The scholars acknowledge the co-presence of violence and nonviolence in social movement phenomena, but deny that this implies any interdependency as elements constituting larger processes. (I will argue later than some advocates of “violence” commit, by accepting such dichotomous categorization in the course of reversing it, exactly the same error.) Chenoweth and Stephan confidently assert the clear distinction between categories, despite their complementary presence in phenomena, as easily recoverable through nonviolence scholarship:

[T]he separation of campaigns into violent and nonviolent for analytical purposes is problematic. Few campaigns, historically, have been purely violent or nonviolent, and many resistance movements, particularly protracted ones, have had violent and nonviolent periods. Armed and unarmed elements often operate simultaneously in the same struggle. Still, it is possible to distinguish between different resistance types based on the actors involved (civilians or armed militants) and the methods used (nonviolent or violent). Scholars have identified the unique characteristics of these different forms of struggle, and we feel comfortable characterizing some resistance campaigns as primarily violent and others and primarily nonviolent.” (Chenoweth & Stephan 16)

What, then, constitutes these “comfortable” scholarly findings which finally promise to elucidate the boundary between violence and nonviolence, particularly in regards to the ambiguous status of noninjurious counterhegemonic violence, as for example riots? At times, the authors rely on circular logic, either their own, as in “Campaigns where a significant amount of violence occurred are not considered nonviolent,” (13) or that of previous scholars, ultimately replaying disavowal of an undefined Other: “Sharp defines nonviolent resistance as ‘a technique of socio-political action for applying power in a conflict without the use of violence’ (1999, 567).” (12) At times, as in the block quote above, the presence of arms (“armed militants” as opposed to “civilians”, “armed” versus “unarmed”) defines violence, while at others their definition seems quite a bit more general, as in, “Violent tactics include bombings, shootings, kidnappings, physical sabotage such as the destruction of infrastructure, and *other types of physical harm of people and property.*” (13, my emphasis) *Why* such a grouping of disparate actions might form a coherent category for the basis of a massive research project, is a question never addressed.

Chenoweth and Stephan's quantitative findings arrive at an unambiguous (if hardly an absolute) implication: looking at many thousands of conflicts, nonviolence has proven more than twice as effective as violence. Their methods are rigorous: "We have established rigorous standards of inclusion for each campaign. The nonviolent campaigns were initially gathered from an extensive review of the literature on nonviolent conflict and social movements. Then these data were corroborated with multiple sources, including encyclopedias, case studies, and the bibliography by Carter, Clark, and Randle (2006)." (15) In case their own approach may have proved incomplete, they consulted experts to check their results: "Finally, we circulated the data set among experts in nonviolent conflict." (15) That these experts might share professional and ideological predispositions to reproduce an ambiguous definition of violence is not addressed. Only by looking at the data set forming the basis of their study, an astounding disparity is revealed between their stated definition, and the functional definition of violence at work in their study:

Violent campaign data are derived primarily from Kristian Gleditsch's (2004) updates to the Correlates of War (COW) database on intrastate wars, Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson's (2009) database of insurgencies, and Kalev Sepp's (2005) list of major counterinsurgency operations. *The COW data set requires all combatant groups to be armed and to have sustained a thousand battle deaths during the course of the conflict, suggesting that the conflict is necessarily violent.* (16, my emphasis)

How assumably inter-state or large-scale civil warfare, in which *both* sides are *armed* and suffer massive casualties might be conflated with "the destruction of infrastructure, and other types of physical harm of people and property" is stunning – particularly given, taking the US (Gilje) as

an example, the *great* predominance of riots - which would be unambiguously included in their stated definition but certainly not in their functional one - over wars. The authors acknowledge the imperfection of their terms: “Our book demonstrates that scholars can take a reasoned look at the relative effectiveness of nonviolent and violent resistance, even if the measures of such terms are imperfect.” (17) Still, the disparity in claim and evidence calls into question even the basic categories through which the study argues. Such a “reasoned look” has gone on to inform substantial public conversation applying to actions utterly irrelevant to the actual categories guiding the study.

Ultimately, the incommensurate definitions of non/violence may prove to be impossible to overcome within current hegemonic framings, and not the result of simple opportunistic manipulations. As I will argue in the next chapter, an examination of foundational texts in liberal ideology reveals that violence functions as a constitutive guarantee, through external threat, of the equivalence of commodity and body. However, given the inherent *embarrassment* of acknowledging this equivalence in an ideology grounding itself on humanistic legitimacy claims, mystification of this equivalence is as necessary as its continuation; as the “God term” (Burke 1950) of liberal belief, “property” (as “one’s own,” originally connotating both body and commodity) can neither disown nor openly avow this equivalency. This constitutive contradiction is but another face of Marx’s famous claim (reiterated by Habermas (1989)) that the essential tension between this claim to universal humanism, and the very non-universal nature of the articulation of property relations, is a tension at the heart of bourgeois ideology which will ultimately summon its demise. As the next chapter will go on to argue, it is precisely this embarrassment social movement participants wish to bring to public view in their

performances of sacrilege of non-bodily property. For now, I examine the rhetorical strategies by which nonviolent discourse imputes negative valuation to its Other.

Condemnatory Equivalizing

One of the things that the people considered to be, quote unquote the top of society, what they oftentimes do to all of us, is they criminalize us, and they say that you guys are just a bunch of criminals, hippies, dirty anarchists, whatever, protesters. But we sometimes do the same thing back. And we demonize those at the top, and we say, you're just a bunch of imperialists, capitalists, pigs, racists, and so there's no effort at dialogue, not an effort made at trying to understand the other person's perspective. —

Kazu Haga, Dec 15 debate

When Gandhi disavowed any inclination to bring harm upon the British in India, he may have appealed to an egalitarianism of universal humanity, but his moves were in fact a tactical move within a larger rhetorical strategy of reversal; anyone, whether the war-weary British or the international audience, watching the news clips of British troops beating in the skulls of Indians publicly performing their spiritual strength entertained no ambiguities who were the truly civilized, and who the obviously brutish. Gandhi's great discursive victory was not, then, one of asserting equality where colonial discourse had devaluated the captive population, as much as it was one of reversing it. This was precisely the strategy that King took up from Gandhi: his words of universal love for humanity worked all the more powerfully to contrast with the monstrosity of Birmingham dogs and fire hoses, performing nothing resembling equivalence to Bull Conner and his order, but an undeniable *superiority* before the courts of northern liberal

television and newspapers which King avowed as his audience. Indeed, for his many professions of faith in converting the position of one's enemy through an assertion of triumphant humanity, King certainly never claimed that Conner himself might be the target of his egalitarian appeals of superiority. According to historian Adam Fairclough (2001), King's approach in fact failed in the 1963 Albany, Georgia, campaign, as Chief of Police Pritchett himself professed to a belief in "nonviolence" and instructed his officers to "employ a 'nonviolent approach,'" by beating demonstrators only after they had been removed to jail (269) and setting high cash bonds for protester arrests to delay their release until after demonstrations (270). These prescient practices, so akin to today's strategic incapacitation approach, defeated King's tactics and left the SCLC on the verge of "imminent collapse." (271) "Albany," according to Fairclough, "disabused the Civil Rights Movement of its more romantic notions about nonviolence." (270) What, then, would be the use of such rhetorical strategies under contemporary exigencies, with no distant audience external to the conflicts at hand, no superior executive force which might be called in against the bigoted locals, and film reels, TV cameras, and newspapers that would never deign carry on the message even if such an audience were found?

As elucidated in the previous section, nonviolence has continually mobilized the ambiguity in definition of "violence" to constitute and then disavow its Other; this disavowal would carry little effect, however, were it not linked to imputation of the Other with values repulsive to its audience. Such valuation has consistently relied on the rhetorical move of *equivalization*, in which, most frequently, social movement participants who might be construed as fellow travelers are revealed as equally condemnatory as the shared enemy to which they seem to be commonly opposed.

In what may well have been first use of “non-resistance” as a secular concept, adapted from Quaker doctrine, William Lloyd Garrison (Mayer 2008) declared in an early Abolitionist statement his opposition to the violence of State involvement in wars and slavery, refusing any participation, other than that obliged by force, which non-resistants could not ethically resist, in the course of which precluding his wing of the abolitionist movement from entanglement in the political-party vulgarities of his day. In the midst of several paragraphs detailing his position of opposition to state practices of violence, Garrison suddenly moves without transition to distance himself from Jacobinism, a powerful reference to The Terror, which, occurring less than half a century before, was still within living memory.

We advocate no Jacobinical doctrines. The spirit of Jacobinism is the spirit of retaliation, violence, and murder. It neither fears God nor regards man. We would be filled with the spirit of Christ. If we abide by our fundamental principle of not opposing evil by evil we cannot participate in sedition, treason, or violence. We shall submit to every ordinance and every requirement of government, except such as are contrary to the commands of the Gospel, and in no case resist the operation of law, except by meekly submitting to the penalty of disobedience. (quoted in Tolstoy 5)

However catastrophic The Terror proved to the development of the Revolution, however, the “chain of equivalence” sits oddly. Its imputed doctrine of “sedition” and “treason,” of “fear[ing] neither God nor man,” in other words, of disobedience to ruling authority, is suddenly equated with the mobilization of masses of subjects by and for the purposes of just such authorities. Within his context, Garrison was very likely seeking to implicate with these charges other participants within the Abolitionist movement with whom he had just broken; his charge that

their differences in approach (which, as noted above, were in any case inconsistent) were somehow analogous to the catastrophes of inter-state warfare were odd enough for their time; that the *topos* has remained so flexible and robust over time is yet more puzzling. In time, Count Tolstoy, a major figure in the discourse of nonviolence whom Gandhi named as his greatest influence, and who himself cited Garrison as a central influence on his thought, asserted in *The Kingdom of God is Within You*,

[T]he principle of non-resistance to evil by force has been attacked by two opposing camps: the conservatives, because this principle would hinder their activity in resistance to evil as applied to the revolutionists, in persecution and punishment of them; the revolutionists, too, because this principle would hinder their resistance to evil as applied to the conservatives and the overthrowing of them. The conservatives were indignant at the doctrine of non-resistance to evil by force hindering the energetic destruction of the revolutionary elements, which may ruin the national prosperity; the revolutionists were indignant at the doctrine of non-resistance to evil by force hindering the overthrow of the conservatives, who are ruining the national prosperity. (Tolstoy 39)

Given Tolstoy's central thesis in the book, that "government is violence" and thus that the Gospels demand a stateless society, this statement comes as a surprise. Tolstoy has just been arguing for many pages, along with the revolutionists, that the conservatives *really are* "ruining the national prosperity," and that the conservatives claims were *dishonest* in the very claims he cites in this passage, but suddenly, the revolutionaries have gained analogical equivalence to the very systematized violence which they, together with Tolstoy, oppose. Tolstoy, who might have been mistaken, with his common vision of the future, as advocating a dangerous position of

advocacy for the revolutionaries and “their resistance to evil as applied to the conservatives and the overthrowing of them,” has suddenly and quickly distanced himself from such suspicion. The disavowal allows Tolstoy to clarify that, whatever his vision, *only* spiritual means of transformation are permissible. By classing *any* material process which might bring about such a transformation as “violent” and explicitly defining this as on a moral equivalent with the Czar’s police, Tolstoy perfects a foreclosure of his own vision, safely containing it as an edifying dream which works to enhance one’s reputation as a (very literal) *idealist*, insured with the reassuring guarantee that *by definition*, such dreams are constituted precisely out of the impossibility of their material realization. Any advocate of Tolstoy’s vision who puts forth a *material* plan for achieving it is thus put at a safe distance.

The frequent disavowal by nonviolence of rioting in particular within the analogy with warfare, noted above in Hedges’ and Gitlin’s words, belies the long-standing recognition of the stark differences in origin of the phenomena. “War,” as disenfranchised General Smedley D. Butler (2009) famously wrote, “is a racket,” organized at the behest of elites, whether in its inter- or intra-state forms. Riot, in stark contrast, has always been unambiguously a means of claim-making associated with the otherwise poor and powerless. In Piven’s pithy axiom, “the long history of protest movements is in fact mainly the history of mobs and riots.” (in Seferiades & Johnston, 20) In analyzing more than 4,000 riots in American history, Paul Gilje (1996) documents and analyzes events that time and again demonstrate that aggrieved parties with little access to other means of claim-making resort to riot as their means of articulation, not the least in the formative years of the labor movement:

Even in the opening years of the nineteenth century, just as workers refined their strike tactics, coercion was needed to enforce unity and to persuade owners of the legitimacy of the laborers' demands. That coercion frequently took the form of rioting - whether it was tarring and feathering a recalcitrant shoemaker in Baltimore, or brawling with strikebreakers on New York docks. Force was often garnered to meet force, and riots and violence represent the signposts of American labor history from the 1830s to the twentieth century... much of the history of American labor is written in blood as riots.

(3)

Current catastrophic associations with riots are tied up with the urban riots of the 1960s and 70s, which threw the country into disarray with their intensity and reach, as examined in the Kerner Commission Report. (Wicker 1968) The 1992 Rodney King riots far surpassed in every measure – economic damage, arrests, injuries, and deaths – *any* riot in the history of the country. (Gooding-William) By contrast, rioting had once been so commonplace a means of claim-making of the poor as to be rather banal.

Rioting never became legitimate... all moments of popular disorder were viewed as potentially dangerous... Yet having made this qualification, what stands out in examining eighteenth-century popular disorder is not the doubts and threats it posed; instead, it is the general acceptance of the mob as a quasi-legitimate part of the standing social and political order...

Anglo-Americans never forgot the upheaval of the mid seventeenth century. The main ideological legacy of that political disruption was a belief in the need to limit the power of government... To protect liberty it was necessary to limit the power of government.

One means of doing so was through the people in the street. Commonwealth writers recognized that mobs could create problems since ‘one may at any Time gain an interest in a Mob with a Barrel of Beer’ or ‘by Means of a few odd Sounds, that mean nothing, or something very wicked.’ But some popular disorder was preferable to granting the monarch too much power, since ‘all tumults are in their nature, and must be, short in duration’ and ‘must soon subside, or settle into some order,’ while ‘Tyranny may last for ages, and go on destroying till at last it has nothing left to destroy.’ In other words, rioting could be tolerated because it offered an important check on the power of government. (Gilje 20-1)

Even in its most dramatic manifestations, riots were unambiguously interpreted as public expressions of grievance by the disprivileged.⁷ In the hugely violent 1849 Astor Place riot, whose immediate cause, oddly, was an interaction of two actors on stage, one commentator interpreted the events as evidence that “hatred of wealth and privilege is increasing over the world, and ready to burst out whenever there is the slightest occasion.” (Gilje 74-5) It was, as Gilje explains,

⁷ Clearly, this claim could merit an extended study of its own. Gruesome apparent counter-examples such as the persistent race riots in South Asia, mob violence of whites over people of color in the US (articulated, at times, within labor or anti-war claims), or Kristallnacht all rush to mind. Without here fully analyzing the idiosyncratic nature of hegemonic and non-counterhegemonic riots, two things are to be noted: 1) Paramilitary violence, such as that commanded by the Brownshirts on Kristallnacht, or Ku Klux Klan-led attacks and lynchings in which local or regional elites and state actors play a key role, can be analytically distinguished from riots by their involvement with elite command structures; such actions are better considered crypo-state violence than the nonstate violence of riots. 2) Quite clearly, actors may be disprivileged relative to elites by certain measures, yet possess social privileges over other demographics in society, who indeed may form the target of their violence. The above formulation certainly does not claim that the distance from channels of decision-making which drives certain demographics to express their political grievances through riot somehow dictates the targets of their violence, or makes this violence immune to manipulation by elites. The history of race in America, particularly in the period between Reconstruction and Civil Rights, provides an incontrovertible illustration of both potentials. To take such examples as typical of rioting, however, is contradicted by the literature, which, however horrific these examples, reveal them as relatively exceptional. For an analysis claiming sports violence as an example of riot enacted by actors in no sense disprivileged, see *Among the Thugs* (Buford 1992). Without here attempting to assert any inherent characteristic of riots other than that they are generally enacted by those without access to less risky means of influence, it is to be noted that, as with any other rhetorical phenomena, the meaning of riots can only be interpreted in dynamic interaction with their context.

only by gradually enfranchising sectors of the population that such claim-making became gradually mediated through institutions.

Persistent disorder strengthened popular faith in mobs. Rioting had proven itself a useful tool of resistance against a government that seemed distant, alien, and intent on usurping the liberty of the people. Moreover, the experience with crowds during the 1760s and 1770s had helped to translate long-standing plebian notions of antiauthoritarianism into an egalitarianism that gave the people preeminence in society and government. Although whig [sic] leaders often had opposed excessive rioting, and the people out of doors were defeated in incidents like those at Fort Wilson, *many common folk continued to believe that the tumultuous crowd held a special place as an expression of the people's immediate will*. Whig leaders accepted the centrality of the 'people' in the novel world order of the 1780s and 1790s. They argued, however, that the new republican forms of government now made politics out of doors unnecessary. With the government theoretically in the hands of the people, the people no longer needed to riot. (51 – my emphasis)

In addition to the Jacobin-revolution, State-challenger, and riot-war equivalences, the personal-institutional equivalization appears persistently throughout the history of nonviolence, particularly in its "principled nonviolence" variant, seeks to equate conduct across the personal scale to the institutional scale. In its purest form, personal-ethical standards of conduct do not claim to influence institutions, but simply act out of faith for lack of alternatives. In Tolstoy's classic statement of this position,

“ ‘Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra’ - ‘Do what's right, come what may’ - is an expression of profound wisdom. We each can know indubitably what we ought to do,

but what results will follow from our actions we none of us either do or can know.

Therefore it follows that, besides feeling the call of duty, we are further driven to act as duty bids us by the consideration that we have no other guidance, but are totally ignorant of what will result from our action.” (Tolstoy 74)

Tolstoy here asserts self-aware action as dependent solely upon perceived “call of duty” (which, apparently, is exempt from any such potential disastrous misperception, as “we can know indubitably” its message) and independent from consequence establishes itself as the basic concept of what has been termed “principled nonviolence.” That “total ignorance” of consequences should inform any act forms a sort of “subject-not-supposed-to-know,” a subject with only *ethical*, but not *political*, agency. Wendy Brown (2008) classifies as depoliticizing *personalization* such political resignation in place of public engagement, which removes matters properly political from shared deliberation in making them a matter of psychological constitution or preference. That personalistic discourses, reframing the political as matters of as psychic “wellbeing” should prove vociferous under neoliberal conditions was already predicted by strategic nonviolence theorist George Lakey, whose criticism of “principled nonviolence” relies on the prophetic diagnosis of the particular anomie later characteristic of the affective regime of neoliberalism:

Many Americans, especially in the middle class and in the counter-culture, are like psychic hypochondriacs: they constantly have an inner ear cocked to their emotional condition, testing to see where the aches and pains are today. In the name of liberation (from “neurosis” or from “the straight world”), they seem anxiously driven on their search for a continued sense of well-being. Although this ‘hypochondria’ results basically

from the dissolution of Western culture, it is intensified by mobility and individualism, both of which drive the person even more back upon him- or herself. (Lahey 81)

Considering the renunciation of political agency as a form of humiliation clarifies how it certainly carries benefits for those embarrassed by their own social position, as in cultural critic Wayne Koestenbaum's (2011) analysis:

Humiliation is bliss if the experience of largeness or magnitude has become overwhelming or unpleasant and you need relief. When magnitude hurts, humiliation (or demotion) qualifies as remedy. For Shakespeare's querulous King Lear, humiliation provides the bonus pleasure of being exiled on the heath, after his venomous daughters kick him out of their castles; at last, after kingship's ordeal, he can enjoy the aftermath balm of wandering with fellow madmen in the storm. Bliss, to be disqualified from power! (Bliss, perhaps not. But at least Lear relaxes, and rediscovers language, and redefines the meaning of internal sovereignty.) (14)

That such personalistic approaches might prove inappropriate to social movements whose primary rhetorical purpose is to assert the possibility of public agency against an ideological regime of deagentalized administerialism is not surprising. The bliss of agential renunciation holds considerably less charm for those whose concerns stem more from *lack* of power. For such an audience, distancing themselves from agency aggravates, rather than ameliorates, their suffering.

The assertion is often made that, by modeling peaceful behavior on a personal level, social structures and institutions such as "the State", capitalism, patriarchy, the Red Army, etc. etc. might be compelled to mimic such a morally admirable model. That such formations lack

both any site of agency, or even perception, of such a model is a dilemma not addressed. Even public enactments of such “modelling” behavior have little purchase, as they are easily recuperated, so long as they are not disruptive enough to prove *intolerable*. As noted by Schock in the previous section, representative democracies often enact strategies which neutralize even the most public performances of such behavior. In Lakey’s words, “Unfortunately, the strategy of change by example has most of its power muted by tolerance. When governments learn to tolerate peculiar sects a kind of accommodation takes place: the government stops interfering in the business of the sect, and vice versa... The growth of the new way declines because the example is taken for granted.” (Lakey 82) Marcuse famously termed just this strategy “repressive tolerance.” In short, in a sort of “declining rate of profit” law of social movements, recuperation through such a repressive tolerance of social movements creates an exigency of innovative disruption for social movements, a notion to which I will return in the last chapter. For now, it is necessary to finally address what “magic” it is that traditional nonviolence wielded so efficaciously, and why it seems to evade the grasp of contemporary nonviolence.

Nonviolence as a Strategy of Condescension

[I]n November, the day after Lieutenant John Pike of the University of California, Davis, put a name and a face on police barbarity with the pepper-spraying seen around the world, when chancellor Linda Katehi left a public meeting where she refused to resign and walked to her car, thousands of students sat on the ground lining her route in utter silence - *unthreatening*, judgmental, bearing witness. (Gitlin 155, my emphasis)

In holding up the silent protest at UC Davis as the epitome of nonviolent protest, Gitlin makes an odd presumption: how is it that the presence of thousands of protesters, their glares barely surfacing in the dark, the trauma and rage of the day-before's police attack still thick in the air, is to be read as *nontbreathening*? Indeed, Katehi's face in the video visibly quakes with her attempt to maintain composure under the nearly unbearable encompassing gaze of silent rage. Is it not precisely the imminent potential for overwhelming force over Katehi that makes the gathered crowd's refusal to carry it out so powerful? Would the statement have had anything like the same power if the number of students had been small enough to be demonstrably unable to inflict harm, or if, for example, they had all been safely isolated behind a fence? Contrary to Gitlin's reading, the contingency of the protesters' decision, the material performance of agency through refraining based precisely on their *capability to be other than nonviolent*, that imbues the action with meaning and power. Gitlin's misreading is symptomatic of the discursive slippage of nonviolence, manifest in the Occupy movement.

In seeking to understand the "strange magic" of nonviolence, this section will allege that the eloquence of nonviolence works by positing a rather unstable binary and disavowing the persistently intimate Other. The eloquence of nonviolence works precisely through highlighting the presence of violence in a form of Derridean palimpsest; by being dramatically disavowed, violence is rhetorically foregrounded through reference as a threat present through denial. Gandhi acknowledged this dependency in many of his axioms, such as that "nonviolence is a weapon of the strong," and "the weak can never forgive, forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." It is not that nonviolence magically summons a strong subject; rather, a subject must be 'strong' – that is, capable of *choosing* nonviolence among other options – before nonviolence is an option. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his early "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," acknowledges this

dependency quite explicitly. “First, it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or *merely because he lacks the instruments of violence*, he is not truly nonviolent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight.” (Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, & Schulz 43)

King’s admission here that one must possess the instruments of violence to practice nonviolence should not be read figuratively as a simple restatement of not having a cowardly character. King’s choice of “or” to set apart the conditions of nonviolence from the courageous character of its practitioners belies this reading, for the “instruments” are a thing apart from fearlessness; the lack of development of the “instruments of violence” phrase does not suggest any figurative interpretation, but only a quite literal one. As in his friendships and collaboration with Robert Williams and the Deacons for Defense, (Carter 317, 73) each of whom espoused an armed approach to Civil Rights, King acknowledges the non-dichotomous nature of non/violence just in the moments when he performs disavowal. That King understood the presence of an immediate threat of violence as a necessary condition of effective nonviolence can be heard in his frequent pairings of disavowing lamentation and presencing-warning, as for example in his telegram to President Kennedy in 1962: “I will continue to urge my people to be nonviolent in the face of bitterest opposition, but I fear that my counsel will fall on deaf ears if the federal government does not take decisive action. If Negroes are tempted to turn to retaliatory violence, we shall see a dark night of rioting all over the South.” (Carson 166)

In “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” King legitimizes his own campaign to his critics through the same disavowal/presencing approach in a retrospective stance, invoking the “nightmare” of universal race war to demonstrate the power of his own approach:

If this [nonviolence] philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as ‘rabble-rousers’ and ‘outside agitators’ those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies – a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare...
(197)

The “letter” goes so far as to state the violent power undergirding his own nonviolent persuasion as a threat, recognizable in the “this is not a threat but” formula: “If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history.” (198)

Even King’s most famous speech also contained a phrase quite close to a direct threat. King speaks with surprising aggressiveness in the same section when he extols “the marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community...” (225), advising that “[t]hose who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.” (ibid) Along with King’s multiple passionate indictments of police brutality and entrenched institutional racism in this passage, these words from perhaps the most famous speech of the 20th century have been largely erased from public memory, perhaps as their gravity has not abated over time.

As political scientist Harold Nieburg observed in 1969, the increase in rioting worked to bring King from a place at the margins to a place of central influence. “All of those many institutional leaders who refused to bargain with Martin Luther King Jr in the 1950s needed him desperately in their attempts to contain the eruptions of black militancy in the 1960s, and they had to meet many of his terms.” (Nieburg 58) Later in his book, Nieburg analyzes the logic of disavowal/presencing in a passage worth quoting at length.

The moderate leader is placed in a position of minimum risk and maximum effectiveness, that of playing the role of ‘responsible leader.’ He can bargain with formal authorities and with other groups of the society in this way: ‘You must accept our just complaints and you must deal with us; otherwise, we will not be able to control our people.’ While playing this role, the reformist leader may not be unhappy to have his prophecies fulfilled by a few psychotic teen-agers. Events which demonstrate violence, and thus induce other elites to make concessions, do not have to be planned. Once the emotions of a real social movement are churned up, the problem is to keep them from happening.

The irresponsible elements are, of course, disowned, but the bargaining power of the responsible leaders is enhanced... This is a healthy mode of exploiting the demonstration of violence without condoning it... Most followers in social movements will follow responsible leadership through the give-and-take of compromise because they share the general fear of unlimited violence and counterviolence, which can bring unpredictable results and defeat all rational goals. (128)

Is this rhetorical pairing of disavowal and presencing to be understood as simply hypocritical? The observation of the dependency of nonviolence on its purported opposite implies far more than mere dismissive demystification; indeed, just as violence threatens to lead to “unpredictable results and [the] defeat [of] all rational goals,” nonviolence, under the necessary conditions, enacts an unparalleled eloquence. Given certain exigencies, Gandhi and King’s performances of presencing disavowal multiplied the power of their organizing precisely by gathering and demonstrating a great deal of material rage, and going further to perform a very visible agency in *not* activating this rage – a potentiality seen activated, for example, in the massive riots which resulted after both Gandhi and King were assassinated.

In Birmingham, King additionally acknowledged that riots worked very effectively to foreground the crisis of systemic violence, bringing about productive interventions. “Terrified by the very destructiveness brought on by their own acts, the city police appealed for state troopers to be brought into the area. Many of the white leaders now realized that something had to be done.” (212) When Martin’s brother A.D. King’s home was bombed during the Birmingham campaign the same night as Martin Luther’s own hotel, in an attempt to disrupt the pact which their negotiations had just brought out, King observed that

Fighting began. Stones were hurled at the police. Cars were wrecked and fires started... I listened as [A.D.] described the erupting tumult and catastrophe in the streets of the city. Then, in the background as he talked, I heard a swelling burst of beautiful song. Feet planted in the rubble of debris, threatened by criminal violence and hatred, followers of the movement were singing ‘We Shall Overcome.’ I marveled that in a moment of such tragedy the Negro could still express himself with hope and with faith.

The following evening, a thoroughly aroused President told the nation that the Federal government would not allow extremists to sabotage a fair and just pact. He ordered three thousand federal troops into position near Birmingham and made preparations to federalize the Alabama National Guard. This firm action stopped the troublemakers in their tracks. (215)

The passage is complex.⁸ Though vehemently distancing himself from the rioters by equating them with the bombers through the ambiguity of phrases like “criminal violence and hatred,” “such extremists,” and “the troublemakers,” King also acknowledges through the narrative that federal military intervention – always one of his explicit goals – came about as a direct result of the rioting, and not only because of the pact. In order for the violence to be overcome and superseded in the indisputably powerful transformation overheard over his brother’s telephone, the violence had to have been performed in the first place.

In King’s later years, his response to riots and other sorts of political violence deepened in complexity. In speaking to youth on the streets of an unnamed location who had just rioted, King, while maintaining his disagreement with their acts, expressed a reluctance to condemn their acts: “Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government.” (338) King expressed respect and even a bold sympathy with the rioters of Watts, if not actually commending the riots

⁸ As King’s “Autobiography” was compiled and in many sections composed by Clayborne Carson, who was trusted with exclusive access to King’s personal documents, the word choice in this passage may be more Carson’s than King’s. Unless otherwise noted, all other passages are direct quotations from King.

themselves, recognizing in them some of the same rhetorical mechanisms which will be explored in future chapters:

The looting in Watts was a form of social protest very common through the ages as a dramatic and destructive gesture of the poor toward symbols of their needs... There was joy among the rioters of Watts, not shame... They were destroying a physical and emotional jail; they had asserted themselves against a system which was quietly crushing them into oblivion and now they were 'somebody.' As one young man put it, 'We know that a riot is not the answer, but we've been down here suffering for a long time and nobody cared. Now at least they know we're here. A riot may not be *the* way, but it is *a* way.' (293)

Although the final line, in a Vygotskian citational voice simultaneously King's and not King's, riot is acknowledged to play a serious role in bringing about social change. King was still far from acknowledging this role as a necessary or preferential one, but his criticism was clearly far more muted than many of those claiming his legacy.

King was one of the first major public figures to express passionate opposition to the Vietnam War, even going so far as to express open support for political recognition of the National Liberation Army (Carson 111, "Beyond Vietnam"). In reference to the global wave of anti-imperialist revolutions, King avowed unabashedly, "[t]he shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before... We in the West must support these revolutions." (341; cf. also 111) At the same time, King began to frequently speak of racism and the material conditions of Black communities as internal colonialism: "The Northern ghetto had become a type of colonial area. The colony was powerless because all important decisions affecting the

community were made from the outside. Many of its inhabitants had their daily lives dominated by the welfare worker and the policeman.” (301) King, losing popularity to the growing Black Power movement, continued to be critical of its approach at the same time that his language grew surprisingly similar to it: if armed struggles against colonialism abroad were justified and commendable, and the domestic situation was best described as internal colonialism, might King have been suggesting an eventual break with nonviolence under these new conditions? Near the end of King’s life, he began to discuss “[n]ew tactics which do not count on government goodwill”. (348) The phrase simultaneously acknowledges in deepening frustration that the tactics of the Southern campaigns had stalled out faced with issues of Northern poverty and foreign policy, and, astoundingly, a previous dependency on what is bitterly avowed as “government goodwill,” clearly indicating an immanent break in some form with his previous approach. In any case, King had certainly acknowledged by his death that the form of nonviolence with which he was synonymous was in fundamental ways dependent upon certain rhetorical conditions, conditions which did not transfer into his latest campaigns.

Leaving aside fruitless speculations concerning the political metamorphosis cut short by his assassination, I will now return to an analysis of nonviolence under those conditions in which it has undoubtedly proven effective. How might this pairing of disavowal and presencing, this “strange magic” which disowns as it asserts its own conditions, bring about such powerful effects? If not mere hypocrisy, how does this rhetorical strategy work? To appreciate the specific efficacy of nonviolence, I evoke Pierre Bourdieu’s analytical concept of “strategies of condescension,” (1991 68) which he defines as “those symbolic transgressions of limits which provide, at one and the same time, the benefits that result from conformity to a social definition and the benefits that result from transgression.” (124) Bourdieu came upon the concept in

seeking to explain an odd occurrence in his home region in France: on the occasion of a public commemoration of the provincial region's most renowned poet, the mayor of the town delivered a speech to the crowd in the local dialect, Béarnese, an event widely remarked on with admiration in the national press. Why, Bourdieu asks, would a mayor (evidently a native speaker of Béarnese) addressing a Béarnese-speaking audience about a Béarnese-speaking poet be so worthy of remark by Parisian journalists?

The answer, Bourdieu asserts, lies in precisely in the disprivileged status of Béarnese, and mobilizing the context of implications external to the local performance, known to any member of the audience or reader of the article. Since a speaker *only* of the dialect could never hope to accumulate anything like the social capital necessary to become an elected official, the mayor's use of Béarnese was performed before his audience a situated *choice* over the unmarked use of standard (Parisian) dialect in which all estimable affairs were conducted. Such strategies are “reserved for those who are sufficiently confident of their position in the objective hierarchies to be able to deny them without appearing to be ignorant or incapable of satisfying their demands,” (69) the “weapons of the strong,” not for those who “merely lack the instruments” of power. Moreover, given what Bourdieu terms the audience's “ascription” of fluency in Parisian external to the immediate “achievement” of Béarnese use in the local context, the mayor's use of Béarnese worked exactly to stress his command of Parisian in the absence of its performance. Were the mayor to be “suspected of resorting to the stigmatized language *faute de mieux*,” (69), he would have swiftly been excused of his duties. Rather, by relying on the audience's own surety of ascription of privilege in the very absence of its performance, the mayor's power of position is forcibly performed through the action of interpretation itself.

However much Gandhi spoke of the self-subsistent power of *satyagraha*, his Indian, British, and Global audiences could be ascribed to ascribe a rather contextual power (Remnath 2011) of the Axis armies and V2 rockets raining down on London, of the Bhagat Singhs and Chandrasekhar Azads growing and rivalling him in popularity domestically, and of widespread anti-colonial insurrectionary activity escalating across India. However much King insisted on the potency of his campaigns' own local performances of peaceful petition, even to the point of passively receiving the violence of batons, firehouses, and dogs with gestures of love, the audience can be assured to ascribe a power of enraged violence to (in King's words) "the square blocks of Negroes, a veritable sea of black faces" (Carson 213), the rage and not infrequently the riots of ghettos across the country, always standing just behind him. The passage above demonstrate that King in particular was never slow to remind his audiences of this constant presence. The peaceable surrender to British police truncheons and Bull Conner's dogs only articulated the more clearly that such superhuman forbearance could not be expected to last long.

This autonomy of ascription is precisely what is misrecognized as "strange magic" by many contemporary nonviolence advocates, as they naively forget, in both Gandhi's and King's contexts, to read the texts within their context of riots and murder, of a century of insurrectionary violence and rage, framing traditional nonviolence's narrative like an overwrought baroque frame glittering with gold and dripping with jewels. When "nonviolence" lapses into mere avoidance of conflict and risk, when, contrary to Gandhi and King, it hopes to achieve its goals not as a *substitute* for imminent potentialities of violence but in the absence of such potentialities, it lacks any efficacious rhetorical mechanism with which to make its appeal. Kenneth Burke (1950) accurately describes just this sort of thinking as "magic, in the discredited

sense of that term,” (42) which by his account involves the misapplication of symbolic resources outside of their appropriate conditions. “The realistic use of addressed language to *induce action in people* became the magical use of addressed language to *induce motion in things* (things by nature alien to purely linguistic orders of motivation).” (42) Similarly, the “strange magic” of nonviolence outside of its felicity conditions mimics the rituals of effective performances of the past without the context of power – of potential violence – which imbued these rituals with their meaning.

Nonviolence as Conflict Aversion

Pacifism is hugely influenced by *conflict aversion*. It really shows its middle classness in that way. There is a tremendous level of yearning for harmony because *many pacifists see conflict itself as the problem*. On the other hand, nonviolent revolutionaries welcome conflict, depend on it, and see polarization as absolutely essential. Whereas most pacifists hate polarization, we welcome it as long as polarization happens in such a way that we’re on the winning side! And then, of course, lots of pacifists are OK with capitalism, and nonviolent revolutionaries are not. They are strongly anticapitalist, and often antistate.

(Lakey, in Cornell 64)

In what Sharp refers to as “political jiu-jitsu,” traditional nonviolence practitioners, precisely by asserting “violence” as a central moral axis of significance and going on to posit themselves on the opposite pole from the state powers which attack them, are able to conquer what is famously referred to as “the moral high ground.” Gandhi, whose invocation of complex and always shifting re/significations and assemblages linked under *satyagraha* enacted the term’s most

significant discursive victory, in reversing the dichotomy of “civilized” and “savage” of colonization through the performance through globally-distributed newsreels of British iron truncheons crushing stoically ascetic skulls of *satyagrahis*. As noted in Chapter 1, however, it is precisely the presence of cameras willing to convey the images of sacrifice to a mass audience upon which the success of this performance depends; this presence, as ubiquitously noted by analysts of the Occupy movement (Gitlin), was precisely what was lacking in the movement’s plateau and dénouement. Consequently, in the absence of access to the set of resources which gave traditional nonviolence its power, participants who continued to define their approaches as nonviolent increased their reliance on what remained to them: performances of disavowal. Coming at a time when no public damage or threat of damage to property or bodies had yet occurred in Occupy by any measure, those asserting their disavowal from “violence” resorted to less-than-traditional ascriptions of the term in order to demonstrate their “commitment to nonviolence.”

Tim Anderson, founder and lead facilitator of the “Occupy Seattle Nonviolence Working Group,” explained in a November 16, 2011 interview on Seattle radio station KKNW (Anderson) how the movement had been “obviously taken over by the violent pro-violence anarchy people and others who are sympathetic,” and quite explicitly advocated a split, under his guidance, along these lines. Anderson does not allege that any violence had *occurred* from which he wished to distance himself; rather, he reads “violence” into what the constitutive Others “say and think”:

Tim: Where I think we are going is a division of the movement between those who are open to being violent and those who are not... [W]e're going to have to start a different

Occupy, so we're going to have a choice, if you want to be with the [pause] violent people, that's great, and if you think that's the way to go, go there. And then we're going to have one that's going to get really big, because we're going to break free of the violence, and we're going to have hundreds of thousands of people.

Interviewer: So what is that going to look like?

Tim: It's going to look like a picnic. It's going to look like a church service. It's going to look like a dance... I mean I can't predict the future, but this is what, yea, that's what we're looking for, is like a giant movement, where everybody can come and be welcome, unless you're violent, and you wanna control things and dominate from the dominator culture, because whatever, you're hurt because you don't remember that your dad molested you and so you're taking out that kind of anger, or you believe may legitimately that that's the way to go, subvert us retarded, middle-class, bourgeois people who don't know that if we don't throw rocks we won't win, that's what they say and what they think..."

In the absence of immediate differences of approach, some proponents of nonviolence in Occupy Seattle resorting to condemnation on hypothetical grounds. One proponent asked those not willing to sign onto a nonviolence proposal to join in the gesture of disavow (and imputation) of absurd crimes, or risk being themselves accused of them. "I have not seen a list of tactics which are included in what people call a diversity of tactics, as I have requested. Let me list some possibilities: 1) Murdering an opponent 2) Assaulting a police officer 3) Throwing a brick through a window and running away from a crowd of protestors 4) Spitting at a police officer 5) Killing a police horse" (correspondence) Another rather public figure, who public

documents later showed was meeting with the police to discuss Occupy, made similar condemnatory demands: “For me, individually, *given what I believe is actually being planned by some people associated with [Occupy Seattle]*, I would need OS to expressly disavow the use of violence against people or property, to be able to continue to work with and assist the movement/organization.” Kazu Haga, in the December 15 debate, voiced his concerns more specifically:

Without some sort of baseline, some principles to ground us, it could mean... Someone at the general assembly one night said, “Does that mean we would endorse someone kidnapping, torturing, and murdering the children of corporate executives?” None of us, none of us on this table I'm sure, would advocate for that. But without some common understandings, we don't know how far we're allowed to take it. (PPWN)

That noninjury was in play as a very clear *de facto* limit went apparently unnoticed by all parties. Bodily harm aside, “nonviolence” advocates seemed unaware that the sort of redistribution of wealth demanded by *all* participants of the Occupy movement likely implied a level of conflict, rather than conciliatory communication, with elites. While social movement theory has long recognized elite defection as an important factor in systemic change, occurring under sufficient pressure as to motivate their investment in the success of the future order and their divestment of the present one, contemporary nonviolence advocates often lapse into speaking of elite defection as occurring automatically, without reason, simply through the acceptance of a friendly invitation issued. Such voices often equated violence with *any* level of conflict with, even disapproval of authorities. Anderson clarified his own version of the social change process in his KKNW interview as not only non-conflictual, but even welcome by elites:

Trying to find a way to make an offer to the 1% that they *really* are so happy to have received. I think the 1% are just as scared as we are. [Interviewer: Of course they are, probably even more so.] They don't know how to get out of this mess. It feels like they were born with a silver spoon in their mouth and somebody has to have it and they're going to have it and there's no way to stop it. I think if we made them an offer which said something like, look: give us the keys to the army, we'll give them to all the moms, plus the Dalai Lama, they can take care of all the military and policing in the world. Something like that. What we'll give you, is your lifestyle, take a couple percentage of your money to have your lifestyle, you know when you're a billionaire, or a multi-millionaire, you don't need much, you know most of your money is going into business, you can have your lifestyle for 10 generations, but you can't have all that military power, let us run the military and the economy and the politics. ("Workforce")

Alice, a professional "Kingian nonviolence trainer" involved in Occupy Seattle, went so far as to present social change as *granted* by elites like recess in a classroom, with such change being withheld because of the misbehavior of other social movement participants, in a sort of maximalist interpretation of disavowal:

I just feel like, it's like in a classroom, when one kid is misbehaving, then none of you get to go to recess until they stop doing what they're doing and then, we're in the middle of recess, we're sitting in our desks, and little Jimmie is still acting up, and you're just like, "Come on, Jimmie! If just you cooperate, then all of us get to go on recess!" That's what I feel like both sides felt like, if you could *just* join our side, we'd all be united, and then we'd... but I see what you're saying, that diversity of tactics maybe could involve some

cooperation where some people are doing violence and others doing nonviolence, but the way that I see it is that, the whole classroom, in order for it to work, the whole classroom has to be playing that game. So that we can go to recess and then be free.

Such thin analyses reveal that the conditions which made traditional nonviolence so powerful in its moments are far from hand; rather than setting out to force the hand of authorities by threatening legitimacy crises, contemporary nonviolence adherents must, in conditions such as those above, hope for their benevolence. Discourses on the issue have found themselves tortured into knots, however, since just as the conditions which made traditional nonviolence effective – an honest and sympathetic media, greater authorities whose force can be brought to bear on lesser authorities in line with one’s interest, and a civil society self-aware of its disruptive powers rather than carefully managing their containment – so have the conditions rendering armed struggle suicidal *intensified*. As appeals of nonviolence devolve into moral cover for ineffectual conflict aversion, the stances of traditional “revolutionary nonviolence” find themselves alienated from those sharing their symbolic resources, and more akin to those opposed to them. Under such conditions, the goals and methods of “strategic” and particularly “revolutionary nonviolence,” with its affectual commitments of disruption and risk - begin to look oddly similar to those of riot. Only in rare fortuitous moments – moments generally arrived at only after a process of considerable violence - where “people’s power” has rendered police force inutile, media distortions mute, and “progressive” institutions unable to manage dissent are strategies of condescension still possible, such as in Ryan’s testimony about an Occupy Oakland march, with some tens of thousands, shutting down one of the West Coast’s largest economic pressure points:

I mean the port shut down, wasn't violence, although I think people were willing to receive, if there was ever a time were going to be sort of on the receiving end of violence where they wouldn't really fight back, it might actually have been at that time, just because there was so many people, that what I mean, when the authorities had to reload, I mean I think they would have been overwhelmed, it was like a zombie horde moving forward. And so it wasn't violence. It was one of the only times I think people might not have fought back. That might've been because there were that's in the front, and protected by a line of shields just because people felt empowered and secure. And feeling, now if there was ever a time when quote unquote it should have gotten violent if the police attacked having like 40,000 people, having an army behind you, there's definitely the time when if there's going to be violence directed at you, like, that's the time, but honestly, that's the time when I don't think people would have fought back. And so what you're saying earlier in terms of how can you profess to be nonviolent, if you did not have the capacity to be violent because in saying I'm going to be nonviolent with you, means I'm going to engage in this contract with you, where you actually have nothing to fear, like, I'm going to reason with you, and it's only when you can say that as you have a side arm, like, I'm choosing not to shoot you right now and I went to talk you through it, this became that situation where it's like, you're 40,000 people. We are pumped and ready to go, and we are choosing not to be violent and were not even preparing to do violence. No one was going to smash anything. And of course it's the one time when the police didn't provoke attack because they would have lost. That's the one time when nonviolence worked, backed with the threat of violence. Backed not even by the threat, I think the *potentiality* of violence. (Ryan interview)

Chapter 3 – The Eloquence of Targeted Property Destruction in the Occupy Movement

Introduction

In early October of 2011, the Occupy Oakland General Assembly voted to change the name of the location of their encampment to “Oscar Grant Plaza,” named after the unarmed 22-year-old African American man killed by BART police officer Meserle in front of hundreds of onlookers. Few antecedents so profoundly affected the contentious repertoire of Occupy Oakland as did the Oscar Grant riots, thus I will open this chapter’s argument with by looking at the words of two Occupy Oakland participants describing them:

A week after the murder of Oscar Grant, nothing had been done. There'd been rallies, there'd been press releases, but nothing structurally had been done. And then, people who are not in this room went out into the streets and they smashed shit. And they set some stuff on fire. And they fought the cops... The cop who killed Oscar Grant served a little bit of jail time. He would have served no jail time, had people not gone out into the streets and demanded vengeance. It was violence, and I'm actually OK with that.

(“Matthew” on December 15th panel, “Positive”)

Most traditional accounts of riots represent them similarly, as a material *making consequences* which “structurally” force a change of policy, by agents without other access to decision-making channels. Piven and Cloward (1977) explain this as a sort of *social strike*; just as workers’ most powerful means of disruption lies in their withdrawal from economic production, so the marginalized urban poor have little else at their disposal than withdrawal of their roles as passive, peaceable citizens. The audiences of such activity are the policy institutions themselves and their supporters, and the characteristic affects stern, hurt, and enraged: these riots seem to

say, with Langston Hughes, “Seems like what makes me crazy has no effect on you. / I’m gonna keep on doing until you’re crazy too.” (qtd in Nieburg 1969, 136)

Michael, who was present for the Oscar Grant riots, however, characterizes the disconcerting public affect in the streets as something else entirely; more congruent with a sudden euphoria of collective power and unforeseen possibility, of public *jouissance* and the excess of antagonism in the face of neoliberalism’s claims of seamless consensus, than with the riots’ tragic cause or stern institutional address:

There’s an underlying anger about the extrajudicial killing of a Black person, but the actual character of the riots is not one of people being angry, it’s one of people being *happy*... Just seeing young people, primarily not activists but just young people run, where there’s like parked cars, just seeing them run on top of all of them just smashing every single window as they go, and just screaming with laughter, again and again and again, or just looking down random side streets and seeing kids with 2x4s just laughing with each other and smashing out all of the windows of all the cars, everywhere you look there’s that going on, it’s just like, what?! The city’s gone insane! But also it’s like, everyone was high-fiving each other. (Michael interview)

The following two chapters will attempt to understand these affectual and subjective mechanics of the contemporary riot, with its rhetorical peculiarities of address, audience, argument, and appeal. Faced with the exigencies of the neoliberal state and ideological regime, they attempt to articulate powerful collective subjects through immediate appeals of material antagonism to police and property relations, addressing a direct demos in disdain of mass publics, in self-conscious contrast with the mediations of institutionalized dissent. However necessarily material their means of argumentation, however, contemporary riots are always, like their predecessors,

social appeals. Indeed, contemporary neoliberal riots may indeed be *more* “symbolic,” by constituting subjectivities, mobilizing affects, and publicly performing value struggles, than are the traditional “consequential” riots. In the words of Daniel from Occupy Oakland,

[T]hat attack on property [is powerful,] even if it's symbolic, because obviously we are not doing enough damage to Wells Fargo to really damage their bottom line, but *the willingness* to actually attack corporate property is one of the biggest taboos in this culture. (Daniel interview)

In claiming that the occurrences of counterhegemonic public violence in the Occupy movement were especially revelatory of new rhetorical logics in post-New-Left social movements, I do not mean to be misunderstood as claiming these moments as *typical*, or even especially *important*, within the larger Occupy movements. If anything, in the words of participants in Occupy Oakland’s “Move-In Day,” in which a failed attempt to occupy an abandoned convention center ended in a protracted clash with police, or Occupy Seattle’s May Day anti-capitalist march, these moments were tragic attempts at continuation only through *condensation* of the values more fully present in the concrete utopias of the camps and previous mass actions. Those critics citing these actions as the work of outside agitators who have used the movement for their own ends fail to appreciate that the Occupy movement as a whole succeeded for its unmediated, dispersed, confrontational, and essentially *disruptive* nature of its shared action which performed a space for unforeseen agency; such characteristics manifested as riot in policing conditions which had already effectually prevented the tactics of Occupy’s first months. The riots occurred months after the “less-lethal warfare” suppression of the Occupy camps and actions, and occurred as liminal condensations attempting to continue the movement under extremely foreclosed

conditions. Thomas, a Move-In Day participant who strongly disagreed with the action's overall strategy still felt compelled to participate, in order to communicate,

[W]e're not, we're still here, we're not, you haven't harassed us out of existence and there'd been a lot of different strategies of repression, some violent, some bureaucratic, so I do think that it's important to... we haven't gone anywhere, we're not going back to sleep. (Thomas interview)

Why, then, focus on such moments? Given that they were atypically narrow, their very existence *as condensations* may prove rich grounds for discursive inquiry for tendencies present more diffusely throughout the movement. Additionally, in attempting to understand why so many Occupy participants grew wary of nonviolence as an ethico-political keyword, such moments which fall outside of nonviolence, yet still firmly within the rhetorical logics of unarmed insurrection, promise to prove exceptionally illustrative of these shifts. The West-Coast Port Shutdowns, for example, were both, by the accounts of most of those I interviewed, far more emblematic of the rhetoric of unarmed insurrection than were the moments of riot. For the sake of analysis, however, although these instances manifested in full the rhetorical characteristics I wish to bear out as central to the Occupy movement's power, their ambiguous status in nonviolence makes them difficult to discuss here: although Quan labeled them "economic terrorism," many of the participants would have typified them as nonviolent. Rather than taking them as the object of study for now, I will look in this and the following chapter at those riotous moments which no participants attempted to describe as nonviolent.

The dominant dismissal of Occupy Oakland's riotous aspect can be found in Oakland's Mayor Jean Quan's words, "It's like a tantrum.... They're treating us like a playground."

(“Occupy Oakland: Are We Being Childish?”) Martin Luther King, Jr., drew on the same commonplace describing the Watts riots, “When people are voiceless, they will have temper tantrums like a little child who has not been paid attention to. And riots are massive temper tantrums from a neglected and voiceless people.” (Carson 293) In King’s case, the rhetorical deployment achieved contradictory effects: a belittling in order to gain a distance from and an attempt at control over the events, but also a parental recognition and kindness in response to the riots’ desperate intent. Nieburg, in 1969, pointed out the theoretical immaturity of this explanation in explaining political violence:

[T]he psychological *theory of frustration-aggression* ... is frequently used to explain violent behavior. Frustration imposed by external sanctions or the physical world generates a cumulative rage that, at some point, breaks through in violent behavior. This theory is similar to the doctrine of repressed sexuality, but it broadens the range of drives that may be frustrated. One must be a very naive psychologist indeed to be satisfied with such a mechanistic explanation. (40)

The contemporary racial implications of the “tantruming” dismissal have been discussed in the previous chapter, and a discussion of its gendered entailments will be discussed in the next chapter. For now, I will now turn to the riotous eloquence of these moments: the forms of riotous *defiguration*, acting to free up discursive material in destabilizing current rhetorical forms, objects, and positions, at play in post-eviction Occupy movement in Oakland and Seattle. This chapter will analyze the three rhetorical strategies of forced comparison, desubjectification, and profanation, enacted through embodied, material rhetorics of targeted property destruction. In the following chapter, three strategies enacted primarily through noninjurious confrontations

with police will be analyzed, returning finally to the central strategy of backlighting, manifest in both sorts of riotous situations.

Forced Comparison

In early 2012, Oakland nonviolence trainer Kazu Haga and an anarchist named Gen met before an audience of perhaps fifty in the Seattle Friend's Center, in order to come to an understanding of one another's perspectives on the contentious issue of non/violence, which had already bitterly sundered the local Occupy movement. Kazu, having just led a three-day workshop, deferred to Gen to open the proceedings. Gen, before delivering the opening talk which he'd spent some weeks planning, began by attempting to lay out a common understanding of terms. "I want to start by establishing a definition of violence. Violence is harm committed against living beings, and only living beings. Destruction of property, whether it's right or wrong, cannot be properly called violence." Immediately, several members of the audience interrupted Gen's presentation to object; the rest of the multi-hour event was spent disputing Gen's preliminary claims, and neither he nor Kazu ever succeeded in completing their opening comments or following through with the program's schedule, much to Gen's dismay.

Puzzlingly, the experience in the Friend's Center is far from unique; nearly every time an occurrence of public property destruction occurs at a demonstration associated with the Left, nearly the same conversation can be heard to immediately follow: as in Gen's discourse, young militants speak of Fire Departments wielding axes to save babies from burning buildings, and veteran proponents of nonviolence join Haga in reminding their audience of Kristallnacht and

burning crosses. Why, one might ask, does this argument keep coming up? From a different perspective, why bother discussing it at all, if it always just starts the same argument?

To better understand the means of argumentation at play in such moments, I evoke the category of what Autonomist Marxist theorist Massimo de Angelis (2007) terms a *value struggle*: by giving presence to an antagonism, what had previously been naturalized or hegemonically fixed, is called into question, unfixed, relativized into one possible value among others, potentially worthy of comparison and deliberation, rather than automatic acceptance. De Angelis illustrates the difficulty of approach in questions of “the economy” in the era of neoliberal hegemony, when postmodern diversity of identity is guaranteed by the supplement of free market consensus. The passage is worth quoting at length, as his analysis offers a very rhetorical entry to analyzing the action of such antagonism:

The Labour minister highlighted progress, winked at the critics and spelled out policies that, in the usual neoliberal style, are all geared towards and justified in terms of creating ‘effective competition’, a condition, we were told, that is indispensable for fighting world poverty. When challenged to explain what happens when a country has an ‘absolute trade advantage’, like China, and the consequence of that is, for example, the ruin of Bangladeshi workers in the textile industry and their communities, he explained that ‘competition is a fact of life.’ Right, I can imagine what a woman in the struggle in the 1970s would have said to a man claiming that patriarchy is ‘a fact of life’, or a black about racism being a ‘fact of life’, or a migrant about border control being a ‘fact of life’, or a gay about homophobia being a ‘fact of life’, or an indigenous person about privatised sacred land being a ‘fact of life’. In all these cases, in a wide range of modalities, what

these struggling subjects would have said and done is *to contest a relational mode they did not value*, indeed, that they abhorred. Yet, we seem to be speechless in relation to the dominant relational modes through which we articulate life practices and that we call ‘the economy’. We seem to be paralysed before the domain of the relational modes implicit in ‘economics’. And so, critics who feel there is something wrong with the way we live and operate on this planet emphasise the effects produced by these relational modes, such as poverty or environmental catastrophe, and their critical stance is focused on correcting the facts they are given and trying to uncover the ‘lies’ of power. And this is of course very good. However, they seldom look at *power in its ‘truth’, that is, in the fact that it stands for something that we, the critics, do not. To do so would require measuring it with the yardstick of what we value, and being reconciled to the fact that the borderline is a line of conflict, a front line.* [page? My emphasis]

In the context of presumed consensus, simply stating arguments can itself be understood as already a powerful rhetorical strategy. In the quotation above, challenging the Labour minister’s claim that economic “competition is a fact of life,” worked to destabilize the unspoken consensus on trade policy by making visible social relations and values which before appeared necessary; this, in deAngelis’ terminology, is what makes up a *value struggle*. Gen’s proposed definition of violence, by similarly contesting the unspoken (an embarrassing) equivalence of bodies and commodity in the hegemonic definition of violence, inadvertently produced such a foregrounding of dissensus within the Friend’s Center discussion and produced “a line of conflict” over values where before there seemed consensus. I contend that targeted property destruction itself, and not only the contentious conversation it produces, works as an assertion of value struggle, a rhetorical strategy to foreground this definitional dissensus. As this

equivalence inscribes an essentially *embarrassing* inconsistency with liberal ideology's humanistic claims, the act of foregrounding this equivalence can be understood as a rhetorical strategy seeking to challenge the core of liberal ideology.

While the intractability of positions in the Friends' Center anecdote reveals that such instantiations of dissensus do not always show noticeable effect at the time, other results may occur from such bringing-into-question in the *longue durée*. When I asked Ginger, a long-time Seattle nonviolence trainer, if she had seen shifts over time in whether property destruction was regarded as violent or not by participants in her trainings – particularly in the wake of the arguments started by the Black Bloc actions in the WTO protests of 1999 - she indicated that a shift had indeed taken place in the wake of these conversations:

I think there may be more understanding of, seeing a difference between property versus people being hurt... I think, yea, I think more, especially... [It's hard to say definitely,] but I think there's more openness to seeing it, seeing violence more as against people. [But] it doesn't mean people approve of it, or like it. To say something isn't violent doesn't mean that you think it's a good idea to do it right in the middle of the march or something. (Ginger interview)

In addition to simply de-naturalizing hegemonic ideologies concerning, for example, the “scientific” social relations informing “the economy,” the conversations triggered by acts of targeted property destruction inevitably involve *comparisons*. Not only, as in the de Angelis quotation, are the “facts of life” concomitant with economic practices brought into deliberation, but invariably they are done so by dragging them into a *comparison* with hegemonically backgrounded forms of violence, which though less remarkable, are proposed as of markedly

worse consequence. *Such comparisons are not merely a rhetorical opportunism following on acts of targeted property destruction; rather, they are the content of the actions themselves, often but not necessarily born out in conversations following on the controversial act.* In this way (and, as we will see, in several others as well), *riot is an enthymeme*, with the force of these comparisons as its hidden but necessary middle term. If the central purpose of the acts lies in starting such arguments, the rhetorical content of the acts lies in the perceived *inevitability* that the comparisons implicit in the acts themselves will be, in some form, received by the direct demos. The following passage from a transgender African-American woman who spoke on a non/violence panel in December, 2011, works powerfully to bear out in words this implicit comparison of foregrounded and backgrounded violence, or as an unpacking of the comparison implicit within the very acts she describes:

When you start thinking about violence and the first thing that comes to your mind is that fucking Whole Foods or that stupid ATM... I want you to reconsider, and think about the violence of the State, think about the violence of the police. If you can get so mad about this theoretical violence against a window, or against a newspaper stand, but you cannot actually muster enough energy to get that pissed off about the everyday systemic violence that occurs against my people, against your people, then you have no place talking about violence.

Or, similarly, from another speaker on the same panel, a young Latino man, extending the comparison *within* differing forms of violence:

Violence is when a mother is denied food stamps and it feels like she has no options left but to shoot herself and her two children. Violence is when the police beat and kill youth of color in Oakland. It is when immigrant families work three jobs to sustain themselves

and their relatives abroad. When the military spreads democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan with stealth bombers and drones. Violence is the modern day slave labor facilitated by the prison system. It is the slow insidious havoc that the court system wrecks on the lives of those who have the wrong skin color, or can't afford a good lawyer. But violence is also when we fight back. It is a tool to get what one wants or needs. One of the oldest and most effective tools. Violence can be an intense form of care and love, the material expression of our passion for freedom and each other.

For rhetors to expect an audience in the contemporary United States to simply accept this claim would indeed prove naive. Indeed, the equalization of commodities (both personal and corporate, a distinction which will be revisited below) and bodies is foundational to - even, in McGee terms, an *ideograph* of liberal humanism. In Chapter III of his Second Treatise of Government (1962), perhaps the single most foundational text of classical liberal ideology, John Locke reverses Thomas Hobbes' famous claim regarding the state of nature as a state of war, instead characterizing the "state of nature" as "men living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth, with authority to judge between them," equalizing the body and commodity through the violence of the "state of war":

Thus a thief, whom I cannot harm, but by appeal to the law, for having stolen all that I am worth, I may kill, when he sets on me to rob me but of my horse or coat; because the law, which was made for my preservation ... permits me my own defence. ... Want of a common judge with authority, puts all men in a state of nature: force without right, upon a man's person, makes a state of war, both where there is, and is not, a common judge.

(15)

What is in one sentence a possession - “my horse or coat” - immediately becomes “my own” – the etymological meaning of *property* - to defend through murder, by right of law based on “my preservation.” This moment, in which the constitution of one’s (masculine) physical self through a potentially odd equivalence of body with coat or horse goes unremarked; rather than understanding this unremarked equalization as a purely perlocutionary speech act of description within the ideologically-permitted premises of his day, we might read his move as a moment of constitutive rhetoric which here discursively constructs the liberal order. Just as Žizek (2002) persuasively argues that ideology is maintained precisely through circulations of *transgression*, Locke’s equalization of body with commodity occurs through the Other, the constitutive outside - i.e., violence - which threatens both *in the same manner*. That Locke here additionally posits a reciprocity of condition - that “all men” exist together in “a state of peace” under a “common judge with authority”, or “a state of war” in the absence of such a figure - is a telling corollary of this body-commodity equivalency. A primary exclusion is enacted in this conjunction, as the obvious consequence of property relations - that one “man’s” state of peace might be based on another’s existence in “a state of war” - is precluded. Inevitably, rhetors who challenge this equalization or exclusion thus find themselves encountering the rhetorical work done by violence.

Ayn Rand, the persistently beloved scribe of capitalist ideology, articulates this body/commodity equivalency through the algebraic property of equality, in the form “if $A=C$ and $B=C$, then $A=B$.” In this case, the third term which mediates equivalence is “rights”, first implicitly and then explicitly understood as a guarantor against violence which threatens the existence and security of the body/commodity. In one passage, the parallelism is mediated through the notion of existence: “Just as man can't exist without his body, so no rights can exist

without the right to translate one's rights into reality—to think, to work and to keep the results — which means: the right of property.” (977) Just as a body permits “a man” to exist physically, capitalist property relations produce all other rights - that is, the space within which “man” can exist as a *social* and *political* being among others. Later, Rand goes on to use the notion of rights as an equivalency of bodily protection: “The only proper purpose of a government is to protect man's rights, which means: to protect him from physical violence. A proper government is only a policeman, acting as an agent of man's self-defense...” (page) Tellingly, in her repetition of the blunt clause “which means,” the first quotation makes all rights essentially elaborations of property relations, while the second define all “man’s rights” as essentially bodily protection against the threat of violence. Both within the parallelism of the first quotation and through the algebraic equalization through the mediating term of “rights” across the two passages, body and commodity are posited as equivalent through the potential of threatening “violence.” Later, Rand affirms the equivalence of “men’s [physical] protection” with property relations as “the base of a moral existence”, under the threat of unspecified “destroyers”, now specifying property relations to the now-sacred moment of money: “Money is the barometer of a society's virtue. Whenever destroyers appear among men, they start by destroying money, for money is men's protection and the base of a moral existence.” (page)

It is precisely this equalization which riotous political property destruction attempts to destabilize, this ideograph (McGee, in Lucaites et al) of “property” of body and commodity which is threatened by violence, by foregrounding this mystified, common-sense equivalence. That this appeal fails to succeed in convincing its audience should not be taken as evidence of its ineffectivity. The discursive attempt to disarticulate property from bodies meets with resistance and fails to take hold precisely because to agree would entail rejecting, in Laclau and Mouffe’s

(1985) terminology, precisely the most basic *chain of equivalence* which constitutes liberal ideology, the essential moment of “superstructure” expressed by the “base” of capitalist property relations. Rhetors who persist in contesting this definitional claim might well, and frequently are, be understood as naive, delusional, or worse, for their surprise that others are not convinced of this disarticulation, for allegedly denying the centrality of this ideograph to the status quo. But what if this assertion of disarticulation is understood as effective not in an expectation of an easy rejection of this equivalency, but precisely because it *succeeds in causing arguments about it*, and thus foregrounding and potentially “demystifying” just these beliefs that, as all ideological formations (Eagleton), function precisely by going unquestioned at the level of common sense. In this strict sense, drawing attention to the embarrassment of Locke’s equivalence can be read as a move of properly “anticapitalist” rhetoric.

One might well first ask whether rhetorical challenges to such core ideographic elements are by their nature futile. Such deep claims, though sometimes slower to manifest a response, both clarify the longer-term direction of a movement, and aid more moderate claims by shifting the context which allows previously marginal positions to appear as reasonable in the semiotic measurements of the status quo, in what Schock (2005) terms the “radical flank effect,” akin to a local application to what was earlier discussed as an element of strategies of condescension: an extension of the radical margins shifts the center in that direction as well. Martin Luther King, Jr. himself highlighted the embarrassment of Locke’s equivalence in drawing notice to more local injustices, and advocated a revaluation similar to the anticapitalist revaluation described above as the first concern with those seeking justice in the contemporary United States:

We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are

considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. (Carson 340)

The very contentious, and unresolved, character of these arguments correlates with its importance, and thus the necessity of *starting arguments* as the appropriate, available “means of persuasion.” As one organizer for the Palestinian Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions campaign, the fact that the tactic of academic boycott was so contentious, so productive of argument about the premises of freedom and complicity which usually went unstated, was itself the measure of its effectivity.

One of the more popular arguments against academic boycott, both during BDS in South Africa and with the Palestinian campaign, is that it’s against dialog, that it’s shutting down the conversation. The response that people were making was - listen, this is actually starting fruitful debate about what we actually believe, and how we’re connected to what’s happening in other places. By definition, the debate has to be about themes of complicity, about the definitions of academic freedom, what are our responsibilities to the world... I don’t think people have real conversations about places that feel far away, that those things don’t feel urgent enough for real conversations, unless it feels contentious. I also wonder if things are or feel contentious by the same mechanism that they are relevant or urgent, because debates around BDS get at the heart of, challenge their core values, things people believe they believe - that it gets at things people believe or feel about other parts of their life beyond just how they feel about Palestine or BDS, so it has to be contentious.

The very contentious nature - whose purported incivility is contested by accusations of being “against dialogue” or “shutting down the conversation,” is precisely what makes it effective in *forcing the presence of topics* too implicated in the core values of the audience to allow polite questioning, particular in regarding such topics painful to engage and distant enough that the audience might not acknowledge as urgent. Such appeal finds itself within what Darsey (1999) labels as the “Hebraic” tradition in Western rhetoric, which foregrounds topics precisely through non-identification through jeremiads: accusations, threats, and general perturbations of the rhetorical status quo; the importance of this confrontational rhetoric is often forgotten under the dominance of the “Hellenic” approach, which attempts to identify with the audience. If the delineation of the acceptable terms of the debate is itself a matter of dissensus, the means of appeal must themselves involve incivility to perturb these boundaries - since any “civil” claims are defined *as such* through their acceptance of just those terms under debate.

In one passage about targeted property destruction in Occupy Oakland, journalist and participant Emily Brissette (2011) explicitly describes a parallel “horror” and “outrage” experienced by the audience with the unraveling of “common sense” and “taken-for-granted assumptions” that “we need to attend to” in order to “deny the existing system the power to define the situation for us”:

That so many react with horror and outrage at broken bank windows is not, however, surprising. The capitalist system in which we live sanctifies property and personalizes corporations, while dehumanizing millions of people in the US and billions worldwide. To a very large degree these ideas suffuse our common sense; they are the taken-for-granted assumptions out of which our moral and affective reactions emerge. But if we are serious about transforming our society to put human need at the center of our

politics and economic practices, then we need to attend to the way unexamined assumptions shape our interpretations of this moment, its pitfalls and possibilities, and the way forward. We must deny the existing system the power to define the situation for us. We must root out the ways it shapes our interpretations and reactions, by thinking deeply, probing our assumptions, questioning the origins of our gut reactions and the allegiances these express. We must have the courage to pursue personal transformation alongside, in conjunction with, and as mutually constitutive of the social transformations we seek.

That claims are not merely made *about* “broken bank windows” in ensuing conversations, but may be understood as being intentionally precipitated *by* the breaking of windows in the first place, not accidentally, but purposefully, are born out in Brissette’s language; such acts work as an *eloquent* appeal urging the “probing our assumptions” and “questioning the origins of our gut reactions and the allegiances they express.”

Claiming that property destruction should not be termed “violence” is merely begging the question, by denying the equivalency still clearly at play within current hegemony. I am not claiming, in a sort of relativist parody of post-structuralism, that “violence” *only* exists as a social construct under capitalism in order to establish a value equivalency between body and commodity. Rather, in doing this work, accusations of violence under the hegemony of capitalist property relations lays claim to the ancient notion and stretches it to cover actions which destabilize property relations, while reducing the claims of systemic “everyday” institutional violence over certain bodies to be identified as such. By calling this re/definition of violence into question, what alternative definitions of violence do participants propose? Is there any more subtle alternative to invoking a fictional golden age where bodies, outside of *any* relationship to

inanimate objects, are absolutely valued outside of the power relations expressed through goods even in most non-capitalist societies? Is there an easy boundary between acts which threaten the integrity of bodies, and the integrity of the things around them?

Desubjectification

Marketing has become the center of the 'soul' of the corporation. We are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world. (Deleuze)

If targeted property destruction works to assert comparisons within and across categories of violence in the hopes of destabilizing ideological chains of equivalence and triggering a revaluation, its affective reconfigurations in the discursive field of subjectivity are equally eloquent in its rhetorical strategy. In his classic “Reflections on Violence,” Georges Sorel put forward his notion of the General Strike as a myth which condensed all of the desired political values of proletarian struggle; violence, in his formation, “is assigned the important function of ‘constituting’ an actor.” (Seferiades & Johnston 6). Similarly, Fanon put forth the celebrated formulation in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968) that decolonization requires a violence to be done to the colonizer’s body in order to disarticulate its sacred inviolability, and thus constitute the post-colonial subject through the act of violation. Contemporary practices of public noninjurious violence, such as targeted property destruction, can be seen to enact analogous discursive actions of subjectification while avoiding the dehumanizing effects of bodily harm, as can be heard in the words of Cindy, one observer of the Seattle May Day 2012 riots:

I think that property destruction has a good effect on those who carry it out... I think most people need to unlearn submission and show themselves that they have the

capacity to act for their own liberation. I think that when people burn cop cars, break bank windows, or blockade a road (thwarting the transfer of goods and or law enforcement) they are also demonstrating to themselves some of the magnitude of their ability to resist. (Cindy interview)

While all of the affectual mechanisms enacted by the rhetorical strategies at work in the contemporary riot interweave in the constitution of powerful subjects under neoliberal conditions, the action described in this quotation bears especially on those *constituting new subjects through the desubjectification of other (inanimate) subjects*. In Foucault's (1972) framework, subject positions attending a given discursive formation can be understood as a particular dispersion of "enunciative modality," of the distribution and circulation of place/s from which to speak and be heard. Within such a spatial (and consequently rather structuralist) model, enunciative potential might be taken as a sort of constant, spread out to different thicknesses along the relational trajectories of which apparatuses are made up. Contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben affirms this 'redistribution' model of subjectivity. "A desubjectifying moment is certainly implicit in every process of subjectification." (2009, 21) In Laclauian terminology, "elements" are freed from their role as "moments" of discursive formations to become "floating signifiers," the constitution of certain subjects, given an unspoken sort of constant quantity of subjectivity, means the dissolution of others. As I will discuss near the conclusion of this project, the rhetors in this study - mirroring Foucault's wariness of reproducing current pollutions of power in any positive assertion of futurity - show a clear preference towards strategies of disarticulatory transgression, what I term *defiguration*, attending more to the dissolution of objectionable discursive targets than the constitution of new subjects, a preference perhaps at times articulating with Agamben's warning that the subjective "material" freed up by

desubjectification does not necessarily coalesce into new enunciative modalities. What is certain, in all of their views, is that if new subjects are to be formed, old subjects must be *deformed*; their speaking voice must be removed from recognition, their modality of enunciation thinned or erased if another is ever to be heard.

That it is the characteristic work of violence to shuffle potentialities of subjectivity is a claim which resonates with a number of those who have attempted to theorize the work of violence. As discussed earlier, Lacan views the imposition and fixing of *any* symbolic order to be essentially violent, indeed the very meaning of violence itself; that semiotic disruption requires violence is, in this model, a sheer tautology: violence *is* nothing other than semiosis, as semiosis is the very motion of violence. Susan Brison, in her unforgettable reflection (2001) on the role of narrative in “remaking a self” in the traumatic aftermath of rape and murder attempt, understands violence as that which undoes the Self, shattering the subject by introducing an intensity of the unspeakable; narrative, in its turn, offers a restoration by integrating trauma into a unity, one which might be considered a new subject in some senses. Contemporary poet and critic Wayne Koestenbaum, (2011) whose reflections on humiliation I will analyze at length in the next chapter, asserts that humiliation, as it “observably lowers in status and position” (10) its object, “represents *the destruction of matter*. Something once present - an intactness, a solidity, a substantiality - turns into tatters.” (10-11) Koestenbaum’s “humiliation,” in this sense, can thus be understood as violence seen from the vantage of its effect on the dignity of its object. That the redistribution of subjectivity inevitably relies on violence seems a dismal but unavoidable conclusion.

The propensity to enact such moments of disarticulatory violence are often misunderstood as relying on affective dispositions of *hatred*. Sarah Ahmed (2004) presents valuable insights into the affective assemblages at work in such acts of violence, which she correctly views as essentially *a manner of social relation*, but attaches a delegitimizing valuation as she designates it as the acts of hatred: “[H]ate does not *reside* in a given subject or object. Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement.” (44) By understanding hatred as a manner of performing group cohesion, Ahmed suggests “the importance of understanding emotions not as psychological dispositions, but as investments in social norms,” (56) thus absurdly inferring that hate is already implicated in *any* act of value struggle. This bonding occurs by a sort of exorcism of the constitutive Other: “[B]y aligning myself with some others, I am aligning myself against other others. Such a ‘giving up’ may also produce the character of the hated as ‘unlikeness.’” (52) By exorcising, violence, which Ahmed incorrectly designates as hate, enacts an intensely rhetorical constitution of its object, clarifying and solidifying the boundary of difference: “[H]ate works by providing ‘evidence’ of the very antagonism it affects; we cite the work that it is doing in producing the characteristics of likeness and unlikeness when we show the reasons for its existence.” (52)

That this investment through violence’s effect of “hateful” Othering must occur *materially* becomes clear as Ahmed examines the way hate *surfaces* its object: “Bodies surface by ‘feeling’ the presence of others as the cause of injury or as a form of intrusion.” (48) Smashing windows works to intensify and localize this surface, this boundary of injury and safety. Hate, in effect, is the affective aspect whose corollary action is the division social space; hated bodies become a condensation of this formation of social space, be they victims of racist violence, or the shattered glass of targeted property destruction:

The organization of social and bodily space creates a border that is transformed into an object, as an effect of this intensification of feeling. The white woman's refusal to touch the black child does not simply *stand for* the expulsion of blackness from white social space, but *actually re-forms that social space through re-forming the apartness of the white body*. . . [T]he skin comes to be felt as a border through the violence of the impression of one surface upon another." (54, emphasis in original)

Violence manifests as a material work which establishes a boundary materially, reforming social space, *surfacing*, touching as it destroys, an exorcism, creating a border that is transformed into an object. In this way, counterhegemonic violence may work to *objectivize* property relations, seeking to materially humiliate the enunciative modality of the Other, as in Ahmed's reading of theorists of the "words that wound" conversation at the base of Critical Race Theory:

The enactment of hate through verbal or physical violence, Matsuda suggests, 'hits right at the emotional place where we feel the most pain' (Matsuda 1993: 25). Such lived experiences of pain can be understood as part of the work of hate, or as par of what hate *is doing*. Hate has effects on the bodies of those who are made into its objects; such bodies are affected by the hate that it is directed towards them by others. Hate is not simply a means by which the identity of the subject and community is established (through alignment); hate also works to unmake the world of the other through pain (see Scarry 1985; see Chapter 1). Or hate crimes seek to *crush* the other in what Patricia Williams has called 'spirit murder' (cited in Matsuda 1993: 24)." (58)

Ahmed, in typifying this violence action as hatred, and in these examples by typifying it through white supremacist and neo-Nazi discourse, avoids needing to clarify the complex *moral*

entailments of violence which inevitably depend on its context; it is assumed that her readership is likely to be unsympathetic with neo-Nazis, so the uncomfortable question of the existence of potentially emancipatory, counter-hegemonic hatred is forestalled. But might some worlds be better *unmade* than left to be? Might some traits deserve exorcism? Particularly given Chantal Mouffe's (2000) claim that *all* groups are bound by a constitutive Other, might some material - if inanimate - "skins" of Otherness be morally commendable to surface? If certain inanimate entities and social practices cause an unfathomable amount of suffering to the actually living, these practices ask, might not a passionate love for the living entail a passionate against the entities enacting this backgrounded violence, which would nevertheless be odd to term as hate? Like Ahmed speaking of hatred, Koestenbaum presents similarly selective examples to illustrate his apparently universal claims regarding humiliation:

The humiliation of a derided performer on American Idol is immeasurably different from the humiliation of a Palestinian under Israeli occupation. One plight is chosen, the other is not. But isn't there present, in both situations, in the demeanor and behavior of the aggressors, an underlying coldheartedness, a rock-bottom refusal to believe the worthiness of the person whose reputation (or house, or land, or ego, or self-esteem) is stolen, trashed, occupied, razed? Isn't there present, in both situations, an underlying will to deracinate and desubjectify this other person? And, most insidiously - isn't there an insistence on considering this process of desubjectification (with my laughter I take away your humanity) an entertaining process, even a cathartic exercise, therapeutic and energizing, like calisthenics? The audience at American Idol (or so I hypothesize) experiences laughter as a cosmetic, cleansing procedure - a cheerful exfoliation. I hate group laughter. It is always smug and certain of its position. Lynndie England's smile and

the laughter of the audience at American Idol display a callous, morally deadening joviality. Any good soldier must undergo - must grow inured to - this morally deadened state. We spread it elsewhere; we cultivate it at home. Through the enslavement and abuse of African Americans, and the genocide of Native Americans, the United States honed its gift for morally deadened cheerfulness. This self-assured laughter isn't solely U.S. property. It grows elsewhere, too. But it has the quintessentially American tone of mass-media confidence - advertising, commerce, McDonald's, slaughterhouses, or what in the 1960s I learned to call the military-industrial complex." (37)

Koestenbaum draws an unambiguous moral claim from the nature of humiliation-as-desubjectification, that "moral individuals... should work toward minimizing humiliation, toward not inflicting it." (16) But is there something particular about the example selections for his point of group laughter, however apt examples they may be of the genealogy of "deadened morality" of hegemonic voices in the U.S.? Does it not say something of the types of groups which strike the author as typical? Does "aggressor" as category, in his phrase "the demeanor and behavior of the aggressors," mask potentially relevant extra-anecdotal differentials of power? Is "aggressor" *only* in the moment, or are there relevant factors of power beyond it which might effect the moral status of this laughter? Are Ahmed's implicit and Koestenbaum's explicit moral prescriptions as convincing if we imagine them applied *counterhegemonically*? Were there not moments in which African Americans, Native Americans, or civilians at the receiving end of the violence of the "good soldiers" were themselves able to make use of the desubjectifying power of group laughter, if only for fleeting moments? That these "jokes" held less sway in the material sphere should never be forgotten, but it does nonetheless draw the critic's attention to Koestenbaum's presumptions of subject position, his habit of only

attributing agency to the hegemonic is illustrative of frequent biases among advocates of nonviolence, one to which I will soon return. Indeed, if group laughter possesses the character of encouraging the constitution of collective self-confidence, might he not rather celebrate this power *for those who need it*, rather than decrying it as always necessarily “smug”? Aren’t there as well certain types of humor, correlating to certain subjects, which are in themselves counter-hegemonic?

Targeted property destruction asks its audience, in starting arguments which hope to foreground hegemonic chains of equivalence: Might moral individuals make use of the means of humiliation and apply them to nonhuman targets, in order to ‘observably lower in status and position,’ the very cultural nodes which re/inscribe antihuman value systems? Considering especially that such transgressions against foundational norms of the social order are due as well to be illegal, these actions may be understood as a “hate crimes against corporate personhood,” except that – as may well be true of right-wing “hate crimes” as well – they in no sense depend upon hatred, but rather on the political will to exclude, to redefine, to redistribute subject positions through local reproductions in order to make locally present an instance of wider social visions. In noninjurious anticapitalist public actions, violence occurs against inanimate subjects not as an accident, but as a claim against the subjectivity, the “soul” of corporations or property relations, against their propensity to be heard over the voices of the living.

Profanation

Alice, one young Kingian nonviolence trainer in Occupy Seattle, particularly active with efforts advocating for changes in financial policy, spoke with concern and incomprehension regarding the propensity of other participants to break the law seemingly only for the sake of breaking the law itself:

It skews the narrative to have a couple of specks on the record where they were doing things that were [transgressive]... I totally believe in civil disobedience, but I don't believe that you should break laws that are tangential to the actual thing that you're protesting. Sit-ins were breaking the law because it was wrong, just sitting there was illegal, or kind of illegal, for African-Americans to be there, but, sometimes blocking traffic is not exactly, I don't believe it's our complete right to do that... (Alice interview)

If indeed, as this participant correctly observes, traffic laws were not a frequent target of Occupy demonstrator grievance, the same cannot be said for hegemonic property relations. Many participants, such as the interviewee above, did view the Occupy movement as properly concerned with reinstating stricter financial regulation such as the Glass-Steagall Act repealed during Clinton's presidency, or limiting corporate influence in the political sphere by the "Citizens United" interpretation of the 14th amendment from the late 19th century which granted corporations the same rights as people. Most or all of the proponents of riotous rhetoric, by contrast, were likely to claim that the social basis of property relations themselves were the movement's proper target; without changing such relations, the problems which brought most of Occupy's participants into the streets would be sure to continue, even were such policy changes instituted. Consequently, these social relations, claim these participants, need to be

confronted directly; not “structurally” through the mediational intervention of State-level authorities, but through an interruption of the reproduction of property relations, through the immediate, empowering, rhetorical action of value struggles. As the above Kingian nonviolence trainer in Seattle advocated in her interview, “we should all attack forces, not individuals; attack their behavior, not the person.” As the forces of capital are *materially manifest* in the commodity, riotous participants, through their non-linguistic but not inarticulate acts, claim that public attacks on commodities can bring into contest the commodity form itself.

In acts of targeted property destruction, it is not only the characteristics of the institutions which own the property which are targeted, but the relationship of ownership itself. Although media reports frequently allege destruction of small businesses and suggest that property destruction targets personal property, demonstrators, as internal police documents (leaked police report) admit, are generally scrupulous to target *corporate* property. Beyond the particular sins of these corporations, participants often indicate that the central relevant appeal in these acts is related to calling into question of the social nature of these relations. As a technique of value struggle, targeted property destruction not only attempts to force comparisons about the *relative* values inherent in foregrounded and backgrounded practices, it also attempts to *denaturalize* capitalist and particularly corporate relations themselves, bringing them into view as subject to *deliberation*, suggesting the potential of alternatives. Loic Wacquant (2009) speaks of neoliberal society as regulated by the “*sacrilization* of the market” (23), and as “a society submitted to the joint empire of the commodity form and moralizing individualism” (20). Militant participants in Occupy Oakland and Seattle mirrored Wacquant’s analysis, such as Daniel, who affirms that the uniquely *sacred* status of such property relations is precisely what demands their being called into question:

As far as this violence against property... there is of course the ridiculous cases of, people who don't believe in damaging property jumping on other people as they're trying to damage property and hitting them, choosing to injure another person who's damaging property in order to stop them... Not even damaging their own property, mind you, but damaging corporate property, you know? To me that's just, that speaks to me about how especially in the United States, how deeply that deification of property, corporate property, is. And that actually, that attack on property even if it's symbolic, because obviously we are not doing enough damage to Wells Fargo to really damage their bottom line, but the willingness to actually attack corporate property is one of the biggest taboos in this culture. Historically, it would've been the equivalent of attacking the church or something, you know? If you think about the Spanish Civil War, the firing squad [SM - *exhuming the nuns...*] right, and the firing squads for the crucifix, and so forth, you know? This is essentially what we're looking at, symbolically, we're looking at attacking the only thing that is left that is holy in this culture, which is corporate property. It's not a surprise to me, but it is always fascinating to just, how much people freak out about stuff. And it just reinforces to me that that is actually an important statement to make. (Daniel interview)

The commonplace of property relations as uniquely sacred appeared repeatedly in interviews. Cindy, speaking of this sanctity not only as a general social value in need of being targeted, but as a persisting matter of personal investment for other participants in Occupy Seattle, spoke of certain participants urging a graduated approach to the disregard of property, one which enacted the *celebration* of this disregard of the sacred, even a “playful” celebration, but wary of the conflictual intensity that risked alienating co-participants:

The scale of property destruction, too, changes things a lot, like in the Port Action, on the march to the port from Westlake, there were anarchists that paint-bombed the Wells Fargo and the bank of America on the way there, and there was this idea, probably, allegedly, that you have to ease the idea, because people are shocked by even the lowest level of property damage, because they hold property to be so sacred... So paint-bombing, rather than smashing a window, is a way for people to celebrate how they don't, to celebrate an attack against the banks that's like, playful still, and is not seemingly as violent, and that maybe will later lead to more acceptance of more so-called violent things, like smashing windows or whatever. (Cindy interview)

The general character of empowering transgression has been discussed elsewhere, and is obviously a feature to varying degrees of any riot or counterhegemonic performance public or private, but here the specific form of public transgression claiming to target capitalist relations *themselves* recurs as a strategy enacted by targeted property destruction. Notably, a more powerful instance of profanation described by the same speaker relies *not* on any destruction, but on sheer violation, during the nine hours of a surprise collective occupation of a long-abandoned warehouse in the center of Seattle's Capital Hill by perhaps 200 participants. Cindy describes the event as a particularly powerful transgression, releasing not only the affects and subjective potentials pent-up behind specific repressive values, but, given the far-reaching social relations involved in maintaining property, a deep-seated subjective violation of the sacred which allows the subjects' to suddenly "believe in themselves", and "dream so much bigger...":

The occupation of the warehouse at 10th and union, ... that detailed to me, an example of radicalizing people, too, because it broke the myth, it was a process of breaking the myth of private property, not the myth of it but the sacredness of it, and that was really

important because I was sort of shocked but also really happy to see so many people before that I'd had really frustrating conversations about [how] the idea of illegality in any way was terrible to them, and now they're running around in an occupied warehouse! ::laughs:: Talking about what they could do with it, and believing in themselves so much more than I thought, and dreaming so much bigger... (Cindy interview)

Agamben (2009) offers a critical insight in an understanding of the liberatory application of profanation, in an archeology of the concept in its Roman origins:

According to Roman law, objects that belonged in some way to the gods were considered sacred or religious. As such, these things were removed from free use and trade among humans: they could neither be sold nor given as security, neither relinquished for the enjoyment of others nor subjected to servitude. Sacrilegious were the acts that violated or transgressed the special unavailability of these objects, which were reserved either for celestial beings {and so they were properly called 'sacred'} or for the beings of the netherworld (in this case, they were simply called 'religious'). While 'to consecrate' (*sacrare*) was the term that designated the exit of things from the sphere of human law, 'to profane' signified, on the contrary, to restore the thing to the free use of men. "Profane," the great jurist Trebatius was therefore able to write, "is, in the truest sense of the word, that which was sacred or religious, but was then restored to the use and property of human beings." (17)

Agamben's definition of profanation as "restoring to use" that which had been reserved for the Gods is strikingly mirrored in the language of one statement released by Black Bloc participants after the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle, describing targeted property destruction precisely in

similar terms, suggesting categories of profanation through such religiously-laden terms as “exorcise” and “spells” :

When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcise that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us. By ‘destroying’ private property, we convert its limited exchange value into an expanded use value. A storefront window becomes a vent to let some fresh air into the oppressive atmosphere of a retail outlet (at least until the police decide to tear-gas a nearby road blockade.) A newspaper box becomes a tool for creating such vents or a small blockade for the reclamation of public space or an object to improve one’s vantage point by standing on it. A dumpster becomes an obstruction to a phalanx of rioting cops and a source of heat and light. A building facade becomes a message board to record brainstorm ideas for a better world.

After [these actions], many people will never see a shop window or a hammer the same way again. The potential uses of an entire cityscape have increased a thousandfold. The number of broken windows pales in comparison to the number of broken spells - spells cast by a corporate hegemony to lull us into forgetfulness of all the violence committed in the name of private property rights and of all the potential of a society without them.

Broken windows can be boarded up (with yet more waste of our forests) and eventually replaced, but the shattering of assumptions will hopefully persist for some time to come.

(ACME)

As the ACME statement makes explicit, the actual “target” of the property destruction was not the windows or newspaper boxes, but the “spells,” “hegemony,” the “assumptions” of the potential uses for these items, and particularly who gets to decide how they are used. The making-available-for-use through profanation of property relations brings into a space of proto-public deliberation the meaning of these items. The public performance of violent transgression in the middle of the city, on a Tuesday morning around noon, was essential to its nature as a *public* appeal, assured of visibility of profanation to the silent potential public of the *direct demos*.

What, then, is this bringing back into use through profanation? Other than the banality of short-lived vents, blockades, and message boards, what rhetorical purpose is served by “destroy[ing] the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights” through profanation? If capitalist property relations – the commodity fetish’s subsumption of use value under exchange value - are themselves the last thing sacred, what is made available by bringing *them* – the values themselves - back into “use”? *What is the use of a value?* By calling into question the sanctity of property, acts of targeted property interrupt the everyday to ask: Can we talk about what this bank is doing? Can we talk about what goes on in this agency? Can we talk about all of these things that are off the table? What is being contested is the non-availability of these values for *deliberation*; just as forcing comparison aims not to propose new arrangements of hegemony but only to call values into question *as relative*, so profanation means to “make available” values as open to discussion, to shatter Thatcher’s smooth veneer of “There Is No Alternative,” and remind the audience that just as these values were once something *produced* as values, so they are available for contestation, and potentially to be remade or replaced with other values, with all of their wider ideological or hegemonic entailments.

In the next chapter, I move from analyzing the contemporary rhetorical strategies of targeted property destruction to the rhetorical strategies at play in noninjurious public conflicts with police.

Chapter 4 – The Eloquence of Police Clashes in Occupy Oakland and Seattle

Disidentification

What we're really scared about is the uniform, more so than, I mean, I think about the police, what's more scary is the uniform, not the person that's in the uniform. And I think people are mixing both of them. Yes, he's a human being, but it's the uniform that is telling you they have the power. And they're trained to think that they hold power, when in reality it's the people that hold the power. (Samantha interview)

Beyond the strategies of forced comparison, desubjectification, and profanation which take place as rhetorical aspects of targeted property destruction during riots, protesters enacting the rhetoric of unarmed insurrection, such as those in Occupy Oakland and Seattle, also frequently practice strategies of clashing with police. Given the central role of policing, incarceration, and the security state in the neoliberal order described in Chapter 1, rhetorical strategies involving a public antagonistic performance with the police can be expected to play an important role. In contrast to the rhetorical logics of targeted property destruction, riotous subjects clashing with the police face a dilemma; protester diffidence towards police must be practiced materially; however, in prioritizing the destabilization of Locke's chain of equivalence, such confrontations must remain for the most part noninjurious, despite targeting a social object associated with a body. This concern was articulated as a principle of Kingian nonviolence by Alice, the professional nonviolence trainer in Seattle:

I do think that it's a fluid definition, it's really hard when everybody's like, you're violent, or we should stick to nonviolence, there is a diversity of tactics and a diversity of things within nonviolence and within violence, so it's really hard to point out what is and what

isn't, but the principles that I stick to in Kingian nonviolence is, we should all attack forces, not individuals. Attack their behavior, not the person. (Alice interview)

A potential contradiction within the exigencies presents itself when performing public antagonism with the police. What if, in the terms presented above, the “forces” targeted are intimately, materially bound to the “individuals” performing them? What if the “behavior” under attack is of an immediately physical nature, such that attacking it risks attacking “the person” as well? As with the uneasy boundary between the materiality and discursivity of bodies examined in Judith Butler’s *Bodies that Matter* (1993), the materiality of individuals enacting oppressive behavior is not simple to divorce from the discursivity of their role. Kazu Haga put forth this concern of non-separability tersely, addressed to other Occupiers who insisted on public expressions of antipathy with the police:

My question is for those who view police as the enemy, or as part of the enemy. What is your end goal? What would victory over the police look like? Does that mean we would lock them all up? Does that mean we would deport them all? Does that mean we would execute them all? When individuals become your enemy as opposed to the behaviors of those individuals and the injustice that they participate in, what does victory of them look like?

Although Haga’s words deny the possibility, public performances against the social institution of *policing* are at least notionally separable from the bodies of individual officers. If, one might say, the institution hides behind the body, is there any way rhetors might “do violence” to the institution without necessarily harming the body before it, as in contexts where such injury might entail unwelcome rhetorical results? How, then, might rhetors go about enacting this separation? The quotation opening this chapter attempts to posit just such a separation, what I

term a *disidentification*, as essential to overcoming fear and reclaiming power. Kenneth Burke, in his *Rhetoric of Motives*, puts identification forward as the work's key term; its reverse, which Burke terms "division," appears in passing as its dialectical corollary, but never receives its due. In transgressive, disarticulatory rhetoric such as that of unarmed insurrection, disidentification surfaces with insistence, returning persistently as both exigency and argument. Ginger, the veteran nonviolence trainer in Seattle, observed how the tension between body and office in presence might be curbed by enacting an elucidated rhetorical separation of the body of police, and their position, in clashes:

I don't know what I saw but I'm sure there was differences in attitudes around police. I definitely saw a lot of verbal abuse of police coming from some protesters, and pushing and shoving and stuff. I think for me, just personally, I like, I know the police play such a repressive role, but to me, that's what I try to focus on, is the role, that that's what we need to end, and I don't have any illusions that the police are our friends, or they're there to protect us, no, they're there to protect property and business interests and those kind of things. But I try, I do believe in recognizing the human being, so attacking the role, challenging the role, but still acknowledging there's a person in there, who has a life and is doing a job that sometimes isn't easy... I just try to keep in mind it's the role that I don't like, not them in particular, although some of them really are abusive... (Ginger interview)

That the *body* of police need not be the target of this empowerment practice is emphasized in the opening quote: the fear and disempowerment in the face of neoliberal policing is itself a result of "the mixing of both of them": the "uniform" of position or "role", and the human body inside the uniform. Although these two speakers positions themselves differently in regards to

non/violence, for each of them the rhetorical performance of separation is key. For the speaker of the opening passage, with the priority of subject-formative empowerment, the central aspect of “the uniform” to be targeted involves a displacement of power: “It’s the uniform that is telling you they have the power... when it reality it’s the people that hold the power.” This effect, the dual action of surrendering agency and then attributing such “surplus agency” as an inherent quality of the party surrendered to, Bourdieu (after Althusser) terms *misrecognition*, elucidating here the circumstances which bear it forth:

What one might call the *liturgical* conditions, namely, the set of prescriptions which govern the *form* of the public manifestation of authority, like ceremonial etiquette, the code of gestures and officially prescribed rites, are clearly only an *element*, albeit the most visible one, in a system of conditions of which the most important and indispensable are those which produce the disposition towards recognition in the sense of misrecognition and belief, that is, the delegation of authority which confers its authority on authorized discourse. By focusing exclusively on the formal conditions for the effectiveness of ritual, one overlooks the fact that the ritual conditions that must be fulfilled in order for ritual to function and for the sacrament to be both *valid* and *effective* are never sufficient as long as the conditions which produce the recognition of this ritual are not met: the language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs, without the help of the social mechanisms capable of producing this complicity, based on misrecognition, which is the basis of all authority. (Bourdieu 113)

By manifesting antagonism to “the uniform,” demonstrators seek precisely to disrupt what Bourdieu terms the *liturgical conditions* of misrecognition in the constitution of police power. In a

reverse enactment of the “ceremonial etiquette” Bourdieu describes as essential to misrecognition’s production, participants aim to destabilize this production and reappropriate the agency previously surrendered. Just as profanation reverses the setting-aside mechanism of sacrament to return the object into use, so disidentification undoes the liturgical conditions of authority to, in the words of the opening quotation, return power to “the people.” In conditions when injurious conduct would risk further alienation, liturgical conditions can be disturbed through public performance of diffident conduct, without risking injury (to the officers.) For all of the conflicts with police which took place in Occupy Seattle and Occupy Oakland – including, absurdly, weekly scheduled “Fuck the Police” marches lasting months after the raids on the Occupy Oakland camp – not a single officer sustained injury. The common implements of clashes with police in these actions – empty water bottles, paint balls, marching bodies, naked arms, raised voices and uncivil turns of phrase – carried little possibility of inflicting bodily harm, yet were effective in humiliating the dignity of position, in interrupting the effectivity of “the uniform” as a liturgical condition of misrecognition.

In exploring the space between injurious violence and nonviolence which police clashes inhabit, I would like to explore the potentially analogous action of *pieing*, which also seeks to perform a separation of body and position through a noninjurious but humiliating attack. Ginger described the practice thus, recalling to Koestenbaum’s insight that “[h]umiliation represents *the destruction of matter*. Something once present - an intactness, a solidity, a substantiality - turns into tatters,” with the destructive, shredding effect focused on the “dignity” of social role:

One [discussion topic in nonviolence trainings] I do often is pieing, where you put a soft pie in a politician, or a figure’s face. Is that violent or nonviolent? It doesn’t hurt the person physically, but it hurts their dignity, it hurts their feelings perhaps, it embarrasses

or humiliates them and preferably you're doing it with the media right there. So is that violent or nonviolent? (Ginger interview)

James Darsey (in Morris et al. 486) details the celebrated pieing of country singer, beauty queen, orange-juice peddler, and antiqueer activist Anita Bryant in 1977. Bryant had recently led efforts to repeal anti-discrimination ordinances in Florida, Minnesota, Kansas, and Oregon, and had just succeeded in prohibiting gay adoption in Miami-Dade County, a law only overturned in 2008. In the tolerant 1970s, Bryant was visionary in modeling the right-wing pundit future in her antiqueer organizing. Although *Advocate* editor David Goodstein bemoaned the pieing as betraying a lack of “professionalism,” not all in the gay liberation community agreed with Goodstein’s lament. Darsey quotes one article, “Angry as Hell,” from the *Gay Community News*: “Let’s not feel awful about bustin’ Anita’s chops... We can try to be cheap Christ imitators or we can be real.” (491-492)

The moment Anita Bryant’s haughty diatribe about “the homosexuals” is interrupted mid-sentence with a cream pie, her social position as antiqueer crusader is fatally injured and her glamor shattered, suffering what Patricia Williams called *spirit murder*. Bryant soon withdrew from public life, and she lives in retirement to this day. Even in the moment when she attempts to reframe the event as still in her definition, by snapping in the most bilious tones, “At least it was a fruit pie!” her pitiable condition has rendered her words rather more sad than threatening. Bryant’s voice is already tragic, because she suddenly speaks in personal voice, abruptly very far from any misrecognized pride of place, mirrored through glittering shards of her enunciative modality so apparently firm just moments before.

As identification with public figures works through an unquestioned sympathy with the unified person, body and persona, the stark disjunction introduced by the pie between the

impervious haughtiness claimed by one collapses with the sudden distance from the humiliated other. The enunciative modality defined only by aggression against others, based on an unquestioned hegemonic place to attack and not even acknowledge vulnerability, an appeal to the powerful against the weak precisely *in their power* – this modality cannot perform a discursive adjustment to incorporate the exposed vulnerability, based as it is on attacking the vulnerable *as vulnerable*. Once the vulnerable has publicly enacted the possibility of even a momentary reversal, the discursive subject position collapses. The appeal of sympathetic misrecognition with the hegemonically powerful vanishes before the presence of vulnerability. Even for the audience which pity her plight (itself not universal, judging by the “busting her chops” comment), substituting pity for deference already shows a collapse of the modality’s function. At the same time, the reversal does not stabilize, since the available comparison of the actual harm done to countless queer lives through Bryant’s policy enactments weighed heavily against the weight of pie – at least before the audience of the time. Disidentification thus operated through breaking the chain of equivalence between body and position which makes for an established body, blocking the transfer through which the sympathy and misrecognition of audience with position occurs.

Notably, in Wayne Koestenbaum’s (2011) discussion of the event, the queer poet and critic fails to disidentify with Bryant; indeed, the noninjurious assault inspires a new sympathy with Bryant:

I’m no fan of Anita Bryant, who did harm to queers. But I cringe, watching the fruit pie slam into her unsuspecting face. Suddenly, she is no longer a wretched antigay activist. Suddenly, she is a victim, a woman physically assaulted by a male stranger. White cream, the pie’s topping, covers her features; it resembles shaving foam or whiteface makeup. A

few seconds ago, she was a wrong-minded, wrong-acting bigot, but now she has become a humiliated woman, crying in public. I can imagine how wretched I'd feel if someone threw a pie at me; in the capillaries of my cream-coated, humiliated face, I'd sense the aggression and hatred that motivated the pie-hurling hand. That's why I don't believe in capital punishment: any murder weeping and shivering with humiliated fear at the oncoming electrocution earns my clemency. Anita Bryant put her orange-juice fame ("Come to the Florida Sunshine Tree") to noxious uses, but when the pie hits her face and she weeps, she becomes a horrifying, human spectacle, a white body smeared with white crap. During the awful instant when Anita Bryant breaks down crying, I suddenly feel guilty for my own aggression against her. (78-79)

Several complex features surface with a close reading. That Koestenbaum's discussion of the action suddenly relates to Bryant *through pity rather than resentment or fear*, reveals that in some sense the intended discursive shift has partially *succeeded*; a transformation of Bryant's power of place has certainly taken effect if her body and personal self, distinct from office, is now available for pity. In other senses, Koestenbaum's response reveals the action as a failure, insofar as he is taken as its audience. Though the pie in the video is clearly a *cream* pie, Koestenbaum *accepts* Bryant's antiqueer redefinition of it into a *fruit* pie; in sympathetically allowing her to define the situation, he has already reproduced a moment of antiqueer designation. For Koestenbaum, the genders of Bryant and her assailant gain sudden priority over their sexualities; both are co-present, but in Koestenbaum's reading of the moment, Bryant's femininity (before her assailant's masculine aggression) takes precedence over her antiqueer presence. In one sense, Koestenbaum identifies with the humiliated Bryant, citing the presencing of "aggression and hatred" of the assailants as reason for his dissympathy with them, which for others, bearing in mind Bryant's

social role in potentially justifying these sentiments, might undergo the opposite effect. In another sense, Koestenbaum identifies with the assailants, but *only* through the guilt of their masculine assault on Bryant's feminine body, uncomplicated by their presence as offended queers. Without dismissing the problematic performance of the male-on-female-violence hegemonic gender script at play, is it possible that Koestenbaum might feel at least ambiguously, if the assailants' figures were in-frame, if their stories and reasons and trajectories of humiliation and dignity laid claim to the title-bar, their lives present as more than merely Bryant's assailants? In Koestenbaum's telling, the camera frame remains the viewer's frame, and the dignity/humiliation of the assailants, their subjectivities, remain utterly out-of-view, however much – paradoxically, because - Koestenbaum espouses a common sexual identity with them. The fact that Koestenbaum cringes, and indeed takes up *guilt*, in the face of a *surprising* moment of humiliation reveals his acceptance of *unsurprising* humiliation, of the systematic, unremarkable humiliation which Bryant's position daily enacted upon millions in the years before the pie attack; elsewhere, the poet terms such hegemonic humiliation “the background music to our lives,” (63) but here allows himself to hear only the foreground.

Koestenbaum confesses more openly a few pages later his analytical basis for just this rejection, in a translation sounding very much like the objection of nonviolence advocates to the public rage of demonstrator clashes with police, in his words, “Aggressive public speech humiliates the mouth that utters it, or the hands that type and transcribe and publish it.” (88) In this view, consistent with his guilt before the Bryant pieing, it is the *affect* itself, and never the deployment of this affect, by which an action is to be ethically evaluated: not by the discursive dispersion of empowered relations, of historicized, contextualized *subjects and object of anger*, with a categorical difference reserved between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic flows of power; but

simply the ahistorical, decontextualized appearance of the affect itself. In this formulation, it is not even the male gender of the assailants enacting violence against a female body, but public aggression *per se*, framed as exceptional, excluding any violence outside its frame. Koestenbaum presumes humiliation as exceptional when it is associated with “aggressive public speech” as the moment “humiliating the mouth that utters it.” What if, contrarily, the presumed *silence* of the mouth of a subject position is always already its humiliation; would not its (loud) speaking constitute precisely an act of dignity? If its daily humiliation lies precisely in patience, in excessive vulnerability, in habitual and habituated love for its abuser; the negation of this humiliating acceptance, the interruption of hegemonic reproduction, lies precisely in rage, in making this anger public.

What Koestenbaum’s rejection of disidentification here reveals is that its audience is never universal; Goodstein and Koestenbaum, in very different ways, elect to sympathize with the humiliation of the hegemonic subject, while the *Gay Community News* and others celebrate “bustin’ Anita’s chops.” A century earlier, proponents like Emma Goldman and Peter Kropotkin of anarchistic “propaganda by deed” acts noticed a similar effect: reductionist constructions of “the people” whose interests seem to obviously be opposed to presidents and wall street bankers proved inadequate to predict their sympathies in the face of terroristic deeds; the material appeals of assassinations and bombings worked to establish identification with the powerful *as living bodies*, rather than as powerful social entities. Anarchism became identified with terrorism, and in the US, the FBI was formed, the Palmer Raids enacted, and Goldman deported under the excuse of responding to such attacks. Goldman, Kropotkin, and others renounced “propaganda by deed” attacks as they came to appreciate the indeterminable materiality of publics. Contemporary rioters are faced with analogous ambiguities: police clashes during

Occupy in Seattle and Oakland certainly alienated certain audiences, though the poll cited earlier indicates widespread support, but without reliable metrics to measure the response of invisible publics, the dilemma persists. Disinvestment is revealed to rely on an ambiguous *imbalance* of affect: those who are firmly committed to sympathy with hegemonic positions are unlikely to suffer modification of subjectivity through such disinvestment appeals, just as those already distant from sympathy with its subjects may appreciate the assertion, but lack affectual commitments to withdraw from the hegemonic object. Given the limited symbolic resources available in situations such as with Occupy Oakland and Occupy Seattle, how might counter-hegemonic rhetors hope to best argue for such a further disarticulation of privilege, a distancing from commitments to hegemonic power positions, *enwithin* potential members of their publics?

Disinvestment

As clashes with police enact disidentification working to sever hegemonic identifications with public figures embodying hegemonic performances, so other rhetorical strategies at work in these moments work to disaffiliate certain participants with *their own* position of power. A few participants who made repeated reference to processes of having disaffiliated with their own privileged positions served as valuable interviewees on this topic, providing suggestive leads to the question raised at the end of the last section in riotous rhetoric: if the privileged are averse to disidentifying with positions of power because of their own subjective commitments, how do antagonistic politics work to establish distance within subjects from such commitments? Following Lipsitz (2006), who sees allegiance to privilege less as a state of belief or knowledge, and more as a subjective *investment* in hegemonic power structures, I refer to this process of

disidentification within the subject from one's own privilege as *disinvestment*. The significance of this process for social change is here laid out by Ginger:

It just makes me think that police training should include, it really needs to include, more information about their role, and the oppressive role as well as the other roles, so that they can not take it personally when people do certain things to them. They need to make that distinction. And anyone with privilege needs to do that, so as white people, we need to recognize that when we're treated in certain ways, it's not because of *us*, it's because of the role of white people, we all need to get better in the areas where we're dominant, or privileged or whatever at recognizing that difference, and then learning from it, and then not taking it so personally, so hopefully politicians and CEOs and all those other people ... would recognize that. (Ginger interview)

In some sense this nonviolence trainer's personalistic discourse is marked as prior to the rhetoric of unarmed insurrection, in that she images police training as a potential site for disinvestment, whereas proponents of unarmed insurrection might respond that police training is expressly for *preventing* this very insight: as intensive conditioning in getting police to perform/embody their role, police training is expressly to get them to "take it personally." In rare occasions, police officers *have* turned against their office, as for example in Wisconsin in 2011 and Thailand in 2013. Such instances, despite their great rarity, are frequently espoused by nonviolence advocates as *the* central process of elite defection, and of systemic social change as a whole. Two factors at play in these claims to disinvestment are worth stating. First, they usually involve an extremely common, and extremely unwarranted, conflation between police and soldiers, most of whom are indoctrinated for confrontation only with foreign Others and historically come over to ally with

domestic populations with *much* more frequency. Some proponents of insurrectionary politics whom I interviewed spoke of the moment when the army refuses to come out against its domestic population as *the* limit case of insurrection proper; by this measure, insurrection is constituted through the very contrast of army and police. Secondly, antagonism is not homologous with alienation; in the rare instances of police defection, it was often *because*, rather than *in spite of*, protester antagonism that individual police were converted. The Tupamaros guerrilla movement of Uruguay (Labrousse 1973), for example, often robbed banks as a challenge to the legitimacy of capitalist relations and to highlight the root causes of economic turmoil; perhaps surprisingly, “[a]mong the lower middle classes, the Union of Bank Employees contains many supporters of the Tupamaros.” (118) The group did not avoid conflict with police or army forces, but nonetheless found many supporters within their ranks as well. In a formulation well known but not exclusive to macho discourse, sometimes the only way to acknowledge another’s humanity is by fighting them.

The strategy of disidentification recognizes that it is through *investment* in privilege, rather than one’s privileged status as a cultural-material fact, that most subjects remain hesitant to engage systemic change. Of those interviewees who described going through a process of disinvestment, the process is revealed as primarily one of a transfer of affective commitments, of dis/investments and their relational entailments, rather than one of intellect and opinion, as in Mark’s testimony:

I guess you could say I went from having opinions and feelings about politics to having political opinions and feelings. In some way, politics became much more vital and present to me, and I started to think of my political beliefs primarily in terms of ethics as

opposed to analyses, of course, I wouldn't say that my basic framework for looking at the world has changed, but the way I perceive the world and why in relation to myself has deepened a lot... (Mark interview)

Wendy, a Occupy Seattle participant, who, though not white, viewed her upbringing as not particularly disprivileged through race, spoke similarly of her disinvestment process. Previous to Occupy, if someone had spoken of the everyday violence of race and economy, she stated, "I wouldn't have objected," but she was unsure how to respond when faced with racist discourse:

Like I would hear [these people who] would talk and say derogatory things about the people of color caucus... And I'm just like, I hear that, I'm hearing them say that and I'm just like have this gut reaction that's so fucked up, like I can't figure it out and I don't know really why. (Wendy interview)

Then, one night in a large Occupy Seattle assembly, she explains, a police officer persisted in standing the middle of a meeting, and a heated confrontation ensued around whether the officer should be allowed to remain. The People of Color caucus of perhaps one hundred people broke with the main meeting in order to refuse interaction with the police.

As soon as that happened, and I went over and I was with the people of color caucus and they were talking and *I finally fucking got it*, it was really empowering, in a sense, it was really encouraging, and it just, I dunno, it just really woke me up to a lot of shit that I had been part of being silent about these issues before, but not really knowing, and part of that is my fault for not trying to figure it out because I *knew* ... (Wendy interview)

That this experience involved not only conversation, but also an affectually-intense *immediacy* of physical confrontation with power, is typical of the disinvestment narratives of interviewees. Language is a medium, perhaps *the* archetypical medium, of human semiosis; the focus on *immediacy* on disinvestment narratives indicates the necessity of a catalytic non-linguistic event to introduce distance within the subject from their privileged investments. Even if the effect becomes, in narrative, discursively positioned as *emotional*, the initial encounter must be pre-discursive, that is, *affectual*. Asked to narrate his disinvestment, Mark, who had just been released from jail for a nonviolent civil disobedience action earlier in the day, describes catching up to a friends in a march just in time to get caught in conflict, which I quote at length for its concentrated elucidation of the affects of disinvestment:

Right when we get there we see one of our friends who had been outside the bank with us and he was trying to help somebody up, and this *huge* guy in a ski mask jumps him and tackles him to the ground, and I thought it was an Occupy person, over some disagreement, so I ran towards them to break them up. All of a sudden we're surrounded by cops, the cops are establishing a perimeter, very very fast, very very forcefully, and I'm still going towards them and one of the cops just grabs me and throws me and he's hitting me with his baton, throwing me back, then I realize that my friend is now being turned over and handcuffed and that this guy is an undercover cop. All things considered, I was fine out of that, barely bruised, but *the immediacy of that was very shocking*. My friend gets up and he's screaming, blood pouring out of his mouth. (Mark interview)

That a measure of affectual intensity might be necessary to rupture one's investment in privilege is not a new idea. As Koestler says in quaintly antiquated terms:

To unlearn is more difficult than to learn; and it seems that the task of breaking up rigid cognitive structures and reassembling them into a new synthesis cannot, as a rule, be performed in the full daylight of the conscious, rational mind. (quoted in Nieburg, 18)

As this immediacy is experienced as an unavoidable sudden presencing of usually hidden everyday violence, the relation of risk vividly intervenes in place of the usually distancing moment of privilege as the threshold of disinvestment is approached, as in Mark's words:

All my life it's something that's happened to somebody else, that I've always been very sheltered from, and all of a sudden there was the possibility that some cop would feel that it was really necessary to swing his night stick at my head, shoot a pepper ball at me or whatever, you know? It didn't happen, but stepping even that tiny little bit outside of the acceptable ranges of behavior meant that all of a sudden I was subject to that possibility. (Mark interview)

These various affects, with moments of fear of consistent agents taken up as *risk*, coalesce as a *repulsion towards privilege*, as one's own becomes equivalized with external agents of privilege enacting brutality, finally become taken up again in discourse which *expels* institutional affiliations and views them rather as an external threat than as an even reluctant attachment, as when Mark continued:

I was at the time actively engaged in something that I was fully aware that the police and the government did not want me to do. So that, in-and-of-itself, gave a slightly different context than a university classroom or an AmeriCorps team meeting, which is where I did a lot of antiracism training and education... So I mean it was already at this point, obviously the police are not allies, the city government is not an ally here, I'm not going

to be protected by them, and that's one thing, right? I guess on a psychological level not having that protection means, that, I also am not going to protect them... I never thought about that but, at this point, there were like, cops lining up with mace and shit, to stand there and fuck with us. *They are clearly not there to protect me, so [laughing] why am I going to protect them?* (Mark interview)

In some sense, disinvestment has already been subjectively accomplished as a visceral repulsion has taken the place of a privileged affiliation. However, a repulsive disaffiliation alone does not suffice to be a *political* disinvestment as a rhetorical strategy of contemporary social movements; without *extending* one's repulsion, one either represses the experience, or recedes into monadic isolation anomie and horror, the modern subject as seen by Durkheim and Kafka. For the rhetorical strategy of disinvestment to carry through, to constitute a political subject with the capacity to posit the presupposition of equality in the midst of neoliberal conditions, an *extension* outside of the monadic self through *analogies of repulsion* must take place. Mark eloquently narrates this stage of his disinvestment process, still in terms of immediacy, but with his repulsion at privileged viscerally extended by analogy into others' situations, a sympathetic analogy refracted through the play of difference:

By US standards and by world standards, I'm extremely well educated, I've gone to very good public schools my entire life, raised on a culture that basically the education system and the criminal justice system are both built on, I would consider myself relatively intelligent, and yet, I sit in these courtrooms and *I* have no idea what's going on. I mean, if I didn't have a lawyer, I would just be completely lost. So if *I* don't understand it, you take any of those elements of *my* background away, and anybody who doesn't speak

English, who's from another country, who didn't go to college, didn't graduate high school, didn't have a lawyer, is just from another culture, I mean, they are completely *fucked*, they have no hope. The first time I went in for a pretrial hearing, we sat in the courtroom for like an hour waiting for them to call our case, we watched six, seven cases come before us, about half were in prison jumpsuits so they were coming out of being locked-up, I think out of six cases before us, five people were people of color, all of them were pretty poor, all of them were just listening to what their attorneys told them and basically just saying, yes, sure, and there's a judge sitting at the front of the room deciding what punishments these people merit, what's going to happen to them, what their lives are going to be like for the next 60, 90, 120, a year, and like, all they could do is sit there. One guy started crying because he didn't understand what was going on, you know? And that shit is just sick. You can read all the statistics you want, and I mean, that's like the tiniest sliver, but, no choice at that point, you know? It goes against so much of what I was raised to believe about this country, or maybe it doesn't, but the immediacy of it, made me think, made me reconsider a lot. (Mark interview)

For the disinvestment process to stabilize as political, such comparisons which separate out the unavoidable *availability* of privilege from the avoidable by difficult refusal to take a privileged *stance* – a distinction which ultimately depends as much on the mediation of linguistic action as from the visceral affective mechanisms of repulsion and boundaries of pride/shame. Again, Mark:

I have a totally sweet life, realistically speaking. I live in a nice house with good people that I care about I have a job that I enjoy doing that more or less pays my rent most

months. I can sit in a nice little yuppie bar with you and have abstract conversations about violence.... But, knowing that all of that is predicated upon, really horrible shit that I would never be able to watch being done to other people somewhere else. I mean, here, but somewhere else even here, for my benefit and with my assumed consent, is sickening... I don't know exactly where to go with that in my life, but I'd be really ashamed of myself if I ever turned my back on that. (Mark interview)

As a result of his involvement in Occupy, Mark attests to a sort of subjective extension; though his immediately personal life is still privileged, his selfhood, as social *bios*, has been extended outside the protected sphere of his own physical *zōon*. With what resources can other subjects extend themselves in this way? Clearly, immediacy no longer suffices, tied as it is to the sensible, the palpable, the non-representational sphere. As essential as the unmediated *intensity* is for the destabilizing, the opening-up of affectual/discursive arrangements of self, the extension of these selves beyond the privileged sphere depended as much on conversation, an insight emphasized in each disinvestment narrative, as in Cindy's words:

... I mean I think experiences are more powerful, for sure, but I think that they work together too, though, I think that, I have this hypothetical person that may not have even existed but lets say that, someone that was in the anti-cop GA talking about it, and they didn't really agree, but they heard some people crying or talking really powerfully about why they're against the police, in a sort of really personal way, and then this person is sort of like, well that's heartbreaking but it's just a few bad apples, but then they're at a protest and they get pepper-sprayed and all of sudden they're like, wait a second, this is fucked up. And it's a combination of both. One reinforces the other. (Cindy interview)

Having experienced the jarring *differend* of unsafety, the listening subject (ref here rhetoric of listening book) is unable to turn away or distance their attention from analogous (if different) narrated traumas of others, or devalue them with naturalizations and justifications. In Mark's words, "Stories that might have kind of bounced off some layer of armor at another point in my life just went straight in." This listening, in turn, provides discursive deer trails which the tender feet of the newly disinvested begin to walk with their own experiences. (How such conversations were even *possible* is a question to which I will return in the last chapter.) Mark again:

Some of the people of color that I've had really long conversations with have been really radical people, and it's been really deep for me to see how in so many ways we actually grew up living in totally different worlds, and in some ways that's one of the most important things about Occupy, is that it gave us this space to cross paths and start talking, when we would never have before. It's pretty hard to argue with a lot of people's experiences. People telling me about, getting radicalized in prison, or prohibited from leaving the country. Watching somebody get shot in the chest with a tear-gas canister in Palestine and die, each one of those is a real story that someone's told me. I mean, how do you argue with that, honestly? How could you possibly? I guess I always knew theoretically on some level, that the exercise of authority depended at root on violence, and not abstract violence, but people getting hit and beaten and tortured and shot... I mean, I haven't seen anybody get beaten or injured or shot, but also the effect of seeing how ready the police were to do that, if they were ordered to or if the situation got out of control... they could be literally smiling and joking with someone and turn around and pull their guns out and shoot them the next. (Mark interview)

When in our interview I asked Cindy if such a claim to the transformative power of these conversations wasn't beginning to seem a sort of Habermasian ideal, a sanitized space of reasoned debate to which all have equal access, she passionately objected not based on differential access, but on the weight of affect in them. Her account bears out the complexity of affect which Brian Massumi (2002) examines, not only a movement of intensities *within* bodies in time, but *between* or *across* them. Such "communism" of affect recalls Ahmed's insight that affects are essential *social* material, more akin to *drives* in circulation across permeable boundaries of self, than psychological *emotions* confined in the individual mind, as Cindy describes:

Well, because it was really personal, too, and people were crying, talking about their personal accounts, I think that, I have to believe that some of these people that were against, for example were pro-cop or whatnot, had probably not even like thought about police terrorizing immigrant communities, or if they had, they don't think about it, because it's not part of their life. And that these sort of personalized experiences, but also the political theory behind it too, for some people, that I don't think, can't discount the raw emotional element of it. (Cindy interview)

Massumi's view of affects as sorts of *relations*, rather than substances, thus comes into view through the character of this circulation, as in Wendy's words, explaining why she'd never previously gone through such disinvestment, "because I didn't have relationships with people who had experienced violence. Because I wasn't confronted with it in a very obvious way." (Wendy interview) That these circulations occurred not only across individualities, but as well across differentials in social power and hegemonic access, made them startling effective, at times

unraveling discursive formations centuries in the making, denaturalizing the unquestionable, as in Cindy's description:

White people probably that never really thought about, they maybe thought about genocide but not about the land they're standing on as stolen indigenous land, those kind of things. Real conversations that were emotional accounts from people, that have a much different position in society from most other people, they don't ever have to hear from, really, things like that... (Cindy interview)

This prefigurative practice/space itself is not separate from public antagonism with the police - since in the eyes of some participants, it is the place of police to reproduce and instantiate the social relations of privilege and inequality with their very presence, *the presupposition of equality necessitates the absence of police*. And, since it is the primary role of policing in neoliberalism to perform omnipotence *and omnipresence*, this absence always already constitutes an antagonism, a clash. For now, though, I will turn from the subjects of disidentification, who enter social action with too much affiliation with hegemonic power, to those who are used to having too little power to act as political subjects, and seek to reverse their habits of powerlessness.

Empowering Reversal

During one of the public debates during Occupy Oakland on non/violence, Sarah, a member of Occupy Patriarchy, an Oakland bloc of radical queers and feminists, sat up as she heard one speaker assert, "I totally think the black bloc and property destruction is violent, that's what we're playing with, we're playing with scaring people, we're playing with intimidation.

Intimidation is violence.” Sarah’s reaction to the speaker’s comment encompasses what we will call the rhetorical strategy of *empowering reversal*, frequently and consciously enacted during the Occupy riots:

I was like, oh, you're totally right. It's easier to constantly think about, ‘You guys, it's trashing a Starbucks window, what are you guys complaining about? It's not violence, what about all the violence in the world?’ But I think the other very real thing is that, tiny folks from Occupy Patriarchy with the shields, you know, me, whoever, what we're playing with is violence. We're playing with like, we want, we're scared all the time and we want to be scary too. You know? We're scared of you, we're going to tell you we're not scared of you anymore. We wanna take on feeling tough because we're constantly intimidated by the world in yay number of ways. I think that that's really real. And people are playing with it, and people are experimenting, people are *trying on* being violent, or being scary, you know because, at least any female person has the experience of being scared a lot, whether we feel that way on a day-to-day basis as an adult, we’ve felt that way in our life, we’ve felt physically intimidated by people. So it's like, oh! I have in my life felt physically intimidated by people, what would it be like to physically intimidate someone else? And I don't think that's a bad thing. (Sarah interview)

Heather, another Occupy Patriarchy participant discussed this rhetorical strategy in riots as analogous to reclaiming agency through resignification of sex work and domesticity practices. Though physical violence, like sex work and domesticity, is often the *terrain* of patriarchal power, the “spaces that have formally been used against” women, empowerment may take the form of appropriating and re-purposing, rather than ceding, this terrain.

I feel like a lot of my friends who are radical and also do sex work have a very similar understanding [to rioting] of the work that they do... You can't go back into this space without necessarily feeling this stuff, but ... you can actually like use your trauma and use these spaces that have formally been used against you to actually undo them. And watch them unravel ::laughs:: I've been really into women's weaving words as of late to describe revolutionary tactics, I feel like since the 70s, there hasn't been this whole, like the women's peace actions in the early 80s, late 70s, where they wove the doors of the Pentagon closed ... and I was like oh man I was never there for those but, I wish I had been, talk about fucking embracing domesticity and making it radical as fuck, like yeah, let's go weave the doors of the Pentagon shut! (Heather interview)

Assertions of police clashes (and public targeted property destruction) as opportunities for empowering reversal for women and queers runs squarely counter to the gendered aspects of the previously discussed “tantruming” dismissal strategy, which acquired gendered and racialized associations clearly absent in King’s time. Besides the delegitimation taking place through the “tantruming” claim, participants referred to such claims as “invisibilizing,” working, in the terms of my analysis, to *contain the transgression* of queer/feminist riot. Says Heather:

The problem is that it kind of becomes reified because so many people are talking about, oh it's this bunch of white male punk dudes that are doing all this shit... what gets obscured when you start talking about, or when you start whitewashing the black bloc first of all, which in Oakland is, absolutely not true, and you start making the black bloc age a gendered thing is, not only do you not see that this is something that has been going on for a really long time... There have been radical feminists that have always been

violent according to this narrative... Like, the first gay pride was a riot. You know?

Queers have always been violent, feminists have always been violent, and what happens when they control that narrative about who the black bloc is ... it disempowers everyone that has been doing all of this work. (Heather interview)

What is complex in this moments, in discourses about riots as in the material rhetoricity of riots themselves, is that to some degree, *indexes of disprivilege which mark riots as authentic also mark them as transgressive*. Thus, the same “tantruming white boys” claims which have previously been analyzed as *delegitimizing* in the racial categories of reductionist “identity politics” simultaneously work to *contain* transgression in gender terms. In the contemporary American imaginary, young Black males are the subjects of riot; simultaneously disprivileged and heteronormative and hypermasculine. However terrifying the notion on Black male riots are to the suburban white imaginary, they can be said to “make sense”; it is precisely for this reason that Katz’s logics of containment, management, and repression, what recent scholars have termed “counterinsurgency,” (Williams et al 2013) begin with Black males as their targets. One need look to further to understand the near-cessation of “urban riots” of the 60s-70s model, as well as the shifting demographics and rhetorical logics of riots since. Contemporary riots seem to have responded by diversifying, if indeed they ever fit this image: photos of the Oscar Grant riots reveal them to have a considerable proportion of female participants, while the Occupy riots, as previously analyzed, were diverse enough to permit an(inaccurate) racial typification meant to render them inauthentic. If the racial descriptions of Occupy Oakland were inaccurate, Sarah and Heather’s testimonies indicate that the gender ascription were so dishonest as to be in bad faith.

When I asked Sarah, taking from King's formulation on "the voice of the voiceless," whether people riot just because they can't be heard, she responded in frustration by insisting on the *complexity* of affective enactment, lost in the monotone of Oedipal ascriptions like King's – a monotony which she experiences not only as painful but *offensive*:

There's a lot of pent-up emotion for a lot of people in those moments. With that question, I wonder what that means, does that mean that we are inarticulate, does that mean we have no other venues to express ourselves adequately at all, or that, why are we choosing this... I mean, I feel like there are things that can be expressed emotionally through fighting the police, that other ways of expressing them are not a satisfying, or don't do the same things to a person. There was just that article... he just used the classic cliché of like, we're just a bunch of people regressing into like rebellious boys fighting the stern father, and [Oakland Mayor] Jean Quan is the stern father, and we are the tantruming boys. It's just like, fuck you. [laughs] It's horrible, it's just so boring. That's what people, I do think that is the emotional function for some people, obviously that is what the function was for him, or ... who posted the article, that was the function for them when they were in that role, they are identifying with it and they're projecting it on to everyone else, which is what I find flagrantly offensive. (Sarah interview)

What, then, are the stakes of these claims? As tantruming becomes an activity presumed to be *male* – an association not consistent even in metaphor, as female children are just as likely to throw tantrums – the many potentially counter-hegemonic, transgressive interpretations of a feminist/queer riot are foreclosed. Heather explains this as reader *fear* of this interpretation

which prefers the heteronormative hegemonic narrative of riot, a “portion of American society” showing preference for explanations consistent with preexisting categorization schemes:

If it becomes feminists and queers rioting in the streets, then everything is over [laughs] that's the end right there, that's really what people really are scared of. And women particularly, if you look at queer liberation or to a lesser extent, second wave feminism, there is this terrified portion of American society that's just like, radical women out in the streets fucking shit up? That really, really scares people. Whereas a young white man in a mask, that's something that they almost can, they have a place for it in their heads, whereas if you're coming from this background where women are supposed to inhabit this role, to not only break out of that role but to break out of it in a way that's deemed violent, it's terrifying to people. (Heather interview)

Regardless of where the censorious decision is located, the potential public eloquence of empowering reversal is hegemonically foreclosed through inevitable claims of white boy tantruming. Though the same actions carried out by straight white males might be equally *illegal*, the necessity to translate the queer/feminist riot into boys reveals the extent to which feminist/queer *violence* is profoundly more disruptive, not only of State power, but of the heteronormative-patriarchal complex on which it rests. The disarticulatory power of subjects presumed to be passive taking violent agency over the very agents possessing Weber's “legitimate use of physical force in a given territory,” enacting an empowering reversal, carries too powerful a semiotic disruption to gain space in representation; the patriarchal mechanism that men are covertly “legitimized” to employ force, just as police are overtly, is empirically manifest in this translation.

Clearly, if empowered reversal primarily seeks to catalyze subjective effects in publics through mass media, the strategy fails utterly; only those actually present at the move-in action were aware of demographics of the riot. If empowered reversal fails at this mediated appeal, what, then, *does* it do? Interviewees indicated not only an ignorance of public awareness levels on the issue, but often had not even considered the issue before; their priority in engaging the *direct demos* of women/queers applied in a new manner that most feminist of commitments, that “the personal is political.” I quote here at length Sarah’s words for their eloquence on this process:

The reason I wanted that to happen ... is that I wanted folks to have a, some type of satisfying display of how they felt, I think that really is a big deal. Standing there impotently, we feel like, ugh! People don't feel proud, they feel weak, they feel helpless... You know, when [the clash with police at] Oak Street happened, people felt proud, they felt inspired, they felt unified, and those are all important things to feel somehow, right? ... I just hoped people would have that opportunity that day because, well we didn't get to do this other thing which would have been a way of physically manifesting, *physicalizing* our emotions and our dreams and aspirations which is taking a building, also totally symbolic. Fighting the police is also symbolic, and physical... I learned this afterwards, a bunch of people from Occupy Patriarchy took the shields ::laughs:: and they were the like rowdy people on the front lines of Oak Street, and I remember walking down that line of people with a bullhorn and like, you guys ready? You want to go up again? And they were like (in a high-pitched voice), Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! ::laughs:: and they were *so excited*. And they were so unified... I think this is a very common experience, and it certainly, from the meetings I've been in with Occupy Patriarchy, it's a lot of women and queer people, and they *want* to be militant. And because, of what that means to them,

they want to be tough and radical, and they want opportunities to practice this, to work it out with other people and practice this and get better at it, and the fact that on that particular day, whatever fuckups happened, they got to feel tough and bad-ass and militant, unified, it was really awesome. (Sarah interview)

The importance of such reversals of power/lessness for disempowered subjects is hardly a new observation. The following quotation by Susan Brison from her potent testimony on recovery from rape and near murder, make clear the mechanics of this process, revealing as well that the feminist/queer counterhegemonic riot seeks not only to temporarily limit the space of and to defigure heteronormativity and patriarchy, but, in doing so, to lay claim to public space as a place of intimate healing of the self:

The incompatibility of fear of my assailant and appropriate anger toward him became most apparent after I began taking a women's self-defense class. It became clear that the way to break out of the double bind of self-blame versus powerlessness was through empowerment - physical as well as political. Learning to fight back is a crucial part of this process, not only because it enables us to experience justified, healing rage, but also because, as Iris Young has observed in her essay 'Throwing Like a Girl,' 'women in sexist society are physically handicapped,' moving about hesitantly, fearfully, in a constricted lived space, routinely underestimating what strength we actually have (Young 1990, 153). We have to learn to feel entitled to occupy space, to defend ourselves. The hardest thing for most of the women in my self-defense class to do was simply to yell 'No!' Women have been taught not to fight back when being attacked, to rely instead on placating or pleading with one's assailant - strategies that researchers have found to be least effective

in resisting rape... The confidence I gained from learning how to fight back effectively not only enabled me to walk down the street again, it gave me back my life. (14-15)

In *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and other Subjects*, Barbara Cruikshank (1999) puts forth a trenchant critique of contemporary empowerment projects and discourses, which frequent *subtract* agency from their subjects as they attempt to form them in ways capable of access to hegemonic channels of power. Numerous interviewees demonstrated a similar reluctance around the term, all too aware of its discursive power of institutional recuperation; yet, these speakers often returned to the term, padded with apologies and hedge words, as an essential category in their repertoire, as in Cindy's use:

I think that people need to have a sense of agency if they want to engage in any sort of revolutionary movement and be a long-term, sustainable, for themselves and for their movement to be sustainable, people need to feel like, I mean, I don't know another word for it, you can feel empowered, or feel like you're relevant, and that you're doing something and changing something...

Sarah similarly gives a powerful account of counter-hegemonic reversal turning primarily around the practice's reluctant dependence on this degraded term:

I don't know how to frame it in contrast to that right now, but the level I'm talking about is like, [we] went to the range on Valentine's Day like we do every year, we shoot up paper, heart-shaped doilies, it's our Valentine's Day trip, but I took this person who'd never gone before and afterwards I was driving them home, and they just started crying, and there were like, that felt [pause] empowering. [Laughs] And they were talking about how it meant to have something to do on Valentine's Day when they're single and

isolated, but there were just like I have never shot a gun before that felt... em [pause]...
powering. And I said, that's what we're trying to do. And it's just like, that is a person
that doesn't have much at all that gives them joy in their life right now, and they did
something, it was exciting, obviously it was about having a specific kind of violent
power. I think it was about being able to defend one's own perimeter in a certain way,
express oneself in a certain way, and you know they just started crying, they were like
that felt... It's not a word that either of us, I don't think it was a word that they were
particular comfortable with, that they don't use very much either, but they were like, that
felt... What's the word? [Pause] Empowering. I was like, that's why we're here, that's
why we do this. And it's just about like, things that make you feel comfortable in your
own skin, things that make you feel like you can stand up to other people, all that. (Sarah
interview)

Both speakers respond to the charged heteroglossia – that of institutionally recuperated
“empowerment” of inclusion and access, in tension with the empowerment of
counterhegemonic reversal, by offering, then moving beyond the hedges and apologies to offer a
elaborated definition. These definitions offer just enough clarification to establish that the
definition is *not* that in circulation in Cruikshank’s world of recuperated dissent; rather than a
process aimed at inclusion, it is rather aimed at developing capacities of subjectivity and affect
quite at odds with hegemonic access. The absolute distinction drawn between these two
meanings of “empowerment”, and the stakes of the battle to participants, is clearly attested in
Heather’s words:

When I was in high school, I was organizing with queer youth empowerment organizations, and their whole thing is, we want to empower you, but we're doing it through this hierarchical process, where we're a nonprofit, and we're getting funding from these people, and we're going to give you, we're going to let you guys organize yourselves, but we're going to *let* you do it. It's not like you *can* do it, and you *should* do it, and you should be doing it anyway, and you should just be expropriating the stuff that you need, instead of relying on nonprofits to serve you, and this is something that a lot of queer youth experience through the nonprofit industrial complex, of getting queer assistance from like Lyric, or like any of these nonprofits that operate in the city, its like, it's a survival thing, but it's also incredibly disempowering, because it's coming from this hierarchical institution, necessarily. And so you don't, the understanding early on that we have fucking power, and that our power is not something that needs to be asked for, its there already, its ours already, we just need to reach out and grasp at it and hopefully get it in the palm of our hands initially and if not, then, well, keep grasping. If I'd seen that shit when I was in high school, I would have been, I mean, I definitely would not have tried to kill myself a whole bunch of times, I definitely would never have run away from home, I never would have had these really traumatic experiences [use this for seriousness of subjective] that are all byproducts of capitalism, living in a shitty home, coming from a working-class background where everyone is fucking miserable, and nobody has the capacity to break out of the environment that they are... I really wish that I had had that when I was younger ... I look back on how awful it was to be a teenager and am like, man, if I'd seen that kind of stuff, just, you know, yea, in the media, if I had seen pictures of queers rioting in the street and just being like, fuck you patriarchy! Fuck you

compulsory monogamy! Fuck you all this shit! Man, it would have been a whole nother thing. (Heather interview)

In the heteroglossic struggle over the primacy of meanings elicited by the term “empowerment,” participants hold forth the rhetorical strategy of empowering reversal as a semiotic instrument undeniable in its articulatory power. Contrary to the institutionalized, recuperated “empowerment” of inclusion insisted on by the non-profit sphere, the riotous rhetor articulates a material, embodied rhetoric of immediately liberatory transgression, one whose power persists for participants even as mediated representations attempt to contain its transgression as hegemonically unexceptional “tantruming.”

Backlighting

I would say that property destruction is an important tactic in the fight against capitalism... For one, it solidifies for us and reminds us that the powers we fight are not abstract and insurmountable. They are vulnerable to attack. - Kerry Cuneen, currently evading a police for a federal grand jury subpoena for the Seattle May Day action

Potentially the most evident and widespread rhetorical strategy at play in the noninjurious violence of contemporary protest, fully evident in the semiosis of the Occupy riots, shared in acts both of targeted property destruction and clashes with police, is the strategy of what I term “backlighting the State.” Much of the circumstances and responses establishing the *kairos* of this strategy in the neoliberal era have already been explored: if, in Wacquant’s words, “the poverty of the social state against the backdrop of deregulation elicits and necessitates the grandeur of

the penal state,” (19) backlighting can be understood as embarrassing precisely this grandeur by challenging the State’s “monopoly on the means of violence within a given territory,” in Weber’s celebrated phrase. Backlighting shares discursive means with guerrilla warfare, but not material ones: it seeks to trip the State up in a situation of asymmetric conflict, but does not seek to “seize power,” nor to “break the back” of the State, nor to directly make its function *materially* impossible. Like the strategic nonviolence of Sharp and Lakey, backlighting relies on the “political jiu-jitsu” and “dilemma demonstrations” evoked by shows of public rage, rather than force of arms; it seeks to publicly perform collective potential, to “open space” for resistance which, in the minds of some practitioners, itself may suffice for an insurrectionary undoing of status quo regimes of power.

While the rhetorical strategies of forced comparison, desubjectification, and profanation emerge primarily from practices of targeted property destruction, and disidentification, disinvestment, and empowering reversals from clashes with the police, the rhetorical strategy of backlighting is articulated by both property destruction and clashing with police, and often by their co-occurrence. In the words of one Occupier, participants carry out “spray painting and breaking windows for the purpose of claiming space and showing that you're not in control, you being the police.” These aspects of “claiming space” and “showing [police] aren’t in control” are targeted property destruction not in its modality of comparison, desubjectification, or profanation, but property destruction *as* clash, for the purpose of backlighting. Backlighting does not attempt to erase its inanimate subject, but to situate it in a finite, thinkable matter, to delineate the infinite, to demonstrate the contingency of that which claims to be absolute, and, in an often indirect correlative, to form nomadic subjects who assume the discursive space made available in this retreat of the infinite. In contrast to desubjectification or disidentification,

backlighting does not presume to delete or sever the enunciative modality of its object, nor is it immediately concerned with transforming the subjectivity of its practitioner as are disinvestment, reversals, though this is certainly a desired consequence. More akin to the discursive mechanisms of comparison and profanation, of the discursive categorization schemes of sign-on-sign, although while these two strategies address the arrangement, equivalence, and ranking of *values*, backlighting seeks in particular to point up new configurations of *potential* and *foreclosure*; “making space” for the former through the public rolling back of the spacial claims of the latter.

As antecedents to the Occupy riots, two exemplary mentions of *limiting omnipotence* demonstrate the consistency of this claim before neoliberal exigencies. In 1999 in the WTO protests in Seattle, one group celebrated the return of this limiting capacity after decades of “disruptive deficit” of the institutionalization of dissent by boasting, “Again the poor and working class the world over were reminded that the ruling class is not *omnipotent*, not even in their primary home nation.” (Black Bloc Papers 41) Six years later, after the dismal period of Bush’s first term, the September 11 attacks, and the onset of the Iraq war, one group, who had traveled from West Michigan to George W. Bush’s inaugural procession in January of 2005, wrote in similar terms, ebullient in momentary rupture of the stifling fear of the era (including nearly stopping Bush’s inaugural proceeding at several points):

In an environment of domestic war and increasing repression of dissent, we came and confronted the power of the state and dared to act for what we dream. This was the first successful unpermitted mass action since 9/11 reinvigorating a culture of direct action and moving away from liberal coalitions that are content with signwaving in pig-pens.

Despite the gallons of pepper spray and repressive tactics of the state, most participants came away from the action feeling positive about it... *We proved to ourselves that the state is not all powerful and we have the power to challenge it.* (334)

Daniel of Occupy Oakland clarified the centrality of affective and subjective trajectories in backlighting, and making space in the temporary absence of authority, beginning with a look at the mechanisms of embodied affect, of “physicalizing their anger,” as what is given presence in the spaces made available by the temporary retreat of policing powers, and by the act of forcing this temporary retreat:

I would say, the moment when people start fighting the State physically, when people start physicalizing their anger, start striking back at corporations, at symbols of the state, and obviously the police, who are the human element of the state, all that tension, all that violence becomes immediate and becomes visible, and becomes physical, and I think that's not to be underestimated. The chance to be able to *physically express and feel that rage*, because there's not a lot of ways to do that. I would say I rarely feel as liberated, particularly, you know we can, shouting ‘Who's streets, our streets!’ when you are, when you have police on either side of you and in front and back of you, and you're walking down the street, just has to be irony. You know? There's really no other way to see that. Because they're not our streets. The police are there to make sure that those aren't our streets. On a day-to-day level, not even just within a demonstration. And the moments when we can actually, are willing to fight for the streets and take them, is as close as I've ever felt to actually having the streets. And that may only be five minutes, that may only be ten minutes, that maybe few hours, but it is in that struggle I think that we come the

closest. I honestly don't want to say that that's the only real form of political expression, that is really not what I'm saying at all, but it is a unique form of political expression that brings its own rewards, that are very different than other forms of political expression. It has its own risks, it has its own problems, just like all forms of political expression.

(Daniel interview)

That backlighting is in some sense a practice of forced comparisons emerges in the above words regarding the capacity of clashes to make “immediate,” “visible”, and “physical” the implicit violence of the everyday; by presenting the hegemonically backgrounded, the potency of the hegemonic is made relative to an evanescent counterhegemony. In standing before the concrete manifestation of systemic violence of, for example, a line of riot police or soldiers lobbing tear gas and wielding batons and less-lethal weaponry, the subject has little choice but fight or flight: Fearing for oneself and perhaps more for those others constituting an ephemeral counterpublic, to seek escape, or give oneself over to a stance of impudence, insolence, anger. The latter, in Brison’s words, is already itself empowering, as an affective process substituting an equivalence of foe-peer for superior-subordinate:

I ... found it almost impossible to get angry with my assailant. I think the terror I still felt precluded the appropriate angry response. It may be that experiencing anger toward an attacker requires imagining oneself in proximity to him, *a prospect too frightening for a victim in the early stages of recovery to conjure up*. As Aristotle observed in the *Rhetoric*, Book I, ‘no one grows angry with a person on whom there is no prospect of taking vengeance, and we feel comparatively little anger, or none at all, with those who are much our superiors in power.’(13)

The *ungiving* expanse of the “grandeur of the penal state” presents its own vulnerability: it belies the ease with which it might be punctured and prodded, a poking and puncturing begging to be mocked. As backlighting targets precisely what Wacquant refers to as “the grandeur of the penal state”, the *farcical* nature of backlighting is often close at hand. Communication scholar M. Lane Bruner (2005) contends that “humorless” tendencies of the State leave it particularly vulnerable to destabilization through the public humor of Bakhtinian carnivalesque protest, particularly under conditions when “those benefiting from rampant political corruption lose their sense of humor, [and thus] become ridiculous in their seriousness, but are incapable, for one reason or another, of silencing their prankster publics.” (136) In Bruner’s theory, social movements often seek to create and define social environments of public transgression and destabilization of meaning, precisely because the State, constituted as serious and somber, is incapable of negotiating such semiotic terrain.

The cover of the Seattle anarchist journal “Tides of Flame” (2012) immediately after the May Day actions bears out Bruner’s claim. Referencing, with a background image of two shattered points of glass, what might be taken as a generally fearful display of public violence of property destruction, the anonymous rhetors have positioned in absurdly bold, large letters, the words, “HA HA HA.” Although the list of contents below mentions May Day and violence, the image seems to stand on its own. Against the likely readings of sullen, severe thuggery of threat and inarticulate actings-out of pent-up unconscious frustration, the juxtaposition puts forth the core claim of backlighting: “We got away with it, so there!” Rather than “speaking truth” to power, backlighting might be said to “talk shit” to power. Guiding their audience (in a moment laden with desubjectification and disidentification claims) away from the point of view, invariably represented in media coverage, of the business owners and representatives of state

agencies whose windows were broken, the “image event” (Deluca & Peeples 2001) issues an invitation to spectators frustrated by a lack of agency, to identify with the antagonistic subjects who, for a moment, perform their power in calling the bluff of neoliberal policing’s omnipotence claims.

In what has become an iconic image of the demonstrations, Assistant Chief Mike Sanford can be seen to fumble as he rushes out from police lines, directly into the crowd of Black Bloc demonstrators. First readings of the photograph may well involve an admiration for Sanford’s renegade heroism, his passion for “the order of things”, like *Les Miserables*’ Javert, so great as to drive him to risk his personal safety in order to take a stand; leaving behind the role of police-as-armed-bureaucrat, Sanford steps into the Bruce Willis mode of white male heroic individual, his business attire both complicating this rogue masculinity, and performing the bureaucrat-gone-hero. On extended readings, however, this interpretation becomes unstable. The stance of the black-clad figures, rather than performing the aggressive thuggery rushing forward for a fight, seems rather to convey defensive surprise; the wooden stick in the hands of the central figure is held horizontally at both ends to defensively block Sanford’s ingress, rather than outstretched to inflict injury. The figure on the left is jumping back to get out of the situation, not escalate it. The hands and feet of the figure on the right too close together to convey aggression; the body language conveys rather a hesitancy and concern. If anything, the confrontation appears to be a collision of misreadings, the thrusts and parries of opponents playing different sports – confronted with very injurious possibilities, the sticks are withdrawn, the bodies seek containment and escape. Sanford, a major figure tasked at the time with reform efforts of the Seattle Police Department, was not rewarded for his tragicomic heroism, but gained severe sanction. As an artifact of successful backlighting, the photograph excels: If any

image could capture the *indignification* of the State at which backlighting aims, this image of fumbling keystone-kop slapstick photos does so with powerful eloquence.

What the neoliberal state lacks in flexibility, it attempts to compensate for in force of response. The dual nature of the neoliberal state as both a *security* state and a *penal* state thus presents two temporary cheeky aspects asking to be pinched: the *preventative*, and the *retributive/punitary*. Once an initial transgression of prevention has occurred, the punitive aspect appears with especial zeal, acutely committed to repairing the punctures and gouges in the smooth surface of power. One unavoidable example, brilliant analyzed in *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (Boal 2005), is the “War on Terror”, understood more as a move at discursive or “spectacular” substitution of image/power for the vulnerability performed by the attacks on the twin towers. The torture images “leaked” from Abu Ghraib, the clouds of flame raining over Baghdad’s skyline, and the mutilated bodies of Afghans and Iraqis piled as evidence of savage rage present not a vulnerability of US empire, but its powerful enactment through substituting “our” outrage for “theirs”; not an exception, but a “state of exception” by which the everyday sphere is constituted.

Social movement participants attempt to interrupt this chain of consequentiality, instead opening up tangential lines of flight to the supposedly inevitable horrors of spectacular revenge. Humor often surfaces as well in the figure who “gets away with it” in the face of neoliberal state threats of retribution, such as Colton Harris-Moore, the “barefoot bandit,” who in his teenage years freely commandeered a series of planes and cars, and ate uninvited from scores of private refrigerators for his own personal traveling pleasure. Harris-Moore evaded capture for several years before being shot down in the Bahamas in 2010, but remains a sort of casual ‘saint’ among

some young radicals for his years of evasion. One anonymous autobiography of wide popularity among young activists is tellingly entitled *Evasion* (Anonymous 2001). That the apparently impossible can be so easily achieved despite a discursive hegemony of apparent universal administration is at once inspiring and, at times, funny, however - and because of - the disastrous consequences dodged. The fear imposed by seamless impossibility suddenly rends in surprise at an unforeseen fission of potential, and sudden shocking relief expresses itself through laughter - including as well a note of derision for the lost supremacy of forces overcome.

An appreciation of the eloquence of backlighting, as with the other rhetorical strategies of the contemporary riot, should not be understood as an apologia for the circumstances of their occurrence. Often participants seeking to enact these rhetorical strategies find themselves frustrated by the *stupidity of riot*: several interviewees emphasized the distinction between the eloquence of *moments* of backlighting, considered as an independent factor, and the disastrous effects which participants often characterize as ill-considered, unstrategic, context-ignorant, and/or irresponsible. From several of these testimonies, I cite an interview from Jenny, talking about Occupy Oakland's general strike, speaking of a badly botched attempt to occupy a vacant hotel bordering on the camp. Jenny praises the effects of backlighting, but does not spare criticism in the conduct of the actors in their follow-through - a short-sightedness explicitly claimed to be aggravated, rather than prevented, by a focus on priorities of "nonviolence" and its oppositions. The fetishization of the effective *moment* - a fetish only exasperated by neurotic repetitions of idealistic critique of that one moment's moral status outside of any contextual application - is argued to assure the application of the method in anti-strategic, damaging, counter-effective manners. An appreciation of backlighting's mechanism on its own terms also encourages critique of its value *relative to* a myriad of other factors essential to social movement

consideration - not the least of which, external appeal and internal maximization of complementarity of a diverse constituency.

The police came, and they walled off the street, they were kicking the shit out of people, shooting a lot of tear gas, and people were charging them for a minute. And that part was spectacular. I'm like, please! You're not going to win, but go for it! Like, please, show them that they don't have power beyond their brutality. Do that. Make that real. Because half their power is the fact that they can actually destroy your life, and the other half of their power is power we give them. So take that back. That's thrilling.

But people did that for twenty minutes, lost interest, or knew that wasn't going to end anytime soon, and ran away. And what that left was a ton of folks in the park, mostly folks who were homeless folks who needed to live there anyway and happened to be getting kind of sheltered by Occupy still in the park, many of whom had a variety of disabilities, getting the shit kicked out of them by the police because the Black Blockers all ran, and the police came and swept, so at that point we did a two-block carry on this dude who got shot in his bad knee, who was a Vietnam war vet, we had to carry him two blocks to where the ambulances would come. ...

It was all this thing where I was like, you have to walk the walk, dude. You can't just charge the police, which I think is really important, and then leave, you have to hold the line, or you have to get people out, or you have to then move away from there. You can also light that fire all you goddamn want, [but] not a quarter block from all the people who are not up for that and don't have the capacity and have not given their consent. So it's just this intense situation where I'm really tired of the conversation, I do

think it is obstructive of the conversation, between violence and nonviolence, because it's about strategy... [violence versus nonviolence is] about should you or should you not, that's not real. What's real in the world is what works, and that means that everything is on the table every time that a new situation arises, and you pick the thing off the table that is the correct thing for that moment that works best. And when it doesn't work best, you don't have crazy fallout, you learn your lessons, and you heal your wounds, and you try again. (Jenny interview)

Riot does not work by magic, anymore than does nonviolence. The public destruction of economic and political targets and clashes with police certainly do not guarantee the success or failure of a social movement. The performance of riotous rhetorics do not constitute a self-sufficient political formation, nor, as in the approach of some contemporary strands of militant discourse, can their affectual entailments stand in as a substitute for the dissensual collective deliberation of politics, that wide arena of conflict which results from what Ranciere terms "the presupposition of equality." (May 2008) The powerful appeals of riot do not exempt its participants from the need to make common cause across demographic, cultural, and ideological differences; to have patience before awkward lapses, misunderstandings, and insults; to listen in good faith and explain in humility however much their preferred means of appeal are necessarily material. Otherwise, riot, lacking incentives and mechanisms of contagion with which to generalize and escalate into a wider insurrectionary movement, degenerates into a mere past-time: a low-risk, nonthreatening, a self-congratulatory, self-incapacitating hobby useless for any end but personalistic expression and identity marking. Like progressive nonprofits, the fetishists of riot lay claim to the prestige of risk-taking without actually taking risks; without threatening

any social transformation that might unseat elites, adherents are free from the inconvenience of having to confront any measures of counterinsurgency.

Riot aims at particular rhetorical effects which may succeed or fail in execution due to its fragility and sensitivity to factors of context. Riot is no more above or below its conditions than is any other rhetorical assertion. The fetishization of riot in both negative and positive terms forms *the* central distortion in the applied analysis of social movements in our era; conversations both analytical and propositional would far better be focused on contextual conditions of strategic effectivity and outcome than on the inherent deistic or satanic nature of the strategy, which in any case, as Tilly (2003) asserts, is a ubiquitous factor of contentious politics. If this project has focused more on a critique of demonizing dismissals of riot than its deifying laudatories, it is because these dismissals work as well to decry precisely those rhetorical strategies which made the Occupy movement so strikingly powerful in its rhetorical effects, and were thus instrumental in availing the discursive resources of “good protesters” versus “bad protesters” which were then utilized by authorities as *the* means of delegitimation as they forcibly – and very violently – dismembered the camps and the movement. (Ciccariello-Maher in Williams et al 2013)

In conclusion to our discussion of those rhetorical strategies often discussed as “tactics,” it is important to remember that riotous strategies need not always be employed to the exclusion of broad publics, although, as the first chapter discussed, it does preclude appealing to “masses” already constituted by the symbolic and organizational order targeted. Rather than quibbling over the supremacy of “deep” versus “wide” appeals, movement participants and theorists increasingly speak of fostering *complementarity* (Amster 2012 60-62) among differences,

multiplying rather than subtracting the strengths of different approaches. At first glance, the tactical dichotomy seems ubiquitous: theorists like Hedges decry “militants” as “the cancer of Occupy” for disturbing an ideal consensus constituted only in his imagination, representing little but a stand-in image for the exclusion of those not invited to his utopia; while some militants cite “diversity of tactics” as a refusal to discuss the place of their actions, or even disown the notion of utility altogether, in individualistic claims of “autonomy” which more resembling right-wing “freedoms” at the cost of the welfare of others. The words of one Tahrir revolutionary whom I interviewed suggest a transcendence of such binaries:

In Tahrir, every morning we would make it very clear that it was a peaceful protest, which was very important, because we needed *everyone* out on the streets for it to be a popular revolution - women, older people, children, everyone. And then, the sun would set, and every night, the *shebaab* would go out, the young men, and fight with the police, set police cars on fire, burn down police stations and the offices of the ruling party. And we needed that too. We needed both, having both was essential, that’s why we won.

(Tahrir interview)

As Guillén-Givins (in Williams et al 2013) argues, “diversity of tactics” was originally a trope meant to stimulate discussion through difference and seek out moments for such complementarity, rather than a means of ending conversation with asserts of any one approach as superior or self-subsistent. Bearing in mind the necessity of such complementarity as the mode of maintaining internal differentiation, this project will now move on to look at what sorts of emergent common characteristics may be seen throughout the wide contentious topics and

tropes of Occupy, as a way to understand what might characterize those of movements to come (Riedner and Mahoney 2008).

Chapter 5 – The Characteristics of Movements to Come

Part 1: Who (and How) was Occupy?

Who (and Which) are The People?

“And then we're going to have one that's going to get really big, because we're going to break free of the violence, and we're going to have hundreds of thousands of people. [Q: So what is that going to look like?] A: It's going to look like a picnic. It's going to look like a church service. It's going to look like a dance.” – Tim Anderson, KKNW (Anderson)

This is a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the wider public and those within the structures of power (including the police) who are possessed of a conscience... The continuing attempt by the state to crush peaceful protesters who call for simple acts of justice delegitimizes the power elite. It prompts a passive population to respond. – Hedges, “Cancer”

I feel like when we feel like we're winning, even in the short time, that that's also something that brings people out, and that doesn't really look like people getting hit with batons on TV and then feeling sorry for them and then going to support them for one march or something... I think when it looks like we're winning more, and we're actually making gains in the streets and taking more space, that's gonna draw more people out. Because I've talked to so many people who are just like, they are really hopeless and for good reason, and that that's a reason that they don't come out, not because they're

morally opposed to violence, or this, or that... Like if we made anything in the
resemblance of [the 2006 teacher's strike and occupation in] Oaxaca, or something, I bet
we'd be seeing thousands of people, or at least hundreds more, than we've seen before.
Cause it's exciting, and its new, and a lot of people do feel discontent, and also alienated
in this society, and the need to feel inspired, and it's gonna have to look like something
new that America never really sees. And it's not gonna be a police baton in the face,
because we've all seen that before. – Cindy, Seattle Occupier

In his classic paper on social movement rhetoric, Gregg (1971, in Morris et al 2006) reminds his
readers that social movements are often more concerned with “constituting selfhood through
expression,” than with appealing to authorities; such characteristics hold particularly true of
those movements whose “militant” rhetoric might seem irrational by petitionary standards.
Simons similarly (1970, in Morris et al 2006) observes a functional dichotomy in social
movements, between a co-constituting “militant” rhetoric more concerned with developing
critique and challenge within the movement, and a “reformist” one that translates the
movement's aims and semiotic advances into terms legible to existing institutions. What Gregg,
Simons, scholars of social movement and counterpublic rhetoric, and movement participants
alike have generally failed to appreciate is that, in the absence of a unified, already-sutured
political subject of “The People,” “militant” and “reformist” rhetorics function to attract and
mobilize different demographic sectors of the larger population, sectors which in turn bring
differing priorities and characteristics to the movement they join. For this reason, public
rhetorics of contention can never remain innocent of sociological inquiry.

The issue becomes acute in *leaderless* movements, a transformation which by most accounts (Brafman & Beckstrom 2008, Ross 2013) characterizes contemporary social movements. Martin Luther King, Jr, for example, could *personally* mediate tensions internal to his movement, the characteristic affects and expectations of different sectors, as when he urged his listeners to act in a dialect of outrage and conciliation, that “if they accepted such injustices without protesting, they would betray their own sense of dignity ... But I would balance this with a strong affirmation of the Christian doctrine of love.” (Carson 59) Contemporary movements, generally acting in the absence of a sympathetic mass-media capable of constituting a unitary political subject for the movement, often rely instead on social media, a platform which inherently produces fragmentary, evanescent identity formations (Deluca et al, 2012; Costanza-Chock 2012). Critics accustomed to a more traditional style of protest may bemoan the lack of “principles” and “leadership,” scapegoating participants who have little influence in the matter, as in Hedges’ indemnification of Occupy Oakland: “These anarchists [sic] represent no one but themselves... Oakland’s African-American leaders, who, along with other local community organizers, should be determining the forms of resistance.” (Hedges, “Cancer”) In the absence of such a figurehead personality or mediating center, contemporary movement tensions are displaced into expressions through topics and tropes, through the legitimacy assigned and denied to different “messages” and “tactics,” which take on the task of defining the movement’s internal and external characterization and appeal. This explanation alone can account for the intensity and ubiquity of dissensus on such topics, in movements such as Occupy.

In appeals to a “wider public” and “passive population” of “hundreds of thousands of people,” each defined *only* by their aversion for an undefined “violence,” a local application of classical liberal ideology’s discourse of universal humanism is seen to be at work. That “The

People” is always *a choice* among different demographics is a point obfuscated in such discourse; with the acknowledgement that most often in movements, like appeals to like – different participants frequently view their own demographic networks, whom they may be struggling to mobilize, as the default audience. As with more general critiques of universal humanism, such claims generally work to obfuscate the very non-universal privileged status of the default subject. Notably, the “militant” discourse above is careful to qualify her evocations – “more,” “many,” “a lot of” people, who number more humbly in the “thousands ... or at least hundreds.” Speaking from marginal subject positions, and frequently espousing positions affiliated with critiques of universal humanism, militant discourses would sound incongruent claiming a unified subject, rather than speaking as one position among others in the “reticulate public sphere.” (Hauser 1999) Disruptive repertoire “tropes,” as elements articulated in marginal discourses, may indeed have a lessor appeal in numbers, but the commitment of their subjects may in some senses compensate, a question later addressed in this chapter. As contention around topics and tropes in Occupy intensified greatly *after* the initial massive mobilizations, when actors were obliged to appeal *despite* rather than *through* increasingly unsympathetic media coverage, self-described radicals asserted the importance of innovation in appeal, while moderates blamed such assertions for the decline in participation.

No figure was cited with such frequency to legitimize claims of universal humanism as Martin Luther King, Jr. However, King himself was quite open about the exclusions enacted by the topics and tropes of his own movement. In one newspaper column on September 1, 1962, he wrote, “No matter what it is we seek, if it has to do with full citizenship, self-respect, human dignity, and borders on changing the ‘Southern way of life,’ the Negro stands little chance, if any, of securing the approval, consent, or tolerance of the segregationist white South.” (Carson

166) Elsewhere, he quite starkly laid out his core rhetorical strategy, including a clear specificity of audience:

The goal of the demonstrations in Selma, as elsewhere, was to dramatize the existence of injustice and to bring about the presence of justice by methods of nonviolence. Long years of experience indicated to us that Negroes could achieve this goal when four things occurred:

Nonviolent demonstrators go into the street to exercise their constitutional rights;

Racists resist by unleashing violence against them:

Americans of good conscience in the name of decency demand federal intervention and legislation;

The administration, under mass pressure, initiates measures of immediate intervention and supports remedial legislation. (Carson 277)

Given the historical context within which King was working, it is not a stretch by any means to read “the presence of justice” as code for the “federal intervention and legislation,” and “Americans of good conscience” as predominantly northern liberal whites. The administration which forms the efficient audience of King’s strategy he names as such. Under current conditions, counterpublic rhetors might be argued to lack analogue; what higher authority might be called in to intervene against the US federal government, for example, or the World Trade Organization, or global capitalism?

In view of such concerns, some Occupy participants advocated more explicit focus on the preferred constituencies of the movement as it developed:

We no longer have the camp, which brought out its own clear social groupings that have been in motion together since the fall. Some of these groupings have been dumpies (downwardly mobile urban professionals who the economic crisis has dumped into the working class), homeless folks, unemployed folks, and low wage workers. We are asking now: what new strategies can continue to mobilize these social groupings together? What strategies can reach out to new groupings that we haven't yet reached? Which groups should we be trying to reach? Is it possible to reach all communities at once? If not, which communities should be prioritized? ...

For example, I think that this movement should be grounded in, and in solidarity with, the struggles of working class communities of color. Wall St. and the 1% get their profits by exploiting working class people of color more than they exploit working class white people. (Note, when I say working class I don't just mean people who currently work, I also mean unemployed folks, and anyone who has been displaced, dispossessed, or separated from their land and the means of production by colonialism). I do think that this movement will *not* be relevant to working class communities of color if it relies on the police for safety. (“Doug,” correspondence)

Topics and their Publics

While I have not yet touched on contested claims over “the message” of the Occupy movement, the question of *how* its publics are constituted finally comes to bear, both in composing the participatory inside, and externally appealing to potential participants and allies. In the absence of any hard data, as a participant in both the first week of Occupy Wall Street

and in every day of Occupy Seattle from October 3 to the loss of the camp in December, one thing seemed clear: while the demographic make-up of Occupy Wall Street was noticeably *less* diverse than most public spaces in Manhattan, Occupy Seattle was noticeably *more* diverse than most public spaces in Seattle. (Oakland has no “public space” innocent of gentrifying dichotomies by which to judge, but the first camp in October was likely majority African-American, which, as numerous interviewees attested, changed as police repression intensified with and after the first major raid.) In the words of one exhaustive study by an independent researcher conducted in tandem with a number of internal Occupy Wall Street research groups (Owens et al 2012), the New York occupation saw “disproportionately high participation rates by professionals and persons with high levels of education. These findings raise specific questions: What do the commitments of our organizing efforts reveal about the kinds of political subjects we enabled?” (5) The study recognizes and indeed asserts that “competition over movement purposes sometimes developed along lines of established social privilege/exclusion... wage issue campaigns for healthcare and financial reform tended to emerge from alliances of wealthier, whiter, professional identified partners...” (3) In the study’s analysis of 124 political projects within OWS, “only 4 projects in the sample sought to produce alternative systems compared to 21 projects producing campaigns to *reform* existing financial, education, legislative, and electoral systems.” (6)

A comparison with Occupy Seattle or Occupy Oakland provides a very conditional answer to the study’s question about commitments: neither Occupy Seattle nor Oakland would be so easily typified as disproportionately “professionals and persons with high levels of education,” and while public claims concerning financial regulation, campaign finance reform, abolishing corporate personhood, and raising taxes on “the 1%” were *always* present, so in

noticeable measure were arguments and statements about police, racism, patriarchy, indigeneity and decolonization, political representation *per se*, and gender determinism in a way such topics never surfaced in New York. While a qualitative study of political aims expressed, for example, in the minutes of Occupy Seattle and Occupy Oakland is beyond the scope of this study, my impression is that a quite dissimilar ratio from New York was communicated, although more in the choice in short-term commitments (as, for example, to endorse the October 22 March against Police Brutality) than explicit avowals of “revolutionary” long-term goals. Occupy Seattle’s largest cultural event, at Westlake Plaza in early November, was termed “Rise and Decolonize: Hip Hop Occupies,” and featured a number of local rappers, DJs, and break dancers, capped by a raucous dance party. While New York maintained ambiguous attitudes towards police (at least until the military-like raid of the camp on November 15), both Seattle and Oakland passed proposals in General Assembly banning police from the camp. While New York declared itself nonviolent before the occupation began, the General Assemblies in Oakland and Seattle voted down such proposals each of the numerous times they were proposed.

In summa, it is certainly possible that New York’s persistently large numbers, remaining in the high thousands when Oakland and Seattle remained in the mid-hundreds, may have correlated with the appeal to less-marginalized audiences, although a number of other factors clearly had influence as well, such as the relative size of the cities. The question posed by the movement as a whole, bearing its stunning spectrum of variations in mind, however, stands: What demographic is most appropriate, in what balance of commitment, consciousness, numbers, and influence, to at least *begin* to bring about the sort of social changes desired by movement participants? For various reasons, one might consider looking towards those

constituencies most impacted by socio-economic inequality; sounding almost regretful for opportunities missed, the Occupy Wall Street study unambiguously comes to such a conclusion:

Supporting poor peoples' movements against our common opponents seems a better strategy to encourage a powerful social movement that can make our society more democratic. My argument is that communication organizing *can* contribute to such a movement but only when talk is part of action and action is to enable the most excluded to fight their exclusion. The poor cannot always resist, through protest or other means. When activists help the silenced gain the power to speak and be heard, we expand the stage of political debate and alter the social context in which rulers strive to legitimate their power.

Enacting our equality through common struggle with the least powerful is how we create democratic community and make ourselves *democratic subjects*. The emergence of that community alters the symbolic and organizational context upon which the ruling order depends and makes another world possible. (4)

Without by any means forgetting the importance of wide-scale mobilizations for social change, and maintaining as an open question the relative importance of numbers versus commitment, among other factors, in social movement characterization, this project will now move on to look at what sorts of characteristics may have been behind the contentious topics and tropes of Occupy, as a way to understand what might characterize those of movements to come (Riedner and Mahoney 2008), what basic set of strategies under contemporary conditions “alters the symbolic and organizational context upon which the ruling order depends and makes another world possible.”

Part 2: After Victimhood, Beyond Innocence

Yesterday one of my good friends, an old hippie, was talking about Occupy and said, the most important thing about Occupy - she must've said this five times - the most important thing is that you continue to make sure that everyone knows that you are the *victims*. I mean, I love this woman, I adore her, I have a lot of respect for her as a person ... At the same time there's something so pathological in that. I think there is something very powerful in the whole world seeing that you are not the ones starting shit, but you have to be seen as the *victims*?

I think that in any of the massive disciplined nonviolent movements it must have taken so much courage and so much strength to really do what they did but that wasn't what I heard here it was in fact that that we seem to be weak that we put our weakness at the forefront... I didn't think about this at the time but thinking about it now like I guess I'm not sure that she had really thought through what that would mean for us to do [that]. I don't really know if I'm like willing or able to stand in one place and get my head beaten or watch my friends get their head beaten so that other people can watch it and feel pity... Like fuck that, at the very least, I'm going to run. -Mark

If one characteristic of nonviolence - including in its “strategic” variations - can be said to be utterly incongruous with the exigencies presented under neoliberal conditions and the corporate control of media, it would be the requirement for performing and communicating victimhood as a central requisite. Sharp’s formulation of nonviolence, although prioritizing a fostering of agency, essentially depends on what he terms “political jiu-jitsu”: counterhegemonic actors assert their victimhood by bringing about repression and suffering publicly before wider audiences,

which then withdraw legitimacy from the regime and assign it to those suffering repression. “Political jiu-jitsu,” in Schock’s analysis, is articulated as precisely what is lacking in “violent” approaches. “Martyrdom is a potent catalyst for the political jiu-jitsu dynamic; that is, the murder of unarmed activists highlights the brutality of the regime and encourages previously uncommitted persons to join the cause in a manner that the murder of a violent activist would not.” (89) In some sense, such approaches are still clearly powerful; in my participation of the first week of Occupy Wall Street, it was clearly the diffusion of televised and video images of innocent (white, youthful, female) protesters pepper-sprayed by police which brought out large numbers to join the movement. In the words of the Occupy Seattle participant whose story opened this section, “I mean I don't think she's wrong. There is a lot of power in that, precisely because it puts the person watching on the moral low ground. If you can watch somebody else get really brutally hurt and you're not doing something, and you're not there then you are in the wrong.” That “regarding the pain of others” (Sontag 2004) is integral to political jiu-jitsu, however, presents a set of problems.

As noted in the first chapter, the ability of mass publics to watch the suffering of protesters is directly dependent on a mass media sympathetic enough to convey the images. Media outlets owned by the very parent companies implicated in protest messages are unlikely to give sympathetic coverage, a factor studied *ad nauseum* in contemporary media-studies literature. (e.g. McChesney 2004, Chomsky & Herman 2008) Other structural determinants of such sympathy include novelty, the “narrative arc” of the issue, the legitimacy and legibility of the issue in editorial eyes, and the age, gender, social association, and of course race of the protesters. The young women in lower Manhattan and the UC Davis students were all or predominantly white, young, and clean-cut; Dorli Rainey, from whom I stood only feet when

she was viciously assaulted, whose photo circulated possibly more than any other Occupy image, is elderly and white. In Rainey's case, the fortunate presence of medics to hold her up and douse her burning eyes in Milk of Magnesia ironically presented a photogenic opportunity, as the treatment (mistaken in most accounts for the offending agent itself) dripped dramatically from her eyes, and her frame hung Jesus-like in the medics' supportive arms. Had any of these elements been missing, or had the assault occurred two weeks later when coverage of the still-growing movement was no longer generally deemed newsworthy, Rainey's suffering would have been known only to her friends and those of us present. Only in images where police violence against bodies would be read as *exceptional* can coverage be expected, and only then, in very specific circumstances.

In addition, the very position of spectator presents complexities not always under the control of participants. Gitlin, a staunch advocate of public victimhood and "political jiu-jitsu," lets slip occasional acknowledgments that such approaches are as likely to backfire: "When the police shoved demonstrators, clubbed them, and gassed them, the scenes of the action were dubbed 'violent clashes,' as if nonviolent demonstrators were responsible for police attacks." (Gitlin 39) In Gitlin, such moments are curious exceptions, even while for participants they form the rule. A complex co-constitution of political entanglements of media, meeting with the compassion-fatigued and *resentiment*-laden subject positions (Connolly 2008) of an American viewership make such interpretations quickly available. Even sympathetic viewings of the suffering of the "undeserving" risks legitimizing persecution of those not deemed so, as in Ahmed's analysis: "To be moved by the suffering of some others (the "deserving" poor, the innocent child, the injured hero), is also to be elevated into a place that remains untouched by other others (whose suffering cannot be converted into my sympathy or admiration." (Ahmed

192, quoted in Riedner and Mahoney 51) Brison explains that the category of victimhood tends to gain a resistant sympathy, at best:

We are not taught to empathize with victims. In crime novels and detective films, it is the villain, or the one who solves the murder mystery, who attracts our attention; the victim, a merely passive pretext for our entertainment, is conveniently disposed of - and forgotten - early on. We identify with the agents' strength and skill, for good or evil, and join the victim, if at all, only in our nightmares. (Brison 10)

Thus, the political identification through victimhood tends to the third person, never the first; it is always an appeal to one in the position of protector to live up to their duty on another's behalf, and never for the victimized themselves to seize power and put an end to the situation that has victimized them, or to the potential victim to prevent themselves from becoming an actual one. In short, political pleas of victimhood are inherently representative and mediative, and precluding first-person agency in defense or change. It is always a plea to the strong to redirect the application of their strength, and never a redistribution of the strength itself. Indeed, the victim, once become a victim, is of too suspect a character, too violated an integrity, to trust with the power of their own protection; their victimhood is taken as itself proof of external invention. What kinds of political form, it should be asked, thus accompany pleas of victimhood?

Brison goes on to warn of yet another unwelcome consequence of victimhood pleas:

Keeping in mind these caveats against taking the experience, its context, or its memory as given, we can avoid a third hazard of first-person narratives of trauma and victimization, which is that they *tend to generate competing narratives of victimization*, not all of

which are justified. Martha Minow points out that ‘victim talk’ tends to provoke counter-‘victim talk’ (note the recent rhetoric of the ‘angry white male victim’ of affirmative action) and not all these narratives can be taken at face value, since they are often at odds with one another. (34)

Such counter-narratives are all-too-easily made available in current conditions, as for example, in rewarding \$38,000 to Lt. Pike for the “workplace injury” of trauma he suffered after pepper-spraying the UC Davis students; for much of the mass-constituted public, they confuse the issue sufficiently to block the jiu-jitsu effect. Gandhi himself, although at times executing such jiu-jitsu with masterful timing, at other times may have overplayed it, leading in part to his lessening popularity as the struggle to drive out the British progressed. In one of his less-fortunate passages, Gandhi avowed,

In a family, when a father slaps his delinquent child, the latter does not think of retaliating. He obeys his father not because of the deterrent effect of the slap, but because of the offended love which he senses behind it. That, in my opinion, is an epitome of the way in which society is or should be governed. What is true of the family must be true of society which is but a larger family.” (in Holmes & Gan, 80)

The analogy is objectionable enough in a domestic context – is there ever a point when the “delinquent” (and hence abuse-deserving) child may disagree with the father’s judgment? Is the child always entitled to suffer in order to satisfy the father’s “offended love,” or might they refuse their role in the father’s own emotional process? In the political application which Gandhi offers, the recommendation becomes even more problematic: what institution is represented by the father, and what sort of “offended love” are institutions capable of? What level of suffering

might be required to gratify the “offended love” of British colonialism, or of the neoliberal security apparatus? One Occupy Oakland participant explained the use of home-made shields (explicitly described as “violence” by Hedges in his “Cancer” article) during the Jan 28 protest as a response to just this dynamic:

You don't get to hurt me. Right. I mean, there's a lot of analogies that one can make that I'm not going to, but are you really going to ask someone who's constantly brutalized by someone to, symbolically really, but materially be injured to prove a point? That's ridiculous, and it's a privileged fucking position... I think they're easy analogies outside of a political context. It would be like asking the battered wife to get battered one last time to prove the inhumanity of her husband. To me, that makes no sense. But following the logic of nonviolence you should steadfastly stand there and get the shit kicked out you. Because it's proving a point. To who? To some higher authority, this wife beater who actually doesn't give a shit? Are you proving a point to some higher authority, the State, who actually doesn't give a shit? No, of course not. Why would you volunteer yourself to be hurt? (Ryan interview)

Although the speaker does not acknowledge that other members of an aggrieved party, rather than the state itself, might form the audience of such actions, the problem of performative victimhood remains: how is this audience to be assured to react with compassion rather than disgust or annoyance?

The public performance of victimhood generally only carries potential power for those privileged parties (Midnight Notes 1978) whose suffering is not *assumed* as a normal occurrence, and even then, only under the most fortunate of circumstances. Mass-mediated publics, should

they be made aware of the suffering, may be as likely to become hostile as sympathetic. In response to such conditions, social movement participants have begun to favor a tactic different and in some manner contrary to “political jiu-jitsu,” a tactic which might be termed “getting away with it.” Schock notes the efficacy of this tactic in Nepal and Thailand, by variously fostering the agency of political subjects:

The occupation of a single indefensible public place by the Chinese students contributed to the movement’s demise, as it was an easy target for repression. By contrast, the ‘lightening protests’ in Nepal and Thailand - whereby protestors gathered at a location, then dispersed upon the approach of authorities, only to reappear at another predetermined place - enabled the challengers to outflank the authorities, avoid the direct brunt of violent repression, remain resilient, and give the impression of being more widespread than they actually were. (Schock 168)

For communities which may have been suffering unjust persecution for centuries, whose presence in jail or prison is more common than in higher education, and for whom “undeserving” has never been made available as a descriptor, voluntary victimhood carries as little power for their own demographic as for mass-publics at large. Apparent exceptions prove the rule: King’s campaigns self-consciously presented middle-class Black college-students, particularly female, for its preferred visage, which, as King attested, was effective only for arousing *national* sentiment against a *regional* situation. Rodney King was not so much an exceptional *target* as a target whose victimhood was captured exceptionally vividly on a novel medium, unlikely to be broadcast a second time. Oscar Grant may have been said to be subject to similar conditions; in any case, to understate the point, neither can distantly have been

imagined to have intentionally been performing their victimhood. Notably, although both Rodney King and Oscar Grant were without question innocent of any charge related to the sadism and murder with which police treated them, media sources soon attempted to legitimate or mitigate police violence by implicating the character of each; the next section will discuss discursive habits of alleged antiracist and critical voices which ultimately enable such defamations. Rapper Lupe Fiasco, perhaps the first celebrity present during the first week of Occupy Wall Street, evaluates the appeal of victimhood for less privileged populations:

The definition of unnecessary-ness... manifested
Say that we should protest just to get arrested
That goes against all my hustling ethics
A bunch of jail niggas say it's highly ineffective
Depart from Martin, connect on Malcolm X tip
Insert Baldwin to similar the separate (Fiasco 2012)

Historian Rebecca Hill (2008), in her powerful analysis of rhetoric labor and anti-lynching defense campaigns in US history, provides a memorable warning concerning the consequences of embracing the melodrama of victimhood for contemporary movements.

After the Civil War, the crime story replaced the story of the heroic rebel at the center of American popular-fiction heroism... Increasingly, what Nietzsche called *ressentiment* became an ideology against revolutionary legitimacy, rejecting action in the name of liberation and embracing instead action in the name of law enforcement. As the nation's soldiers went to war, they acted less in the name of their own personal freedom and more in the name of outraged others in the triangular action that defines the genre of

melodrama. In melodrama, three characters create the story line, and only two of the characters are actors in the true sense of the word. There is a chivalric hero who acts to preserve 'good,' and there is a base villain who threatens the 'good.' The good itself is an object, not an actor, and is usually represented by a white woman or an idealized female child.

That the third point of the pyramid, the "object" of the good itself, possesses no agency already presents radical inconsistencies with the goals of contemporary movements to publicly perform potentials for expanded agency. The idealization of this human object without agency communicates a scorn for democratic values. "She is defined as 'good' because of her separation from both economic and political struggles for power... Her elevation as a symbol of the citizenry, dependent on heroic leadership in a time of crisis, is a sign of the erosion of republican beliefs in American culture." (12) As a figure, such a victim acts as a stand-in for the status quo *tout court*, a "fetish" for all that is threatened by the rage of the Other, embodying in herself the naturalization of familial and class relations.

The symbol of this 'white woman' is the ultimate embodiment of resentment. Stories about her wronged innocence serve to supplant the role of property in the heart of most actions of law-enforcement and military adventure. In her, the private sphere becomes the fetish for private property itself; at the center of the home, the innocent woman stands in for property and becomes an object whose relationship to labor and conflict is utterly erased and naturalized as outside the realms of human action. Instead of property, Nancy Armstrong argues, the 'woman' at the center of domestic fiction defines bourgeois subjectivity (and property itself) as outside power. (12)

Perhaps less obviously, the “chivalric hero” also embodies a dangerous figure of *ressentiment*. Hill argues that this figure is inherently authoritarian, an appeal to an unquestioned third party who embodied justice in a direct manner, precisely the concentration of legitimacy and power that collective, nonhierarchical deliberation structures seek to avoid. His judgments are, by necessity, always to remain unquestioned, and his powers always in need of increase. The discursive substitution for policing functions, whose development paralleled the popularity of such narratives, is not far from hand. “[T]he expansion of the state’s policing powers has been justified by appeals to the need to protect the same innocent and powerless group from the savage criminal classes... In this pattern, the public is not allowed to question the chivalric hero. It can only be the grateful recipient of care.” (12-13)

For those marked with association with the subject position of villainy, rhetorical attempts at reversal are doomed from the start. As analyzed above, Gandhi made use of just this technique in helping to delegitimize British colonialism in India. In the U.S. context, however, public tropes of melodramatic victimhood – precisely those which nonviolence advocates such as Chris Hedges insist are of monumental importance in any effective social movement rhetoric – are so marked by race and class as to always risk reproducing the very legitimizations which they set out to undo. Hill asserts that it was precisely for this reason that, rather than foregrounding *victimhood*, antiracist liberation struggles in the US have historically worked in other manners.

Blacks’ struggle for social equality in the South were described as a quest to dominate helpless white women. It was against this portrayal of themselves as the powerful demons threatening ‘the good’ that anti-lynching activists had to fight. *As a result, they did*

not offer a simple counter-melodrama of Black innocence, because to do so would have undermined their own citizenship claims. Instead, Ida B. Wells and others who followed her unpacked the mythology of rape that surrounded lynching and found that most people killed by lynch mobs had not even been accused of rape. (14, my emphasis)

This problematic nature of innocence, and not only of victimhood, in the figure of the innocent victim which has become so foundational for movements of the past but now must be overcome, makes up the focus of the next section.

Beyond Innocence

In the first chapter, I discussed Wacquant's analysis of the "hypertrophied penalty" of the neoliberal state, meant both to discursively produce a persistent State presence as its provisionary and regulatory functions wither away, and to materially contain the exponential increase in social tension as drastic cuts are made to the "social wage." This penalty is of course not experienced equally across demographics, but is experienced most directly by those at the bottom of wealth and especially racial privileging. Fully 2.4 million people live behind prison walls, a population surpassing any other globally and in history, both in absolute and proportional terms. There are more people in the US "under correctional supervision" (prison or jail, probation, or the home-stay work-jail of probation/parole) than there are people in Ireland, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, El Salvador, Honduras, Jordan, or Libya. Of these populations, approximately 80% are people of color. By most accounts, the majority of these people are not "innocent" – although only a very small minority of crimes result in conviction, scholars have not so far attempted to dispute that the majority of

convictions are for crimes actually committed. However, given the racial disparity between crime rates and arrest, conviction, and sentencing rates (Alexander 2012), conviction of the non-innocent can hardly be termed “justice.” Social movement rhetoric is facing a crisis in manifesting these developments, not the least in its habits of performing *innocence* as a prerequisite characteristic of its participants. As the former director of the ACLU’s Racial Justice Project and author Michelle Alexander argues, “The time-tested strategy of using those who epitomize moral virtue as symbols in racial justice campaigns is far more difficult to employ in efforts to reform the criminal justice system.” (228)

Alexander notes that only months before Rosa Parks’ 1955 arrest on a Montgomery city bus, two other women, Claudette Colvin and Mary Louise Smith, had each also been arrested for similar direct actions violating Montgomery bus segregation. However, Colvin, 15, became pregnant soon after the arrest, and “[a]dvocates worried that her ‘immoral’ conduct would detract from or undermine their efforts to show what blacks were entitled to (and worthy of) equal treatment.” (227) Smith’s father, in turn, was an alcoholic. In Alexander’s words, “It was understood that, in any effort to challenge racial discrimination, the litigant - and even the litigant’s family - had to be above reproach and free from every negative trait that could be used as a justification for unequal treatment.” The NAACP chose to wait for a figure such as Parks, whose reputation could not be marshalled to defame her act by the conservative social mores of the day. Such habits in the preferred recipients of advocacy have not been challenged since the days of Parks, Colvin, and Smith, habits which have determined the character, constituency, and admissible issues of activism for more than half a century. Alexander remarks,

Challenging mass incarceration requires something civil rights advocates have long been reluctant to do: advocacy on behalf of criminals... The ‘politics of respectability’ has influenced civil rights litigation and advocacy, leading even the most powerful civil rights organizations to distance themselves from the most stigmatized elements of the community, especially lawbreakers. (226)

Alexander does not see this reluctance to advocate for lawbreakers and address this issue as a marginal oversight in contemporary anti-racism movements; as noted in my first chapter, her analysis bears out the centrality of policing, incarceration, probation/parole, and especially strictures on employment and housing to the material reproduction of racism in our day. While personal orientations and policies in housing, welfare, education, and health access certainly perpetuate racism, mass incarceration both informs and surpasses each of these factors in influence. As Alexander traces the destabilization of Jim Crow-era legal regimes of segregation north and south and their subsequent material re-entrenchment through the “Law and Order” policies of Nixon carried through in the War on Drugs, the non-innocent character of the targeted demographic was part-and-parcel of the logic of the new regime of dispossession. “The new caste system labels black and brown men as criminals early, often in their teens, making them ‘damaged goods’ from the perspective of traditional civil rights advocates.” (228) The genius of neoliberal practices of regulated dispossession lies precisely in that they do not need to legally acknowledge their own functional categories; by off-loading the moment of selection to police discretion and enacting potentially objectionable policies disproportionately in communities with fewer resources of political defense, categorical sorting may occur in political contexts with even the most politically “liberal” constituencies. While Seattle, for example, has one of the more progressive mayors in the country and the country’s only Socialist city council

member, and Washington State led the country in marijuana legalization and gay marriage, King County maintains the highest level of racial disparity of assets in the country, indexed by zip code. [(cite)] As *every* young person of color I interviewed from Occupy Seattle reiterated, criminalization of youth of color works as *the* key site of re/production of this inequality. That traditional civil rights advocates have refused to engage the issue is worse than omission; it is utter failure by its own measure.

Feminist scholar Jackie Wang (2012) points out that traditional civil rights advocates are not alone in such complicity; in continually framing practices of contemporary racism as typified by instances such as the murder of Trayvon Martin or the near-legal-lynching of the Jena 6, antiracist discourse only acknowledges the Rosa Parkses of our era, which under current conditions, are already corpses. “When we build politics around standards of legitimate victimhood that require passive sacrifice, we will build a politics that requires a dead Black boy to make its point.” (170) By making such moments exemplary, nearly the entire spectrum of antiracists only selects those remnants of Jim-Crow era dispossession practices, re/producing mystification of currently hegemonic ones. As such, antiracists unwittingly work to reproduce white supremacy in its most potent forms.

Using ‘innocence’ as the foundation to address anti-Black violence is an *appeal to the white imaginary*, though these arguments are certainly made by people of color as well. Relying on this framework re-entrenches a logic that criminalizes race and constructs subjects as docile. A liberal politics of recognition can only reproduce a guilt-innocence schematization that fails to grapple with the fact that there is an *a priori* association of Blackness with guilt (criminality). Perhaps *association* is too generous - there is a flat-out

conflation of the terms. As Frank Wilderson noted in ‘Gramsci’s Black Marx,’ the cop’s answer to the Black subject’s question - *why did you shoot me?* - follows a tautology: ‘I shot you because you are Black; you are Black because I shot you.’ In the words of Fanon, the cause is the consequence. Not only are Black men assumed guilty until proven innocent, Blackness itself is considered synonymous with guilt. Authentic victimhood, passivity, moral purity, and the adoption of a whitewashed position are necessary for recognition in the eyes of the State. (Wang 148)

Wang, whose brother received a life sentence without parole at the age of 17, makes clear the consequences of such discourse within social movements, as those most severely impacted by contemporary regimes of dispossessions are effectively barred from participation in just those movements claiming to address these regimes:

The insistence on innocence results in a refusal to hear those labeled guilty or defined by the State as ‘criminals.’ When we rely on appeals to innocence, we foreclose a form of resistance that is outside the limits of law, and instead ally ourselves with the State. This ignores that the ‘enemies’ in the War on Drugs and the War on Terror are racially defined, that gender and class delimit who is worthy of legal recognition.

Wang goes on to elucidate how this played out in the Occupy movement, as forcible assertions about the “real message of the movement” (“this is about the banks, not police”), permissible protest repertoires, and admissible analyses functioned to push out just those constituencies most impacted by socio-economic inequality.

When the Occupy movement was in full swing in the US, I often read countless articles and encountered participants who were eager to police the politics and tactics of those

who did not fit into a non-violent model of resistance. The tendency was to construct a politics from the position of the disenfranchised white middle-class and to remove, deny, and differentiate the Occupy movement from the ‘delinquent’ or radical elements by condemning property destruction, confrontation with cops, and - in cases like Baltimore - anti-capitalist and anarchist analyses. (Wang 169)

Alexander’s book was released just as the Occupy camps were being brutally evicted; writing shortly before Occupy’s appearance, she ends her work with strikingly prophetic words of both hope and caution: just as people have always stood up to past regimes of dispossession, so we can anticipate that human dignity will reassert itself against present-day oppressions. However, to this hope is joined an unambiguous admonition: such movements must consist of those most familiar with contemporary indignity and dispossession, who have much to say to ears that have so far been unwilling to listen. Such voices may not present themselves as “innocent,” and they will not likely be eager to continue their victimhood, publicly or otherwise.

If Martin Luther King Jr is right that the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice, a new movement will arise; and if civil rights organizations fail to keep up with the times, they will be pushed to the side as another generation of advocates comes to the fore. Hopefully the new generation will be led by those who know best the brutality of the new caste system - a group with greater vision, courage, and determination than the old guard can muster, trapped as they may be in an outdated paradigm...

Those of us who hope to be their allies should not be surprised, if and when this day comes, that when those who have been locked up and locked out finally have the chance to speak and truly be heard, what we hear is rage. The rage may frighten us; it may

remind us of riots, uprisings, and buildings aflame. We may be tempted to control it, or douse it with buckets of doubt, dismay, and disbelief. But we should do no such thing.

(Alexander 260-1)

Part 3: Agency and Possibility in Defigurative Politics

I think it redefines what is possible and I think most of what we're doing now. We, being Occupy, we being sort of like the larger milieu of radical politics, is actually pushing forward what is possible... If you remember, a little over a year ago there were student occupations at Berkeley and all over California, and for the first time, to be fair I guess the first occupations were actually months before in New York, you know, the idea of occupying space, of occupation, aside from Iraq and Palestine, but of actually like, taking space in a domestic setting, was unheard of. Cause it didn't happen and when people talked about it people would talk about it as an impossibility as not something that we could actually pull off... Being a college activist radical type, we would discuss whether or not occupying something would make sense, and oftentimes we were just like, no we can't pull it off... The fact that within the course of a month there were literally like a thousand occupations worldwide, pushed the political horizon of what was... Occupy has pushed that spectrum in a lot of different ways. And so besides occupation becoming something that by damn if its actually ok to do, granted the state forces are oppressing, but like, hundreds of thousands, or maybe millions of people were down for it. It's crazy.

(Ryan Interview)

Disruption alone does not a social movement make. The rich totality of relations and trajectories, of ephemeral nodes jagged edges and shifting centers of subjects, publics and performances, of new futures for the past and unfulfilled histories newly discovered, posit and produce to the same degree that they erase and disarticulate; indeed, the two processes are one. The “magic” of Occupy, or of the global wave of “unruly politics” in 2011 of which it was part, was not confined to any inaccurately purported nonviolence, nor by any means to its opposite. For any of us who participated as well as for attentive scholars, the power of Occupy lay in an impossible dialect of *conversation* with *confrontation*. There was the astounding novelty of a participation finally speaking aloud – publicly! - our secret thoughts, sometimes in the charged dissensus of deliberation, other times in quiet listening, but always through what felt like a rather ungainly practice of trust and love. But there was always as well what felt like another participation in fear and rage, in collective assertion and rule-breaking, of screaming “no!” and “why?” and, in some sense at least, violence, in exchanges with our constitutive Other of police, officials, indignant citizens, and our former friends: frictions and fractures with the myriad manifestations of the values against which we stood. The splicing of Habermasian deliberation and millinarian panic felt unprecedented, as it may have been; certainly it is beyond the telling of this project. The movement itself, first as tragedy and then as farce, seemed to articulate this attachment in its very demise: months after the tents, media committees, “get money out of politics!” working groups, kitchens, medic booths, and libraries had been lost, many Occupies persisted in attempting to hold general assemblies and confrontational public actions; in the absence of the material space which held them together in such impossible tension, however, the meetings narrowed into sad cliques, and the demonstrations into marches or riots with declining relevance.

Some scholars, notably Jodi Dean (forthcoming), have attempted to disavow the necessity of the direct democratic aspect of Occupy. Polletta (2002) gives an excellent account of the costs of such disavowal: participatory democracies possess a number of the advantages which contributed to Occupy's undeniable successes in shifting public discourse and constituting new counterpublics of substantial reach. In parallel to some of the claims I have made about performances of unruly politics, Polletta denies that direct deliberation primarily bears *personal* benefits to participants; as her book-length study of the Civil Rights, New Left, Women's Liberation, and alter-globalization movements demonstrates, movements where decision-making is devolved are more robust, resilient, and innovative than centralized organizations. These traits prove decisive in out-maneuvering foes superior in material resources but potentially lagging in flexibility, are the typical institutional targets of social movements. Social movement theorist Lesley Wood (2012) affirms the value of diffuse deliberation, as "when diverse activists with different perspectives can discuss innovations in a reflective, egalitarian manner, they are more likely to be able to incorporate locally new tactics." (i) Political anthropologist David Graeber, himself a member of the Occupy Wall Street committee which decided on instituting general assemblies as the event's means of deliberation, has authored *The Democracy Project*, (2013) which takes direct democracy as the defining method, meaning, and goal of the Occupy movement. In one passage suggesting that Occupy's dialectic might not have been as novel as it seemed, Hannah Arendt asserted that such deliberative figures have been characteristic of *all* large-scale revolutionary movements of modernity, however often they are repressed by opponents, or in the name of the revolution itself:

The councils, as distinguished from parties, have always emerged during the revolution itself, they sprang from the people as spontaneous organs of action and of order. The

last point is worth emphasizing; nothing indeed contradicts more sharply the old adage of the anarchistic and lawless ‘natural’ inclinations of a people left without the constraint of its government than the emergence of the councils that, wherever they appeared, and most pronouncedly during the Hungarian Revolution, were concerned with the reorganization of the political and economic life of the country and the establishment of a new order. (1965, 275)

As for the confrontational aspect, upon which this study has focused, social movement scholars have long acknowledged the centrality of material *disruption* in the power of the disenfranchised. As cited in my first chapter, Piven and Cloward (1977) conducted a thorough analysis of social movement history in the United States, and concluded that in all cases under study, it was the demonstrated potential to leverage disruption in the status quo, to interrupt what Althusser termed the “reproduction of the means of production,” which forced concessions and adaptations from elites; consolidations by social movement organizations and leaders of these concessions in policy and institution occurred only afterwards, as effect, not cause, of the changes brought about. If potential to disrupt forms the *material* power of the disenfranchised, performances of *transgression*, acts which *defigure* the symbolic forms of the status quo, make up its rhetorical counterpart; if long-term *influence* is the sociological phenomenon brought about by this power, *agency* is its subjective apparition. In the words of the Occupy Wall Street study (Owens 2012), defiguration can be understood as that which “alters the symbolic ... context upon which the ruling order depends and makes another world possible.” This study concludes with a look at this rhetorical action.

Semiotic Transgression

I have a hard time understanding what their goals are and how they intend to use these tactics to achieve these goals. ... Remember, we're fighting not only to build a movement but to build a consciousness, and that consciousness will only come when we bring people into the streets. ... If we do not bring the mainstream over to our side, I don't think we can win. – Chris Hedges, Crimethinc Debate

I have discussed earlier in this chapter how inclusion and exclusion of certain topics, as well as certain “tropes,” are marked by specific audiences not always avowed as specific. In Hedges’ passage above, from a debate with the anarchist group Crimethinc, (Hedges & Crimethinc 2012) he commits a similar error in specificity regarding the means of mobilization. Hedges agrees with the radical goals of his conversant, that a change of consciousness is required and that “our side” is something apart from “the mainstream,” but he quickly glosses over *how* exactly “we” are to go about “bring[ing] the mainstream over.” In this articulation, a conversion in consciousness, what I am terming *defiguration* of status quo symbolic figures through transgression, is indeed required, but it is attendant upon a *prior* mass mobilization of an already constituted “People,” who, importantly, are somehow mobilized on terms already familiar to them. Although the Occupy movement was unprecedented in its nearly instantaneous mobilization of tens of thousands of participants and a large majority of public opinion in polls, such mobilization had, in all locations, stalled by late October, and steadily declined until the camps were raided. The debate in which Hedges admonished the Occupy movement took place in September, 2012, many months after its demise. How Hedges expected to mobilize “the

mainstream” *ex nihilo*, relying on appeals familiar to “it” *before* attempting to enact a change in “consciousness,” remains mysteriously unspoken.

In the opening quotation of this chapter, one interviewee clarified that it was precisely *not* by appealing to “the mainstream” on their own terms, or in other words, by attempted to constitute a counterpublic used once-potent appeals that showed drastically diminishing returns in mobilization, but by *revealing as possible what had previously seemed otherwise*, as demonstrating space for counterpublic agency, that opened possibilities for new appeals of public constitution. As discussed in the first chapter, by negating *hopelessness*, rather than *naivety*, such a demonstration of possibility and space for agency is particularly suited to neoliberal exigencies. One of the very participants of Occupy Oakland, of which Hedges spoke so disparagingly, spoke in such terms of the consciousness/mobilization process, as utilizing *transgression* as a mobilization appeal, rather than forestalling it until “only ... when we bring people into the streets.”

Gramsci – along with Marx, Fanon, and CLR James, in different ways – all point to the importance of radical consciousness emerging from direct participation in social struggle, not the inverse. Just as many of the 30,000 people who shut down the Port of Oakland on November 2nd, 2011 came to see their collective power that day, the broader war of position is contingent upon people not only coming out to a rally, but engaging in a movement with revolutionary goals in a way that they see themselves as part of it, and it as part of them. *The movement doesn’t need to manufacture these sentiments among the broader population*, nor should it sit back and wait for changes in popular consciousness to spontaneously happen. A key part of a successful war of position is *helping to draw out the desires that people have been taught are impossible* and create space within our organizing and

actions for people to connect with radical organizing and make it their own.” –

(Correspondence)

In this formulation, rather than first bringing out the numbers *before* attempting to publicly enact transformational performances, publics are constituted *through* them. For those attempting to enact semiotic transgression, performing actions easily translated into the semiotic system of the status quo is *failure* by definition; for Hedges, contrarily, it is the *goal*. As mentioned earlier regarding Graeber’s essay (“Phenomenology”), the right to define the situation is the primary and exclusive “demand” of radical anti-authoritarian actions. While Hedges reading of the audience wishes to bring out the masses *as is*, transgressive contention aims not only to bring out those bored with “activism”, but to transform the participants in the moment the appeal is received. The radical imaginary revolves around an *ex nihilo* constitution of a direct demos large enough to terminally challenge the status quo, transformed through the very act of its emergence. Though apparently delusional, the Occupy movement as a whole seemed to reaffirm the potential for exactly this process, as the opening passage on the prairie-fire diffusion of Occupies attests; nobody saw it coming exactly because the “public” which came out *didn’t exist in any sense until the moment of its emergence*.

That participation in Occupy was experienced by many as transformational defiguration was a theme which appeared again and again in interviews, as with conversations inside the camps. One interviewee, a transgender woman active with Occupy San Francisco, compared the process she watched others undergo to coming out as gender-deviant; other participants, disoriented by the rapid transformation which they felt part of, in fact sought her out as a guide through their process of what Nietzsche termed “revaluation.” She compared participants new

to social movements to someone experimenting with cross-dressing, as “it takes a long time to reacclimate before he can wear panties under his work,” and avowed the parallel:

Yea, like, the weirdos, the outsiders, the queers, the people who already live outside these norms somewhat constantly, we have a leg up, we have something to teach people, because we know how that works, and we understand the process of any transgressive catharsis. And that makes it easier to process. It’s like when you’re an experienced drug user, and you try a new drug, you’re able to be like, this was this, this was that, I’m like, here I am now, you know the arc of it. And so knowing the arc of those transgressions is something that a lot of people have, and a lot of other people don’t have, and that’s one of those things I’m like, how do we share that, so we can all get on the same page and move forward fast, while we still have momentum.

In her investigation, Christina Foust (2010) similarly posits transgression as central to contemporary social movement participants, although she typifies the approach of such participants to be more marginal than the 2011 global wave of contention revealed it to be. More egregiously, she bases her analysis on an understanding of transgression as exclusive of and opposed to hegemony. Day (2005) makes the same mistake in proclaiming, in his analysis of “the newest social movements” of the alter-globalization era, evidence that “Gramsci is Dead.” Though both authors correctly assess that participants increasingly do not presume to exert a “new hegemony” in their articulations, it is too much to claim that they somehow thus negate, escape, or prevent the hegemonic process; rather, the opening of possibilities through fostering agency “makes space” for new values, without imposing them. This approach also proposes a transcendence of a dilemma haunting emancipatory philosophy since at least the 1971 debate

between Foucault and Noam Chomsky. (Chomsky & Foucault 2006) Foucault ridicules Chomsky for his imaginary of the future, which risked continuing current non-State institutions and a reified “human nature” continuous with contemporary subject positions: a continuity which Foucault fears will simply succeed reproduce the current order. While acknowledging Foucault’s concern, Chomsky alleges that, without a willingness to venture in imagination beyond the current state of affairs, subjects lack the grounds and motivation to fight *for* a future at all. The notion of semiotic transgression suggests a way out: the now-versus-after-the-revolution temporality shared by both Chomsky and Foucault constructs is irrelevant to Occupiers, who “prefigured” their futures through the lived agency of enacting them, experiencing “future” as fully present, immediate defiguration of the limitations of the “past.” That this “past” was not strictly temporal tragically revealed as the shared transgressive experience subsides and the “past” reasserts itself as present; for those who partake in such public transgression, however, this return does not make the “past” any more real, nor the fleeting “future” any less so.

Only perhaps in Lacan's sense - that in which any resignification is violent, and violence but another name for resignification - do such moments need to be "violent." In fact, some of them may be the most peaceful of all - as the everyday violence of what seemed necessary suddenly shatters, as the helplessness imposed by a world of no alternatives is suddenly unveiled as a cruel but fragile illusion, what is left in the new moment of overwhelming agency is the oceanic peace of seemingly infinite possibility. The words of Ryan from Occupy Oakland, telling of the moment the port came into view of the massive December 12 march, attest to the transformative material eloquence of such moments.

[Shon] We've talked about the pre-figurative politics of the camp providing services that City Hall can't, with far less resources, we talked about the potentially defigurative politics of the streetfight, ... lots of people that I've talked to who talk about the power of it talk about the effect on participants as powerful which obviously yes, [Yea.], But have had trouble talking about the public effect of it like reverberations down the line or something. And it seems like talking about opening possibilities draws those two together, it's perceivable both opening possibilities for participants, I can't believe I'm doing this whatever and also other people being like, whoa that happens...

[Ryan] The port shut down was that.

Both together?

Yeah. I mean, I think it showed what was possible people could literally for a day shut down a major US port, you know, this is something that is real, but to get to the Oakland port you can walk there it's a nice long walk and there were tens of thousands of us big mass, I was on the front line, because it was actually led by veterans. Veterans were first, then the shield bearers were right behind them, but as we were marching the sort of go under this overpass, then you go on this sort of loop around little bridge, and peaks, so you can't see what's on the other side, you can't see the opening, so your literally marching forward upwards and none of us knew what we were going to see as soon as we crested and looked down. And people were, people were nervous, excited, anxious, exhilarated, all these sort of things, they were ready though. They were ready for what was going to happen and at times people would look behind them and see this literally never ending sea of people right behind you, following, waiting to back you up, and then we crested, and there were zero police, there were stopped truckers and the bike bloc

that actually went forward to make sure the gates would remain open, they were willing to be arrested and their thing was if they try to shut things down they would try to put their bodies there until the mass of people came. There were scouts. They were all this. And at that point did this expand what was possible because not knowing what was on the other side of the bridge but still moving meant that I mean you could call it the Gandhian March on the salt making factory where the people were just beaten down into submission like, people were ready to face whatever was there. It expanded a whole host of possibilities and then I think that resonated not just in terms of what people thought of as possible experientially, but people who didn't experience it saw that it was doable to set a goal and then achieve the goal. So. Very powerful.

(Ryan interview)

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