Occupy Gender: How Women and Queer People Find Their Voice in Mass Movements

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The theme of this conference, *Occupy Free Speech: Getting Women's Voices Heard,* is nothing if not ecumenical. It compels us to participate in an activity that is intrinsic to feminist thought: ending the social-silencing of women's experience. Yet while the task of 'getting women's voices heard' seems straightforward enough, before we set ourselves to such a task, we might wish to address some compelling foundational questions posed by this theme. For example: what qualifies as 'getting women's voices heard'? What are the particular anticipated outcomes of ending women's silence?

The conference title's play on the language of Occupy implies a further condition weighing upon these two initial questions: what does it mean for women's voices to be heard within a mass movement, be it Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street (including its satellites), the Wisconsin uprising of Spring 2011, the youth protests in Chile, the Chicago teachers' strike, or the now-victorious student uprising in Quebec? In other words, is the goal of this "getting women's voices heard" for each individual woman to experience the fulfillment of having expressed herself? Is the goal the recording of individual women's experience into the cultural record? Or, is there such a thing—in Hegel's language—as a *world-historic* role to be played by women's voices? The answer to this question is contingent upon further foundational questions: *Who counts as a woman? What counts as a voice? And what exactly does it mean to 'be heard'?*

As may be inferred by the questions above, this paper will rely upon neither qualitative nor quantitative assessments of mass movements to produce answers; rather, I will pass these

questions through the conceptual lens of continental philosophy to see if anything useful can be

identified. It is my contention as a materialist that the value of philosophy lies in its practical

dimension, in its capacity to clarify and demystify. But clarification and demystification should not

be confused with superficial simplicity: common sense language can hide a wealth of ideological

niceties, and it is the philosopher's job to expose these "simple" terms in all their complexity. And

one of the most contentious of these 'simple' terms is *woman*.

Defining "Woman"

The contentious history of metaphysical speculating about the "nature of woman" is well-

traversed theoretical territory, but for the purpose of developing a practico-philosophical

approach to the question of women's voices in mass movements, it may be helpful to review some

of the most enduring speculations on the subject. The first account of woman comes from

Aristotle's metaphysical schema whereby all substance emerges from various causes: form,

matter, originating agents (the efficient cause), and final purposiveness (*telos*). For Aristotle,

entities that contain the form and material called "woman" also partake in the *telos* (world-

purpose) of woman as defined by her given formal and material components. Simply put,

Aristotle's schema is the basis of a *kind essentialism*: that there are certain innate "kinds" of things

that emerge within the world and that these "kinds" are determined by the essences they contain.

As a critique of Aristotelian essentialism, early to mid- twentieth century feminists from Simone

de Beauvoir to Monique Wittig advanced social constructivist theories of womanhood asserting

that one is not *born* a woman. In the late twentieth century, Judith Butler advanced and reframed

the social constructivist position by pointing out that gender is not only constructed upon a

permanent and transhistorical sexed body, but that the sexed body itself is historical and constructed.[1]

Claims of womanhood and the meaning of womanhood today are hotly contested territory with profound legal and political ramifications.[2] The question of who *counts as a woman* is critical to the question of *who gives account as a woman*, who gets to claim that they experience the world as a woman, and who gets to establish social relationships as a woman. Given that contemporary feminism does not necessarily embrace the inclusion of transgendered, transsexual, and intersexed voices as women's voices[3], any claim to advocacy for women's voices must clarify its stand on trans-inclusivity and the relation of trans-inclusivity to the political goals of the task at hand. Such a claim will be addressed later in this paper.

What is a Mass Movement?

A discussion of the articulation of women's voices in mass movements also implies a clarification of the term "mass movement." I am defining a mass movement as a grassroots "swelling" of diverse persons publically organizing for specific or general social and/or economic change. A mass movement has particular characteristics: (1) It contains a mass of people; it is not a sect or grouplet; (2) its function implies motion; a mass movement's dynamics differ from the internal dynamics of established institutions, which tend to be change-adverse.

Given the above, I am excluding women's voices within institutionalized political parties from this analysis. Unlike mass movements, parties such as the Democrats and the Republicans have *a priori* platforms on gender and sexuality that are brought before the masses, but not directly defined by them. Women may create apparatuses within these parties to push for change,

but these apparatuses are not mass movements.[4] In a spontaneous grassroots mass movement, positions on women's rights must be constructed on the ground, *a posteriori*, formed from argument and the hashing through of popular opinion. There is not a clear negative position among a mass movement that must be renounced (an anti-feminist party platform, for example) but an inert alterity, a hodgepodge of opinion; in the language of the Presocratic philosophers, the *many*, the *not-one*, the *chaotic void*. To organize advocacy for women in a mass movement—which is one possible meaning of the term "women's voice"—is to organize thought from this chaos.

On the opposite side of the organizational spectrum, I am excluding ephemeral anarchist-style "affinity groups" for two reasons. The first is that, they too, begin with an *a priori* position on women's rights. The second is that, because "affinity groups" have such high ideological requirements for participation, they are usually quite tiny and at times even stand in opposition to mass movements, which, for them, contain ideologically suspect peoples. An affinity group by definition contains a platform (individuals self-select based on the affinity of their beliefs which are adhered to as fixed moral ground) and is therefore by definition less relevant for this paper in that any affinity group both contains an *a priori* structure and is fundamentally minoritarian.

Lastly, I am going to exclude from my analysis *gender specific* movements (such as Slut Walk or the fight against Prop 8) not because these movements don't qualify as mass movements, and not because they don't involve internal struggles over issues of gender and sexuality, but only because they have an explicit *a priori* commitment to a clear position on some aspect of women's equality.

Thus, this paper analyzes and theorizes the meaning of women's voices within mass political formations that do not contain *a priori* political commitments to women's (and queer) struggles, but which *do* contain women (and queer people) within their ranks. My goal is to make claims as to how women and gender minorities are shaping—or failing to shape, or could potentially shape—these movements in an *a posteriori* field, when there is no clear position on women's issues yet articulated.

It is my strong contention that the crux of women's capacity for self-articulation can be advanced by pragmatically thinking through the debate in continental philosophy about the relation of *being in-itself* (*an sich*) and *being for-itself* (*für sich*).

Beings In Themselves and For Themselves

The philosophical debate about *things-in-themselves* and *things-for-themselves* has its origins in Kantian epistemology. *The Critique of Pure Reason* attempts to solve the impasse of Hume's empiricism by dividing the knowable world into *phenomena* and *noumena*. In short, Kant maintains that the objects of the world do not 'write themselves onto us' from experience as if we were a blank slate; rather, we know the objects of the world through the human mind's *a priori* capacity to organize *a posteriori* sense impressions into meaningful reflections of objects (*phenomena*), even though we can never know the "things-in-themselves" (*noumena*), since the actual objects of the world as they really are exist beyond our perception. This critique has extended ramifications for the meaning of self-knowledge or, in Kant's language, *transcendental self-consciousness*. The debate in Kantian scholarship turns on the problem of the self's dual

function as subject and object, as well as the problem of the self's triple position as unperceivable

noumena which appears as *phenomena* to a logical self-subject.[5]

However, my analysis of women's participation in mass movements will not investigate

issues of Kantian epistemology, but instead rely on Hegel's conversion of Kant's 'things-in-

themselves' from an epistemological (knowledge-oriented) to an ontological (being-oriented)

construct. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel describes phenomena as "alive" in that

each "moves of itself"; he further characterizes this process in terms of "movement as

development."[6] Hegel defines a phenomenon *in-itself* as the bare facts of its existence, as

disorganized potential. An entity exists *for-itself* when it is *articulated* (articulated in both

language and being) into a self-aware and mature force. That which is for-itself relates to itself and

concretely develops itself. Such an entity does not destroy its own *an-sich* (in-itself-ness) through

negation; it instead becomes a novel, developed and transformed entity with its old remnants

unfolding as a qualitatively distinct modality. One classic concrete example of this is the butterfly,

which emerges from its cocoon, not as an alien that has transcended its former self, but as a

creature that has re-formed itself into something radically different out of its own body, its own

being.

The Hegelian sense of this dialectical process of in-itself/for-itself is later reworked by

Marx to overtly refer to conscious change occurring through a process of self-relation and self-

organization. It is this precise understanding of in-itself and for-itself that I believe can add value

to organizing within mass movements.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx applies the Hegelian in-itself/for-itself in a manner productive to such movements. While thinking through the organizational aspects of English labor strikes, Marx discusses how the in-itself/for-itself dynamic is realized within a group of people struggling for their interests. A class in-itself is a qualitatively distinct entity from a class organized *for-itself*. The articulation of a class *for-itself* occurs through the process of political mobilization and struggle itself: the process of struggle shapes the being of the collective. This Marxian (i.e. materialist Hegelian) sense of in-itself/for-itself will be the most useful for us here.

Who are Women-In-Themselves?

Now that we have reviewed the concept of in-itself/for-itself and its relation to the movement/development of a people (or, in Hegelian terms, the movement/development of an idea) we can return to the earlier question: "Who Counts as a Woman?" This is a question of the 'in-itself' and in part empirically grounded—How many women are present in the mass movement? Is the movement attracting women? But before we think in terms of censuses and surveys, further clarification is in order. Before we can count women we have to answer the question of *who counts as a woman*.

There seems no just and non-divisive empirical answer to this question. If we rely upon Aristotelian kind essentialism and argue, for example, that there are corporeal requirements for womanhood—for example, only those who are invaginated are women, or only those who have XX chromosomes—we exclude those socially and self-identified women with XO chromosomes, and we exclude some transsexual and intersexual women from 'genital inclusion', while privileging transsexual and intersexual women who have the financial access (not to mention the want) to

'standardize' their genitalia. We also unjustly *include* many transsexual men who do not wish to be entered into the 'woman' category when using such criteria. To reject essentialism, but to still say that only those who are socialized from birth/childhood as women qualify as women also excludes the complicated realities of many transsexual and intersexual persons while accepting other trans and intersexual persons into the set.[7]

Despite my disagreement with the political conclusions of Judith Butler's work,[8] the theory of performativity outlined in *Gender Trouble* and then clarified in *Bodies that Matter* is helpful here. In Butler's theory, an individual's presentation of the sex/gender dyad is reiterated (under social discipline) until it appears as an essential part of the performing individual. Gender is not "just a performance"—as if in a single performance we could 'become' a different sex in an instant—but a constant lived reenactment in the material world, an ongoing announcement that socially defines the person in question.

Thus for the sake of making sure that no woman's voice is silenced I propose the following process be generalized within mass movements for determining inclusion into the set of women-in-themselves, women-to-be-voiced: (1) The woman must articulate that she is a woman, must make a claim to having a 'woman's voice.' (2) A woman must carry one predicate or characteristic into the set and claim that this predicate belongs to the set of woman. There is no "vetoing" any woman's contribution. The set of total predicates is open, historically developing, and must always be determined from below, from the autonomous individuals who seek to be in the set. (3) The characteristics belonging to the set of woman can exist in overlap with other sets, including the set of "man". This means that "woman" cannot merely be defined as the opposite or negation of "man." Instead, "the woman set" must contain positive yet historically grounded content.

A few notes on the limitations of this proposal. First of all, I am not suggesting that the process outlined above be a radically specific local endeavor. I am not advocating that women within movements walk around with questionnaires in order to define womanhood by the qualities amassed in their small local groupings. The process I suggest is to be understood as a mass process, historically developed over time, with open communication between movements, cross-culturally. It is a tall order.

Secondly, this proposed method does not purport to affect the mechanisms of gendering within the world at large. It is a suggested normative set of principles for the self-organization strategy of mass movements; it is in no way descriptive of how the world actually operates. In the world at large, it is not our announced connections of belonging that tend to matter, but the ruling schema of gender and sexuality which structures us into its designs, generally with total disregard for our personal objections and with no care for our in-group contributions. This corrective way of thinking about woman-identity attempts to give agency to individual members of the women-in-itself set within the ever-shifting framework of political movements.

I am aware that the proposal seems to overdetermine inclusion. At first glance it seems redundant that women claim particular predicate-identifiers when they themselves are responsible for introducing these characteristics into "the woman set" and when voicing one's womanhood alone seems to settle the matter. (For example, a woman could use the self-identity principle and say "I am part of the set of women because I announce that I am part of the set of women, and that is a characteristic of being a woman within this framework.") So, why not just accept that whoever claims womanhood *ipso facto* belongs within the set of woman? While I honor this theory in concept, I reject it on the pragmatic grounds that the approach to understanding the

meaning of woman needs to be both constructivist and dialectical: a mass of verbal affirmations doesn't tell us anything about the changing material reality of being and becoming women within the woman-set. Not only our identifications, but our *lives* must be heard.

Another reason for a descriptive approach to inclusion is that it resolves the political contradictions raised by pure nomination, which can be problematically connected to a reopening of essentialism. For example, when we read in a news article that a young male-designated person's family claims that the child is *really* a girl because he enjoys dolls and the color pink, Aristotelian essentialism is swept back onto the stage in the name of trans-inclusivity. This reentry of essentialism is hotly rejected by traditional feminists. Indeed, it opens a rift between those who claim to possess an essence of womanhood while being deprived of social recognition as women, and those who don't feel any intrinsic connection to femininity but have been socialized and even stigmatized as women regardless of their internal sense of self. Many transsexual people also reject essentialism's reentry into the debate. In the Spanish documentary *Guerill@s*, transgendered sociologist Miguel Missé[9] puts it succinctly: *how could a commodity you have to purchase be an expression of a true essence?*

Given the principles outlined above, we can welcome the experience of any young woman into the set of women without either rejecting the presence of pink-gendered commodities as 'illegitimate' expressions of woman-being and without essentializing such desires as intrinsically connected to women's identities. In other words, our set can be inclusive without agonizing over 'innate' belonging or ideological impure expressions of woman-being.

Acknowledgment of set-membership is important, but it is also important that we 'give voice' to the characteristics of the set, ever-changing and partial as these characteristics may be. If the characteristics of womanhood today are openly expressed, we begin to understand the concrete experience of women as articulated by self-identified women without recourse to metaphysical essences or *a priori* definitions. The idea or set-of-woman itself is then a 'being-in-itself', a living mass developing in a democratic, *a posteriori* manner within the framework of a larger historical movement. Moreover, the sharing of characteristics across sets implies connectivity and space for solidarity—including solidarity with men and non-woman-identified queer people. In the ethical terms set out by Alain Badiou, the communitarian must be rejected for the generic.[10]

What are Women's Voices and What Does it Mean to Hear Them?

Now that we have developed an inclusive schema for the counting of women-in-themselves as a foundation for the capacity of women to organize for-themselves, we have another sticky wicket to address: what counts as "women's voices" and when are they "being heard"? It should be clear from the earlier discussion that a mere census of women's presence in-themselves does not automatically suggest "women's voices being heard." It should also be noted that the presence of women in powerful positions within a movement alone does not suggest that women's voices are represented. I'd like to argue that, within mass-movements, "getting women's voices heard" can have two particular contents informed by two distinct goals as well as distinct political conceptions of "being heard":

(1) *The Pluralist Goal*: The pluralist asserts that the physical voices and written words of individual women should be expressed for the sake of expression itself, primarily because speaking in-itself is beneficial to the health and well-being of the speaking woman. Free speech is itself the desired political end.

(2) *Unary Goal*: The unary goal begins with the pluralist position: all individual women's voices must be heard for the reasons stated above, but also to further understand the status of women, as a set. However, the unary position claims that "getting women's voices heard" extends beyond the self-articulation of individual women, and instead suggests that a set of historically-determined, and contingent positions *for women* can be announced. This is where 'speaking' becomes 'speaking out', where 'being heard' becomes "being heard and listened to." Hearing here becomes a richer activity that implies more than just nods, more than just the acknowledgement of existence. Hearing means engagement and action.

I am skeptical of pluralism as a political end goal for women. In the realm of labor relations, when management gathers its workers to "listen to their grievances," it is not the same as having those grievances addressed—and the grievances are often only truly "heard" through the united act of a labor strike. Holding a platform for the voices of immigrants is distinct from an organized mass of immigrants demanding social change. The pluralist goal of "getting women's voices heard" contains passive content (almost as if "getting heard" is the condition of being "given" a platform as if women were invited guests within someone else's mass movement) while the unary goal is an active expression of a group acting for-itself. In the first case, articulation means the act of speaking; in the latter, it assumes both verbal articulation and the material articulation of a conceptual force within a mass movement. In the first case, hearing is the act of politely listening

to another's narrative; in the latter case, it is being made aware about the intentions and aims of a group: being a "hearer" implies developing a response to the stated aims of the group.

The most common contention with the unary position, is the necessary "silencing" of individual women's demands into a collective demand. Indeed this is the reason why demand-formation is rejected *prima facie* as majoritarian and even 'oppressive.' But rational criteria for a principled collective voice can be argued. (1) One can exclude from demands all individual voices that negate the voices of other women within the set. For example, individual women's voices do not need to be incorporated into the united voice when they make anti-Muslim, racist, transphobic, homophobic, and otherwise discriminatory claims and demands. Closing ranks through asserting the demands of the most vulnerable populations solidifies women as a unit and helps thwart political disintegration. Closing ranks around the demands of the most marginalized members of the set is not only valuable because it is moral, it is valuable because such actions help the group cohere and develop into a for-itself entity. Through building solidarity in this way, the women's group becomes an asset to the mass movement as a whole. (2) Demands can be prioritized in terms of both the path of the movement and solidarity with other struggles. The order of demands addressed can be arranged in a pragmatic manner as opposed to a ranking of 'the most important issues' to women, a process that would be inherently exclusionary.[11] (3) While there are many urgent issues facing women, demands should be bundled into small groups of twos and threes (if not ones) so that the push for each demand is well-organized. A list of grievances is not the same thing as a list of demands. A list of demands implies solidarity and a commitment to collective voice.

There is one last point that is bound to be contentious among feminists. The process outlined above implies a logic which decouples the individual physical voices of women into a disembodied unified proclamation for women. Just as an individual woman's voice can be disseminated by non-women during the Occupy movement's infamous "human mic" process, a male-identified person or non-woman-identified queer person who "hears" women's voices can and perhaps even *should* voice or more precisely *re-articulate* what women have abstracted from the well-spring of women's collective experience. Women's voice must become more than physical emanations from women's bodies. Those physical emanations must be abstracted into an idea grounded in lived experience. Thus, a man cannot speak 'in place of/as a substitute for' women, but a man can speak 'for' (advocate for, amplify) the world-historical position of women in a movement.

A Brief Reflection on the Voices of Occupy

A long analysis of the trajectory of the Occupy movement in its multiple locations is beyond the scope of this paper. My intention is to give a brief overview to the successes and failures of the movement in relation to women's voices in particular and oppressed groups in general. First of all, I would like to argue that the appearance of the Occupy Movement *in-itself*, on the heels of the uprising in Wisconsin and the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, is historically significant and politically meaningful. It was a visual display of collective anger, an homage to the creative spirit of ordinary people, and a reclamation of public (and in some cases private) space. But while Occupy's *being-it-itself* is meaningful, its *being-for-itself* never managed to completely emerge. Movements have their ebbs and flows; they unite and separate from other movements. More importantly these supposedly mysterious ebbs and flows are often grounded in fairly predicable

turns: movements are fragmented by ideological impasses, absorption into institutional electoral strategies, and inflated or deflated in relation to the historic and material conditions of the movements surrounding them. In closing, I will only address the first of these problems.

<u>*Bodies-in-Themselves*</u>

The Occupy Movement's strength and weakness was its reliance on the power of physical collective presence. The reclamation of space created a highly democratic, pluralist environment that provided a real avenue for political conversation. This *being-in-itself* was a powerful amplification of the voices of ordinary people. But the intoxication of the experience of collective being-in-itself, mixed with an unwavering fidelity to a celebratory pluralism, in the end thwarted the *for-itself* formation of the masses.

Judith Butler's Zucotti Park speech "Bodies in Public" on October 23rd is exemplary of this problematic and demobilizing ideological take. Butler states: "...we are not just demanding economic justice and social equality. We are assembling in public, we are coming together as bodies in alliance, in the street and in the square."[12] A political movement conscious of the needs of its agents, a movement *for-itself* would invert Butler's formula: "We are not just assembling in the street! We are demanding economic justice and social equality!" Although occurring prior to Butler's speech, Slavoj Zizek provides a speech with a title that serves as a rebuttal to this kind of thinking: *Don't Fall in Love with Yourselves*. "There is a danger. Don't fall in love with yourselves. We have a nice time here. But remember, carnivals come cheap. What matters is the day after, when we will have to return to our normal lives." Zizek grasps the purely politically inaugural

sense of Occupy's nature: "Remember our basic message is, 'We are allowed to think about alternatives.'"[13]

The Articulation of Demands

This "be-in" attitude of pluralist celebration undermined the movement's capacity to streamline its voice into a unified demand. It should be said that, while OWS' lack of demands were problematic, there was much disingenuous hubbub about the movement's lack of a message. The Occupy movement did not lack a message—its message was clear to hundreds of thousands of participants across the nation and millions of supporters around the world. What it lacked was a demand born of a movement capable of transcending being-together so that it might articulate itself into a *being-for-itself*. The formation of a demand is useful even if the demands are not won.[14]

It should be noted, however, that one occupation, did manage to unite and organize itself into a political force: Occupy Oakland. Occupy Oakland's ability to call a general strike, to shut down the Port of Oakland with the help of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union; its ability to get backing for the Nov. 2nd Day of Action from the Oakland Education Association; its unity under the demand of an end to police brutality in response to the police assault on 24 year-old veteran Scott Olson deserves lengthy study. [15]

The Failure to Mobilize Marginalized Populations

The Occupy movement has been repeatedly characterized, both within and without, as a movement dominated by whiteness, maleness, and heterosexuality, even though women, queers, and people of color have been involved from its start. The foundational act of Occupy Wall Street

began with news media and social media images of police attacking young women; the movement

grew in immediate response to outrage over the highly controversial execution of Troy Davis, an

African-American man, in Georgia. Locally, at Occupy Austin, there continues to be a multiracial

component, while at the beginning of the occupation at least half the participants were women.

When the *in-itself* of an occupation or movement is diverse, what exactly are the mechanisms that

tend to mute the voices of marginalized populations?

The first was a failure of the majority to close ranks around the most oppressed members

in-themselves at the level of demands or even slogans. In some cases, it was an outright failure to

earn the trust of certain populations such as immigrants, African Americans, LGBT persons, and

feminists. The for-itself could not be organized, because the in-itself had been entirely overlooked

or abandoned. OWS participant Audrea Lim explains through an interview with Esther Wang of

the Chinatown Justice Project:

> "The question is: what are we going to win from being a part of it? The
> reality is that these people work like crazy or their situations are highly
> unstable, so it's hard to plug into a movement that's not accessible and they
> don't feel welcome.
>
> It's hard to be a truly multi-racial movement that's inclusive of immigrants. No
> one knows how it do it yet."[16]

Occupy Austin's local conservatism and heavy commitment to pluralism at all costs caused

a sloughing off of women and other feminist participants early on. Recently, an article in *The*

Nation singled-out Occupy Austin's early writings as a bastion of anti-woman sentiment hiding

under the cover of 'unity and togetherness:"

Occupy Wall Street's initial declaration, a long list of grievances from colonialism to the maltreatment of "nonhuman animals," mentioned women's inequality only in the context of the workplace—no mention of the systematic inequality that affects every area of life. Occupy Austin went further: a paper put out by its Language of Unity Working Group describes Occupy Austin as "radically inclusive," open to everyone from disaffected Tea Partiers to Greens and anarchists, as well as homeless people and "soccer moms looking for a cause" (not too patronizing!) and highlighting only "the things that bring people together." "For instance, you will never see Occupy approach the issue of abortion. It is too derisive (sic). Rather than championing one side, the huge innovation of the Occupy movement is its focus only on issues which unite people. We care most about people and care what most people support."[17]

This "radical inclusivity," united in its exclusion of feminists, had a demobilizing effect on the Occupation. In one case, a male occupier and self-styled security guard told a lesbian-identified participant that he would "rape the dyke out of her" after she gave a public speech at a rally.[18] But it was not this threat of violence that demoralized the movement, it was the collective response: the Occupy Austin General Assembly (its political decision-making body) decided that the incident was a mere personal spat. Occupy Austin did not fail by the fact of the presence of a threatening individual *in-himself*, it failed when it refused to take up violence against LGBT people as an internal political issue. It failed when it refused to stand up *for* lesbian women.

As a result of the vote, many women and queer people left the movement, while others formed a private "safe space" for women. This "safe-space" devolved into a closed Facebook page, and then finally into nothing more than a *secret* Facebook page.[19] This is an excellent example of how women and queer people must organize *for-themselves* within a movement for the benefit of the movement itself, and why non-woman, non-queer political actors have a responsibility to close ranks around vulnerable participants in solidarity. A secret Facebook page is a retreat from the

mass movement, and from a *group-for-itself* style of political advocacy. One cannot build a movement among women in secret.

Eventually women and queer people were able to come out of the "Facebook closet" and rejoin the movement as a novel, *for-itself* force; participation by the OccuQueers is now routine in Occupy Austin and such blatant anti-woman and anti-queer sentiment is no longer tolerated. While the main phase of Occupy nationwide is in decline, we shouldn't see this new *for-itself* formation as a day-late excrescence. In the next wave of political agitation, pluralist sentiment will not provide easy justification for attacks on Austin activists. In the end, the failure to address gender and racial injustice itself divided, weakened, and disengaged the movement—exactly what the silence intended to prevent. A reactionary take on political pluralism was itself the "divisive" agent within the occupation. Freedom of speech is essential to understanding the background, history, and sentiments of individuals within a movement; but eventually, a movement must form its own concepts and it must make a principled stand.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

An additional barrier to the development of conscious, movements-for-themselves is what Jo Freeman calls in her classic essay by the same title, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."[20] When a group claims to have no structure and no leaders, the hegemonic frameworks of the larger society are imported into the so-called structureless movement. Without a transparent organizational structure, an elite emerges within the movement and an informal and unelected leadership emerges.

This structurelessness has a secondary effect: it erodes the power of univocal demands that could give the movement shape and direction: such as a principled stance against anti-racism, immigrant rights, women's autonomy, and solidarity with immigrants. Instead, the structureless decision-making body of many Occupy General Assemblies meant that a position could be taken one day and then overturned by a different set of participants the next.

For a mass movement to be successful, it can't just exist *in-itself*, the mass movement as a whole must also be a well-articulated entity capable of acting *for-itself*. For the mass movement to advocate *for-itself*, it needs to address the issues of the subsets within it. For the mass movement to take notice of its internal subsets, those subsets must internally articulate themselves and struggle to be heard by the whole. Organization is articulation. Organization is voice-in-action. Lessons learned in struggle *a posteriori* must be codified into axiomatic demands.

Conclusion

One year later, the Occupy Movement has been forced out of all its encampments by police repression, and is no longer a physical occupation of mass force. Its *in-itself* character is now (at least on the surface) dispersed. However, all is not lost as the power of the movement never rested in, as Heidegger calls it, its *mitsein*, its communitarian and utopian being-together. The reclamation of space by the masses was an opening to a discussion—a discussion that produced actions, ideas, and a historical record. These struggles, innovations, and failures will help clarify American mass movements to come, will be instrumental in the creation of a future movement *for-itself*, a movement where diverse women, diverse as individuals and diverse as a collective—might be able to fight for greater *say* over the direction of their lives.

[1] Judith Butler makes her strongest case for the social construction of the body in her first two books published by Routledge, *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993). For an account on how the body has been shaped by both social perception and medical practices, I recommend Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1992) and Anne Fausto Sterling's *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (Basic Books, 2000).

[2] The case of Texas resident Christie Lee Littleton is exemplary of the contestation that occurs when transgendered women assert their voice. After filing a wrongful death suit against her deceased husband's doctor, the doctor's lawyer's had the case dismissed on the grounds that Littleton should not be considered her husband's wife, which rested on the grounds that Littleton should not be considered a woman. Her marriage was subsequently invalidated. The court ruling and county policy left Littleton (and other transsexual and intersexual Texans) in a legal limbo. Littleton remarks on her website that in Houston she can only legally be married to a man, and in San Antonio she can only legally be married to a woman. "Christie Lee Littleton." N.p., 13 05 2001. Web. 28 May 2012. <http://christielee.net/main2.htm>.

[3] The classic example of virulently anti-transgender feminism is Janice Raymond's book *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (Teacher's College Press, 1994), in which Raymond claims that "transsexuals rape women" by reducing the female form to an artifact. Another example of feminist prohibitions on transsexual people is the *Michigan Womyn's Festival*, which has refused entrance to transsexual women (but, curiously, not transsexual men) since 1991. "Transitioning into inclusion at Michigan." *Seattle Gay News*. N.p., 04 04 2008. Web. 28 May 2012.

[4] This is not to say that a political party formed by the struggling masses wouldn't respond to ongoing input from the women within those masses; it is only to say that the current parties in the US cannot be discussed in terms of a self-constituting political force defined by democratic mass activity.

[5] For an excellent discussion on the cogency of Kant's theory of self-consciousness see Pierre Keller, *Kant and the Demands of Self-Consciousness*, Cambridge University Press, 1998 and Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, part II section 5.

[6] Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. "Introduction to the History of Philosophy." *marxists.org*. N.p., 04 04 2008. Web. 28 May 2012.

[7] Anne Fausto Sterling's book *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (Basic Books, 1993) is an excellent starting point for those interested in empirical research on sexed bodies beyond the binary.

[8] Butler's postmodern politics tend to elevate body presentation and personal style into not just meaningful political action, but perhaps even the most meaningful political action.

While I agree with Butler's critique of the metaphysics of gender, I find her political proposals to be apolitical at best and, at worst, verging on reactionary.

[9] Missé, Miguel , dir. *Guerill@s*. Dir. Montse Pujantell. Homoscope Film Festival, Austin, Texas, 2009. Film.

[10] For those unfamiliar with his work, *communitarian* roughly equates to "localist" in Badiou's work while *generic* roughly equates to "an open, universalism that acknowledges alterity as its foundation. Badiou, Alain. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil.* Verso, 2002. Print.

[11] For example, for the set to decide that abortion access is a 'higher priority' than child visitation rights for incarcerated women (or vice versa) is inherently exclusionary. Instead, groups can form fractions that build political campaigns around certain instances of inequality, with the whole group politically solidifying around the issues close to developing critical mass in response to events, with events defined as anything from proposed local legislation to emerging international solidarity campaigns to inequalities emerging form natural disaster response.

[12] Butler, Judith. "Bodies in Public." *Occupy! Scenes from Occupied America*. Ed. Astra Taylor, Ed. Keith Gessen and Ed. Et Al. New York: Verso, 2011. Print.

[13] Zizek, Slavoj. "Don't Fall in Love with Yourselves." *Occupy! Scenes from Occupied America*. Ed. Astra Taylor, Ed. Keith Gessen and Ed. Et Al. New York: Verso, 2011. Print.

[14] The early twentieth century Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg described the dialectical relations (non-oppositional relation) between reforms and revolutionary change, in her pamphlet *Reform or Revolution.*

[15] Chretien, Todd. "General strike call from Occupy Oakland." *Socialist Worker* 28 10 2011, n. pag. Web. 31 May. 2012.

[16] Lim, Audrea. "Chinatown is Nowhere." *Occupy! Scenes from Occupied America*. Ed. Astra Taylor, Ed. Keith Gessen and Ed. Et Al. New York: Verso, 2011. Print.

[17] Pollitt, Katha. "Women: Occupy the Left." *The Nation*. 02 05 2012: n. page. Web. 31 May. 2012

[18] Personal communications with three separate Occupy Austin attendees. Conversations took place online and in-person throughout March 2012.

[19] I tried to gain access to the page with a borrowed password, but the group was so secretive that the password either never worked or was changed by the time of my attempted access.

[20] Freeman, Jo. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." *jofreeman.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 May 2012.