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Social Theory and the Occupy Movement: An Exploration into the Relationship between Social Thought and Political Practice

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Relationship between Social Thought and Political Practice

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Abstract

In the 21st century, this planet has experienced an explosion of social movements and protests. From the Arab Spring to the Occupy Movement, global protests had become such a prominent feature of the first decade of the new millennium that *Time Magazine* named the protester as its person of the year in 2011. This project examines the relationship between social theory and political practice in an attempt to gain further insight into contemporary social movements. In particular, it examines the theoretical assumptions underlying the Occupy Movement in the United States and compares these assumptions with 19th century individual and collective anarchist theories, as well as with contemporary theories that have taken the postmodern turn.

Introduction

Over the last century, from the Russian Revolution in 1917 to the third wave feminist movement in the 1990's there has been an implicit, but questionable connection between social theory and political praxis. The disputed relationship between social theory and social movements was epitomized by Karl Marx's famous quote when he criticized French communists who misrepresented his work: "If that is Marxism than I am not a Marxist", (Marx; Guesde 1880). Despite an evident need to understand the relationship between social theory and social movements, few studies have explored this relationship for contemporary social movements. While there are numerous studies that investigate the structure, meaning, composition, goals, political efficacy, and history of social movements, few make exploring and analyzing the relationship between theory and political practice the central focus of their research.

Yet understanding the relationship between social theory and social movements is increasingly important, especially in the 21st century where the new electronic and digital technologies have so compressed the relationship between time and space that the local is global and the global is local. Indeed, today a social movement that occurs in Egypt can affect the lives of American citizens living thousands of miles away. With the effects of social movements and the demands put forth by these movements becoming increasingly global, exploring the relationship between the social ideas and the political activism that drives these changes becomes an increasingly significant endeavor. If societal institutions are to respond adequately to current social movements than they must understand what drives them. For all of these reasons, this study undertakes this task by exploring the relationship between social theory and the Occupy Movement.

Since its emergence in the fall of 2011, journalist, academics, and politicians have all asked the same question; "What drives the Occupy Movement?" Although there have been plenty of broad speculations and vague assumptions, a rigorous study of the question has not been made. This study will investigate the possible connections between anarchism – a modern theoretical perspective that has roots in the 19th century and the more recent postmodern turn in social thought as represented by postmodernism, post-structuralism, and queer theory, as well as the connection between these ideas and the Occupy Movement. Through this exploration, this study hopes to gain insights into the inner workings of the more general relationship between theory and political action.

Overview of the Occupy Movement

When the Occupy Movement burst onto the global scene in the fall of 2011, its' "occupation" of New York's Zuccotti Park represented for many the anger and disillusionment felt by the American public. At the time, the political system in the United States was embroiled in a spectacle of political risk-taking that engendered heated debates over raising the U.S. debt ceiling, which ultimately ended in the downgrading of U.S. credit. Millions of Americans had already lost their jobs and/or homes because of the financial meltdown on Wall Street and the mortgage crisis of 2008, which accompanied it. Faced with high rates of unemployment, unchecked corruption in financial institutions, and political incompetence in Washington, many Americans took to the streets. However, the Occupy Movement was but one of many social movements across the globe that vividly displayed public dissatisfaction with government and financial institutions. Coming on the heels of the populist uprisings in the Middle East dubbed the "Arab Spring" and the growing protests against economic belt-tightening policies in European countries, such as in Greece and Spain, the Occupy Movement was seen as yet another example of growing global unrest. As suggested by author and anthropologist David Graeber in *The Democracy Project* (2013), many people, "saw what happened in Zuccotti Park as part of a wave of resistance sweeping the planet" (Graeber, 64, 2013). Much like these emerging waves of protest abroad, the Occupy Movement grew exponentially in a short time period.

The earliest most recognized Occupy protest began with about a thousand protestors that entered New York's Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011. In less than a month protests had sprung up in as many as 70 major U.S. cities and in more than 600 communities (Walters, 2011). From Seattle and Los Angeles on the west coast to Providence, Rhode Island, and Tampa, Florida on the east coast, the Occupy Movement had spread across large portions of the continental U.S. (Walters, 2011). Zuccotti Park in New York City provided the central point of contact for most of these ongoing protest stations. By October 15, 2011, rallies were occurring in more than 900 cities in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America in what was billed as a worldwide "occupation" (Adam, 2011). Joined together under the slogan: "We are the 99 percent" protesters across the globe engaged in sit-ins, occupied public spaces, and voiced their frustration with broken financial systems, ineffective governments, and growing social inequalities in their societies. For example, in New York, work groups were formed that did everything from washing the linens of long term protestors who had been encamped in Zuccotti Park for extended periods of time to preparing legal documents and bailing incarcerated protestors out of city jails. For the next two months the Occupy Movement pressed on with its' protest against economic inequality and pervasive corruption in financial institutions. Like all waves, however, the movement's popularity eventually reached its peak and then subsided with

as much expedience and force as the energy that had propelled the movement to its initial heights.

The forced dispersal of many of the Occupy encampments in the U.S. that occurred in November 2011 crippled the Occupy Movement. Media reports of violence, degenerate behavior, and sexual assault within the Occupy encampments tarnished the public image of the movement. A growing intolerance of the Occupy Movement's unwillingness to produce general demands also contributed to growing public disapproval of the movement. When combined with the destruction of the Occupy encampments, the dispersal of its participants, and a withdrawal of support from the liberal political establishment, the problems that plagued the Occupy Movement proved too much and the tidal wave of popularity and the positive public perception that the movement had previously enjoyed crashed onto the shore.

While it is inaccurate to proclaim the Occupy Movement as "dead" as did many in the mass media, it would be just as fallacious to claim that the movement, in its present form, is anything but a fractured shell of its former self. The collapse of the encampments threw the movement into enormous disarray (Graeber, 136, 2013). Infighting within the Occupy Movement over money, organizational structure, race, and other issues ensued. Eventually the Occupy Movement reorganized and through an alliance with various New York union leaders, planned a nationwide May Day "general strike" that would take place on the first of May in 2012 (Graeber, 147, 2013). However, because of political pressures placed on unions, the May Day "strike" was reduced to merely a march that occurred without the presence of many of the union leaders who had helped plan it. Despite these and other setbacks, the Occupy Movement's protests and programs, such as their Strike Debt campaigns and Occupy Sandy, continue as of the time of this writing. These protests and programs have not reached the scale or scope of earlier protests held during the Occupy Movement's peak. However, they have continued with the same goals of addressing social inequality and combatting institutional corruption that founded the movement.

Origins of the Occupy Movement

Due to the non-hierarchical, decentralized nature of the Occupy Movement, any report claiming to provide a definitive description of the movements' origins should be accepted with a degree of skepticism. That said, if the potential relationship between social theory and the Occupy Movement is to be explored some accounting of this movement's genesis must be undertaken. The analysis below will draw from David Graeber's book *The Democracy Project* (2013) in order to describe Occupy's origins. Along with being a prolific author, essayist, anthropologist, professor, activist, and self-described anarchist, David Graeber is also a core organizer within the Occupy Movement. On activist blogs and online cites Graeber is often

touted as one of Occupy's founders. He is also credited with coining Occupy's popular slogan "We are the 99 percent". The accounts provided in *The Democracy Project* will be used in this project as a major source for information concerning the Occupy Movement. Graeber's accounts may well be the most credible detailing of the inner workings of the Occupy Movement produced to date.

The First General Assembly

According to Graeber, the first Occupy Wall Street (OWS) general assembly was held on August 2, 2011. Graeber previously, had been working with and for *Adbusters* - an activist magazine headquartered in Canada. *Adbusters* was "originally created by rebellious advertising workers who loathed their industry" (Graeber, 6, 2013). A colleague had brought a campaign titled "Occupy Wall Street" that was advertised by *Adbusters* to the attention of Graeber. The campaign asked interested individuals to attend a "general assembly" style meeting to discuss a proposed plan to subvert the New York Stock Exchange. As a self-described "small-a anarchist" Graeber had, for some time, been enthralled with consensus-based forms of political decision making based upon the ancient Greek general assembly model and later modified by Quakers and radical feminist groups. In an essay he published in 2007 titled "Revolutions in Reverse", Graeber detailed the evolution of this consensus process to its contemporary form. In the essay, Graeber argues that, "…new forms of consensus process constitute the *most important contribution to revolutionary practices in decades*" (Graeber, 2007, my emphasis). Hoping to meet others who embraced this form of politics, Graeber and a few of his colleagues decided to attend the "Occupy Wall Street" meeting that had been advertised. Unfortunately, for Graeber and his peers, the meeting operated in a manner that was far from the consensus-based general assembly format they had hoped to find. Commenting on his disappointment with this first meeting, Graeber writes:

> For activists dedicated to building directly democratic politics—horizontals, as we like to call ourselves—the usual reaction to this sort of thing is despair. It was certainly my first reaction. Walking into such a rally feels like walking into a trap (Graeber, 26, 2013).

Disheartened but not outdone by the unexpected turn of events Graeber and his peers decided to take control of the situation:

> Finally, Georgia and I looked at each other and both realized we were thinking the same thing; "Why were we so complacent? Why is it that every time we see something like this happening, we just mutter and go home?"—though I think the way we actually put it at the time was more like, "You know something? Fuck this shit. They advertised a General Assembly. Let's hold one (Graeber, 27-28, 2013).

Determined to create the general assembly-style that had been advertised, Graeber and his peers searched the meeting for like-minded individuals. Graeber first encountered Chris an "anarchist who worked with Food not Bombs" and Matt Presto, both of whom later became key

OWS organizers (Graeber, 28, 2013). After Chris and Matt joined with Graeber and his peers, they all continued to gather other like-minded individuals who were interested in leaving the rally to form their own group.

> So with the help of Chris and Matt, Georgia and I gathered up some of the more obvious horizontals and formed a little circle of twenty-odd people at the foot of the park, as far as we could get from the microphones (Graeber, 28, 2013).

The composition of the group Graeber in his peers had gathered was diverse. The group consisted of members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Zapatista solidarity folk, Spaniards who had been active with the Indignados in Madrid, insurrectionist anarchists, and a few onlookers (Graeber, 31-32, 2013). Despite the political and cultural diversity of the group, they all shared a strong appreciation for a consensus-based, decision-making process. This small meeting of diverse, but consensus-minded individuals could be considered as the first Occupy Movement General Assembly.

Direct Democracy

During the first general assembly, few major political goals were actually discussed. For the most part, this meeting was used to formulate the decision-making process that would later become the hallmark of the Occupy Movement. According to Graeber, they:

> …quickly decided that the group would operate by consensus, with an option to fall back on a two-thirds vote if there was a deadlock, and that there would always be at least two facilitators, one male, one female, one to keep the meeting running, the other to "take stack" (that is, the list of people who've asked to speak). We discussed hand signals and nonbinding straw polls, or temperature checks (Graeber, 33, 2013).

Following their decisions regarding this consensus-based model, Graeber and the other forerunners of the Occupy Movement also formed separate breakout groups a "standard horizontal practice" in which:

> …everyone calls out ideas for working groups until we have a list (in this case they were just four: Outreach, Communications/Internet, Action, and Process/Facilitation), then the group breaks out into smaller circles to brainstorm, having agreed to reassemble, say, an hour later, whereupon a spokesman for each breakout group presents reports-backs on the discussion and any decisions collectively made (Graeber, 34, 2013).

The consensus process discussed above is but one of many models for direct democracy. The primary goal of a consensus-based organizational structure is to ensure a non-hierarchical, horizontal, decision-making process, in which all views are treated with equal consideration and respect. The quote below, from the official Occupy Wall Street (OWS) website reinforces this notion:

Occupy Wall Street is structured on anarchist organizing principles. This means there are no formal leaders and no formal hierarchy. Rather, the movement is full of people who lead by example. We are leader-full, and this makes us strong (OWS, 2011).

As stated by Graeber and reiterated in the quote above, "the essence of consensus process is just that everyone should be able to weigh in equally on a decision, and no one should be bound by a decision they detest" (Graeber, 211, 2013). Due to the flexibility of the consensus process, many models follow the spirit of consensus, but they can vary in the forms in which they are practiced. Graeber provides four principles that he thinks should guide the practice of most consensus processes:

- Everyone who feels they have something relevant to say about a proposal ought to have their perspectives carefully considered (Graeber, 211, 2013).
- Everyone who has strong concerns or objections should have those concerns or objections taken into account and, if possible, addressed in the final form of the proposal (Graeber, 211, 2013).
- Anyone who feels a proposal violates a fundamental principle shared by the group should have the opportunity to veto ("block") that proposal (Graeber, 211, 2013).
- No one should be forced to go along with a decision to which they did not agree (Graeber, 211, 2013).

To explain the actual process by which these basic principles were implemented in this nascent Occupy movement, Graeber-presents "…a fairly standardized four-step procedure that has been developed over the years to ensure that proposals can be continually refashioned in a spirit of compromise and creativity until they reach a form most likely to be amenable to everyone" (Graeber, 214, 2013).

In the first step of this procedure, "someone makes a proposal for a certain course of action"(Graeber, 214, 2013). Next, "the facilitator asks for clarifying questions to make sure everyone understands precisely what is being proposed" (Graeber, 214, 2013). Then, the facilitator asks if there are any concerns. Those with concerns may suggest a "friendly amendment" to address the concern. A "temperature check" is then taken regarding the proposal or an amendment may be issued to gauge the overall feelings the group on the issue (Graeber, 214, 2013). At any timeduring this process, "the proposal might be scotched, reformulated, combined with other proposals, broken into pieces, or tabled for later discussion" (Graeber, 214, 2013). If concerns are raised, but the proposal moves forward anyway, then the facilitator test for consensus is implemented by asking if, there are any "stand asides" or "blocks". "Standing aside" as defined by Graeber, means that the individual allows the group to go forward with the proposal but the individual refuses to take part in the action the proposal suggest. A "block" is similar to a veto but it "has to be based on a "moral, ethical, or safety concern that's so strong a person would consider leaving the movement were the proposal to go forward" (Graeber, 215,

2013). While this process is but one of many procedures that can be used in order to obtain consensus politics, it is the process used by the Occupy movement.

Direct Action

Direct democracy through the consensus-based, decision-making process utilized by the Occupy Movement, is not just an egalitarian means of making decisions. Direct democracy is also a form of political action that is a foundational aspect of the Occupy Movement. According to Graeber, "the original inspiration of Occupy Wall Street was the tradition not just of direct democracy, but of direct action." Direct action is primarily an anarchist concept and, as with many anarchist concepts, the meaning of the concept is quite flexible. In her essay, entitled "Direct Action" the anarchist, feminist, and lifelong colleague of Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, writes:

> Every person who ever had a plan to do anything, and went and did it, or who laid his plan before others, and won their co-operation to do it with him, without going to external authorities to please do the thing for them, was a direct actionist. All co-operative experiments are essentially direct action (Cleyre, 1912).

According to Graeber a direct action "is ultimately, the defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free" (Graeber, 233, 2013). As suggested earlier, direct action is a broad and flexible concept with various meanings that contain a homogenous center but vary in form. In order to provide more clarity to this concept, Graeber contrasts the concept of direct action with that of civil disobedience. An act of civil disobedience is a refusal to comply with a law one considers unjust. A direct action however, questions the legal order itself (Graeber, 234, 2013). An even clearer distinction is observed when comparing a direct action to a protest. Graeber writes that, "protest, however militant, is an appeal to the authorities to behave differently; direct action... is a matter of proceeding as one would if the existing structure of power did not exist" (Graeber, 233, 2013). This conceptualization of direct action explains the Occupy Movement's refusal to present explicit demands. Their refusal to make demands is a politically informed direct action taken in order to ignore and, thereby, to delegitimize the existing power structure. As Graeber suggests, Occupy's refusal to present demands "was, quite self-consciously, a refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the existing political order of which such demands would have to be made" (Graeber, 233, 2013). This sentiment is displayed in the frequently asked questions section of the OWS websites, which reads:

> We do not have one or two simple demands, though many demand them of us. Why? Because we believe that making demands of a corrupt system makes our success contingent on the will of others. It legitimizes the corrupted, it disempowers us. Our actions are our demands (OWS, 2011).

Understanding direct action as a form of political expression that delegitimizes the existing power structure makes it easier to comprehend the ways in which direct democracy can

be a form of direct action. Marian Sitrin, a colleague of Graeber and a key organizer within the Occupy Movement, echoed this assertion in her essay "Horizontalism and the Occupy Movements" (2012), writing:

> But the democracy is the crux of Occupy politics, and democracy practiced in such a way so as to upend vertical political relationships and expand horizontal ones. From these new forms of horizontal relationships, located in neighborhoods, villages, workplaces, and schools, and giving rise to novel forms of direct action, the Occupy movements will continue to grow (Sitrin, 2012).

From the Occupy Movement's perspective, direct democracy is a decision-making process that is superior to the form of government found in their own societies. Therefore, the consensus-based decision-making process that the Occupy Movement practices is itself, a model that delegitimizes the existing power structure. Graeber reiterates this notion:

> From an anarchist perspective, direct democracy and direct action are—or ought to be—two aspects of the same thing: the idea that the form of our action should itself offer a model, or at the very least a glimpse of how free people might organize themselves, and therefore what a free society could be like (Graeber, 233, 2013).

Many critics, pundits, and media personalities have criticized the Occupy Movement for its apparent reticence to present clear demands and as being a movement without direction. Yet, Occupy's perspective on direct action and its relation to direct democracy debunks these pervasive misconceptions about the movement. The Occupy's decision-making process is itself a model or goal for a more egalitarian form of politics and social life.

The Goal of Occupy

The goal of the Occupy Movement is quite simple; the movement seeks to spread its version of direct democracy worldwide. Core members of the Occupy Movement have dubbed this objective "contaminationalism". Graeber describes Occupy's aspiration writing:

> …our entire vision was based on a kind of faith that democracy was contagious. Or at least, the kind of leaderless direct democracy we had spent so much care and effort on developing (Graeber, 22, 2013).

The achievement of the Occupy Movement's ambitious goal is premised on the belief that the movement's method of decision-making would catch on. The key organizers of the Occupy Movement knew that lecturing the American public on the virtues of direct democracy would be a fruitless endeavor. Graeber writes; "we all knew it was practically impossible to convince the average American that a truly democratic society was possible through rhetoric" (Graeber, 89, 2013). The Occupy Movement needed a public forum. The occupation of public spaces, ultimately, provided the Occupy Movement with a forum in which they could

demonstrate the benefits of the consensus-based decision-making process they promoted. The media coverage of the Occupy Movement's various "occupations" provided the occupiers with the publicity they needed to achieve their goal. Unfortunately, goals based upon faith are achieved at far lower rates than those based on rationality. While supporters of Occupy continually promote the successes of the Occupy Movement, one would be hard-pressed to suggest that they have turned their ultimate vision into a material reality.

Sociological Perspectives on the Occupy Movement

As alluded to earlier, there has been a good deal of scholarly work performed regarding the Occupy Movement. Much of this work has come in the form of essays that have examined different elements of the movement including its treatment by the media and other societal institutions. One such essay, authored by Jackie Smith, titled "How Elite Media Strategies Marginalize the Occupy Movement" (2011), examines how media portrayals of the Occupy Movement misrepresent the movement as "disorganized, violence prone mobs" (Smith, 2011). In an effort to debunk such claims, Smith states that, "extensive research documents the fact that mass movements are by and large nonviolent in nature" (Smith, 2011). Smith also points to the fact that many Occupy Movement protestors often develop strategies and tactics to minimize violence and isolate those among them who engage in such behavior. The mistreatment of Occupy Movement protestors by the authorities is also a central issue in Smith's essay. Smith points to the accounts from former police chief, Norm Stamper, a central figure in the aptly named "Battle in Seattle," that occurred during the 1999 anti-WTO protest in Seattle, Washington to further illustrate the abuse of protestors by individuals in positions of authority. Regarding the violent event in Seattle, Smith references statements by Stamper, which read, "My support for a militaristic solution caused all hell to break loose… gas filled the streets, with some cops clearly overreacting, escalating, and prolonging the conflict" (Smith, 2011). Concluding her essay, Smith states:

> Any serious attempt to understand the Occupy Wall Street movement must look critically at the assumptions behind mainstream media portrayals of these protests and focus on the real violence that is being done by a system that has long worked to benefit very few at the expense of the many. Professionals offering commentary for elite media outlets like Foreign Affairs should be mindful of the elite agendas behind these publications and resist being framed by these agendas. They should also refrain from commenting on movements without engaging in research that extends beyond mainstream media reports themselves (Smith, 2011).

Craig Calhoun, renowned sociology scholar and author of "Evicting the Public: Why has Occupying Public Spaces Led to such Heavy-Handed Repression?" reiterates many of the themes expressed in Smith's essay. Unlike Smith, however, Calhoun focused upon the often violent, forced dispersal of Occupy encampments by police and other state sponsored authority figures that occurred in the fall of 2011 in major cities throughout the United States. In the essay, Calhoun acknowledges the particular difficulties associated with authority while also constructively criticizing the oppression of democracy that occurs because of poorly thought out decisions by authority figures. This ability to recognize and express viewpoints from a variety of perspectives enables Calhoun to make comparisons that, in less qualified hands, would seem outlandish. Calhoun suggests that the decisions made by Mayor Michael Bloomberg during the fall of 2011 are analogous to that of Deng Xiaoping, the former communist leader who ruled China during the 1989 protest at Tiananmen Square:

> It is disturbing to see governments in ostensibly democratic America taking actions reminiscent of the Chinese government ousting protestors from Tiananmen Square. More recently, the government of Bahrain used force to remove peaceful protestors camped at the Pearl Roundabout. I am sure Mayor Bloomberg does not think he has joined the ranks of Chinese communists or antidemocratic Arab rulers. He declares himself a supporter of the First Amendment. Indeed, he has done much good as mayor (though he has also felt entitled to manipulate the electoral process to stay in power). But for that matter Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues did many good things, just not on June 4, 1989. Bloomberg's action against Occupy Wall Street was directly analogous to those of rulers who do not even claim to be democrats (Calhoun, 2011).

Calhoun uses comparisons such as the one referenced above to illustrate how well intentioned authority figures in the U.S. trample over the principles of democracy in an effort to maintain public order. Calhoun also recognizes the role that the financial interest of the wealthy played in the decision to evict Occupy encampments:

> So, it is a pity that Mayor Bloomberg chose repression over freedom for dissent. But we need to face the fact that the use of heavily armed police to evict and arrest protestors and reporters is a national pattern, not simply a matter of the personal preferences of individual politicians or university presidents. This pattern reflects the very ascendancy of private financial capital that Occupy Wall Street protests. But it is a more complicated pattern than just the power of the rich over politicians, real though that is (Calhoun, 2011).

Once again, Calhoun illustrates his ability to recognize the variety of factorsinvolved in the complicated issues that he examines. As demonstrated in the quote above, Calhoun acknowledges that the repression of the Occupy Movement was influenced by financial interest but he also recognizes that were more factors that contributed to this repression. The overall message that Calhoun attempts to convey is

that tactics, such as those used by Mayor Bloomberg, that suppress political assembly and public protest damage the fundamental idea of democracy and by extension, threatens the entire democratic system. In his conclusion to the essay, Calhoun warns of the danger to the democratic system that occurs when repression of political dissent is institutionalized. However, he retains an inspiring sense of optimism regarding the future of democracy:

Happily, American democracy is not on its last legs; there is plenty of chance to fight back against repression and elite efforts to manage public participation. But the issue is basic. After all, democracy depends not just on voting and the rule of law but on social movements and public expressions of dissent (Calhoun, 2011).

In an entirely different vein, authors Zoltan Gluck and Manissa McCleave Maharawal examine the issues that occur between the researcher and the object of research in their essay titled, "Occupy Ethnography: Reflections on Studying the Movement" (2012). This essay explores the awkward role a researcher plays when conducting participant observatory research on the Occupy Movement. Field notes, presented in the essay, taken by the authors themselves, provide an excellent example of the overlap between researcher and participant that occurs when conducting participant observatory research on social movements such as the Occupy Movement:

September 25th, Day 8: Late morning on a crisp and sunny Sunday in September. First visit to Zuccotti. People move around the park, others waking and crawling out from underneath tarps layered on the ground. Tourists wander through without knowing what they have stumbled upon, pausing to read the cardboard signs arranged on the ground on the Northwest side of the park. I arrive, unsure of what to do. I sit on a bench and start writing fieldnotes. Suddenly there is a commotion to the right of me and everyone rushes to the side of the park. I hear something being chanted, so I stand on a bench in order to see better. Men in suits are walking through with a stack of papers attempting to pass them out. Protesters are surrounding these men, following them as they walk, chanting: "Don't take the paper, don't take the paper." From the chatter around me I gather that the men are from the real estate company that owns the park and are passing out eviction notices. The protesters are refusing to take these notices. They are refusing to be served. I am struck by the ingenuity and simplicity of the act, but before I have a chance to dwell on this for too long the crowd is around me and one of the men in suits is trying to hand me something. I instinctively reach for it but catch myself. The voices around me are chanting "don't take the paper." I withdraw my hand quickly and start chanting with them (Gluck and Maharawal, 2012).

The authors of the essay discuss the political implications of taking the paper and not taking the paper while also illustrating how the structure of the Occupy Movement contributes to making an ethnographic researcher a part of the movement itself. According to the authors of essay, this occurrence has significant and perhaps questionable implications regarding the use of

participant observation as a substantive ethnographic research methodology. The authors conclude by writing:

> As Occupy is trying to redefine the parameters of what it means to participate in a social movement, it is also having a methodological impact on the parameters of ethnography, calling into question, yet again, the very substance of participant observation. The Occupy movement is then an opportunity—perhaps an imperative—to rethink the boundaries, ethics, and methods of social research (Gluck and Maharawal, 2012).

Matthew Noah Smith author of "Reflections on Occupy's May Day: All Play Doesn't Work" (2012), presents an outlook on the Occupy Movement that is more critical than the other essays mentioned in this section. The central theme of Noah Smith's essay is that the form of political action utilized by the Occupy Movement, while being inclusive and "fun", is ineffective in bringing about real social change. According to Noah Smith, "substantive political action—and, in particular, the future of left resistance to inequality—remains in the hands of established movement organizations" (M. N. Smith, 2012). Using a comparison between the general strike that occurred in Oakland, California in 1946 and the Occupy Movement's 2012 May Day general strike, Noah Smith illustrates the differences between an effective political action and a "fun" expressive event. Noah Smith compares the almost total shutdown of city transport and retail stores that occurred in the 1946 Oakland strike, "the streetcars were still, the buses were still, and the stores were shuttered," with the less than partial shutdown that occurred in the Occupy Movement's May Day 2012 strike, "Mad Day 2012 looked nothing like this. In New York City, the subways and buses ran without even a slowdown…" (M. N. Smith, 2012). Recognizing the differences in era's and other external variables that contributed to the differences between the two strikes, Noah Smith acknowledges the greater challenge facing the Occupy Movement's May Day strike. However, Noah Smith views the Occupy Movement's decision to label the May Day strike as a "general strike," despite the movement's recognition of the overwhelming obstacles it would have to overcome in order to truly live up to this description, as an example of an underlying inability to recognize facts that borders on being disingenuous:

> But instead of facing up to these considerations against calling for a strike, much less a general strike, Occupy just redefined "general strike" to mean whatever would happen on May Day. This appears to me to be a clear case of dishonesty. In democratic organizing, telling the truth matters. Being honest both with yourself and with those who follow you is essential for the organizing to be *democratic*. And, being honest with yourself and those who follow you is essential for the organizing to be *successful* (M. N. Smith, 2012).

In the quote above, Noah Smith makes it clear that the misrepresentation of the term is but an illustrative example of the Occupy Movement's focus on expression and theater rather than engendering real social change. In his conclusion, Noah Smith warns that such theatrics, while fun and inviting, can undermine the opportunity to engender real social change because it

teaches prospective agents of change the wrong lessons. Noah Smith argues that for real change, "we must look, at least on the Left, to more traditional organizations like labor unions and communities of solidarity, like women's rights groups, immigrants' rights groups, queer rights groups, and the like" (M. N. Smith, 2012).

"Occupy's Expressive Impulse," an essay written by well-known social theorists Todd Gitlin reinforces the central argument expressed in Noah Smith's essay, namely that the Occupy Movement is more of a vehicle for expression rather than an agent of social change. Gitlin, however, examines why the Occupy Movement chose such a path and how that choice has resonated with the society it inhabits. According to Gitlin:

> The movement, well aware of its theatrical potential, was superficially visible to outsiders, bystanders and the media, but those forms of visibility weren't its central point… The movement's primary audience was itself. It gave birth to itself as a phenomenon. It was a creation. What did it what? It wanted itself. It wanted the euphoria of its existence. It wanted to be. It wanted to be what it was (Gitlin, 2012).

Gitlin goes on to discuss how this "collective narcissism" began to resonate with the anger towards financial institutions and the political system that was widespread in the U.S. during the time of the Occupy Movement's inception. The abuse of Occupy Movement protestors by state sponsored authorities, according to Gitlin, extended the movements popularity as viral videos of abuse of authority spread over the internet and induced the previously unconverted to support the Occupy Movement. Gitlin also argues that the Occupy Movement's preference for theatrics and expression resonated with young adults and those least attached to institutions. Gitlin references Gallup polls to illustrate how young adults and liberals supported the Occupy Movement by small but observable margins. In his conclusion, Gitlin reiterates many of the assertions presented by Noah Smith. However, Gitlin, recognizes that criticizing the Occupy Movement is an exercise in futility:

> To quote Matthew Noah Smith: "A central goal of most forms of contemporary democratic organizing is the development of astute, disciplined political actors who understand what it takes to make changes in an unjust political order." Astuteness and discipline are not in short order in Occupy. The problem is that they operate in the service of the expressive impulse. *This movement does not want to think in any way other than the way it already thinks.* Preaching to it, much as I share in the impulse, is doomed (Gitlin, 2012).

Gitlin ends his essay arguing that instead of criticizing the Occupy Movement, those, such as himself and Noah Matthew, in disagreement with the movement's form of political action should form their own coalitions:

> But succeed or fail, it's foolhardy to demand of Occupy that it evolve, at least quickly, into something other than what it is. Why wait for someone else to do what needs to be

done? It's incumbent upon those of us who think like Matthew Noah Smith and myself to formulate a reform agenda; to win support for it among groups so inclined; to splice together the coalition that can work for them beyond this election year; and not to expect anyone else to do what needs to be done (Gitlin, 2012).

The sociological essays that have been discussed in this project have all examined the Occupy Movement from a variety of different perspectives. Jackie Smith observed the ways in which the Occupy Movement's media portrayal misrepresented the movement as a violent, disorganized mob. Craig Calhoun reiterated themes expressed in Smith's essay but focused more upon the how the repression of the Occupy Movement's public dissent represented a fundamental fracture in the process of democracy. Gluck and Maharawal reflected upon the issues that occurred during participant observatory research of the Occupy Movement and how those issues drew participant observation as an ethnographic methodology into question. Matthew Noah Smith and Todd Gitlin criticized the Occupy Movement's preference for expressive and theatrical political action rather than effective political action. Gitlin, however, concluded by suggesting that one should formulate one's own agenda rather than critique that of the Occupy Movement. In many ways, these essays compliment and reflect upon each other. Yet, none of the essays discussed have undertaken the task that will be performed in this project, which is the exploration of the relationship between social theory and the Occupy Movement.

Theory

Up to this point, this project has examined and identified some of the fundamental elements of the Occupy Movement. The movement operates by a consensus-based, decision-making mechanism called direct democracy. Direct democracy is also the Occupy Movement's method of political expression, direct action. The concepts of direct democracy and direct action share one commonality that will provide the next step in this project's investigation into the relationship between the social theory and the political practice of the Occupy Movement. That is, direct democracy and direct action are both concepts whose histories are heavily associated with anarchism. Consequently, the most logical starting point for an exploration of the theory underlying the Occupy Movement is to examine more closely the philosophical assumptions that inform anarchism.

Collectivist Anarchism

Anarchism is a political philosophy that dates back to the nineteenth century and that has been shaped and reshaped over the last two centuries. Today there are many anarchisms, just as there are many Marxisms and feminisms. Because of the vast number of anarchist paradigms existing today, this project will limit its focus to two major camps in the anarchist tradition - the

collectivist anarchist tradition represented by the works of Mikhail Bakunin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Peter Kropotkin; and the more individualistic anarchism derived from the work of Max Stirner.

Anarchism and Marxism

From its earliest beginnings, anarchism has had an antagonistic relationship with Marxism. In 1846 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, cited as one of the "fathers of modern anarchism", published one of his most significant pieces *System of Economic Contradictions* (Guerin, 1970) (Simkin, 1997). In 1847 Karl Marx, a friend and writing correspondent of Proudhon, critically responded to Proudhon's book in his sarcastically titled, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Simkin, 1997). Marx's publication promptly ended the friendship between the two men. It also began a contentious relationship between Marxists and anarchists that lasted for decades and continued long after Marx and Proudhon died. The ongoing dispute was exemplified in 1872 when Marx used his influence and stature as a member of the General Council of the International Working Men's association to expel Bakunin (a disciple of Proudhon) from this organization (May, 45, 1994; Guerin, 1970). This expulsion furthered the split between the Marxist and anarchist wings of this fractured association, which was the first international organization for the working-class.

Anarchism and Marxism conflict fundamentally, at a philosophical level. Anarchists reject any notion of the state. Proudhon once wrote, "the government of man by man is servitude (Proudhon quoted in Guerin, 1970). He also wrote: "whoever lays a hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant I declare him to be my enemy" (Proudhon quoted in Guerin, 1970). Bakunin was just as hostile to the state, describing it as an "abstraction devouring the life of the people" (Bakunin quoted in Guerin, 1970). While Marx ultimately envisioned a society, in which the state would eventually wither away, he argued for a transitional phase in the post-revolutionary period when the state would be temporarily governed by the proletariat. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx writes:

> The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state (Marx; Kamenka, 226-227, 1983).

Anarchists view this "transitional phase" in Marxism as a dangerous notion. For anarchists, the belief that the proletarian-governed state would eventually "wither away" was naïve. Indeed there is great disparity between the Marxist and anarchist conceptions of the state. Marx viewed the state as a tool used by the bourgeoisie to benefit their interest. In the *Communist Manifesto,* he writes: "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx; Kamenka, 206, 1983). For Marx, the bourgeoisie were the source of oppressive power and the state is but one of many instruments through which that power is exercised. Anarchists, on the contrary, viewed the state as the embodiment of oppressive power and therefore argued: "to view the state, as some Marxist

do, as derivative of class power, is to fall victim to the state's deception" (Newman, 26, 2007). Anarchist philosophy turns the Marxist notion of the state on its head viewing class power as a by-product of state power, Saul Newman, author of *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (2007), speaks to this assertion:

> Anarchism works the other way around–it analyzes from the state to society. It sees the state—all states, all forms of political power, the place of power itself—as constituting a fundamental oppression. Marxist theory also sees the state as an evil that is to be eventually overcome, but it is an evil derived from the primary evil of bourgeois economic domination and private property. Anarchism, on the other hand, sees the state itself as the fundamental evil in society (Newman, 25, 2007).

The anarchist understanding of the state explains why anarchists view Marx's post-revolutionary, proletarian-governed "temporary" state as suspect. For anarchists, the state will not simply dissolve; this would be contrary to the state's interest in its own continuation. According to Newman, "the state has its own origins and operates according to its own agenda, which is to perpetuate itself, even in different guises—even in the guise of the worker's state" (Newman, 26, 2007). This conceptualization of the state also explains why anarchists argue for the total destruction of the state:

> It is for this reason, anarchists argued, that revolution must be aimed, not at conquering state power, even if only temporarily, but at destroying it immediately, and replacing it with decentralized, nonhierarchical forms of social organization. It is also for the reasons mentioned before that the state cannot be trusted simply to "wither away" as Marxist believed (Newman, 27, 2007).

The paragraphs above, demonstrate that fundamentally, the clash between anarchist philosophy and Marxist philosophy lies in their conflicting notions regarding the source of oppressive power. Marxists, in general, view the bourgeoisie class as the source of oppression whereas anarchists perceive the state as wielding oppressive power that seeks to perpetuate itself. Although this key divergence establishes the fundamental point of conflict between the two philosophies, both philosophies also differ in their notions of resistance to oppressive power. Resistance for Marx came from a particular class - the proletariat, who would one day rise up and overcome the oppressive power of the bourgeoisie. Anarchists, however, found their agent of resistance in the masses - in "humanity's innate moral characteristics and intellectual capacities" (Newman, 38, 2007). Thus anarchism is more of a left-wing populist theory, than a class-based theory. The next section of this project will explore the anarchistic belief in humanity's moral and rational essence.

Collectivist Anarchism and Humanism

Contrary to popular belief, anarchists do not object to all forms of authority, they just reject external forms of authority. Anarchists differentiate external forms of authority, which

they call "artificial authority" from the internal authority or "natural authority" that they claim constitutes the essence of humanity (Newman 2007, 38). Natural authority is embodied in what Bakunin describes as "natural laws". Bakunin argues that natural laws "are not extrinsic in relation to us, they are inherent in us, they constitute our nature, our whole being physically, intellectually and morally" (G.P. Maximoff, 1953)." Bakunin's notion of "natural law" complements the anarchist assumptions that suggests "that human beings have a nature or essence; and, second, that that essence is good or benign, in the sense that it possesses the characteristics that enable one to live justly with others in society" (May, 63, 1994). In *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (1994) Todd May discusses the anarchist claim that there is a natural human essence by referring to arguments expressed in *Mutual Aid,* the seminal anarchist text published in 1902, authored by Russian philosopher, Peter Kropotkin. According to May, *Mutual Aid*, a significant work in collective anarchist philosophy, "is a reply to Darwin which attempts to show that cooperation among humans and other animals in an effort to further their family, neighbors, and at times species is as much a motive force of action as competition for survival" (May, 62, 1994). As Kropotkin writes: "Sociability and the need of mutual aid and support are such inherent parts of human nature that at no time of history can we discover men living in small isolated families, fighting each other for the means of subsistence" (Kropotkin quoted in May 1994, 62).

Both Kropotkin's conceptualization of "mutual aid" and Bakunin's notion of "natural law" are founded on the anarchist assumptions that humanity has a natural, good or benign essence. For anarchists, this belief in a good or benign human essence constitutes an uncorrupted point of resistance to the oppressive artificial authority embodied in political power. Newman elaborates further on this anarchistic conception of the conflict between natural authority and artificial authority:

> The human subject is oppressed by this outside power, but remains uncontaminated by it because human subjectivity is a creation of a natural, as opposed to a political, system. Anarchism is based on this clear, Manichean division between artificial and natural authority, between power and subjectivity, between state and society. Furthermore, political authority is fundamentally oppressive and destructive of man's potential (Newman, 39, 2007).

According to Newman, the anarchist conception of a natural human essence is derived from Feuerbachian humanism. In the 1854 edition of George Eliot's translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's, *The Essence of Christianity,* Feuerbach posits that God is an abstract construction of man, an illusory object created by humanity that reflects humanity's innate characteristics:

> What is God to man, that is man's own spirit, man's own soul; what is man's spirit, soul, and heart – that is his God. God is the manifestation of man's inner nature, his expressed self; religion is the solemn unveiling of man's hidden treasures, the avowal of his

innermost thoughts, the open confession of the secrets of his love (Feuerbach; translation by Eliot, 1854).

Feuerbach goes on to note that humanity is not always aware of the true origin of God hence, the peculiar nature of religion:

> But if religion, i.e., the consciousness of God, is characterized as the self-consciousness of man, this does not mean that the religious man is directly aware that his consciousness of God is his self-consciousness, for it is precisely the absence of such an awareness that is responsible for the peculiar nature of religion (Feuerbach; translation by Eliot, 1854).

The "religious man's" misguided perception of God as something outside himself, something to which he owes his subjugation, alienates the "religious man" from his own creativity. This is demonstrated when Feuerbach goes on to state:

> Thus in religion man negates his reason… In short, man denies his knowledge, his thought, that he may place them in God. Man renounces himself as a person only to discover God, the omnipotent and the infinite, as a personal being; he denies human honour, the human ego, only to have a God that is selfish, egoistic, who seeks in everything only himself, his honour, his advantage, only to have a God whose sole concern is the gratification of his own selfishness, the enjoyment of his own ego (Feuerbach; translation by Eliot, 1854).

Newman suggests that, "anarchism applies this logic to political theory" (Newman, 39, 2007). In the same way, that Feuerbach argues that humanity is unaware of how it subjects itself to its own abstract construction of religion; anarchists argue that humanity is unaware of the ways in which it subjects itself to its own abstract construction of the state. Newman demonstrates this link between the two ideas by citing a quote from the 1953 edition of G. P. Maximoff's translation of Bakunin's compiled work, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism:*

> We are convinced that theology and politics are both closely related, stemming from the same origin and pursuing the same aim under two different names; we are convinced that every State is a terrestrial Church, just as every Church with its Heaven—the abode of the blessed and the immortal gods—is nothing but a celestial State (Bakunin quoted in Newman, 39, 2007).

As demonstrated in the quote above, anarchism builds on the Feuerbachian analysis of the relationship between man and religion by applying his critiques to both religion and the state. For collective anarchists, the origin of oppression resided in the state and resistance to this oppression finds its place in humanity's rational and moral essence. This notion of resistance to oppressive power coming from the essential "goodness" of humanity coincides with the Occupy Movement's consensus based decision-making process, direct democracy. As stated earlier, the

Occupy Movement engages in direct democracy in order to ensure a non-hierarchical, horizontal, decision-making process, in which all views are treated with equal consideration and respect. Therefore, direct democracy can be a process that attempts to *accurately* capture and express the collective voice of a group or society as a whole. Direct democracy is also the Occupy Movement's form of political action, its form of resistance to the existing power structure. This project has yet to provide evidence that suggest that the Occupy Movement subscribes to the humanistic philosophies espoused by the classical collective anarchists. However, because the Occupy Movement utilizes direct democracy, a process that attempts to accurately capture and express the collective voice of humanity, as their place of resistance it follows that the Occupy Movement must believe that humanity is essentially good or, at the very least, less oppressive than the existing power structure. It could be argued then, that direct democracy is, fundamentally, an attempt to truly capture and express the rational and moral essence of humanity. Moreover, one could also argue that direct democracy is a practical attempt to manifest humanity's essential "goodness" and express that "goodness" in a political context. These arguments will be explored more thoroughly in later sections of this project. For now, it is useful to be aware of the preliminary associations between direct democracy and the humanistic philosophies of classical collective anarchism.

That said there are anarchists who object to the humanistic assumptions presented in the works of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. Max Stirner, a major influence in individualistic anarchist philosophy, is perhaps, the most vehement in his rejection of the humanist elements in collectivist anarchism. The next section of this project will explore the ways in which Stirner's most significant work *The Ego and Its Own* published in 1845, both complement and conflict with, collectivist anarchist philosophies.

Individualistic Anarchism

Many anarchists describe Max Stirner's book *The Ego and Its Own* (1845) as one of the founding text of individualistic anarchism. It was an important influence on Benjamin R. Tucker's work at the American anarchist journal *Liberty* (Leopold, xi, 1995). Stirner's book also influenced the early work of feminist anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre. Along with being a major influence on prominent anarchist schools of thought, *The Ego and Its Own* made a considerable impression on theorists in other fields of social and political thought. For example, Karl Marx criticized Stirner's book in his early work *The German Ideology* (1932) (Leopold, xi, 1995). In the introduction to his 1995 translation of Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* David Leopold writes:

> In *The German Ideology*, Marx calls the book [*The Ego and Its Own*] a *Geistergeschichte,* a history of 'ghosts' within which empirical details are utilized only to provide convenient bodies for the 'spirits' of realism, idealism, and egoism in turn (Leopold, xviii, 1995).

Marx's critical response to Stirner's work demonstrates yet another antagonism between anarchist philosophies and Marxism. Much like collective anarchists, Stirner rejects the Marxist notion that the source of oppressive power emanates from the economic domination of the bourgeois class. Stirner is also wary of the idea that the proletariat or any collective identity can be a non-oppressive agent of resistance. Stirner writes:

> Communism rightly revolts against the pressure that I experience from individual proprietors; but still more horrible is the might that it puts in the hands of the collectivity (Stirner; Leopold, 228, 1995).

Stirner shares the antagonism towards the state demonstrated in collective anarchist philosophies. He rails against the state, writing that, "…we two, the state and I, are enemies" (Stirner; Leopold, 161, 1995). Yet, both Stirner's antagonism toward Marxism and his hostility toward the state derive from very different epistemological positions than those posed in collective anarchist philosophies. As this project has demonstrated, collective anarchism finds its place of resistance to oppressive power in humanity's innate rational and moral essence. Stirner, on the contrary, finds this position as unsettling as Marxist collectivist arguments. For Stirner, the collective, even a rational and moral one, can be just as oppressive as the state and communism. Indeed, Stirner attacks elements of communism and the notion of collective social authority, suggesting that the collective is just another iteration of oppressive state power:

> On the contrary, communism, by the abolition of all personal property, only presses me back still more into dependence on another, namely, on the generality or collectivity; and, loudly as it always attacks the 'state', what it intends is itself again a state, a *status*, a condition hindering my free movement, a sovereign power over me (Stirner; Leopold, 228, 1995).

This objection to collective authority is primarily derived from Stirner's ardent rejection of the Feuerbachian essentialism that informs the humanistic elements found in collective anarchism. The next section of this essay will examine Stirner's hostility towards Feuerbach's notion of a rational and moral human essence.

Rejection of a Natural Human Essence

One of the most transparent aspects of Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* is the book's overt enmity towards the work of Feuerbach. In the introduction to his translation of Stirner's book Leopold writes:

> The very structure of the book would have revealed Feuerbach as the primary target of Stirner' polemic to contemporary readers. The two parts of Stirner's book headed Man and I are an implicit structural parody of the sections God and Man of Feuerbach's best-known work, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) (Leopold, xix, 1995).

For Stirner, Feuerbach's analysis of the relationship between religion and Man did not go far enough. As discussed earlier, Feuerbach posited that God is an abstract construction of humanity. Humanity projects its own qualities, its own essence onto this abstract construction called God. Unaware of the fact that God is a product of human construction; religious followers distance themselves from their own essence and subject themselves to their own creation. Stirner argues that Feuerbach's attempt to dismiss God is incomplete because it simply transfers the oppression brought about by the notion of God into a new oppression brought about by the notion of a moral and rational human essence. Stirner states:

> To expel God from his heaven and to rob him of his *'transcendence'* cannot yet support a claim of complete victory, if therein he is only chased into the human breast and gifted with indelible *immanence*. Now they say, the divine is the truly human (Stirner; Leopold, 47, 1995).

In the same vein as Proudhon's and Bakunin's criticism of Marx, Stirner accuses Feuerbach of simply exchanging one form of oppression for another:

> Who is his God? Man with a capital M! What is the divine? The human! The predicate has indeed only been changed into the subject, and, instead of the sentence 'God is love', they say 'love is divine'; instead of 'God has become man', 'man has become God', etc. It is nothing more or less than a new – *religion* (Stirner; Leopold, 55, 1995).

Stirner's criticism of Feuerbach has broad implications because it frames the rational and moral human nature posited by Feuerbach and embraced in collective anarchism, as an oppressive power in and of itself. For Stirner, this rational and moral human essence is a burden; an idealized fiction that one must continually attempt to emulate:

> I can never take comfort in myself as long as I think that I have still to find my true self and that it must come to this, that not I but Christ or some other spiritual, ghostly, self (the true man, the essence of man, and the like) lives in me (Stirner; Leopold, 283, 1995).

Stirner does not cease his criticism of Feuerbach's notion of a rational and moral human essence; he also is disparaging of the concepts of rationality and morality themselves. Much like the postmodern and poststructuralist theorists discussed later in this project, Stirner views rationality, and morality as oppressive fictions. Stirner's critique of objective rational truth is similar to his critical assessment of Feuerbach's natural human essence. For Stirner, objective rational truths are no more than "fixed ideas" that suppress individual autonomy. Stirner writes that, "as long as you believe in the truth, you do not believe in yourself, and you are a – *servant, a – religious man"* (Stirner; Leopold, 312, 1995). "Truth" from Stirner's perspective is only real when it is in the service of the individual; he writes, "all truth by itself is dead" (Stirner; Leopold, 313, 1995). In order to suppress the oppressive nature of objective rational "truths" one must possess them. They must become objects that are under the dominion of the individual. Outside of the individual, truth is nothing. Stirner states this clearly when he writes:

All truths *beneath* me are to my liking; a truth *above* me, a truth that I should have to *direct* myself by, I am not acquainted with. For me there is no truth, for nothing is more than I! Not even my essence, not even the essence of man, is more than I, above me, this 'drop in the bucket', this 'insignificant man'! (Stirner; Leopold, 313, 1995).

Morality is also oppressive for Stirner. He writes that "the *spirit* of morality and legality holds him prisoner; a rigid, unbending *master*" (Stirner; Leopold, 60, 1995). Stirner views morality as a tool of degradation, a method of bending individual will until it becomes the insidious tool of degradation that was used to distort it. Stirner writes, "moral influence takes its start where *humiliation* begins; yes, it is nothing else than this humiliation itself, the breaking and bending of the temper [*Mutes*] down to *humility* [*Demut*]" (Stirner; Leopold, 75, 1995).

The First Anti-Essentialist

Stirner's outlook on concepts like rationality, legality, morality, and the like, arguably, positions him as one of the first anti-essentialist theorists. His ardent rejection of Feuerbachian humanism further illustrates his staunch anti-essentialist disposition. Yet, Stirner's notion of what constitutes the individual provides, perhaps, the most vivid expression of his rejection of essentialism. For Stirner, there is no human essence, the individual is empty, and the individual is nothing, albeit a creative *nothing*. Stirner writes:

If God, if mankind, as you affirm, have substance enough in themselves to be all in all to themselves, then I feel that I shall still less lack that, and that I shall have no complaint to make of my 'emptiness'. I am not nothing in the sense of emptiness, but I am the creative nothing [*schopgerische Nichts*], the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything (Stirner; Leopold, 7, 1995).

Stirner's notion of the creative nothing suggests that the individual has no core essence but rather, is composed of a continuous process of creation and recreation. The creative nothing that constitutes the individual is not constrained by essentialist characteristics or "fixed ideas" like morality or rationality it is contingent, flexible, always in a constant state of becoming. Therefore, individuals are not innately rational or moral, they are capable of rationality, morality, or whatever other creative process they endeavor to engage in. This subtle but profound distinction differentiates Stirner's notion of what constitutes the individual from that of collective anarchists who understand the individual as having a natural essence. It is also related to Stirner's concepts of 'egoism' and 'owness', which are examined in more detail below.

'Owness'

According to Leopold, Stirner's notion of 'owness' "…is best understood as a variety of self-mastery, a form of substantive individual autonomy which insists that any actions or desires which involve waiving or suspending individual judgment violate the self-mastery and independence of the person concerned (Leopold, xxii, 1995)." Thus 'Owness' is the antithesis of

the notion of a natural human essence. 'Owness' cannot be attained if one is constrained by the essentialist, humanistic ideals espoused by Feuerbach. As Stirner argued, one cannot be truly free to act of one's own volition if one is always attempting to live in concurrence with the characteristics of some presupposed internal essence. Echoing this sentiment, and referencing Stirner's notion of 'owness', Newman writes:

> Surely, Stirner suggests, what should be freed is not human essence form external conditions, but the self from human essence, from fixed identities (Newman, 68, 2007).

'Owness' also can be understood in relation to the idea of freedom itself. Stirner uses this comparison to fully conceptualize his notion of 'owness':

> 'Freedom lives only in the realm of dreams!' Owness, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is myself. I am free from what I am *rid* of, owner of what I have in my *power* or what I *control*. *My own* I am at all times and under all circumstances, if I know how to have myself and do not throw myself away on others. To be free is something that I cannot truly *will*, because I cannot make it, cannot create it: I can only wish it and – aspire toward it, for it remains an ideal a spook. The fetters of reality cut the sharpest welts in my flesh every moment. But *my own* I remain (Stirner; Leopold, 143, 1995)

As illustrated in the quote above, Stirner views the general notion of freedom as an unattainable ideal, a 'ghostly' dream, whereas 'owness' is a state of being that is anchored in reality. As suggested by Leopold, Stirner views 'owness' as a form of self-mastery, a manner of near absolute individual *automonony*. 'Owness' is a manner of being in the process of creation and recreation that one already is; in fact, this is the crux of the message Stirner intends to express in *The Ego and Its Own*. Stirner aims to awaken humanity, to alert us of the fact that we are willing participants in our own subjugation:

> Thousands of years of civilization have obscured to you what you are, have made you believe you are not egoists but are called to be idealists ('goodmen'). Shake it off! Do not seek for freedom, which does precisely deprive you of yourselves, in 'self-denial'; but seek for *yourselves*, become egoists, become each of you an *almighty ego*. Or, more clearly: Just recognize yourselves again, just recognize what you really are, and let go your hypocritical endeavours, your foolish mania to be something else than you are. (Stirner; Leopold, 149, 1995).

Awakening humanity's 'owness'/egoism (Stirner, for the most part uses both concepts interchangeably) can also be thought of, in a sense, as Stirner's means of resistance to oppressive power. Interpret my use of the word 'resistance' carefully here, as by resistance I do not mean opposition to, or fight against oppressive power. Resistance in Stirner's case, is an elevation above or a placing beneath of everything outside of oneself. This understanding of resistance is exemplified when Stirner compares the act of insurrection with that of revolution,

The revolution aimed at new *arrangements*; insurrection leads us no longer to *let* ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on 'institutions'. It is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collaspes of itself; it is only a working forth of me out of the established (Stirner; Leopold, 280, 1995).

Stirner's notion of 'owness' is predicated on the understanding that we are participants in our own subjugation. Resistance, according to Stirner, is not a fight against the existing power structure it is fight against our participation in our own subjugation, as he states, insurrection "leads us no longer to *let* ourselves be arranged" (Stirner; Leopold, 280, 1995).   This is why Stirner views resistance as an elevation above oppressive power and not a fight against it.

From a tactical perspective, Stirner's notion of resistance is in many ways, congruent with the Occupy Movement's use of direct action. Both the Occupy Movement and Stirner discuss tactics of resistance that are not focused on an antagonistic engagement with the existing power structure but rather on the elevation of the oppressed entity above the power structure. The quote from the 2001 OWS website, mentioned earlier in the project and repeated again below, clearly demonstrates the tactical similarities between the Occupy Movement's style of resistance and Stirner's views:

> We do not have one or two simple demands, though many demand them of us. Why? Because we believe that making demands of a corrupt system makes our success contingent on the will of others. It legitimizes the corrupted, it disempowers us. Our actions are our demands (OWS, 2011).

Like Stirner, the Occupy Movement refuses to acknowledge the existing power structure because to do so would make the movement a willing participant in their own subjugation, "…making demands of a corrupt system makes our success contingent on the will of others. It legitimizes the corrupted, it disempowers us" (OWS, 2011).   Instead of focusing on engagement with the established power structure, both Stirner and the Occupy Movement percieve themselves as elevating themselves above the oppressive entity. This and other tactical similarities between the Occupy Movement's style of resistance and Stirner's notion of 'insurrection' will be more thoroughly examined later in this project. One should take note, however, of the emerging pattern that is beginning to become apparent when the Occupy Movement's political positions and tactics are juxtaposed with concepts and arguments presented in anarchist theory. Key elements of the Occupy Movement's form of political action and resistance correspond with key elements expressed in the two conflicting schools of anarchistic thought. Yet, furthur analysis is needed to draw substantive conclusions from this early observation.

Interestingly, Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own,* is also regarded as a forerunner to postmodern and poststructuralist thought. Although there is no direct mention of Stirner or his

work in postmodern texts, many radical theorists, including Saul Newman (2007), Lewis Call (2002), Daniel Guerin (1970) , Todd May (1994), and others, view Stirner's book as a precursor to the postmodern turn in social theory. The next section of this project will further examine these similarities.

The Postmodern Turn in Social Thought

One of the major similarities between poststructuralism and Stirner's individualistic anarchism is that both level scathing critiques against essentialism. During a 1980 interview at the University of California Berkely conducted by graduate student Michael Bess, Michel Foucault, a prominent figure in poststructuralist theory had this to say:

> In a sense, I am a moralist, insofar as I believe that one of the tasks, one of the meanings of human existence - the source of human freedom - is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us. We have to rise up against all forms of power-but not just power in the narrow sense of the word, referring to the power of government or of one social group over another: these are only a few instances of power. Power is anything that tends to render immobile and untouchable those things that are offered to us as real, as true, as good (Foucault; Bess, page, 1980).

As suggested in the quote above Foucault rejects any notion of 'essence.' He states that, "the source of human freedom – is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile" (Foucault; Bess 1980). Like Stirner, Foucault is antagonistic to any notion or concept that constitutes itself as definitive, absolute, beyond questioning. Indeed, Foucault's statement, "no aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us (Foucault; Bess 1980)", is similar to Stirner's statement, "All truths beneath me are to my liking; a truth above me, a truth that I should have to direct myself by, I am not acquainted with" (Stirner; Leopold, 313, 1995). It is not necessarily the concept or idea that Foucault and Stirner reject but rather it is the elevation of the concept or notion to a level that is definitive, a level that is above the individual, which both theorists find problematic.

The poststructuralist critique of essentialism also rejects, "the assumption that a group or collectivity has certain intrinsic traits that bind them together in both theory and practice" (Mann, 214, 2012). In *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity* (2012), Susan Mann discusses the postmodern and poststructuralist antagonism towards the notion that groups have identifiable core traits:

> Postmodernist, poststructuralists, and queer theorists reject the notion that there are core features that distinguish any groups or collectivities, just as they reject the notion that there are core identities. Rather, group concepts and identities are simply social constructs—social fictions—that serve to regulate behavior and exclude others. Their goal is to deconstruct or dismantle these fictions and, thereby, to undermine hegemonic

regimes of discourse. This is why Foucault saw freedom as 'living in the happy limbo of non-identity'(Mann , 215, 2012).

The postmodern and poststructuralist deconstruction of group categories does not always lead to the nullification of said categories. Rather, strategic essentialism, "the method of using essentialist identity categories for political purposes while simultaneously recognizing the flaws entailed in essentialism," allows for the deconstruction of group categories while maintaining the political efficacy provided by such categorization (Spivak, 1987). Much like the postmodernist and poststructuralist theorists that followed him, Stirner also rejected the notion of group categorization. Referring to the German nationalism that was prevalent during his era as analogous to "beehood", Stirner writes,

> Now the nationals are exerting themselves to set up the abstract, lifeless unity of beehood; but the self-owned are going to fight for the unity willed by their own will, for union. This is the token of all reactionary wishes, that they want to set up something *general,* abstract, an empty, lifeless *concept*, in distinction from which the self-owned aspire to relieve the robust, lively *particular* from the trashy burden of generalities (Stirner; Leopold, 205, 1995).

In a fashion similar to the postmodern and poststructuralist theorists who argue that, group concepts and identities are simply social constructs—social fictions—that serve to regulate behavior and exclude others, Stirner argues that German nationalism, a group category, is nothing more than "an empty, lifeless *concept*," that is incompatible with the self-owned aspiration to be free from the encumbrance of such generalities. Moreover, much like the postmodern and poststructuralist concept of strategic essentialism, Stirner is not completely opposed to a unity of individuals but rather the idea that those individuals are united under the guise of a socially constructed fiction such as German nationalism.

Although there are, parallels between the philosophies of Stirner and those espoused during the postmodern turn in social theory, it would be inaccurate to describe postmodern or poststructuralist theory as simply a rehash or extension of Stirner's work. The theme expressed throughout *The Ego and its Own,* focuses on the elevation of the individual above essentialism and essentialist concepts like rationality, morality, legality, and the like whereas the hallmark of the postmodern turn in social theory is questioning the legitimization of such notions. The difference between Stirner's work and the work of the postmodernist and poststructuralist theorists that follow is a tactical and nuanced one, but a significant difference nonetheless.

Challenging 'the Cogito'

One of the most common views associated with postmodernism and poststructuralism is the 'death of the subject'. Prominent poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, posit 'the subject' as socially constructed. This stems from an ongoing philosophical debate surrounding Rene Decartes infamous discovery *cogito ergo sum*, or 'I think

therefore I am' which is often considered, in western philosphy, as the foundational basis for any notion of "the subject". 'The cogito', as it is often called among philosphers and theorists, is a philosophical proposition formulated by the 17th century, French philospher, Rene Descartes. In short, the Cartesian proposition suggests that by thinking about my existence I prove that I exist because I do the thinking, all other knowledge is suspect because it is subject to doubt. My existence, however, is beyond doubt because the very act of doubting my existence serves as evidence of my existence.

Foucault challenges the Cartesian version of "the cogito" by juxtaposing Decartes proposition with what Foucault terms the "modern cogito". In his 1971, historical "archaeology" of scientific discourses entitled *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* Foucault writes:

> The modern cogito (and this is why it is not so much the discovery of an evident truth as a ceaseless task constantly to be undertaken afresh) must traverse, duplicate, and reactivate in an explicit form the articulation of thought on everything within it, around it, and beneath it which is not thought, yet which is nevertheless not foreign to thought, in the sense of an irreducible, an insuperable exteriority. In this form, the cogito will not therefore be the sudden and illuminating discovery that all thought is thought, but the constantly renewed interrogation as to how thought can reside elsewhere than here, and yet so very close to itself; how it can be in the forms of non-thinking. The modern cogito does not reduce the whole being of things to thought without ramifying the being of thought right down to the inert network of what does not think (Foucault, 324, 1971).

The quote above demonstrates Foucault's firm commitment to subjecting any notion or concept to continuous interrogation. Foucault is not convinced of the absolute legitimacy of the Cartesian version of the cogito because of its treatment of "what does not think" according to Foucault the notion of "non-thought" eludes the Cartesian cogito:

> For Descartes was concerned to reveal thought as the most general form of all those thoughts we term error or illusion, thereby rendering them harm-less, so that he would be free, once that step had been taken, to return to them, to explain them, and then to provide a method of guarding against them. In the modern cogito, on the other hand, we are concerned to grant the highest value, the greatest dimension, to the distance that both separates and links thought-conscious-of-itself and whatever, within thought, is rooted in non-thought (Foucault, 324, 1971).

The emphasis Foucault places on what he terms "non-thought" is what leads him to ultimately reject the Cartesian version of the cogito:

> This double movement proper to the modern cogito explains why the 'I think' does not, in its case, lead to the evident truth of the 'I am'. Indeed, as soon as the I think' has shown itself to be embedded in a density throughout which it is quasi-present, and which it animates, though in an equivocal semi-dormant, semi-wakeful fashion, it is no longer possible to make it lead on to the affirmation 'I am' (Foucault, 324, 1971).

Foucault's concept, the modern cogito, dismantles the absolute legitimacy of "the subject" rendering it contingent, provisional, and subject to continuous interrogation. It must be reiterated that the idea that all concepts or notions are contingent and therefore must be subject to continuous interrogation is the hallmark of poststructuralist thought. In her essay entitled "Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism" (1990), Judith Butler, reinforces Foucault's notion of contingency in regards to "the subject" she writes: "no subject is its own point of departure; and the fantasy that it is one can only disavow its constitutive relations by recasting them as the domain of a countervailing externality" (Butler, 635, 1990). In the essay Butler also demonstrates the poststructuralists commitment to subjecting the notion of "the subject" to interrogation, she writes that, "the critique of the subject is not a negation or repudiation of the subject, but, rather, a way of interrogating its construction as a pregiven or foundationalist premise" (Butler, 635, 1990).

For poststructuralist and postmodernists' theorists such as Butler, "*there is no core self, identity, or subject who acts to express herself or himself, but, rather, performances or actions create the interior self*" (Mann, 229, 2012). Butler argues, "that there need not be a 'doer' behind the deed, rather the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (Butler, 1990). Butler's notion of performativity allows for a continuous construction of group categories such as gender or core identities such as the self. Butler understands gender as a performance rather than as a descriptive or determinative category. This understanding of gender is demonstrated through her conception of identity and its relationship to the body:

> One is not simply a body, but in some very key sense, one does one's body and, indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well (Butler quoted in Mann, 228, 2012).

Butler views the body and its relation to identity as active and constructive rather than determinative. For Butler, the presence of distinct sexual organs does not determine one's gender, gender is a fluid, and constructive identity that is always in relation to how one utilizes or performs said sexual organs, or other aspects of one's body, in short, gender is created and continuously recreated by how it is performed.

Butler's notion of performance and its construction of identity as continuously in a process of recreation is very similar to Stirner's notion of the self, being composed of a "creative nothing". As discussed earlier, Stirner's notion of the self suggests that the individual has no core essence but rather, is composed of a continuous process of creation and recreation. Stirner argues, "I am not nothing in the sense of emptiness, but I am the creative nothing [schopferische Nichts], the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything (Stirner; Leopold 1995, 7)". Their shared rejection of "fixed identities" implied in both Stirner's and poststructuralists' conceptions of the self is apparent. While Stirner focuses heavily on the oppressiveness caused by the "fixed identity" present in the Feuerbachian notion of a "rational and moral" human essence, feminist and queer theorists that subscribe to postmodern and poststructuralist notions,

such as performativity theory, reject the underlying hierarchical distinctions observed in gender categories and gender as a fixed identity.

As both Butler and Foucault have argued the primary theme underlying postructuralist thought is that identity and all concepts are contingent and therefore subject to questioning. This theme is also prevalent in the work of Stirner. The next section of this project will examine how poststructrualist and postmodern theorists apply this prevailing theme to concepts such as rationality and science.

The Postmodern Challenge to Science

As illustrated in the previous section of this project, poststructuralist theorists implicitly challenge the legitimacy of science by questioning the existence of "the subject". In his 1979 book, titled *The Postmodern Condition*, French theorist Jean-François Lyotard also challenges the legitimacy of science by criticizing the validity of the Cartesian proposition,

> As resolute a philosophy as that of Descartes can only demonstrate the legitimacy of science through what Valery called the story of the mind, or else in a *Bildungsroman*, which is what the *Discourse on Method* amounts to (Lyotard, 29, 1984).

However, Lyotard also views science, particularly modern science, as a complicated language game that is unable to legitimate itself. According to Lyotard, "...science plays its own game; it is incapable of legitimating the other language games. The game of prescription, for example, escapes it. But above all, it is incapable of legitimating itself, as speculation assumed it could" (Lyotard, 40, 1984). For Lyotard, modern science is incapable of legitimating itself because its means of legitimation are themselves illegitimate, or to be more precise, the means of legitimating science are only as legitimate as the means used by other "language games". There is no hierarchical distinction between nonscientific knowledge and scientific knowledge. According to Lyotard, both types of knowledge are "language games" with different rules that are not capable of validating one another:

> Both are composed of sets of statements; the statements are "moves" made by players within the framework of generally applicable rules; these rules are specific to each kind of knowledge, and the "moves" judged to be "good" in one cannot be of the same type as those judged "good" in another, unless it happens that way by chance. It is therefore impossible to judge the existence or validity of narrative knowledge on the basis of scientific knowledge and vice versa: the relevant criteria are different (Lyotard, 26, 1984).

The belief that there is no hierarchical distinction between scientific knowledge and nonscientific knowledge is also observable in poststructuralist thought. Much like the ideas espoused by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*, Foucault's notion of "genealogy" is antagonistic to any hierarchical distinction between types of knowledge. In a collection of

selected interviews and writings produced by Foucault entitled *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977,* Foucault states:

> By comparison, then, and in contrast to the various projects which aim to inscribe knowledges in the hierarchical order of power associated with science, a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledge from that subjection, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse (Foucault 1980, 85).

This opposition to the privileging of scientific knowledge over other types of knowledge stems, primarily, from the postmodernist and poststructuralist notion that the privileging of scientific knowledge is a form of oppressive power that is associated with the imperial tendencies of western society. Lyotard says as much when he writes, "This unequal relationship is an intrinsic effect of the rules specific to each game. We all know the symptoms. It is the entire history of cultural imperialism from the dawn of Western civilization (Lyotard 1984, 27)". Foucault also speaks to this assertion during a lecture when he discusses the question of whether Marxism is scientific. Foucault states that, "you are investing Marxist discourses and those who uphold them with the effects of power which the West has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse" (Foucault, 85, 1980).

Two significant themes that underlie poststructuralist and postmodernist thought have been demonstrated by this project. Both paradigms challenge the legitimacy of science and they both view the privileging of scientific knowledge as a form of power that is a by-product of western society's imperialist tendencies. The poststructuralist conception of power and its relation to knowledge, the poststructuralist opposition to social norms, and the relationship between post structuralism and the Occupy Movement will be examined in the next section of this project.

Power a Poststructuralist Perspective

This project has demonstrated that Foucault and Lyotard both view the scientific hierarchicalization of knowledge as a form of power. This observation begs the question, how do postmodernists or poststructuralists theorists perceive power? First published in 1978, Foucault's radical outlook on sex and society, titled *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, provides, perhaps, the most descriptive account of poststructuralists' conception of power to date. Foucault argues that the common understanding of power as repressive and essentially juridical is a fundamental misrepresentation of power that allows power to "mask a substantial part of itself" (Foucault, 86, 1978). Foucault's conception of power presents the concept, "…as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the

disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies" (Foucault, 92, 1978).

Foucault's understanding of power emancipates it from the binary relationships associated with the common juridical/repressive understanding of power presented in collective anarchism and Marxism. For Foucault, power is the "multiplicity of force relations" it is everywhere, because "it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 93, 1978). Thus, resistance, from Foucault's perspective, is an aspect of power. He writes, "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 95, 1978). Like power, resistance takes its form as "a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations" (Foucault, 95, 1978). Foucault's understanding of resistance challenges the notions of resistance presented in collective anarchism and Marxism. Unlike most Marxists, who find their agent of resistance in the oppressed proletariat, collective anarchists, who believe the state to be the embodiment of oppressive power and the rational and moral human essence as the natural form of resistance to this power, there is no pure place of resistance for Foucault. He writes that, "…there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary" (Foucault, 95-96, 1978).

Therefore, the goal of Foucault's analysis of power is not to create or find a pure place of resistance to power but rather to "decipher power mechanisms on the basis of a strategy that is immanent in force relationships" (Foucault, 97, 1978). Foucault is committed to exposing, "new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus" (Foucault, 89, 1978).

In spite of the non-binary nature of Foucault's analysis of power, there are types of power that Foucault seeks to resist. As Foucault states in a quote referenced earlier in this project, "we have to rise up against all forms of power" (Foucault; Bess 1980). That said the primary focus of a significant portion of Foucault's research is centered on exposing the disciplinary forms of power and their relation to both science and normativity. Many of his texts attempt to expose the domination and oppressions legally instituted under the guise of scientific legitimacy. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault writes, "…the law operates more and more as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory" (Foucault, 144, 1978). After examining much of Foucault's research, it is clear that Foucault opposes the effects of normativity and it is also, evident that he is, at the very least, antagonistic to the scientific discourses that legitimize and perpetuate the existence of that normativity.

David Graeber, a core and founding member of the Occupy Movement, is, interestingly enough, at odds with Foucault's conceptualization of power. In fact, Graeber compares Foucault's conception of power with that of conservative strategist and theologian George Gilder. According to Graeber,"One need only reflect on the astounding rise in the 1980's, and apparent permanent patron saint status since, of French poststructuralist theorist Michel Foucault, and particularly his argument that forms of institutional knowledge—whether medicine, psychology, administrative or political science, criminology, biochemistry for that matter—are always also forms of power that ultimately create the realities they claim to describe. This is almost exactly the same thing as Gilder's theological supply-side beliefs, except taken from the perspective of the professional and managerial classes that make up the core of the liberal elite" (Graeber, 120, 2013). Further, comparing Foucault's conception of power with positions purported by Gilder, Graeber remarks that both theories are, "…the ultimate theological apotheoses of habits of thought that are pervasive within what we called "the 1 percent," an intellectual world where even as words like "bribery" or "empire" are banished from public discourse, they are assumed at the same time to be the ultimate basis of everything" (Graeber, 121, 2013). However, the Occupy Movement's unorthodox activist tactics, its critical view of rationality, and its commitment to anti-hierarchical decision making are all congruent, to some degree, with positions and concepts observed in postmodern and poststructuralist theory. The next section of this project will explore, in a more detailed fashion, the relationships between positions espoused in collective anarchism, individualistic anarchism, postmodernism and poststructuralism and the principles and political tactics utilized by the Occupy Movement.

Analysis

After examining and contrasting the central themes of theoretical arguments expressed in the two anarchist traditions and the postmodern turn in social theory with the tactics and positions produced by the Occupy Movement this project found some preliminary similarities between these approaches. The goal of the analysis section of this project is to more thoroughly explore these congruencies and to explain, as precisely as possible, the relationship between the social theories examined in this project and the social theory and action of the Occupy Movement.

Occupy and Collective Anarchism

In the sections that discussed collective anarchism this project argued that direct democracy is, fundamentally, an attempt to truly capture and express the rational and moral essence of humanity. It was also asserted that the Occupy Movement's usage of direct democracy, because of its inclusive consensus based nature, might be a practical attempt to manifest humanity's essential "goodness" and express that "goodness" in a political context.

These arguments coincide with descriptions of Occupy Wall street encampment activities that are expressed by core members of the movement. In an opinion article published in 2011 by Aljazeera a global news organization, entitled "Occupy Wall Street's Anarchist Roots", David Graeber, outlines the congruencies between anarchist traditions and the principles of the Occupy Movement. Graeber writes,

> As a result, Zuccotti Park, and all subsequent encampments, became spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society - not only democratic General Assemblies but kitchens, libraries, clinics, media centers and a host of other institutions, all operating on anarchist principles of mutual aid and self-organization - a genuine attempt to create the institutions of a new society in the shell of the old (Graeber, 2011).

If Graeber's description of the Occupy Wall Street encampments are regarded as accurate and the Occupy Movement does, as stated, operate "on anarchist principles of mutual aid" than it follows that the Occupy Movement is, in some manner, attempting to manifest the essential "goodness" of humanity through their activism. As discussed earlier, Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid is based upon the humanist assumptions of Feuerbach, which argue that humanity has an innate rational and moral essence. The Occupy Movement's principles of direct democracy and its adaptation of mutual aid into its activism illustrate the movement's physical expression of the humanist principles espoused in collective anarchism. It could be argued then, that the Occupy Movement reflects or mirrors these principles held in collective anarchist theory. It should be noted, however, that this similarities are only partial. Many of the positions and principles observed in collective anarchism are not congruent with those found in the Occupy Movement. The notion of the state, for example, as the sole embodiment of oppressive power is not as prominent a belief within the Occupy Movement as it is among collective anarchists. Many occupiers do see the state as oppressive but they also see oppression in the financial system, the media, the medical industry, and various other societal institutions. Once more, the Occupy Movement also derives its activism and politics from sources other than that of collective anarchism, therefore, the reflection or mirroring of collective anarchist principles observed in the Occupy Movement's tactics and principles results in some contradictions in the movement's theory and practice. The next section of this project will provide a more detailed exploration of one of the other sources that influence the principles and political tactics of the Occupy Movement, the individualistic anarchist philosophy of Max Stirner.

Occupy and Individualistic Anarchism

In the section that discussed Stirner's philosophy, I briefly outlined some of the congruencies between the notion of direct action utilized in the political action of the Occupy Movement and Stirner's notion of "insurrection". The the similarity between these two ideas can be best illustrated by contrasting Stirner's accounts of Socrates and Alcibiades with Graeber's explanation of the difference between an act of civil disobedience and a direct action. Graeber states that, "civil disobedience means refusal to comply with an unjust law, or legally valid, but

unjust order" (Graeber, 234, 2013). He goes on to explain that, "this is why those engaged in civil disobedience so often welcome arrest: it allows them a platform to challenge the law or policy either legally or in the court of public opinion" (Graeber, 234, 2013). In contrast, a direct action, according to Graeber, seeks no platform and appeals to no authority; it is "ultimately, the defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free" (Graeber, 233, 2013). Stirner's assessment of the actions of Socrates and Alcibiades illustrate, in a strikingly similar fashion, the ideas as those espoused by Graeber. According to Leopold, "Stirner's brief and contrasting accounts of Socrates and Alcibiades can be read as an implicit indictment of the respect for law embodied in the practice of civil disobedience" (Leopold, xxvii, 1995). Leopold goes on to say that, "Socrates' refusal to escape punishment, or even (earlier) to request banishment, was clearly grounded in a commitment not to weaken the community by undermining the system of law…" (Leopold, xxvii, 1995). Stirner harshly criticizes this decision:

> Socrates was a 'fool' to concede to the Athenians the right to condemn him; his failure to escape was a 'weakness', a product of his 'delusion' that he was a member of a community rather than an individual, and of his failure to understand that Athenians were his 'enemies', that he himself and no one else could be his only judge (Stirner quoted through Leopold, xxvii, 1995).

> Stirner, however, praised Alcibiades, a criminal who fled Athens to avoid trial, "as an 'intriguer of genius' an egoist who undermined the state precisely by breaking with the ancient prejudice that individuals were free only if, and to the extent that, they were members of a free community" (Stirner quoted in Leopold, xxvii, 1995). Although Graeber does not exhibit the same condemnation for civil disobedience as demonstrated by Stirner, it is evident that Stirner's assessments of Alcibiades actions are similar to the Occupy Movement's notion of direct action. Instead of legitimizing the existing power structure by allowing himself to be judged, Alcibiades fled Athens. Stirner's assessments of Alcibiades actions are also similar to Graeber's evaluation of the actions of activists who attacked fast food outlets in Europe and America. Retelling the account Graeber writes:

> What he objected to was the fact that the activists who damaged the buildings did not then remain in front of them until the police arrived and voluntarily turn themselves over for arrest… But the people who attacked fast-food outlets in Europe and America were anarchists; they completely agreed with the KRSS critique of fast food as a state-supported engine of ecological and social devastation, their existence made possible by a whole legal apparatus of trade treaties and "free trade" legislation; but it never occurred to them it would be possible to address this, or find any kind of justice, within the legal system (Graeber, 235, 2013).

As demonstrated in the quote above, the anarchist in Graeber's accounts, like Alcibiades, fled the authorities in order to avoid trial. Both Graeber and Stirner view this behavior as a political tactic. Moreover, Stirner's assessments of Alcibiades actions and the Occupy

Movement's notion of direct action are all congruent with Stirner's conceptualization of 'insurrection' and his idea of resistance, which is not a fight against oppressive power but a raising of oneself above oppressive power. The Occupy Movement's concept of direct action is a reflection of Stirner's notion of resistance. As Graeber suggested, a direct action is proceeding as one would if the existing power structure did not exist this idea practically mirrors the aforementioned notion of resistance expressed by Stirner. That said, it should be noted that the Occupy Movement does not mirror all of Stirner's philosophies. Stirner's adamant rejection of the humanist assumptions found in collective anarchism are at odds with the adoption of humanism expressed in the direct democracy form of political action utilized by the Occupy Movement. This further illustrates contradictions entailed in the principles and political tactics utilized by the Occupy Movement.

Rationality and the Scientific Method

In each of the theoretical paradigms, discussed rationality has been conceptualized in a variety of different ways. Collective anarchism, informed by the humanistic assertions of Feuerbach, conceived of rationality as an innate and essential aspect of humanity. Max Stirner, whose book laid the framework for individualistic anarchism, turned the Feuerbachian notion of a "moral and rational" human essence on its head, arguing that rationality and morality were nothing more than oppressive fictions or fixed ideas. Postmodern and poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Jean-Francois Lyotard conceived of rationality as a discourse or narrative that should not be privileged. Each of these conceptions of rationality are accurate, to some degree, however they also misconstrue the essential nature of rationality. However, before rationality can be reduced to its essential nature it must be defined. James Lett author of a book published in 1997, which explores the fundamentals of science and rationality, entitled *Science, Reason, and Anthropology: The Principles of Rational Inquiry* provides, perhaps, one of the most comprehensive definitions of rationality or reason to date:

> Reason is the exercise of critical judgment in the pursuit of reliable knowledge. Reason entails the recognition of the distinction between propositional and emotive statements; reason also entails the recognition that both propositional and emotive statements can be expressed in either subjective or objective terms. Accordingly, reason requires that a consistent distinction be made between subjective-propositional, objective-propositional, subjective-emotive, and objective-emotive statements. Reason avoids the confusion that stems from confounding these four types of statements. In the pursuit of objective-propositional knowledge, reason employs a set of self-correcting epistemological procedures that can be characterized as the scientific method. Thus reason demands that claims to synthetic propositional knowledge be both publically verifiable and testable. Reason further demands a steadfast adherence to the rules of logic…Finally, reason recognizes that all claims to synthetic propositional knowledge are tentative and provisional, subject to revision in the light of additional evidence or superior analysis. Reason rejects the proposition, however, that all claims to knowledge are of equal merit,

and reason maintains that claims to knowledge that are incongruent with the principles of rational inquiry are insupportable (Lett, 89-90, 1997).

Lett's detailed conceptualization of reason or rationality is highly informative and illustrative of all the ways in which rationality or reason obtains knowledge. It also identifies with specificity, the type of knowledge, and the limitations of that knowledge that can be derived through rational inquiry. At the cost of being reductive, however, Lett's comprehensive definition of reason or rationality essentially conceptualizes rationality as a systematic means of obtaining reliable knowledge. A simpler way of stating this proposition is to say that rationality is a tool, a tool that is used to obtain reliable knowledge. In essence, rationality is a tool much like a hammer is a tool. A hammer can be viewed and used as a doorstop, a paperweight, or even a murder weapon but its essential nature or primary form of use is as a tool. Rationality, in the same sense, can also be used and viewed as an innate aspect of humanity, a narrative, or discourse, or even as an oppressive fiction. However, like the hammer, rationality's essential nature, its primary form of use is as a tool.

In order to provide a more detailed explanation of why rationality is essentially a tool we must reexamine Foucault's criticism of "the cogito". Foucault argues that the cogito is a flawed assertion because it fails to address "what does not think," or what he terms "non-thought". However, Foucault's understanding of the cogito is misplaced because his interpretation of the thought exercise interprets non-thought as something other than feeling. The difference between non-thought and feeling is semantic at best. Feeling, essentially, is non-thought. Both terms are binary opposites of thought. This understanding of the interconnected relationship between thought and feeling is not foreign to Foucault, in fact, In his 1971 publication *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* he references a quote from French enlightenment philosopher and aristocrat Antoine Destutt de Tracy, which states:

> I think that, when you have an opinion, when you form a judgment. In fact, to pass judgment, true or false, is an act of thought; this act consists of feeling that there is a connection, a relation… To think, as you see, is always to feel, and nothing other than to feel (Foucault, 241, 1971).

Foucault's response to the quote above illustrates that he only recognizes the physiological aspect of feeling, inaccurately reducing the concept to sensation:

> We should note, however, that, in defining the thought of a relation by the sensation of that relation, or, in briefer terms, thought in general by sensation, Destutt is indeed covering, without emerging from it, the whole domain of representation; but he reaches the frontier where sensation as the primary, completely simple form of representation, as the minimum content of what can be given to thought, topples over into the domain of the physiological conditions that can provide an awareness of it (Foucault, 241, 1971).

While Destutt's assertion that thought is, nothing more than feeling is somewhat misplaced, Foucault's one-dimensional conceptualization of feeling as the physiological condition of sensation has its own inaccuracies. Although there is a connection between feeling and sensation, to conceive of feeling as simply sensation is to view only one-dimension of a multifaceted concept. Feeling is much more than sensation it is that "what does not think". One can experience certain feelings such as nostalgia, depression, etc. with or without experiencing the normative physiological effects that correspond to such a feeling. Destutt is correct when he states that "to think, as you see, is always to feel," this is because thought and feeling are opposite ends of the same line. One cannot think without in the same instance having some degree of feeling and one cannot feel without in the same instance having some degree of thought. Foucault recognizes this inseparable link between thought and non-thought, He writes,

> The modern cogito (and this is why it is not so much the discovery of an evident truth as a ceaseless task constantly to be undertaken afresh) must traverse, duplicate, and reactivate in an explicit form the articulation of thought on everything within it, around it, and beneath it which is not thought, yet which is nevertheless not foreign to thought, in the sense of an irreducible, an insuperable exteriority (Foucault, 323, 1971).

Yet, Foucault is married to the idea that non-thought is somehow foreign to feeling. Informed by this notion Foucault argues:

> This double movement proper to the modern cogito explains why the 'I think' does not, in its case, lead to the evident truth of the 'I am'. Indeed, as soon as the I think' has shown itself to be embedded in a density throughout which it is quasi-present, and which it animates, though in an equivocal semi-dormant, semi-wakeful fashion, it is no longer possible to make it lead on to the affirmation 'I am'. For can I, in fact, say that I am this language I speak, into which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its own possibilities, yet which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether (Foucault, 323, 1971).

When one conceptualizes non-thought as feeling however, Foucault's argument, represented by the quote above, loses it logical coherency. Indeed, 'I think' does lead to the affirmation 'I am' because when I think I feel. Better stated, I think/feel or I think and feel therefore I am. I can say that I am this language that I speak because I think and feel this language that I speak. Foucault's assertion that my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether because my thought is never an absolute of itself, is accurate because my thought is always in relation to that "what does not think," that which I feel. When Foucault ask, "How can man think what he does not think, inhabit as though by a mute occupation something that eludes him, animate with a kind of frozen movement that figure of himself that takes the form of a stubborn exteriority?" (Foucault, 322, 1971). The answer is simple man thinks what he does not think he inhabits that which eludes him, because he feels it.

This aspect of feeling, which is implicitly included in the cogito, explains why the absolute certainty of existence the cogito provides is singular to the individual who experiences this thought exercise. To view the cogito as a narrative as Lyotard argues when he writes, "As resolute a philosophy as that of Descartes can only demonstrate the legitimacy of science through what Valery calls a story of the mind or else in a *Bildungsroman,* which is what the *Discourse on Method* amounts to," is to misconstrue the essential nature of the cogito (Lyotard, 29, 1984). The cogito is essentially a thought exercise; it can be viewed as a narrative just as a hammer can be viewed as a paperweight however, like the hammer that is not its primary function. Once again, I cannot, with absolute certainty, prove my existence to anyone other than myself because I think and *feel* therefore I exist. This understanding of the cogito explains why it is more accurate to view the cogito as a thought exercise (something that one *feels* when it is undertaken) rather than a narrative because it is a method or exercise that allows one to affirm one's existence with absolute certainty.

The interpretation of the cogito discussed in this project reaffirms the existence of the subject, stated more precisely it reaffirms my existence, with absolute certainty, as a subject. The existence of the subject in general is still largely assumptive. However, if I continue this thought exercise, formulated by Descartes, I find that this affirmation is the only thing in which I have absolute certainty. My understanding of absolute certainty, ascertained through my experience with the cogito, allows me, to some degree, to conceptualize that which is not absolutely certain, uncertainty. Rationality is the tool that I use to hierarchize, organize, and understand this uncertainty. It is the method, by which I am able to, now that I have constituted with absolute certainty my existence as a subject, understand, control and adapt to that which is my opposite, that which I am not absolutely certain of, the object. This project has illustrated the ways in which Foucault, Lyotard, and other poststructuralist and postmodernist theorists have attempted to question the legitimacy of science and rationality by pointing to the illegitimacy observed in Descartes constitution of the subject. In a sense, these theorists are correct in their assertions, the existence of the subject, in general, cannot with absolute certainty, be proven. However, my existence as a subject is undebatable. Once again, the cogito is a thought exercise that can prove the existence of the subject, with absolute certainty, to, and only to, the individual that undertakes it because the affirmation of one's constitution as a subject can only be confirmed through a realization that involves both thought and feeling. However, because of the various similarities observed through sensory evidence, it can be assumed, with a high degree of certainty, that all humanity can constitute themselves as subjects in much the same fashion. This is the foundation that science and rationality is based upon. This also explains why the product of rational inquiry is always tentative and provisional, because its basis is assumptive. This understanding of rationality is in line with the assumptions concerning objective reality that also provide a framework for rationality and the scientific method:

> It should be admitted as well that science is founded upon a pair of assumptions that are ultimately unprovable, at least in the logical sense. The first of these is the assumption

that objective reality exists independently of the perceptions, interpretations, motivations, feelings, desires, wants, or needs of individual human beings. The second is the assumption that objective reality is amenable to human inquiry (in other words, that human beings are able, at least to some significant degree, to apprehend and understand the reality beyond their own minds). While it may not be possible to logically prove the truth of these two assumptions, however, neither is it possible to reasonably doubt either of them. Our lives are not mere illusion, and we do not live in worlds of our own. Indeed, all of our notions of moral accountability are based on that factual: we are not responsible for what we do in each other's dreams, for example. The pragmatic justification for the belief in the efficacy of human inquiry into objective reality is similarly overwhelming; the myriad technological accomplishments of science establish that in dramatic fashion (Lett, 42, 1997).

As illustrated in the quote above, science and rationality are based on assumptions regarding the existence of objectivity, because the only thing I can be absolutely certain of is my existence as a subject. The uncertainty involved in the existence of an objective reality does not undermine the legitimacy of it rather it reaffirms the validity of its suggested composition. Moreover, as implied in the aforementioned quote, science, or rationality is the tool by which that assumed objective reality becomes amenable to human understanding. This explains why rationality and the scientific method are, essentially, tools that allow human beings to understand and explain the uncertainty that pervades human existence. Again, rationality, essentially, is a tool that is used to obtain reliable knowledge. This is not to say that rationality and the scientific method cannot and are not used as tools of oppression. Many theorists and a large amount of social science research, have thoroughly demonstrated that indeed, rationality and science have been used and misused in such misguided ways. The central claim that this project maintains is that these uses do not represent the essential nature or primary function of rationality or the scientific method.

The section above has argued that the essential nature and primary function of rationality is that it is a tool that is used to obtain reliable knowledge. It is now time to examine the misplaced manner in which the Occupy Movement conceives of rationality and how that misconception relates to misguided conceptions of rationality observed in the three primary theoretical paradigms discussed in this project.

The Occupy Movement's Misconceptions of Rationality

The conception of rationality expressed by core members of the Occupy Movement and observed in the movement's political tactics and principles illustrates the Occupy Movement's misunderstanding of the essential nature of rationality as a tool. A more thorough examination of the Occupy Movement's notion of "contaminatinism" illustrates a degree of disregard and antagonism towards rationality that is informed by the misconception of rationality expressed by core members of the group. As demonstrated in earlier sections of this project the Occupy

Movement based their notion of contaminationism on the belief that their form of direct democracy would spread globally:

> Insofar as we were a revolutionary movement, as opposed to a mere solidarity movement supporting revolutionary movements overseas, our entire vision was based on a kind of faith that democracy was contagious. Or at least, the kind of leaderless direct democracy we had spent so much care and effort on developing. The moment people were exposed to it, to watch a group of people actually listen to each other, and come to an intelligent decision, collectively, without having it in any sense imposed on them—let alone to watch a thousand people do it at one of the great Spokescouncils we held before major actions—it tended to change their perception over what was politically possible. Certainly it had had that effect on me (Graeber, 22, 2013).

As illustrated in the quote above the entire vision of the Occupy Movement "was based on a kind of faith that," their form of direct democracy would spread (Graeber, 22, 2013). The basis for the achievement of the Occupy Movement's primary goal is not grounded in a rational assessment of the possibility of achieving the movement's goal but rather on a hope or faith that this goal would be achieved. As alluded to earlier in this project, the Occupy Movement's "hope" that direct democracy would be contagious represents a reflection of an assumption observed in collective anarchism that is informed by Feuerbachian humanism, which suggests that humanity has an innate rational and moral essence. The Occupy Movement assumes that direct democracy, their primary form of political action, would resonate with the innate rational and moral essence of the global populous. Once again, a relationship between the principles and goals of the Occupy Movement and social theory can be observed. Moreover, we can view how the assumptions concerning rationality informed by collective anarchism are reflected in the in the actual goal of the Occupy Movement.

As alluded to earlier in this portion of the project core members of the Occupy Movement, also express a misconceived notion of rationality. David Graeber, one of the core and founding members of the Occupy Movement, criticizes what he terms the "tradition of "rationality" that the founders inherited":

> To be rational in this tradition has everything to do with the ability to issue commands: to stand apart from a situation, assess it from a distance, make the appropriate set of calculations, and then tell others what to do… It's only the habit of command that allows one to imagine that the world can be reduced to the equivalent of mathematical formulae, formulae that can be applied to any situation, regardless of its real human complexities (Graeber, 198, 2013).

Graeber's conception of rationality, illustrated in the quote above, is a conception informed by a distortion of rationality's essential nature. It is akin to the notion of rationality expressed in the work of Foucault or Lyotard, who conceptualize the concept as a tool of

oppression, an imperialistic discourse wielded by elites that suppress and undermines the knowledge of the oppressed. Graeber's assertion that rationality "has everything to do with the ability to issue commands," almost echoes an assertion Foucault makes in *The History of Sexuality,* which states, "Between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority, even if they have specific roles and are linked together on the basis of their difference" (Foucault, 98, 1978). Graeber conflates rationality with the ability to issue commands, an oppressive technique of power. Once again, we see the reflection of social theory observed in the principles and politics of the Occupy Movement. Although Graeber has criticized post structuralism, elements of postmodern and poststructuralist thought are reflected, although in a distorted and amalgamated manner, in his conceptualization of rationality. That being said, much like the conceptions of rationality purported by Lyotard and Foucault, Graeber's conception of rationality is, to a degree, inaccurate. This project has argued that to perceive rationality as a "means of control" misconstrues the essential nature or primary function of the concept. Rationality, essentially, is a tool and like any tool, its usage is heavily dependent upon who and how it is used. To assert that rationality "has everything to do with the ability to issue commands," erroneously conflates the tool with its user.

Also noted in the aforementioned quote, is the fact that Graeber acknowledges that this conception of rationality is derived from a singular period of its usage (the colonial period in U.S. history) yet he goes on to present this conception as a singular definition of rationality. This assertion becomes evident when Graeber contrasts the aforementioned notion of rationality with his conception of reasonableness:

> After all, when one asks if a person is being rational, we are not asking very much: really, just whether they are capable of making basic logical connections… Consider, in contrast, what's entailed when one asks if someone is being "reasonable". The standard here is much higher. Reasonableness implies a much more sophisticated ability to achieve a balance between different perspectives, values, and imperatives, none of which, usually, could possibly be reduced to mathematical formulae (Graeber, 200, 2013).

In the quote above, Graeber demonstrates his misconception of rationality in two very distinct ways. The first way in which Graeber demonstrates his misunderstanding of the nature of rationality is that he interprets rationality simply, as a means of "making basic logical connections" or a manner of reducing all human inquiry into "mathematical formulae". While rational and scientific inquiry usually does include quantitative methods and logical consistency, these are only aspects of a much more inclusive and complex means of ascertaining and understanding the assumptive objective reality that humanity inhabits. To argue, as Graeber suggests, that rationality is completely quantitative would discount the large girth of scientific qualitative research that has been performed by scientists in a variety of disciplines for decades. The second way in which Graeber misconstrues the concept of rationality is that he erroneously attempts to distinguish "being rational" from "being reasonable". Much like the difference between feeling and non-thought, the disparity between rationality and reason is semantic at best.

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Moreover, Graeber's suggestion, that rationality and humanism, which is what Graeber appears to be referring to when he speaks of "reasonableness", are incompatible is unfounded. Lett reaffirms this assertion writing, "…the essential principles of rational inquiry are a *necessary* component of a genuinely humanistic approach. Remove the element of rationality from humanism and all that remains is mysticism" (Lett, 118, 1997). Lett goes on to write:

> The epistemological standards of scientific inquiry are also *sufficient* to inspire genuine humanism, because the consistent application of reason inevitably results in the distinctive set of ethical values that is characteristic of the humanistic approach (Lett, 118, 1997).

Graeber is highly mistaken when he suggests that rationality is incapable of assisting in the achievement of a balance between two different perspectives, values, or imperatives, this is exactly what happens when two adversarial parties come to a rational compromise. Yet, this error, once again, reflects the postmodern and poststructuralist conceptualization of rationality and knowledge, which interpret rationality as an imperialistic and domineering narrative or an oppressive technique of power.

The Occupy Movement's misconceptions of rationality provide, perhaps the most transparent representation of the distortions of social theory that this project has attempted to demonstrate throughout its analysis of the relationship between social theory and the Occupy Movement. However, the fact that this section, and possibly this project as a whole, has relied heavily on the accounts and positions expressed by a few of the core members of the Occupy Movement is not lost on the author of this project. In the next section of this project, this shortcoming and others will be discussed.

Limitations of the Research

This project has relied heavily upon the accounts and positions expressed by a small number of the core members of the Occupy Movement to inform its description and analysis of the movement. This represents a serious drawback in the validity of its findings. To present the accounts and positions of a few core members as representative of the Occupy Movement as whole goes against the inclusive and leaderless principles of the movement. It should be noted however, that the accounts and positions expressed by core members of the movement and utilized in this project are in line with positions and principles expressed on the Occupy Movement's official website, reported and documented by the media, and expressed in scholarly essays written by social scientists that have closely researched the movement.

Another major limitation of this project is its condensation of expansive and diverse social theories into highly reductive categories. The variation and diversity of thought included within each of the theoretical traditions discussed is immense and perhaps impossible to capture within the limited scope of this project. However, the goal of this project was to illustrate the central themes expressed within each of the paradigms discussed. Whether or not this goal has

been achieved in its entirety is debatable. At the very least, this project has captured the themes expressed in the theoretical paradigms discussed that are, in some manner, related to the social movement that has been examined throughout the project.

Future explorations of the connection between social theory and social movements could utilize methodologies that were not employed in this project. A content analysis of publications and pamphlets created by the Occupy Movement, as well as news articles that focused on this social movement could elicit new insights into the relationship between Occupy's social theory and political practice. Visual analysis of protest signs, pictures, and events could be used in tandem with ethnographic non-participant observations. Participant observations, like the ethnographic research referenced earlier in this project performed by Gluck and Maharawal, could also be used to aid the exploration of the connections between social theory and political action. Qualitative methods, such as interviews of key members or organizers, could be utilized in future research to add experiential depth not found in this project. Further research on this topic may also want to expand the scope of the social theories under examination. Moreover, a comparative analysis of other contemporary social movements, such as the Arab Spring, might yield interesting findings. This project has only begun the exploration of the connections between social theory and political action and there are a variety of methodologies and research designs that could draw out more extensive information on this topic.

Conclusions

This project has established that there is a relationship between the Occupy Movement and features of collective and individualistic anarchism and postmodern and poststructuralist thought. The similarities and the differences between each of the theoretical paradigms also have been examined. It was found that the Occupy Movement's form of political action and resistance takes its cues from the humanist elements espoused in the collective anarchistic tradition and the notion of 'insurrection' expressed in Stirner's work. This project also has illustrated the parallels between some of the ideas espoused in Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* and those expressed in postmodern and poststructuralist thought. Finally, this project demonstrated the ways in which the Occupy Movement reflects, in a distorted but observable manner, the misconception of rationality expressed in each of the three theoretical paradigms examined.

After examining the Occupy Movement's social theory as espoused by some of its core members and founders, this project has concluded that, in general, the positions and political tactics utilized by the Occupy Movement share some similarities with the assumptions and themes found in collective and individualistic anarchism and postmodernism and post structuralism. This study also revealed a number of contradictions within the Occupy Movement's theory and practice. In particular, Occupy embraces some of the essentialist features of collective anarchism, while simultaneously drawing from the assumptions of individualistic anarchism and postmodern thought – both of which reject essentialism.

While this project encourages future research to examine the findings of this exploratory study in more depth, important insights have been obtained from this initial exploration. One insight that should be quite evident at this point is the fact that the relationship between social theory and social movements is very significant. The data and analysis regarding that relationship that has been presented in this project underscores that assertion. With revolutionary movements and social protests occurring in rapid succession throughout the globe, it is vital for societies and the participants' of the movements themselves to understand what informs these movements and how that influence affects the movement's principles and politics. Investigating the relationship between social theory and social movements is but one avenue of research that can provide such information.

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Vita

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