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Activism, Deliberation, and Networked Public Screens: Rhetorical Scenes From the Occupy Moment in Lincoln, Nebraska (Part 1 & 2)

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What is This?

Activism, Deliberation, and Networked Public Screens: Rhetorical Scenes From the Occupy Moment in Lincoln, Nebraska (Part 1)

Joshua P. Ewalt[1], Jessy J. Ohl[1], and Damien Smith Pfister[1]

Abstract

Part 1 of this manuscript is a dramatization of five rhetorical scenes that take the Occupy phenomenon as a moment to explore features of contemporary social protest and change. Drawing on rhetorical field notes collected over the first two weeks of Occupy Lincoln in Nebraska, we identify how historical tensions between activism and deliberation were both complicated and reasserted as the Occupy moment became a movement. The rhetorical scenes partially replicate actual conversations, though they are remediated through three composite figures: Anda, a longtime social activist; John, an advocate of democratic deliberation; and Dajuan, an undergraduate organizer of the local Occupy Movement. The footnotes throughout the dramatization anchor scholarly observations in Part 2 of the manuscript, a "footnote essay" which develops the concept of "networked public screens."

Keywords

networked public screens, social movements, deliberation, activism, rhetorical scenes

Introduction

Dajuan: [*To the audience*.] October 15, 2011, is the day that the Occupation went global.[1] Protestors had been occupying Zucotti Park near Wall Street for nearly a month. What began in New York spread throughout the world, from New York to Rome, Seattle to London. While these large metropolises drew most of the media attention, cities all over the map find themselves occupied, including here, in Lincoln, Nebraska—a locale known for its staunch conservatism and tepid political temperament. Yet, even here the movement strikes a chord.[2] A crowd of protesters begins to gather before the State Capitol building, holding signs, beating drums, and starting to set up tents on the Centennial Mall. There is a palpable buzz. Is this the beginning of the revolution? Is this the moment social activists have been waiting for, where the 99% finally stand up and demand a truly equal society?[3]

Anda: [*To the audience.*] It sure as hell feels like the moment I've been waiting for. We've witnessed a forty-year war on what made this country great and I've been on the front lines since Vietnam.

We're finally waking up from a deep slumber. The close of the Bush years—the darkest time of my life—brought us the greatest economic collapse since the Great Depression. The economy crashed because of the crimes of the 1% looking to line their wallets at the expense of working people. It's time to reverse the trend: people over profits! I'm here because I'm interested in being involved in the big question: what next?[4]

Dajuan: [*To the audience*.] While images of violence at other Occupy sites are circulating throughout the mass media, the beginning of the protest here in Lincoln is marked more by earnestness and hope.

John: [*To Dajuan*.] Excuse me, sir, could you step back a bit? We have to stay on the sidewalk according to our permit. I know, I know . . . but we need to keep the police on our side. The goal of the Occupation is

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to encourage people to recognize themselves as part of the 99%, and we're not going to do that if we're seen as lawbreakers. We want our message out, not pictures of us violating municipal ordinances or engaging in property destruction and fighting with the police. Remember what happened in Seattle—the news cameras came for the protests and stayed for the violence. We want them to come for the protests and stay for the conversation. We want them to stay for the General Assembly as we discuss: [*Anda and John together*] what next?

Dajuan: [*To the audience.*] The mix of people at the protest is remarkable, growing from about 50 at 11 am to 500 by 1pm, when the march begins through the downtown area. As people begin to gather, older citizens are heard reflecting on what has been lost; younger citizens ruminate on what might yet be found. *I* want to find a future. I want to be part of imagining a better world, but my prospects aren't so hot right now. There's few jobs—well, good jobs—right now. I'm going to have a mountain of debt when I graduate. I've seen friends struggle; I've seen families struggle. It's not easy for my family to keep me in school right now. They blame themselves, but it's the system that's rigged. Another world is possible. We are the 99%. And we want to know: [*Anda and John and Dajuan together*] what next?

People's Mic Chorus: [*The People's Mic Chorus synthesizes the traditional Greek Chorus with the People's Mic, which involves concentric circles of members repeating a speaker's words, so that people on the outer rings can hear what is being said. The Chorus should encourage the audience to act as amplifiers in the People's Mic by repeating the phrases as they are said.*]

What next, what next, how to decide?

Strategy and tactics sit side by side

Get in people's faces, risk turning them off

Invite them to talk, get a polite cough

What next, what next, how to decide?

Watch as these perspectives now collide!

Scene One: Occupy Lincoln Protest, October 15, 2011

[*John enters a crowd of protesters and is confronted by an older woman at the footsteps of the State Capital in Lincoln, Nebraska.*]

Occupier 1: Where the hell is everyone?[5]

John: Excuse me?

Occupier 1: It's almost noon! We're supposed to be marching now. Where is everybody? We need more people if this is gonna get noticed.

John: Well it's still a few minutes until 12 so maybe more people are on the way. I'm sort of impressed with how many are already here. By the way, do you know if there is an assemb—[*Anda enters.*]

Occupier 1: ANDA!

Anda: Oh hey. How's everyone doing this beautiful Saturday? Feel like changing the world?

Occupier 1: 99% baby! It's been years since I've felt this alive. I'm gonna hand out more flyers and round up the stragglers. Anda, this is my new friend . . .

John: John. [*Woman exits.*]

Anda: Hi. I'm Anda . . . . Well, John. Where's your sign?

John: Sign? Oh . . . . Yeah, my third grade art teacher told me civilization would be better off if I retired from the art scene.

Anda. Wow. Tough love. Don't worry, you can borrow one of mine. I made extras last night just in case. You know it's not a protest without provocative posters. [*Hands John a sign reading "The Human Race I$ Waking Up."*]

John: Um . . . ok. Hey, I've been trying to figure out if there is an . . .

Occupier 1: WE ARE

John: . . . sembly later . . .

Occupier 2-12: THE 99%

Anda: What?

Occupier 1: WE ARE THE 99%.

John: Is there going to be an assembly later?

Occupier 2-12: WE ARE THE 99%.

Anda: Assembly?

John: Yeah or some sort of meeting where we all can talk about the movement?

Anda: I think there's one after the march.

John: Great, do you know wher—

Occupier 2: [*Approaches microphone set up on stairs of the Capitol.*] Alright everyone, we are about to get started. First, thanks for coming today to join in solidarity with Occupy protesters across the country and across the entire world! Remember, the people, united, will never be defeated! We are going to march downtown throughout the business district and then turn back and regroup at the governor's mansion. This is a peaceful protest so please don't litter, block traffic, or engage counter-protestors at all. Be loud and be proud! Are you ready? LET'S GO!!!

Anda: Alright, John. Get excited. This is where the real work begins.

[As they march, they pass Occupier 3, dressed in black and wearing a devil mask.]

John: Oh jeez . . .

Anda: Hey. What's your costume about?

Occupier 3: I'm supposed to be a corporate devil.

Anda: Oh, that's cool.

Occupier 3: Yeah . . . not many people get it.

Anda: Well it makes for good discussion.[6] [*Devil walks off*.]

John: You don't really think that do you?

Anda: What do you mean?

John: "Makes for good discussion"? That sort of stuff makes people think we should be laughed at, not listened to. You can't have a meaningful dialogue with someone wearing a costume.

Anda: Come on, sure you can. Relax, John. It's fun. It's a conversation starter. Besides, he's expressing himself in a creative way. He's getting people to think about how they see things. He got our attention didn't he?

John: Yeah, but not in a good way. Drunken streakers get attention. Masked anarchists throwing bricks through Starbucks' windows get attention. But they don't get taken seriously. He has the right to dress and act how he wants, but let's be honest, that behavior only helps those who say this movement is just a bunch of crazy college kids with no message and nothing better to do. I mean what if a picture of that guy lands on the front page of the newspaper tomorrow?

Anda: I dunno, no more Catholic supporters?

John: My grandma already suspects that Satan is behind Occupy Wall Street.

Anda: Well, think about it this way: having diverse personalities gives us strength. It means we are flexible and inviting and then we can attract more people to our cause. That's what made this thing global. If we are too controlling and restrictive then people will choose to do other stuff.

John: Maybe . . .

Anda: At the very least, it's important given our society's short attention span. Sometimes the only thing that gets the ball rolling is that spark that grabs the public's attention.[7]

John: Color me skeptical, but I don't think weird leads to real discussion.

Anda: Well—

Occupier 1: SHOW ME WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!

Occupier 2-12: THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!

Occupier 1: SHOW ME WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!

Anda: Come on, John. It's ok.

Occupier 2-12: THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!

[Moments later Anda and John pass Occupiers 3 & 4.]

Occupier 3: You are shitting me.

Occupier 4: Nope. Dead serious.

Occupier 3: Margaret Thatcher.

Occupier 4: Yep.

Occupier 3: *The* Margaret Thatcher. The Iron Maiden said, "There can be no liberty unless there is economic liberty."[8]

Occupier 4: Cool right?

John: That's interesting.

Anda: What are they talking about?

John: See those signs? They all have quotations from conservatives or people in industry. Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Henry Ford. Excuse me sir, I noticed your signs. Do you think it's wise to use quotes from those people?

Occupier 4: Why not? We have to show the world that this isn't a liberal or conservative movement—it's a people's movement. And you have to love the irony of quoting Henry Ford at a protest about corporate greed.

John: Hmmm . . . maybe so. [Turns to Anda] Is the march close to being done yet?

Dajuan: [*Dajuan runs up*.] EVERYONE! PLEASE! SLOW DOWN. THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THAT ARE FALLING BEHIND. TAKE YOUR TIME. MARCH TOGETHER. WE ARE IN NO HURRY.

Anda: Hey, Dajuan. How are things going back there?

Dajuan: Good to see you Anda. Everything is great, but we all just need to slow down a bit. Some people are getting frustrated and are starting to feel left out.

John: You're Dajuan?

Dajuan: Yep.

John: Hi, I'm John. I was the one who emailed you about setting up some educational workshops on deliberation, media relations, and consensus building.

Dajuan: Oh, cool. Nice to meet you. I forwarded your email to the listserv and posted it on our Facebook page. I know that a lot of other cities have been doing those types of workshops so I think it's something we should definitely bring up later.

John: Thanks, I am glad to hear that. Dang, my throat is starting to hurt, but I have a few agenda items I'd like to propose—can we stop shouting for a bit?

Anda: But we haven't finished the march yet!

Dajuan: Well I'm not in power to set the agenda or anything; that's something we will do during the assembly. We are trying to avoid having too much of a predetermined agenda anyhow. But feel free to brainstorm some ideas while we are marching.

John: Yeah, ok. I've just really been looking forward to the bigger conversations about what we're going to do . . .

Anda: Haven't we been doing that?

People's Mic Chorus:

Feeling, reason, carnivalesque

What kind of public face is the best?

Devil masks and puppet shows

That is what mass media knows

Can there be another way?

That is what we'll see today!

[*End Scene*.]

Scene Two: The General Assembly, October 15th, 2011

[*Around 120 people stay after the march for the General Assembly. They sit on the lawn of the Centennial Mall. There is an energy present here; a unique amalgamation of excitement and uncertainty. Dajuan and another Occupier stand at the front of the lawn, acting as facilitation leaders.*]

Dajuan: This is the General Assembly, it's the forum that we're using for a meeting of ideas and sharing voices, trying to figure out where we're going from here, because holy SHIT we have so much energy going on! [*Crowd applauds wildly.*]

Occupier 5: We're going to be sending around the contact list. Oh, and if you want to note whether or not you plan on occupying that would be great, thank you.

Dajuan: Again, the purpose of this gathering is to share ideas, share voices, and figure out where we want to go from here. Obviously, look around you, there's a lot of voices, people coming from different backgrounds, different perspectives, so we need to establish that this is a conversation that is built on respect. If you have ideas to share, please raise your voice, please raise your hand.

Occupier 6: What we want to do is come up with an agenda, kind of an order of how we want to

share ideas so the floor's going to open up for that, and if people have ideas of what they want to talk about, where we want to go with this movement. The idea of consensus is something where we all have equal voice here. If you haven't shared your voice yet, think of something that you'd like to say, think of a way you can express your ideas, because we are all here with ideas to share and to learn from each other.

Dajuan: Also, along the lines of respect, no hate-speak. We have a lot of different opinions, and please just express respect. Also, after we establish some sort of agenda, we're going to move through that and my job is to make sure that we're doing that in an orderly fashion and we're not getting totally off topic, so if I do happen to pause you, then just know that your conversation is important but it's going to be parked on what I like to call the bike rack. We'll get back to it.

Occupier 7: We've been discussing a visual way for everyone to express how they're feeling without having to raise their voice, so as Dajuan is demonstrating right now, if you're down with the plan, if you're down with what someone is saying, then raise your fingers, give them a shake. If you're not comfortable with that, then give a thumbs up, whatever's good for you. If you feel totally uncomfortable, if you hear something that you don't like, an idea that you want to block [*makes X with forearms crossing*] this is a visual way to say you're not down with the plan and I'll make a note of that and try to get a general feel of how people are feeling up here. Are there any questions about the process before we start coming up with an agenda?

Dajuan: And one other point is the idea of not interrupting, so the things that we're putting into practice are little, but make your momma proud and follow those ideas. Alright, so let's start building an agenda, so we're going to take hands . . . and if you can't hear someone this is going to be our most difficult logistical thing. I can pass the bullhorn around, or we can use what is called the People's Mic. The people's mic is an idea that if one person needs to say something, then the other people around them will repeat it, so other people can hear it around them and then we get louder and louder so we hear.

Occupier 8: So if I were to say something like "I think that's a bad idea," then the people that can hear that say [*Points to people within 5 foot radius, who all chime in.*] "I think that's a bad idea." That's the people's mic! [*Laughter.*] So, if you can't hear

someone, yell out "mic check" and we'll use the people's mic to make sure everyone can hear.

Dajuan: Cool, let's move forward and go towards building our movement and building our agenda.

Occupier 9: [*Man raises hand and stands.*] My name is Robert . . . and I'm an alcoholic. No, not really but I do like beer. I'm sure people can figure out there is no Wall Street here. But the governor invited Wall Street here. And he had closed door meetings with TransCanada. I think the Occupy Lincoln movement needs to have a focus and a target. If the Occupation is only symbolic, we lose an opportunity. Seizing on the TransCanada Pipeline issue opens the door to other issues.[9] [*Happy fingers from the audience.*]

Occupier 10: [*Woman raises hand and stands.*] My name is Sarah. I think we should support our brothers and sisters fighting against the Trans-Canada Pipeline. But in terms of taking action we need to decide a schedule for the upcoming week. We should engage with as many people downtown and on campus daily. Does anyone have any ideas about what we should do?

Anda: [*Anda raises hand and stands.*] Hi, my name is Anda. If we want to get on the radar of as many people as possible, the best place to start would be Memorial Stadium. Before the football game on Saturday, let's march to the Stadium. Lock Arms. And block the entrance. Then they'll have to listen to us. [*Block signs and murmuring among the crowd.*]

John: [*John raises hand and stands.*] Hi, my name is John. It's entirely reasonable to be both a sports fan and a part of the Occupy movement. A lot of people around here love football as much as Jesus. And if we block the stadium, we could lose support from the community. If we go to the game, we should set up some educational tables and wear Husker Red. This shouldn't be the place for guerilla tactics.[10] [*Happy fingers from the crowd.*]

[*Over an hour later.*]

Dajuan: Okay, we have been at this for a while. Let's get some updates about other occupations and then I propose we break into our separate committees for discussion. But, first, a lot of you have spoken to me and I think a top priority should be the formation of a Sanitation Committee. [*Happy fingers from the crowd.*]

People's Mic Chorus:

Shall we agitate or just debate;

Will we militate, or bloviate?

This process won't succeed

If many evenings it will need…

This agenda got filled by many hats

But gosh it felt like herding cats!

[*End Scene.*]

Scene Three: Campground, October 15th, 2011

[*Anda sits outside her small orange tent drinking a cup of coffee.*]

Anda: I'm just not sure. At first, it went so smooth, so . . . much like the old days. 12 o'clock and we were ready to go, signs in hand. There were nearly 500 people . . . damn . . . . What happened? Why did my optimism sour so quickly? [*Behind Anda, Occupiers 11 and 12 toss a football. Occupier 11 yells "You've got quite the arm, Jimbo!"*] Fucking football shit certainly doesn't help. Why are they acting like this is a summer vacation? Occupiers should be locking arms on O Street right now . . . I can't believe there was so much resistance to blocking the stadium. There's more energy around getting Occupy Lincoln to 1,000 likes on Facebook than there is on marching and demonstrating. This obsession with the net, phones and gadgets is a distraction, not a strategy.[11] Maybe I don't belong here.

Dajuan: Anda! Great day, yeah? It's so exciting to be *actually* doing something . . . by the way, sorry about earlier . . .

Anda: What about it?

Dajuan: Well, it is just you seemed really excited about protesting at the stadium. But perhaps you can continue to bring it up in a future assembly . . .

Anda: Well, don't be sorry; it's not your fault no one seems to want to engage in real activism.

Dajuan: *Real* activism?

Anda: Yeah, you know, as in occupying places where people go, like stadiums or banks . . . . Instead, people are occup*ied by* their phones and Facebook!

Dajuan: I guess that means I shouldn't bother with a friend request?

Anda: Oh, even I couldn't resist joining Crackbook. It's the only way to know what's going on around here. But c'mon, at some point all people wanted

to do was talk about Facebook this, Facebook that! I heard one couple behind me during the march, talking about how they want to log onto Facebook to post pictures. Another guy was just walking around asking people to "say hello to the internet."

Dajuan: But Anda, this whole thing is networked and that's part of what makes it really exciting. We can keep in touch with other occupations in New York, Los Angeles, and Rome. It increases our solidarity and power. [12]

Anda: But how much is too much? I really think we need to remember the fact that this park is a common communal space and we're reclaiming it. I don't want this protest to devolve into clicktivism. It's not the internet that we need to take back.[13]

Dajuan: I understand what you're saying—did you see how many people were taking photos throughout the whole protest? It can be a bit much. But the internet is just a tool—people are posting their pictures to Facebook and Twitter, and their friends and family are seeing democracy in action rather than reading pointless status updates. You can't just dismiss the internet for social protest—look at how crucial it was during the Arab Spring . . .

Anda: It wasn't a Twitter hashtag that toppled dictators over there, it was civil disobedience and physical presence. It shows how the state defends its power over public spaces. In order to prove that point, you have to be HERE. This is our message . . . not how many "likes" we've accumulated on our Facebook page!

Dajuan: Well . . .

Anda: The Arab Spring showed us one thing, and it's a lesson we re-learn and re-learn . . . . The press will only focus on you if you fuck shit up a little bit. To do that you've gotta stop face-stalking your friends and get in the face of a few of your enemies. I mean, isn't it the point of a protest to disturb the goings on of the establishment so a point can be made?

Dajuan: That depends.

Anda: I just don't see the point of a protest that simply works with the police and asks for permission to exercise their right to protest. We need to seriously rethink what we're doing.

Dajuan: Well, you know: the times, they are still a-changing. This isn't about Seattle or the Democratic Convention or Vietnam. It's about what has been happening in Wisconsin and Tunisia and Egypt and France and Greece and 950 other countries that are participating with us tonight . . . at this very moment . . . *right now!* This is about the global present, not the U.S. past. It seems kind of silly to say it, but I think *seeing* all this global protest has reminded Americans that social change is still possible. We aren't stuck in this present. We too can work for a better world, but it's going to take every tool at our disposal to get there!

Anda: Yeah, but . . .

Dajuan: Wait, one more thing. The value in being more connected with others is that we no longer need the *mass* media to circulate our words and pictures. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook . . . . The conventional wisdom has been that you have to break the law in order for the mass media to cover your protest. But who needs to break laws if you can cover your own protest and upload the video yourself? Images aren't just controlled by corporations any more. We have some control over our *own* image. Plus . . . haven't you noticed you are the only one without a camera-phone?

Anda: I noticed. But don't you think you're being a little naïve with all this "we-are-the- connected-world" stuff?

Dajuan: Maybe, but we're getting attention just by being here, as a sustained presence, and making sure that our being here is always being noticed by others, and linking up with others through our Facebook page. Look at the guy this morning connecting us to Occupy Los Angeles. Now, how cool was that? This is protest for a 24/7 world.

Anda: But that is only useful if people are still willing to engage in protesting on the ground. We have to be willing to ruffle a few feathers. A sustained presence is good, yes, but we have to use that to capitalize on opportune moments for protesting . . .

Dajuan: You're talking about earlier aren't you?

Anda: When me and three others had to get up, grab signs, and sprint in order to stand next to the road as runners in the marathon passed? Yes. We missed a major opportunity there because we were in a four hour meeting trying to come to consensus on where we should poop. So, yes, it's a bit ridiculous.

Dajuan: Okay, fine . . . you won't let us live that one down will you? But think about it. We have to evolve with the times so that we aren't trapped by tradition. Resistance isn't futile, but resistance to the networked world might be! I say all of this to say: keep the faith, Anda. We need good souls like you on board with us.

Anda: Yeah . . . good souls . . .

Dajuan: Now what's the real reason you hate Facebook?

Anda: I hate pictures of cats . . .

Dajuan: Goodnight, Anda. I'm gonna grab some coffee at the Really, Really Free Market. [*Dajuan exists*.]

Anda: Isn't activism more than just "sharing" messages? Won't the public ignore our messages pretty easily if we don't throw a wrench in everyday life? Does posting a video on YouTube disrupt everyday life? You can't ignore people chanting on your streets . . . . The others aren't going to like this . . .

People's Mic Chorus:

Through public screens and public spaces,

This is how you Occupy people's faces.

Must you work with the networked flow

To be on the screens where the people go?

But don't forget there's a flow to place

Old techniques you should not erase!

[*End Scene*.]

Scene Four: Facebook Chat, October 20, 2011

Occupy Lincoln: [*Status update*.] Brothers and sisters! Have you shared this Occupy Lincoln page, yet? Do you have video of the occupation? How about the marching or the picketing? Quit delaying and upload that footage to YouTube and link us here! We want to see what you're seeing![14]

***

Anda: [*Private message to Dajuan*.] This fucking Facebook page is a disaster. There's 19 administrators and everyone's posting everything everywhere. I don't mean to be "The Man," but where's our message discipline?

Dajuan: [*Private message to Anda*.] I know, I know. We discussed this in the media committee the other day, and I'm about to post an update on our page that will hopefully streamline things. Stay tuned.

***

Dajuan: [*Posting as Occupy Lincoln*.] As stated at General Assembly of Occupy Lincoln, (10/26/11)

by the media committee liaison. If you have anything you would like posted on the Facebook, Twitter, the website, or mentioned in the weekly newsletter, please consult a media committee member. Please do not directly post things. This has nothing to do with censorship and this policy is only being implemented to allow the Occupy Lincoln media committee to use social media to provide important information for those that rely solely on such sites for updates. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

[*Comments on this status update*.]

Occupier 1: Now there is no visible community and learning from what other people post. These are the very principles we are standing against.

Occupier 2: Will post to my page as I see pertinent news. Sorry mods couldn't keep up with trolls & spammers, but I understand.

Occupier 1: While you are at it you need to ban a couple of low-life spammers

Occupier 3: Please Repost my GOOD MORNING . . . SONG DAILY for me as my phone can't, someone? Thank You! LOVE & PEACE jack & Knuckles

Occupier 4: Just keep an eye out for advertisements, and if someone tries to sell stuff using your page, simply block them. But be careful not to block a person for simply having an opposing view. I'm an occupier of Toronto and the world and I cannot stand the people who ignorantly say that revolution is useless and resistance is futile. But it would be worse to not let them speak as well. Everyone has a right to form and share an opinion, but advertising is not covered by the constitution.

Occupier 4: Well, not thoroughly.

Occupier 5: What about admins? I am an admin on this page, you saying I cannot post?

Occupier 5: I do not like this, this isn't what I made this page for. I propose this be brought up in a larger meeting, I am very pissed off. What's the point of having admins on this page? The posts I put up are news articles and pertinent information for OL. I won't ask a committee's permission to post on my own page!

Occupier 5: I demand a contact from the media committee.

Occupier 5: This is censorship in the worst degree and I won't stand for it.

Occupier 6: Doing it this way, makes it impossible for new people to ask questions and get involved.

Occupier 7: bullshit. total bullshit.

Occupy Lincoln: Well, I deleted all the other admins. Until a REAL group consensus is taken, I will be the acting admin on this page. The filter is off, feel free to post.

Occupier 5: I think it's all been resolved now. So sorry I had to delete admins to get attention to the problem. Hopefully things will run smoother as soon as Leroy gets our even better page up and running. Thanks for your patience and for putting up with my "passion." Didn't mean to sound, well mean . . .

Occupier 8: Love that you all are out there! Please come visit Occupy Toronto and maybe we can come visit you!

Occupier 9: I don't see anything in the GA minutes about this being discussed. It is stated in this thread that a Media Committee liaison stated something but there is no mention of a proposal made or consensus reached. I don't agree with the action that was taken. Do we know who was deleting posts or is it another FB glitch. All of these things need to be decided by the media committee or in GA. A large number of my posts have been deleted.

Occupier 5: Okay, here is what was decided at GA. Only official Occupy Lincoln business will be posted on the Occupy Lincoln tab. However, anybody may post to this page by clicking on the Everyone (Most Recent) tab first. That way the first page you see will be Occupy Lincoln business, and on the other tab, all other links. You do not need media permission to post on the Everyone (Most Recent) tab. No posts, other than spam, will be deleted on the Everyone (Most Recent) tab. If you post on the Occupy Lincoln tab it may be deleted, as there is no way to filter both tabs separately. At least that I know of.

Occupier 2: W00T!

Occupier 5: There were posts being deleted even on the EVERYONE tab. Hopefully this is resolved. I was very upset to see all my posts had been removed.

Occupier 11: It's a good thing to see that the temporary "censorship" is all figured out. IMO, there are a number of folks who visit this page frequently to not only see "official" posts but what others are saying as well. To let everyone express their views is an example of the rights we are fighting for. Personally, this is the best way that I can be involved in OL and I'm glad to see the flow of ideas is not going to be plugged up. Peace.

Occupier 9: This is not in the minutes for the GA. Was this a consensus decision of the GA? Everyone I have talked says this is not the case. The media committee has been taken off as admins and there are 2 people who asserted control in an authoritarian manner, completely contradicting the way we make decisions.

Dajuan: I sincerely am amazed by the reaction by some. This decision wasn't made to consolidate power or to give anyone more authority. It was a decision made in the best interest of Occupy Lincoln. I feel that certain people are feeling personally offended by not being listed as an administrator. I'm sorry, but 19 administrators for one page is out of hand. It was an issue that needed to be, and was, addressed. Instead of who made what decision, or who has control over what account. Isn't this about the 99%? ANYONE can still post ANYTHING they want (please no spam), even administrators are discouraged from using the OL official page for personal links and are encouraged to post links under the "everyone" tab like we have instructed all members to do!

Occupier 7: I'm not very computer literate.

Occupier 9: The whole crux of the matter is why wasn't the media committee (the controlling body) contacted to see what was going on. We have one of the admins on here stating THEY made those changes. Who is that? And how come none of this is in the GA minutes? Do you know who is deleting my posts now? And who deleted the entire thread? There is 0 accountability now. We don't even know who is admin.

Occupier 11: I think I may be out of line, and I know that this is unconventional but I move that all discussion of the running of this page be tabled until the Sunday GA, where a public discussion is already on the agenda. The reason for this motion is that this discussion has broken to a point that does not look good to people wandering in here for their first time. I don't think that this is what we want the world to see about our group, do any of you?

Occupier 12: I just realized that my ONE post on the earlier thread had been deleted also. Nothing that was being discussed throughout the day was inappropriate in any way and not deserving of deletion. Obviously consensus can only be achieved at GA, but we should still have the ability to discuss via the page, especially those of us who cannot make it to the GA's. This is my main way of keeping up with what is going on, and now someone has tried to cover it up. NOT COOL!!!!

Occupier 1: As I said this morning patience would be good, because obviously somebody with admin did something—I don't think it was a hijack because typically they will do damage not simply lock the

site down to admin only and remove some select posts. I have seen FB algorithm do some hiding and removing of posts and I have also seen people hit "spam" and things disappear.

Occupier 5: Hell I'm confused and tired. I wish I could say something to make it all better, but I don't have that kind of power. All I can say is regardless how angry we all got, I love you all and after all this is resolved we need to get drunk again. PEACE

Occupier 9: Haha. Yes, we should. Anyone can join the media committee and I have encouraged everyone who is concerned to join so you can take part in the discussions. We have pages and pages of emails spent discussing all of these issues so it is frustrating when we are all stripped of admin and left in the dark. I still don't know who it is who started all of this confusion by getting on here and tinkering with the page. In other news the Twitter was not hijacked . . . waiting for more details on that story. PEACE!

Occupier 13: ahh resolution. and this is why threads must not be deleted.

Occupier 9: No hard feelings anyway. These things are common in organizations . . . it is part of the beautiful messiness/organized chaos of direct democracy.

Occupier 5: OMG!!! I know this isn't "official business" but check out this awesome link. Somebody put an entire litter of kittens in a box label 99%!!! Adorable! We should totally use this somehow.

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Anda: [*Private message to Dajuan and John.*] I'm kinda dying here. I understand the need for consensus, but that whole thread on who's adminning the stupid Facebook page shows how we're getting bogged down. I've talked to a couple other Occupiers and we want to go occupy Wells Fargo tomorrow. I know there was resistance to the stadium idea. I get it. People like sports. But everyone hates banks. They're at the heart of this, and our weekly walk by protest isn't enough.

John: [*Private message to Anda and Dajuan.*] Anda, listen, I hear where you're coming from but be reasonable. This kind of thing was opposed when we met last week at the General Assembly. You're free to bring it up again in the assembly. But I have to tell you, I really don't think this is where the group wants to go.

Dajuan: [*Private message to John and Anda.*] I understand your frustration about the Facebook stuff. It's important to figure this out, though, so

don't get too frustrated. ☺ Here's an idea about the Wells Fargo sit in: what if it was not "sponsored" by Occupy Lincoln? What if whoever is interested simply sneaks into the bank and sits down? Occupy doesn't have to sanction every protest action—that's the whole point of being decentralized. Honestly, I'm with you in spirit if not in body.

John: [*Private message to Dajuan and Anda.*] I still don't think this is a good idea. You're going to be tagged as an Occupier and it's going to get linked to our movement. The press will go apeshit and it will make us look too radical. We make decisions by consensus so that we can be as inclusive as possible. Until it passes through consensus, this does not fit the group's goals.

Anda: [*Private message to John and Dajuan.*] Dajuan's right, John. Occupy is an umbrella. It doesn't have the power to direct every protest. I'm going down there, and whoever wants to come with me can. I won't identify as an Occupier. I'll identify as a citizen. I think I'm kinda done with this so-called movement anyhow. First the stadium, now the bank. What *do* you want to resist, John? Anything? You guys can do whatever you want. You know where I will be. Maybe I will see you. Maybe I won't. Good luck.

John: [*Private message to Dajuan.*] I think we need to be really careful about this. Once we start allowing these kinds of things, it just creates a chain reaction. We can't lose control of the movement and become a bunch of vigilantes.

Dajuan: [*Private message to John.*] But neither can we pretend to control such a diverse group of people. This isn't a business. Anda is right, Occupy is an umbrella. Citizens have the right to go offscript and participate in direct action to draw attention to the issues they care about.

John: [*Private message to Dajuan.*] We're trying to build a democratic society that's inclusive. But when we become polarizing, we lose focus on the whole notion of the 99%. Vigilante activism gets attention, but does nothing for coming up with creative new solutions.

Dajuan: [*Private message to John.*] You're right, about inclusion, that is. We have to respect different forms of expression and protest.

John: [*Private message to Dajuan.*] But where is the line? Doesn't this open us up to violent protest? What do we do if neo-Nazis or other hate groups decide to join us at the General Assembly and start militating for violent agitation?

Dajuan: [*Private message to John.*] But remember our picnic rule. Anything that could reasonably get you kicked out from a picnic, could get you

banned from Occupy. Would you kick someone out of a picnic for protesting at a bank?

John: [*Private message to Dajuan*.] Well, it's hard for me to imagine picnicking at a bank but whatever. The bigger point is that we could get negative press and there could be legal implications.

Dajuan: [*Private message to John*.] Which is exactly why we won't officially endorse it. It didn't make it through consensus and if it did then the whole movement could get in legal trouble. So let's just keep this off the books. We respect that they are fighting for the cause, but we still can protect the Occupation.

John: [*Private message to Dajuan*.] I've noticed that some people are losing faith in the process. I admit that the meetings go a bit long, the turn-taking is a little difficult, but building a new society can't be done through pure anarchy. We have to stay committed to deliberation. Instead of sitting in, why don't we invite the bank representatives down for a General Assembly?

Dajuan: [*Private message to John*.] Good luck with that, dude. Deliberation might be our process, but it can't be the only thing we're about.

People's Mic Chorus:

Login, glance, click click, like link

Click glance, link click, link glance

Click link, glance link, link link

Click click, like link, glance like

Delete spam, click link, glance

Like link, like link, logout.

Scene Five: A Conclusion of Sorts

John: Okay, everyone welcome to G.A., again. Who wants to take stack? . . . Anyone? . . . Okay, well I guess I'll do it . . . we need to talk again about restrooms and sanitations . . . .We still have to figure out what to do with the Quikie Mart. They want us to stop using the restrooms after 11:00 p.m. We are going to need an alternative venue . . . .What are your thoughts on this? . . . . Anyone . . . ? Come on . . . this is *sanitation*! . . . This is all you care about some days! What's wrong?

Occupier 1: I want to talk about Wells Fargo . . . [*Happy Fingers from everyone*.]

John: That is not on the agenda. We are talking about sanitation . . .

Occupier 2: I think we really need to be down there to support the others . . . they are still part of the Occupation . . . they are still part of the movement.

John: They made their own decision. Listen, we gave them a chance . . . they had their opportunity . . . it didn't work out . . . they are welcome here . . . but we don't need them to continue . . .

Occupier 1: I vote we discuss . . .

John: We need to reach a consensus on sanitation before moving forward. [*Murmuring throughout the crowd*.]

Occupier 2: How can you have a consensus if it does not include everyone?

[*The stage is split. On one side of the stage you see Dajuan being interviewed. On the other side of the stage you see Anda, and three others, locking arms inside of Wells Fargo.*]

Anda: [*To the protesters*.] Alright everyone . . . feel like changin' the world?

John: [*John enters the stage, out of breath.*] Anda . . .

Anda: Well, if it isn't our good friend Doctor Dialogue!

John: That's Professor Dialogue to you.

Anda: Whatever, John.

John: Listen, we need you to come back . . . . Okay, I want you to come back. Anda, do you know what this is going to do?

Anda: Yes. They won't be able to ignore us anymore! Relax, we left the machine guns at home.

John: If you do this, it will hurt the whole movement. Please . . . let's try to run this through the General Assembly, again. It's the consensus that will make this legitimate.

Anda: No need for consensus. We're not acting for the entire movement; it's just us this time.

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Reporter: Four members of the Occupy Lincoln protests were arrested after refusing to vacate the downtown Wells Fargo building. I am here now with one of the leaders of the Occupy protest. Sir, this is the first time Occupy Lincoln participants have gotten arrested. Are we witnessing an escalation of hostility from the group?

Dajuan: Well, first of all, I'm just an organizer, not a leader. Those who were arrested were actually acting independently in a protest that was not an

official Occupy Lincoln demonstration. The people were just exercising their right to peacefully protest with a sit-in. There is no reason for people to fear violence from Occupy Lincoln.

Reporter: So the people arrested were not part of your movement?

Dajuan: No, they are still a part of the movement . . . . We're all still a part of it. It's just that they weren't speaking for everyone when they decided . . .

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John: So, after all that talk about solidarity, and human togetherness, and discussion, you're just leaving? We can't just fold; we can't just lose hope in the process. We can't let the 99% become the 83%. Our strength is in our numbers and we have to stick together.

Anda: We're still in this together no matter what we do, but it's our differences that make us strong. They love us, John. [*Pointing to the Occupiers gathered outside of the bank in support.*] That looks like consensus to me.

John: We are setting out to recreate a genuine democracy. Democracy is about getting people with differences at the same table to work together free of bias and prejudice. If you and me can't work together, what impression are we giving . . .

Anda: I can't sit down at a table with Wells Fargo. Until we restructure the system, there's not even such a thing as a discussion table. And this is how we restructure the system!

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Reporter: Does this mean the group is splintering?

Dajuan: It's not that we are splintering, it's just that we are all different. We always have been. Some thought the sit-in was something that they wanted to do and others didn't like the idea so much. So when it was brought up it didn't receive enough votes from everyone.

Reporter: But if it wasn't an Occupy protest why did people congregate outside the bank to support those who were arrested?

Dajuan: Um . . . yeah. I guess you could say that even if it wasn't official a lot of us were still really proud of them. It's pretty neat to see people care about something that much.

Reporter: These protests have been ongoing for months now. Could you please explain what is the goal or purpose of these Occupy protests?

Dajuan: I suppose one of the biggest goals is to get people to think.

Reporter: To think? About what?

Dajuan: To think about where this world is right now and maybe where it is capable of going. Thinking about where it needs to be for us all to get what we need and deserve. I think that deep down we have all known for a while that things haven't exactly been working out. There is something wrong with the way things are going with this country and world that needs to be fixed. The status-quo just isn't enough anymore.

Reporter: So what is next then?

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Anda: We need to step up the activism. We step up our civil disobedience. This right here is the next step. The next step . . . we keep ending up in jail. It makes the news and hopefully inspires others. And if enough people are willing to sacrifice that much, then maybe it's not too late to change things.

John: We need to build a new participatory democracy. We start small by drawing people in and then we relearn the arts of discussion and debate together.

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Dajuan: That's the thing. We don't know yet what's next. No one knows yet for sure. And anyone who says they have an answer is lying to themselves. Right now we need to make sense of this whole thing. We need to create a space for thinking. Answering these complicated problems is going to take new solutions . . . solutions that we are still working on. And that's gonna take the involvement of everyone.[15]

People's Mic Chorus:

Occupy was a moment in time

At first things seemed to go on fine.

In the movement, two old foes—

Action and talk—inevitably arose.

Can we envision a better future?

Only if these two modes we suture.

Activism, Deliberation, and Networked Public Screens: Rhetorical Scenes From the Occupy Moment in Lincoln, Nebraska (Part 2)

Abstract

The footnotes in the dramatization "Activism, Deliberation, and Networked Public Screens," published as Part 1 in this issue, point to the numerated paragraphs in Part 2. This interpretive "footnote essay" makes four contributions. First, we locate tensions between activism and deliberation in the scholarly literature on social change that manifest in the dramatization. Second, we explain and justify our method of assembling rhetorical scenes. Third, we develop the concept of "networked public screens." Finally, we articulate a distinction between movement and moment that bears on the broader Occupations.

Keywords

networked public screens, social movements, deliberation, activism, rhetorical scenes

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Notes

1. 2011 witnessed a dramatic groundswell of public protest for democratic and economic liberation, which *Time* Magazine succinctly captured by naming the "Protestor" as its annual "Person of the Year" (Anderson, 2011). Citizens in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Bahrain risked their lives to resist dictatorial oppression by collectively raising their voices for democracy. On September 17, 2011, an estimated 1,000 people, inspired by this "Arab Spring" and disgusted by the calumny that caused the 2008 economic collapse, followed the suggestion of the anti-consumerist magazine *Adbusters* to stage a persistent inhabitation of lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park adjacent to the iconic financial marker, Wall Street (Greene, 2011). This protest, referred to as the "Occupy Movement," did not stay confined to New York; to date, millions of people have donated time, money, and labor to an effort that has spread to over 1,500 cities across the entire globe (Occupy Wall Street, 2012). As a networked transnational movement, the Occupations have taken advantage of networked communication technologies to circulate their messages to local and global publics. By sparking engaged discussion on the potential and necessity for more transparent and representative forms of government, Occupy could well foreshadow a significant reimagination of the modern relationship between subject, state, and capital.

2. Our analytical attention toward Occupy begins with a traditional bifurcation: deliberation and activism. For Iris Marion Young (2003), in "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy," the deliberative democrat and social activist are antithetical subject positions. The deliberative democrat believes the best approach to solving collective problems requires conflicting parties to "propose solutions to their collective problems and offer reasons for them; they criticize one another's proposals and reasons, and are open to being criticized by others" (Young, 2003, p. 103). The activist, on the other hand, "eschews deliberation, especially deliberation with persons wielding political or economic power and official representatives of institutions [s]he believes perpetuate injustice or harm" (Young, 2003, p. 104). Young's polarization of activism and deliberation has powerful heuristic value, though she recognizes, as do we, that the distinction between the two is not sharp in practice.

Inspired by Young's work, this dramatization features several rhetorical scenes that draw out how these different approaches to social change can conflict. Agents favoring activism (represented by Anda) and deliberation (represented by John) often reinscribe traditional models of social change. In order to complicate this historical dualism in the context of Occupy, the character of Dajuan plays a mediating function that attempts to transcend—or at least manage—these routine binaries. The tension between activism and deliberation became more pronounced as the

Occupy *moment* became a *movement.* Although comingled bodily presence through traditional social protest marches shaped Occupy Lincoln's strategy, the "occupation" metaphor enacted through camping in public space signaled a departure from the social movement legacy of the 1960s. Indeed, given the decentralized organizational structure and inchoate demands for change, describing Occupy as a "movement" may well import an inappropriate frame. What we witnessed locally and globally was something more akin to a social *moment.* Occupy, in its "formless form" and organizing practices, defies the movement model of democratic action by performing a moment: a fluid, open, democratic context akin to what Hardt and Negri (2004) describe as a kairotic moment of rupture that escapes neat categorization and definition. However, as participants and observers attempted to make sense of the moment, they often tethered Occupy to the traditional binaries of movement politics: deliberation vs. activism, old vs. new social movements, public spheres vs. public screens, global vs. local activism, spaces of places vs. spaces of flows, and vernacular vs. institutional discourses. As we dramatize, participants labored to embrace Occupy's fluidity and potential, but were also forced to rely on historical discourses and a Western lexicon of protest ill-equipped to reflect the moment's polyvocality.

3. Young's original essay, while brilliant, stages a dialogical interchange in the avowedly non-dialogical form of a traditional academic essay. We were motivated to extend and update Young's essay, and push the boundaries of scholarly writing, by embracing dramatization as a heuristically rich method for examining how actors rhetorically negotiate the latent tensions in organizing. Our method involved the construction of "rhetorical scenes" from our own experiences, registered in field notes, from the first two weeks of Occupy Lincoln, producing a plausible composite of conversations that may have, could have, should have, and did take place during the Occupy moment. This approach partially extends Peter Simonson's (2010) efforts to construct rhetorical episodes "based on making contact with audiences and interlocutors outside the academy, and feeling the force of rhetoric as an embodied activity manifest in particular cultural scenes" (p. 95). Dramatizing the early activity of Occupy in Lincoln, Nebraska, provides a robust account of a "regional rhetoric" that overlapped and departed from national and global Occupy sites (Rice, 2012).

The crafting of a "rhetorical scene" assembles a variety of methodological currents. We entered the Occupy Lincoln protests not as passive observers, but instead as active participants in order to gain perspective on the "lived advocacy of individuals and organizations" struggling for social change through public displays of communication (Hess, 2011, p. 128). In order to strike a note of verisimilitude, we took extensive field notes on our experiences marching the streets, camping at the Occupy sight, participating in the General Assembly meetings, and monitoring the group's digital communication networks like Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, we captured pictures and video, collected the minutes from all of the meetings over the first month, and acquired a recording of the entire first General Assembly. Using these "rhetorical field methods" we directed our focus to the "embodied, dynamic, contingent, and ideological concerns that shape and regulate lived rhetorical experience" (Middleton, Senda-Cook, & Endres, 2011, p. 400). Our organized field notes and selected images are accessible at damiensmithpfister.net/occupy-lincoln.

Using the field notes and autoethnographic reflections as starting points, we translated our observations into a hybrid of creative nonfiction and theatrical play. To be clear, much of the specifics of speech featured in the dramatization—with the exception of the description of the General Assembly process at the beginning of Scene 2, which is a transcript, and the "Occupier" comments in Scene 4, which are taken from actual Facebook threads—is fictionalized for the purposes of investigating the tensions between activism and deliberation. However, they are all grounded in details derived from our observations of public events that increase their value as representative anecdotes of Occupy. While the construction of rhetorical scenes does not necessitate the presence of traditional academic modes of scholarship, we found that grounding our dramatization in the scholarly literature via this "footnote essay" allowed a complementary engagement with the Occupy phenomenon.

4. We theorize a number of benefits to constructing rhetorical scenes as an investigative method. First, this approach reflects the fluidity and dynamism of rhetorical advocacy. Our rhetorical scenes (partially) capture what "being there" was like by doing justice to the conversations and practices that took place at the beginning of Occupy Lincoln (Blair, 2011). In this way, rhetorical scenes serve as a "kind of instructional theatre" where interpersonal, cultural and social experiences are given a lively presence often excluded from scholarly analysis (Turner & Turner, 2004, p. 270). As an alternative to scholarly essays primarily "directed toward other academics or students privileged enough to be enrolled in college classes," our hope is that this assemblage of rhetorical scenes is more accessible to nonacademic audiences and capable of instigating critical reflection and discussion (Simonson, 2010, p. 95). Second, the construction of characters from three different intellectual positions enabled a polyvocalization otherwise sublimated in traditional academic writing. Our blurring of fact and fiction—field notes with/as creative dialogue—underlined the intensely malleable and multiple experiences that undergird the worldviews represented by each of the three main char-

acters. Finally, our attempt at (re)dramatization corrects for an academic tendency to artificially segment "data" through the isolation of discrete moments in separate field notes, thus de-dramatizing and de-contextualizing rhetorical activity. The narrative arc in this dramatization aims to create a more holistic sense of the very real human performances at the heart of Occupy.

During our effort to reinsert what Kenneth Burke called the drama of human relations into our scholarly production, we were faced with a meta-tension that is embedded in the term "participant observer": we felt a particular pull between being interested participants and scholarly observers. For example, there were several moments where we felt the strangeness of pausing to scribble field notes while chanting protestors swarmed around us. While we were tempted to set up a campsite in solidarity with the Occupation, our need for electricity in order to tackle piles of mid-semester grading prevented a long-term stay. The rhythm of the semester often created a tension between discharging our scholarly and pedagogical duties responsibly and maintaining a presence as participants. Consequently, this is a necessarily partial view of the local Occupy movement, inflected by an academic interpretive lens and discontinuous observational pattern. At the same time, we believe that the details captured in the rhetorical scenes provide valuable insight into the dynamics of contemporary social change.

5. So how can we characterize features of contemporary social change? One way of exploring this is to ask: "What is Occupy about? What do they want?" These questions, asked *ad nauseam* as the Occupations received publicity, were frustrated by a "movement" that did not seem to fit traditional conceptualizations of social change with regard to scope, membership, or operationalization. This was not just a problem for agents of the mass media, but also for many participants. At the beginning of our observation we were approached by an older woman very concerned about the time and the number of people present at the protest. She began by asking us the question "Where the hell is everyone?" and went on to explain that more people would be needed for the protest to gain traction (Field Note 30). The march did not begin until several minutes after 12 o'clock as people were still arriving. In total, roughly 500 citizens joined the Lincoln protests on October 15, 2011 (Cornwell, 2011).

Occupy was difficult to conceptualize because it represents a phenomenon that moves beyond both "new" and "old" social movements. "Old social movements," namely the class-based labor movement, pursue material redistribution, while "new social movements" arise in the area of "cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization" and center their agitation on recognition (Habermas, 1981, p. 33). This conventional bifurcation, however, is too

limiting to adequately describe Occupy, although many of the protests did feature signs demanding "old" economic reallocation goals and "new" emphases on recognition of different ways of thinking and being. But the demands of Occupy seem more foundational. The dominant trope of "We are the 99%" galvanizes attention around the meta-political question of representation: who gets voice in deciding redistribution and recognition? This comports strongly with Nancy Fraser's (2009) position that theories of social justice must become three-dimensional by incorporating "the political dimension of representation alongside the economic dimension of distribution and the cultural dimension of recognition" (p. 15). For Fraser (2009), battles for political representation differ from distribution and recognition by centering on issues of membership and procedure. "We are the 99%" underscores the inequitable decision-making power of institutionalized forces in everyday life by drawing attention to how 1% of the world population disproportionately controls the levers of global social, economic, and political power. Visually, this point manifested itself in signs objecting to the Supreme Court decision *Citizens United* and the two party duopoly. This multilayered critique of contemporary political representation was coupled with an affirmative model of democratic decision-making, represented by the General Assembly, that each Occupation used to guide their local interventions. In a repudiation of the membership requirements, bureaucratic procedures, and anti-democratic inclinations that dominate many 21st century global institutions, Occupy represents a more transparent, egalitarian, and participatory mode of collective action. Yet, while the global gathering of Occupiers was initially an open affective moment with multi-faceted democratic demands and improvisational structure, the communicative action of individuals – as represented by Anda and John – reasserted traditional models of social change.

6. Our experience of marching underlined the improvisational structure of the Occupations. Individuals brought their own signs and initiated their own chants without a central orchestrating committee (all signs and chants featured in the dramatization of part 1 are taken from ethnographic notes from the October 15th, 22nd, and 29th marches.) Although largely impromptu, the legal requirements for protesting did require some advance planning by a small organizing committee to acquire the legal permits to march. This minimal legalism aside, the marches themselves were filled with the kind of carnivalesque behavior now *de riguer* for social protest: clever chants, rhythmic drumming, wide-ranging conversations, and, occasionally people dressed in devil masks (Field Note 24). Perhaps in part because of the improvisational nature of the protests, a wide variety of people were there, including those with explicitly religious associations. During our time at the protests we noticed a plethora of religious

iconography and metaphor, an adaptation to a highly religious part of the country. For instance, a small child carried a sign declaring "Jesus was one of the 99%" (Field Note 19).

7. Improvised, carnivalesque protest activity is tailored for what Kevin DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples (2002) call the public screen. In their analysis of the 1999 World Trade Organization protests, they identify how civil disobedience and public spectacle fulfill the function of "gaining the attention of the distracted media" in order to stimulate reflection and deliberation (DeLuca & Peeples, 2002, p. 144). Supplementing, and in some ways supplanting, the traditional public sphere that privileges linguistic, rational-critical debate, DeLuca and Peeples suggest that the public screen functions as a vehicle for public opinion formation that highlights "dissemination, images, hypermediacy, spectacular publicity, cacophony, distraction, and dissent" (2002, p. 145). Conceptually, the public screen is suppler than the public sphere in accounting for rhetorical activity in an increasingly visual culture. However, from our contemporary internetworked vantage point, even the concept of the public screen circa 1999 appears rather antiquated. The public screen, as an artifact of the mass media, has been decentered in favor of a world of public screen*s* animated by digitally networked communication technologies. DeLuca, Sun, and Peeples (2011) account for the proliferation of digital screens since 1999 by theorizing "wild public screens" as a way to register the chaotic, risky, and unritualized circulation of images across televisual, computerized, and telephonic screens (p. 154).

This is a useful development of the public screen concept, for the "wildness" of digital public screens hints at the viral nature of contemporary image events. Perhaps the most iconic image emerging from Occupy was the "pepper-spraying cop" from UC-Davis; a meme-ready image that distilled the nonchalance of state violence (see http://peppersprayingcop.tumblr.com/). Despite these and other viral images emerging from the early Occupy sites, our experience with Occupy Lincoln led our speculation in a different direction from DeLuca, Sun, and Peeples. Instead of wild public screens, we witnessed many *tame* public screens. Almost everyone at the marches we attended had some kind of camera, from pro-level DSLRs to camera phones (which perhaps identifies a class dynamic in the Occupy protests). People were constantly snapping pictures and instantly uploading them to Facebook and Twitter. Even onlookers pulled out cameras to document what was happening as the marchers tromped past. One woman, driving a minivan full of pre-teens, drove by the Occupiers (twice!) with a compact video camera hanging out the window as they circled the Governor's Mansion (Field Note 39). Presumably, most of these images barely circulated, viewed by a small group of people linked through established social networks on Facebook or Twitter. No iconic image from Occupy Lincoln splashed

across national newspapers. This rampant photography at each march and General Assembly invites questions about the nature of image circulation across contemporary public screens: Who else was watching? What kinds of conversations were sparked? How did the multiplicity of individual photos contrast with the visual coverage (to the extent it existed) by the mass media? What is the aggregate effect of images of nonviolent protest circulating through individual citizens' social networks?

To refer to "tame public screens" is thus to register tameness in circulation, but also in subject matter. We witnessed Occupiers visually documenting the commonplaces of protest: comingled bodies acting in concert, amusing signs, shocked onlookers, and other "banalities" of protest. Although there is modest spectacle in any protest, the images from Occupy Lincoln were not marked by police brutality or property destruction. DeLuca and Peeples' early theorization of the public screen argued that violence (like smashing windows at the local Starbucks) is a prerequisite for mass media attention. According to their early theory, there must be a certain kind of "wildness" of content for the mass mediated public screen to take note. Given the changing mediascape, is violent spectacle still required for mass media attention? Maybe. Alternatively, perhaps the ability of individuals to create their own networked media ecologies allows for gentler images to gain public attention, albeit with smaller circulation. Taking this tame, small-scale circulation seriously is important in order to understanding how networked image events work. Much as Communication scholarship has complemented a traditional focus on the "great speech" by embracing the study of everyday sites of communication, so must we consider the implications of the modest circulation of tame, everyday images in addition to the wild, iconic ones.

Because contemporary public screens can veer toward the wild or careen toward the tame, we think the term "networked public screens" better captures how image events, iconic and everyday, are produced and circulated in a networked mediascape. Images and text hop from screen node to screen node, following the developing logics of social networking and algorithmic culture. Unlike a conventional public address or formal screen presentation (like a newscast), with a specific context, internal coherence, and a sequential development, images on networked public screens are often decontextualized, random, and bricolaged. This is especially the case for Occupy, given that the unorchestrated messaging led people to bring all kinds of disparate image politics to the marches.

8. The creation of spectacle invited by networked public screens sometimes yields strange bedfellows. One discussion, for example, occurred between two people concerning

the decision to use quotations from members of the political right and corporate world on protest signs. The rhetoric of Ronald Reagan, Henry Ford, and Margaret Thatcher were appropriated to lend argumentative force against the excesses of corporate influence and laissez-faire economics, but were sometimes looked at suspiciously by Occupiers because of who they were from (Field Note 30). Thus, while the openness of the *moment* invited these ironic rhetorics, the conversations of fellow protestors questioned whether this was appropriate for the *movement.*

9. Despite the prevalence of networked public screens, our attention was regularly returned to the embodied experience of the march. This kind of deeply local, embodied interaction with co-present others was embedded in a dialectic relationship with an experience of the intensely global Occupation. At one moment, we are trying to slow the march down so people with mobility challenges can catch up, while the next moment someone approaches us livestreaming with a computer and webcam and asks us to "say hello to the internet" (Field Note 39). During the first General Assembly, many people expressed interest in finding "out what was happening at the other Occupy sites" around the world (Field Note 48). Networked public screens facilitate this dialectical movement between local and global. The internet, as the first truly global medium, allows for a toggling between contexts of action that is difficult to imagine in earlier eras dominated by the voice or print. While there were overlaps between local and global solidarity, there were also significant tensions within the Lincoln branch of Occupy about whether focusing on the local/regional issue of the proposed TransCanada pipeline would compete with other issues important to the Occupiers. Although blocking the pipeline's construction was not an explicit demand of the national or global Occupy agenda, it weighed heavily in the Lincoln protests with local environmentalists fearing the pipeline threatened an underground aquifer which supplies drinking and irrigation water for eight states. The October 29th protest at the Governor's mansion featured several reappropriations of the University of Nebraska fight song to lambast the pipeline (Field Note 109). However, many Occupy Lincoln participants resisted alignment with opposition to the TransCanada pipeline, leading one individual eventually to declare, "We don't care about the pipeline" (Field Note 110). This tension between the commonality of global issues and particularism of local concerns is an inherent complexity of transnational organizing (Fairclough, 2006).

10. In some ways, the commitment to the vagaries of the global "We are the 99%" was easier to generate consensus around than the local direct actions that were proposed in the General Assembly. The proposal to block entry to the football stadium (Field Note 48), which received negative reactions from the crowd, signals how the activism-deliberation tension is manifested in an era of networked public screens. From an activist perspective, such in-your-face presence in a football-crazed

state would generate mega-publicity for the cause; from a more deliberative perspective, this kind of in-your-face tactic risks alienating potential allies.

11. The proposal to occupy the football stadium draws attention to another traditional dichotomy between activism and deliberation that networked public screens complicate: the "spaces of places" and the "spaces of flows." This distinction, articulated most compellingly by Manuel Castells (1996), registers a difference between material, embodied contexts and virtual environments supported by networked technology. The stock market speculations at the root of the 2008 economic collapse and the communication networks linking the global Occupations are both spaces of flows that coordinate increasing amounts of human activity. We might go so far as to read these different "spaces" as the loci of the activist and deliberator respectively. The tradition of direct action is embedded in protest in the spaces of places; in fact, Occupy seems to have incorporated a spatial politics of justice (on the issue of spatial justice, see Soja, 2010). Historically, advocates of deliberation work with flows of the communicative kind, be they face-to-face, printed, electronic, or digital. It is important not to overdraw this distinction so much as to draw attention to two different kinds of contexts for two different sensibilities.

DeLuca and Peeple's original formulation of the (nonnetworked) public screen underlines the distinction between spaces of places and spaces of flows: televisual mass media attend protests in the spaces of places and then circulate images through the spaces of flows. Whereas flows from the mass mediated public screen are unidirectional, flows emanating from networked public screens are multidirectional: individual citizens produce images that circulate through complex networks, moving laterally as well as vertically. Indeed, the Occupy moment seems to incorporate logics of networked organizing developed in the global justice movement. As Best (2005) explains, "by appropriating the facilities of the internet, the globalization movement has been able to maintain much greater editorial control over information disseminated about its collective identity, thereby allowing participants to bypass the mass media entirely. . ." (p. 227). This multidirectionality of the networked public screen forges a tighter and more recursive link between spaces of places and flows, blurring the distinction, perhaps, beyond usefulness. The cameras take pictures of people in the space of places, are uploaded to social networking sites where they become part of the broader information flow, which sparks further (deliberative) conversation about (activist) strategy, which then loops back to action in material places that invites the camera all over again. Since flows are increasingly embedded in places, the Occupy Lincoln protest was influenced by the flows of symbols, images, signs, and chants that emerged from the place of Occupy Wall Street.

Thus, the spaces of places (Occupation in Zuccotti Park) produced flows of rhetoric (the 99%; consensus-building procedures) that circulated through both public and vernacular networks of mediated communication (it is not uncommon to hear people say they found out about Occupy from Twitter) in the spaces of flows, which then reconstitute action in the spaces of places.

12. The multidirectionality of networked public screens reflects the extent to which internetworked technologies have become embedded in everyday communicative interaction. The tendentious distinction between the "online world" and the "offline world" has steadily eroded as networked media have diffused throughout society. There were many markers of this erosion during our time at the Occupy site. During the first march, we witnessed at least one group of people wanting to login to Facebook in order to discover what was happening at other Occupy sites (Field Note 25). One of the clearest instances of the blending of the spaces of places and the spaces of flows was the constant livestreaming of social protest. Multiple times, people informed us we were connected with sites including Occupy Los Angeles (Field Note 106). Here, it becomes clear that the spaces of places, even, perhaps particularly, in places like Lincoln, accrue more influence because they increase their visibility drastically when connecting with the spaces of flows (see Greene & Kuswa, 2012, p. 283-285 for a theoretical account of how networked communication technologies amplify political power by folding together different sites of protest).

13. The Occupation metaphor can be read as a mode of commanding attention: protestors wanted to "occupy" national and global publics' fields of attention. Occupiers made #OWS a trending topic on Twitter and stimulated an increase in mass media stories on income inequality, increasing the (temporal) attention share of the moment. Yet occupiers were often very suspicious of the flows that infiltrate material place. Many were invested in a politics that relied on a nostalgic view of a flow-less space of places, commenting on the need to focus on the reclaiming of public spaces and lamenting the focus on networked activism (Field Note 67).

14. Although some Occupiers were skeptical of the role of networked media, many were active on sites like Facebook. The Facebook conversation regarding who has the authority to post Occupy Lincoln content marks a rhetorical contestation between vernacular and institutional uses of networked media. Social networking sites are eroding the traditional hierarchical structure of institutions in favor of new, decentralized forms of organizing. New communication technology has, in Clay Shirky's (2008) formulation, made organizing without organizations possible. The vernacular web can now do what only institutions could achieve earlier. But institutional impulses still persist, because a site like Facebook "hybridizes the institutional and noninstitutional" (Howard, 2008, p. 491). Even though Occupy denied that

they were an organization, this scene illustrates an instance when the "moment" fell into the traps traditionally associated with organizational procedures, such as gatekeeping which vernacular voices have the ability to publish on the site. Although the role of new communication technology in the organizing process was often lauded, skepticism persists that the ties created in these groups are much weaker than traditional institutionalized movement ties—which was perhaps borne out by the steadily shrinking participants of Occupy Lincoln through the fall and winter of 2011 (e.g., Gladwell, 2010; Segerberg and Bennett, 2011).

15. We have offered the following account: Occupy represents a multi-faceted moment where demands for representation, redistribution, and recognition coalesced. It is a moment deeply confounding for the very reason that it reflects a radical challenge to dominant modes of contemporary thought and *praxis*. Our experiences with the early Occupy moment signaled that the traditional tensions between activism and deliberation are no longer safe, stable, or essential (indeed, if they ever were!). Activists deliberate and deliberation is activism, screens are networked—simultaneously wild and tame—occupied places are flows and flows are places to be #occupied. The moment was fluid, changing, and open, though as the moment matured, traditional movement dynamics reasserted themselves. We have tried to reflect how, despite Occupy's efforts to forge a new mode of protest, the emphasis on deliberation turned the moment toward more conservative activism and the actions of the activist(s) undermined the promise of legitimacy encouraged by deliberation.

These rhetorical scenes foreground these tensions. Is it possible for agents of social change to transcend these dichotomies? Or, alternatively, are these structural problems facing any advocates of social change? Perhaps these binaries cannot be escaped, and the best that we can hope for is that they are successfully negotiated. On the other hand, as Hardt and Negri (2004) suggest in their theorization of the possibility of democratic practice within the global "multitude," we seem to be on the precipice of a new imaginary: one that is global, digitally mediated, oriented to the screen, and mindful of the problems of representation. Perhaps a new vocabulary, capable of stimulating and accounting for social change without falling into the dichotomies that have plagued historical movements, will emerge. The mere possibility opens a scholarly moment, for new modes of academic writing might register the transition to a new imaginary and assist in developing a new vocabulary. In capturing Occupy Lincoln through dramatizations of rhetorical scenes we have tried to identify the utility in thinking in terms of a vocabulary of moments instead of movements. This is a modest contribution to an ongoing conversation but an effort that we hope will expand as scholars theorize the dynamics of rhetorical performances oriented toward change.

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