

# "OCCUPATION" BETWEEN CONQUEST AND LIBERATION

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A lot can change in two months. When intrepid activists descended on Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011, few expected that they would spend the night. Within a month, their occupation had spread to dozens of other outposts across the land. A month later, most of the parks and squares had been cleared. Officially undaunted, the occupiers clamored throughout 2012 to gain purchase in stormier, windswept fields. But it was no use; in a movement called "Occupy," the struggle and the encampment were one. To be sure, the Internet continued to facilitate activist communication and (to a lesser degree) coordination. But without Zuccotti, the word "we" began to sound hollow.

Sooner or later, even great eulogies become historical footnotes. What, then, can be learned from Occupy now that its arc can be traced in a single meager paragraph? In keeping with the movement's own cosmopolitan reflexes, some commentators have disputed the death sentence by pointing to similar conflagrations erupting elsewhere. The American *camps* may have been smashed (though their websites, like hollow men, persevere), but that doesn't mean that the *struggle* is over. If there was any doubt, the rebranding of Paul Mason's *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere* (2012) in 2013 provided the necessary reassurance: surely book sales alone couldn't explain why we were invited to consider *Why It's Still Kicking Off Everywhere*.

Trying to keep good company can bring out the best in us; however, it can also provide cover for our inadequacies. Back in 2011, activists in Tahrir Square sent pizza to Zuccotti Park to solidify the global network they'd begun to forge. In a world where distributing files across the Internet is routinely called "sharing," their act was probably the closest you could get to breaking bread. In the Spring of 2013, Istanbul erupts. The scene is weirdly familiar, and the children of Zuccotti can't help but recognize themselves. Now it's their turn, and they send emissaries of their own. But instead of pizza, the Turks get livestream reporters. And so it was that—as refugees from the American camps moved online—they ensured (*pace*, Gil Scott Heron) that the revolution would be televised after all. Never has there been a more

perfect image of the *retour au normal* than when sharing became “sharing” once again.

Emboldening though scenes like those that unfolded in Taksim Square may be, we can't pretend they have much to do with Zuccotti. Better instead to admit that the American movement that called itself “Occupy” is dead—and now the *post festum* analysis must begin. According to Walter Benjamin, adopting a position downstream from an event's source was best understood as an analytic opportunity (1978b: 177). From such a position, he maintained, the critic might judge a current's force. Now that Zuccotti is a wasteland in a wasteland again (so sterile that even the office workers in adjoining towers won't eat lunch there), we can take stock of what we learned—and make lists of the questions that still demand answers.

Why, for instance, did the movement's renunciation of kleptocracy spread at such an epidemic rate, and how did a continent beset by tent cities in the fall have little more to confront than a barricade's worth of hasty anthologies and slapdash monographs come spring? On the surface, the struggle to understand a movement's rise and fall seems to demand an analysis of the swirling vortices that guide the circulation of struggle. But while such an approach might help us to understand Occupy's degeneration from lighting rod to empty signifier, it's also true that it's likely to overlook the importance of foundational political concepts. However, once political *concepts*—and, indeed, the meaning of politics itself—are foregrounded, both the movement's contagious appeal and its rapid decomposition become instantly comprehensible.

Indeed, not since *The Port Huron Statement* has an American movement been so successful in revitalizing our engagement with the conceptual bedrock of politics. Among these concepts, perhaps the most cherished was “democracy” itself. Ringing out with People's Mic choirs, the movement's General Assemblies could not help but remind us of the church-basement enthusiasm that, for Tocqueville, was the very heart of *Democracy in America*.

But even before there was “democracy,” there was “occupation.” Perhaps more than any other term, noun or verb, it was occupation's destiny to spark debate—and these debates were as important as they were divisive. Reviewing them from our current downstream position, it becomes clear that movement fights about occupation's meaning allowed us to grapple, albeit indirectly, with a fundamental question who's answer continues to elude us: what does it mean to be political today?

2

Politics presupposes conceptualization. Prior to (and thus more fundamental than) the “frames” of frame analysis, concepts are the key to understanding how and why actors act as they do. Because concepts turn matter into objects and, in turn, order the relations between the objects produced, they are the means by which both matter and relations become perceptible as world-building material. Such material is the medium through which human desires attain to concretion.

An evident homology with Marx’s conception of the human labor process (1954: 173), it becomes clear that—far from being idealistic phenomena—concepts are at once a manifestation of the personal activity of the human laborer, a constitutive aspect of the object upon which she labors, and finally (and following logically from the former two propositions) one of labor’s most powerful and primitive instruments. In that specialized field of human production known as “politics,” concepts are the very substance of imagination.

The rapid diffusion of protest encampments during the fall of 2011 gives an indication of how generative “occupation” had been. Nevertheless, the ferocity (to say nothing of the unresolved character) of movement debates suggests that this resonance owed largely to the term’s conceptual indeterminacy. In many cases, “occupation” became what Benjamin would have called a wish image—a vision capable of stimulating the longing for redemption by recalling those unrealized promises buried in the (mythic) past (1978a: 148).

The late-capitalist disarticulation of social space (its carginogenic profusion of dead and transitory zones) stimulates remembrance of a time—a time that may never have existed—when it was possible to foster a collective, exuberent “we.” Eden, Winstanley’s squatted wastelands, the Tennis Court Oath: each prior iteration becomes a spark with the power to push the approximate present into the actualized future. Boomeranging through the past to stimulate its energetic élan, the wish image provides a vision of liberation that impels people to *act*. But how, and on what basis? The wish image doesn’t say, and the concept has yet to find its object.



*The Tennis Court Oath*  
Jaques-Louis David



*OWS General Assembly March 17, 2012*  
Photo by Wasim Ahmed

Although their sources are varied, wish images have consistently emerged from the Romantic current that has buoyed social movements since the end of the eighteenth century. In the immediate aftermath of Wall Street's catastrophic meltdown, movement romanticism and the wish image "occupation" revealed their profound affinity.

Drawing on Mao (or maybe, sadly, Tyler Durden) and writing as The Imperative Committee, some participants in the 2009 occupation of The New School issued a manifesto proposing that, as far as they were concerned, "an occupation is not a dinner party, writing an essay, or holding a meeting." Instead, it was "a car bomb" (2009: 3). Conceived as the prelude to a messianic rupture in capitalism's base immediacy, it therefore followed that "the coming occupations will have no end in sight" (2009: 12).<sup>1</sup> A little more than two years later, as Occupy Wall Street began showing signs of being possessed by what George Katsiaficas has called the "Eros effect" (1987), activist Conor Tomás Reed proclaimed in the movement-based journal *Tidal* that, "for many of us, 'occupy' has become a verb to be sung." This desire owed primarily to the fact that *the word itself*, when wielded by the right people, seemed to turn the world upside down.

This rowdy crowd word, at once descriptive and prescriptive, aims to body-flip the logic of imperialism on its head. A radical people's occupation of public space doesn't erect checkpoints; it tears them down. Instead of usurping others' resources, we heartily pool our own for free distribution. (2011: 4)

Exhilarating though it may have been, the body flip achieved by Reed's conceptual wrestling was not yet a paradigm shift. From Mikhail Bakhtin's celebration of the medieval carnival (1984) to Naomi Klein's approving observation that the movement against globalization responded "to corporate concentration with a maze of fragmentation; to globalisation with its own kind of localisation; to power consolidation with radical power dispersal" (2000), the idea that struggle restores balance by reversing valuations has been as persistent as it has been seductive. In the Western political tradition,

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<sup>1</sup> Grad students will be grad students. Both the name "the Imperative Committee" and the formulation "the coming occupations" reveal the authors' debts to a particular strand of romantic insurrectionary thought associated with the work of Giorgio Agamben (author of, among other books, *The Coming Community*) and elaborated by groups like the anonymous Frenchmen who penned *The Coming Insurrection* under the name The Invisible Committee.

such inversions can be traced back to Scripture, where—in Acts 17—it is revealed that riots broke out in Thessalonica after Paul preached the Good News to unbelievers, who lamented: “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also ... and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.”

But no so sooner had the new believers begun to savor their regicidal fantasies of deposing the One Percent’s Caesars, others began to take issue with occupation’s new ubiquity. In their view, “occupation” seemed irreparably tarnished by its association with the acts of conquest it was thought normally to denote. In their estimation, not only did the movement’s preferred nomenclature alienate those who had endured histories of colonial violence at the hands of occupying forces, it also ensured that their efforts would fail. How, they asked, could a liberation struggle win if it rallied behind conquest’s banner?

4

Barely a week into Zuccotti’s Bakhtinian body flip, statements began appearing on the Internet calling attention to the fact that the mobilization had failed to address the *colonial* occupation that wrote America into the annals of humankind in letters of blood and fire. In a widely circulated *Racialicious* article, Indigenous writer and activist Jessica Yee suggested that—by encouraging “organizers, protestors, and activists” to “‘occupy’ different places that symbolize greed and power”—the movement had signaled its insensitivity to the fact that “The United States is already being occupied.” She went on to clarify: “This is Indigenous land. And it’s been occupied for quite some time now” (2011).

In response to the movement’s careless framing, Yee enjoined protestors to consider how, instead of “more occupation,” what was needed was “decolonization.” Moreover, since “colonialism affects everyone,” it was in everyone’s interest to participate in its undoing. This was all the more true since, by her reckoning (and like a gateway drug), “colonialism also leads to capitalism, globalization, and industrialization.” “How,” she asked, “can we truly end capitalism without ending colonialism?”

Although its defining attributes remained unspecified, “decolonization” quickly became occupation’s antithesis. And with the contest thus established, Yee’s call gained traction in many cities. Over the course of a few short months, activists positioned within, alongside, and in opposition to the growing Occupy movement initiated projects and set up websites with names like “Decolonize

Canada," "Decolonize North America," "Decolonize Oakland," "Decolonize Occupy," "DeColonize the 99%," and "Decolonize The World."

In the best interpretations, Yee's article was read less as an injunction to shut down movement operations than as a call to deepen them by exposing the primary contradiction underlying American experience. Thus it was that, on December 4, 2011, members of Occupy Oakland's People of Color caucus put forward a motion encouraging participants in that city's General Assembly to consider dropping "Occupy" and adopting "Decolonize" as their watchword. "We want to open our movement to even greater participation," their proposal asserted.

For many of us, including our local native communities, the terms 'occupy' and 'occupation' echo our experiences under colonial domination and normalizes the military occupations that the U.S. is supporting in places such as Iraq, Palestine, and Afghanistan. (2011)

Speaking in favor of the motion, activists argued that the proposed name change would allow them to gain traction in communities affected by colonial occupation and conquest. In turn, such base-building would help the movement to grow. Although the motion ultimately failed, the meeting's transcript reveals broad support for the "name change" position.<sup>2</sup> According to one participant, "the historical context of 'occupy' doesn't fit with the goals of this movement." According to another, "the term occupy is racist" and, as a result, "few people of color [were] involved" in movement activities. One participant reported how, "as a Jewish person," they could not "support Palestinian people in a movement named 'Occupy,'" while another expressed concern that, by "using the language of our oppressors," the movement would be fundamentally "weakened."

Sentiments like these were not a west-coast anomaly. Speaking at a public forum two months after the eviction of Toronto's Occupy encampment on November 23, 2011, Indigenous Environmental Network organizer Clayton Thomas Mueller added his voice to those calling for the movement to change its name. "No Native person ever called this movement 'occupy,'" Mueller said, "and certainly no Palestinian ever did" (2012). On April 24, 2012 the

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<sup>2</sup> Some commentators have observed that opposition to the resolution came primarily from white participants and, as such, should be read as further indication of the movement's insensitivity to questions of racism and colonialism; however, to the dismay of many activists, revolutionary hip-hop act The Coup's frontman Boots Riley also spoke in opposition to the proposal. This led to an interesting exchange, which can be found here: <http://disoccupy.wordpress.com/page/2/>

authors of the POC Open Letter to the Occupy movement were even more direct when they declared that "*Occupation is a failed political strategy.*" And more: "*Liberation through occupation is impossible.*"

Adopting a slightly more conciliatory tone in their retrospective analysis of movement gains, Baltimore-based authors Lester Spence and Mike McGuire conceded that, "to the extent the fight against financial capital is a war," the term occupation helped to emphasize "the fundamental nature of the struggle." Nevertheless, since "occupation" also "denotes ... white settler colonialism" and "has a deeply regressive meaning" (2012: 56-57), they concluded by exhorting "future iterations" of the movement to "use symbols that reflect the realities of settler colonialism and refrain from using language that denotes 'occupation.'" (2012: 63).

When viewed as a strategic proposition, Spence and McGuire's recommendation seems to make sense. Nevertheless, across the continent, efforts to rename the movement met with resistance. For many radicals, this resistance was enough to confirm their suspicion that the movement was irreparably racist. Such assessments should not be discounted; however, it's equally important to consider how the reluctance to dispense with "occupation" might also have owed to the inadequacy of the proposed alternative. If the movement's use of "occupation" was overly Romantic and insensitive to histories of conquest, it was equally true that the call to "decolonize" (Yee) tended to lack the "descriptive and prescriptive" (Reed) clarity of "occupation" as a tactic of "war" (Spence and McGuire)—and, hence (and following Clausewitz), of *politics* itself.

## 5

The call to "decolonize" the Occupy movement was motivated by the sincere hope that America's history of violent conquest might finally, mercifully, be undone. But while there's no reason to suspect the motivations that compelled people to call for an end to the indiscriminate use of the term "occupation," this should not lead us to conclude that the *analytic* basis of their exhortation should likewise be beyond scrutiny.

Returning to Yee's *Racialicious* article, the attentive reader is immediately struck by the important conceptual work accomplished by two distinct but interrelated rhetorical gestures. In the first, the movement's occupations are—by virtue of their common nomenclature—rendered as conceptual equivalents to the occupation that inaugurated colonialism in the Americas.

Consequently, in the second, “occupation” is posited as the logical antithesis to decolonization, which is in turn held to be the only logical response to the founding violence of occupation.

These rhetorical moves reiterate conceptual habits that are pervasive among American radicals. Most evident in movement discussions about “violence,” such habits usually lead us to take note of what our enemy does and then to propose that—as a reflection of our opposition to their rule—we will do the exact opposite. In this way, resistance becomes a process of logical negation, of siding with the *representational* antithesis of the thing we oppose. “They have power,” said Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz; “we won’t touch it with a ten-foot pole.” (1992:24).

And so it is that we find ourselves launching assaults from the antithetical side of the conceptual divide. But what content might be attributed to such a negation? Yee never says. Although she briefly considers the tactical repertoire associated with “occupation” (e.g. occupying places that “symbolize greed and power”), no such repertoire gets elaborated with respect to decolonization. An oversight, maybe; or maybe an admission—tactic, all too tactic—that the conceptual distinction cannot hold. Indeed, no less an authority than Frantz Fanon made clear that, when conceived as a *practical* and not merely a representational act, decolonization is in fact much closer to occupation than Yee’s comments would allow.

Like the OWS enthusiasts who cheered their movement’s messianic body flip, Fanon begins his decolonization treatise on a Romantic note by proposing that, “if we wish to describe it precisely,” we would do well to recall “the well-known words: ‘The last shall be first and the first last’” (1963:37). But there’s more: in a world cut in two, the will to decolonize first finds expression in the desire to occupy the occupiers. “The look that the native turns on the settler’s town is a look of lust, a look of envy,” says Fanon. “It expresses his dreams of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler’s table, to sleep in the settler’s bed, with his wife if possible” (1963:39).

Comments like these raise questions about Fanon’s feminist credentials. Just as important, however, are those questions that might be raised about his implicit philology. It would not have surprised him (if he didn’t know it already) that, throughout the sixteenth century—modern colonialism’s “age of discovery”—occupation was closely associated with sexual possession.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> On this point, see Sophie Lewis (February, 2012).



6

Liberation owes nothing to negation; it is the fruit of reciprocity. Opposition to militarism calls on us to disavow “class war” about as much as our conviction that picket lines mean “don’t cross” demands that we cede abortion clinics to the placard-wielding zealots who showed up first. Thus far, the history of American racism has made it harder to accept the same with respect to occupation; however, our collective failure to acknowledge occupation’s inescapability as a necessary form of reciprocal violence has prevented us from advancing beyond the satisfactions of conceptual negation.

For the movement’s Romantic enthusiasts, these satisfactions allowed them to play innocent. And thus it was that they carved out micro-zones of autonomy while beseeching the State to safeguard their right to burlesque its sovereignty. For movement detractors, negation proved instead to be a reliable alibi. Responding to a force they didn’t create but couldn’t ignore, the most satisfying option was to declare it inadmissible.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; in either case, the movement’s “occupation” debate quickly degenerated into a tale of two representations. Meanwhile, *politics* continued as it always had—from occupation to occupation, with all underfoot. I shouldn’t say “always,” for to do so ignores historical evidence. Indeed, American radicals have often explicitly embraced occupation as a term and tactic of anti-colonial resistance. In these moments, though it may not have been their intention, they helped to reveal occupation’s centrality to *all* forms of political action—whether carried out in the name of conquest or of liberation.

Considered at their threshold, such acts make clear that politics without occupation is, in fact, inconceivable. Will it be *their* occupation or *ours*—and, if it is ours, what will we produce? These profane questions (only hinted at by the Occupy movement’s regicidal body-flip wish images) are, in the final instance, the only ones that matter.

7

Between 1969 and 1971, several hundred Indigenous activists occupied Alcatraz Island. According to movement participant Adam Fortunate Eagle, “Alcatraz was a powerful symbol.” However, the action’s significance did not arise primarily from the symbolic realm. For members of Indians of All Tribes, seizing the island was worthwhile in large part because it was thought to

have “enough facilities to give it some real potential.” In other words, the objective was not simply to *hold* the space but to *produce* something with and within it. As Fortunate Eagle recounts, activists hoped that the island’s “potential” could be used to “galvanize the urban Indian community and reach out to the Indians on the reservation.”

We developed our ideas of the practical, historical, and political reasons why Alcatraz should become Indian, and what exactly we would do with it. All of our thoughts were later incorporated into proclamations made at the takeover. (1992: 39)

Despite being a member of the “local native communities” invoked by the Occupy Oakland People of Color Caucus in the preamble to their December 4, 2011 motion, Fortunate Eagle remained unfazed by the “echo” of “colonial domination” in the terms “occupy” and “occupation.” Indeed, as far as he was concerned, the homology between “their” occupation and “ours” was an important political discovery. And it’s precisely for this reason that the activists that landed on Alcatraz are—in Fortunate Eagle’s account—referred to as “the occupying force,” and that their arrival is described reverentially as “the takeover” (1992: 54).

The homology between “their” occupation and “ours” can be extended. Despite Reed’s insistence that “a radical people’s occupation of public space doesn’t erect checkpoints” (2011: 4), activist scholar Hannah Dobbs has noted that Indians of All Tribes secured Alcatraz by—among other things—painting “giant ‘no trespassing’ signs, including one that read ... ‘Warning Keep Off Indian Property’” (2012:24).

Based on accounts such as these, it’s clear that (regardless of the practice’s apparent self-evidence today) positing resistance as the conceptual negation of the oppressor’s terms was not yet hegemonic in 1969—or even in 1992, when Fortunate Eagle published his reflections; or even among “local native communities,” despite the fact that this is where the allergy to “occupation” is ostensibly strongest.

## 8

For Carl Schmitt, politics presupposes “the distinction of friend and enemy.” Here, the political enemy is “existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible” (1996:26-27). In this way, the goal of politics becomes: repulsing one’s opponent “in order

to preserve one's own form of existence" (1996:27). Although tainted by his association with fascism, Schmitt's formulation is nevertheless instructive when considering anti-colonial encounters.

In Fortunate Eagle's account, deliberation enabled activists to "agree on a name we could use to structure the occupying force and sign the proclamations—'Indians of All Tribes'" (1992: 43). Apart from the telling reference to his Indigenous compatriots as an "occupying force," Fortunate Eagle's testimony highlights how the inauguration of politics is marked by the emergence of a "we"—a "form of existence," to use Schmitt's apt but misunderstood phrase.

It's noteworthy that, while Schmitt's analysis presupposes the nation state as the primitive, mythological, unit for the elaboration of forms of existence, his category can be applied equally well—and perhaps more accurately—to contests *within* the nation state. Here, the most extreme form of friend-enemy antagonism is civil war. By dispensing with Schmitt's fascist mythology, it becomes clear that the most universal contest between different "forms of existence" concerns the war between parasites and producers, e.g. class war.

As with the occupation of Alcatraz, the occupations of the 99% pointed toward this horizon; but mythology's a giddy thing, and winning doesn't mean what it used to.

## 9

Having landed on Alcatraz, Indians of All Tribes declared: "We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery" (1992:44). Though the proclamation's gestural mimesis was no doubt meant to be—and indeed was—humorous, its political implications were impossible to ignore.

For one, the "we" that did the reclaiming amounted to a new people—a group that came together through reclamation and would not likely have emerged without it. Moreover, by making the claim on behalf of "all American Indians," the occupiers effectively erased prior national divisions in an effort to conceptually extend the boundaries of their "we." Finally, by appealing to the "right of discovery" (and thus drawing on a European colonial legal contrivance to legitimize their possession), Indians of All Tribes demonstrated that the realization of their sovereign claim required that the claims of others be nullified.

Having established the basis of their entitlement, the Indians of All Tribes proclamation enumerated the uses to which the island would be put. Significantly, all proposed uses concerned the development of the people's form of existence. These included: a center for Native American Studies, an American Indian spiritual center, an Indian Center for Ecology, a Great Indian training school, and—finally—an American Indian museum.

Marked as it was by the weight of sovereign assertion, it's not surprising that the proclamation led Fortunate Eagle to consider the similarities between the actions of the occupiers and those that marked the conquest of the Americas. "I thought of the Mayflower and its crew of Pilgrims who had landed on our shores 350 years earlier. The history books say they were seeking new freedom for themselves and their children, freedom denied them in their homeland."

It didn't matter that Plymouth Rock already belonged to somebody else; that was not their concern. What did concern them was their own fate and their own hopes. What a sad commentary on this country that we, the original inhabitants, were forced to make a landing 350 years later on another rock, the rock called Alcatraz, to focus national attention on our own struggle to regain the same basic freedom. (1992: 56)

## 10

Alcatraz marked a watershed moment in Indigenous struggles in the United States. As Troy R. Johnson reports, there were more than 65 major Indigenous occupations or actions in support of occupations in the period between 1969 and 1975. Many of these actions, which involved occupying abandoned military bases, explicitly mixed the struggle for legal recognition with the struggle to create new forms of Indigenous existence along post-national lines.

Citing the 1868 Sioux treaty right to occupy former Indian lands scheduled by the government to be declared "surplus," United Indians of All Tribes occupied Fort Lawton on March 8, 1970. According to Johnson, "Indians from Alcatraz Island made up the majority of the occupation force" (1996: 223). On the same date, 14 activists also occupied Fort Lewis, Washington (1996: 224). On April 2, 1970, another attempt was made to occupy Fort Lawton. According to occupation participant Bernie Whitebear, "Alcatraz was very much a catalyst to our occupation here... If it had not been for their determined effort ... there would have been no movement here" (Johnson 1996: 225).

On May 1, 1970, Pomo Indians occupied Rattlesnake Island near Clear Lake California. Against the objections of the lumber company then claiming title to the land, they were "allowed" to stay (1996: 225-226). On May 9, 1970, approximately 70 Mohawks from the St. Regis Indian Reservation occupied Stanley Island in the St. Lawrence River, posted a "no trespassing" sign, and reclaimed the island—along with its nine-hole golf course (1996: 226). According to Ward Churchill, "Mohawks from St. Regis and Canghaiwaga [Kahnawake]" partook in a similar action on May 13, 1974, when they "occupied an area at Ganiekeh [Moss Lake], in the Adirondak Mountains." After declaring the site to be "sovereign Mohawk territory under the Fort Stanwix treaty," they "set out to defend it (and themselves) by force of arms" (1996: 64).

Such examples suggest that, rather than being decolonization's antithesis, occupation has historically been a central tactic in the struggle to achieve it. The fight to determine what liberation might mean must first contest and then overthrow what—following Weber— we might describe as the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of occupation. Although it often remained insensitive to the colonial experiment from which it remained inseparable, the Occupy movement's wish images revealed that regicide was its guiding star. And, had they reached it, they would have opened clear lines along which decolonization forces might have advanced.

Instead, the wish image remained unclarified. And occupation (the concept without content) was set upon by decolonization, its contentless antithesis. Had the conceptual problem been addressed, and had the strategic lines been more carefully drawn, our eulogy might have been a ballad instead. Having missed our opportunity, the least we can do is work to ensure that this footnote occasionally gets consulted.

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