

## Connecting the Dots: Occupy Times Square, Re-occupy Our Imagination

By JULIANNE LUTZ WARREN

October 29, 2012: This is the 83rd anniversary of Black Tuesday, the day that the stock market crashed in 1929, ushering in the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl years. As I awaited Hurricane Sandy, I walked Tess, my terrier, along the wall of Central Park near West 103rd Street, which was barricaded by city authorities to keep people safe from falling tree limbs. Up and down the sidewalk, Tess and I were pelted by acorns as wild gusts blasted through the oaks lining the streets. Pumped with adrenaline, we dashed up and down the sidewalk for a few minutes and then, finally, stopped. I shivered slightly.

Sounds of trees—full of  
nuts percussing the cement—  
planted seeds of fear.

A couple of days earlier in the park, I watched a single, tiny Winter Wren—whose bright voice can slice through dark springtime woods—with quiet intent, picking tiny flower seeds out of the soil near my feet.

October 28, 2012: One day earlier and three hours before the NYC subways went through an “orderly” shut down at 7 p.m. to help keep people safe during the incoming Hurricane Sandy, I took the 1 train to 42nd Street where a group had assembled in *Times Square* to take a stand, refusing to yield our imaginations to bad dreams. We would not yield our faith and ideals—our hopes—to the numbers of the stock ticker

flashing above our heads, which glowed with undiminished brightness. We would not yield our memories and expectations to the images shimmering above us at Times Square; the high-resolution, gargantuan visions of girls in sexy underwear and boys with big feet in high-performance sport shoes. These images seduce us to dissociate from our selves, real sex, the earth beneath our feet, the actual stars in the sky, flocks of birds migrating beyond the clouds, and the people standing right beside us. We would resist the engulfment of our hopes into that “sponsored dreamscape.” We would choose to be grown-ups, standing amidst sparkling kiosks that advertise *Coca Cola (recycle)*, *NBA2K13*, and *Rock of Ages, Annie, Book of Mormon, Wicked*, and *War Horse*—all against a leaden sky. It would be that leaden sky itself that would occupy our minds. Our message is this: END CLIMATE SILENCE.

These words were painted with black paint on a duty-reassigned US Army-issued parachute. Just the right number of people in a circle of hands faced each other and held the edges of the pink fabric taut so the message—END CLIMATE SILENCE—was clear against the blue-painted concrete near the bottom of the ruby-red bleachers, the now iconic structure that cost \$19 million to build despite economic crisis in 2008, where visitors have since competed with each other in climbs to the top—a vista from which people may experience an adrenaline-pumping dose of simulated hope. For us, the stairs become part of

the backdrop and we position our message for a photo shoot from the ground. Our photographer is hidden above the dazzle behind the tinted glass of a nearby hotel. Next, we shuffle around together, keeping the parachute-dispatch level until we are in line with the “Earthcam,” which takes in a shifting live aerial view of Times Square. For a few minutes END CLIMATE SILENCE competes onscreen with the bewitching, half-naked-well-shod fantasy world environing us.

I discovered, however, that I needed help to keep from being lured in.

Recite birdsongs. Quit  
the big, flat screen. Wrinkle out  
of pretend. Breathe free.

I discovered afresh my own desire to watch my disembodied self ascend into limelight to be watched and desired by others who wanted the same thing for their incorporeal selves. I became more interested in craning my neck to see if I could see myself on the screen than in the message I was holding in my hands. Not a moment too soon, the parachute-holders, some with smiles for passersby and some with their eyes closed as in prayer, began chanting together, at the top of our voices, “HURRICANE IN OCTOBER, CLIMATE SILENCE MUST BE OVER.” For a dose of reality, recite these threshold numbers published this past August in *Rolling Stone* in an article by climate change activist Bill McKibben:

“2” is the utmost number of degrees Celsius the global average temperature can rise above the Holocene average and we still have any expectation that Earth will maintain conditions to which we have become long adapted.

“565” is the maximum number of gigatons of fossil fuels we can burn by mid-century and have any expectation of staying under that 2 degree temperature limit (at current rates we will blow through this in 16 years).

“2795” is the still-rising number of gigatons of oil and gas in proven reserves (valued at \$27 trillion) which fossil fuel companies intend to sell to us. This means that we need to keep at least 80 percent of that underground. <sup>1</sup>

The 2012 presidential debates between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney were the first since 1988 not to include at least some mention of climate change. The oil and gas industry donated over five million dollars to their campaigns (Obama, \$705,373;

Romney, \$4,748,461), buying their silence, or worse, their decency.<sup>2</sup> Obama’s better decisions seemed twisted. In an amazing triumph for the people who had clamored against it, Obama, at the start of the year, denied the needed presidential permit on the Keystone XL pipeline because it would jeopardize the health of the sensitive agricultural lands it would run across. Romney strongly criticized Obama’s decision because he believed that it opposed the national interest in jobs and economic growth. Meanwhile, *Forbes Magazine* reported the same day that prices for crude oil in the areas that the pipeline would serve were “artificially low,” because major oil companies like

“The Earth is resilient and creative, but neither inexhaustible nor unbreakable.

Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum (BP), and Conoco Philips could not get the oil to their refineries around the Gulf Coast fast

enough. This was a bold complaint from an industry that, fewer than two years earlier, had been responsible for spilling billions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. In June 2010, Obama said that this disaster was as profoundly worldview-shaping as 9/11. It continues to profoundly spiral outward, sickening reaches of the ocean, shorelines, and thousands of people (or more) in a poisonous chain that is also cycling inland. Nonetheless, in the second presidential debate, although Obama insisted on the importance of developing “clean energy,” he and Romney engaged in what can only be viewed as a radically bizarre contest to demonstrate which of them was more pro-drilling and mining. Throughout the campaign debates, neither candidate talked openly about climate change.

No policy discussion makes sense apart from the reality of climate change, however, which has arisen from extreme land-use practices encouraged in the United States. Industrial-era land uses, particularly “Green Revolution” agriculture and forestry, have diminished Earth’s biodiversity, which maintains the gaseous composition of the atmosphere to which we have become accustomed. We appropriate deeply buried, ancient, carbon-rich fossil life as fuel to burn in order to grow food and textiles, manufacture plastics and nylons, pave parking lots and streets, and drive cars. This has pumped tons upon tons of carbon dioxide directly into the air. Now, Earth’s atmosphere contains proportionately more greenhouse gases than it has at any other point in humanity’s existence. Amounts of carbon dioxide, the top greenhouse gas,

are at 392 ppm and rising, already well above 350 ppm, the likely threshold ushering in disruptive or catastrophic changes in ecosystems and human societies alike. The over-abundance of greenhouse gases has already raised the Earth's global average temperature about 0.8 degrees Celsius over the past century. This means that the atmosphere holds around four percent more water vapor on average, which tends after evaporating from arid places, to be dumped as rain deluges on already wet areas.

This election year is in the running for the warmest year ever in the continental United States. Extreme drought in the Midwest has destroyed winter wheat and corn and soybeans. Ten days before Hurricane Sandy, I sat atop a hill in Birmingham, Alabama, where I was attending a family wedding. I was hosted generously and comfortably behind panoramic glass windows, from where I watched dust cloud up the parched air, blowing across from the Dakotas. While average ocean surface temperatures have risen over one degree Fahrenheit over the past decade and a half, this year temperatures in some areas of the mid-Atlantic were five or more degrees warmer than average, creating conditions for hurricanes to travel farther north, bringing more destructive winds and flooding rains. Four months ago, I watched everything go dark as 70-mph winds and downpours erupted across Virginia during the June 2012 "super derecho," blowing out power and leaving my family and me without running water for more than a week. On October 28, I—along with millions of others—was waiting for the arrival of what meteorologists called "the biggest storm ever to hit the US mainland."

As I prepared for this storm, I felt fear. But I also felt relatively well insulated, ensconced on the second floor of a sturdy brick building with few windows, a flushing toilet, and drinkable water. More than a billion people don't have clean water on a daily basis, and those suffering most bodily from climate change are not those responsible for bringing it about. America makes up about four percent of the world's population, holds nearly 34 percent of its household wealth, and has contributed at least 25 percent of industrial-era accumulated global greenhouse gas emissions, which are trapping heat in the atmosphere.<sup>3</sup> I knew that my lifestyle contributed to all of this. I have benefited materially from our fossil fuel-driven Times Square economy, a system that measures value in ciphers and tickles, but not love. Therefore, in this hurricane, my fear was something I deserved, for I have been ben-

efiting from a way of life that is harmful to others and eventually will be harmful to me as well.

I surrounded myself with bowls of clean tap water to drink and wash with if the power went out. I realized how fortunate and wealthy I was; the clean water surrounding me was cradled in porcelain. All I have to do is push a lever and, carried by clean water, my waste flows away from me to somewhere else. The clean water that surrounded me was cradled in a crystal pitcher, hand-thrown pottery bowls, and copper pots. All I did was turn on the faucet and it flowed to me from somewhere else. The clean water that surrounded me at home in Manhattan on the eve of Hurricane Sandy, and on all previous days, has flowed through pipes to the city from reservoirs to the north, including the Gilboa Dam on Schoharie Creek on the outskirts of Prattsville, New York, in the Catskill Mountains—my family's historic hometown.

#### OCCUPY THE WHITE HOUSE, UN-OCCUPY PRATTSVILLE

August 27, 2011: My husband and I, traveling from our places of work, joined up at St. Stephen's Church in Washington, DC, on August 27th. We reunited for a training session prior to taking part in a peaceful action of disobedience, during which we would be sitting down at the White House fence in protest against the building of the Keystone XL pipeline. We were planning, along with at least one hundred others that day (and hundreds more over the course of two weeks of action), to be arrested for this cause.

The 1700-mile pipeline, if built and operated as planned, would pump nearly 900,000 million barrels of crude oil daily through some of the world's most fertile growing areas, situated between the boreal forests of Alberta Canada and the Gulf Coast. The Keystone project would mobilize strip-mining of hundreds of thousands more acres of those vast northern forests. It would further demolish the home of a multitude of First Nations people and other members of the land community, including caribou, wolves, and the 30 percent of North American birds that breed there. The white-throated sparrow, arriving here to New York in the fall, the only bird I know who sings tunelessly through the winter, is one of them. Its numbers have already declined 30 percent in the past 40 years. Mining destroys the forest, fouls the soils, pollutes the Athabasca River and other waterways, leaches poisons into the ground water with consequences potentially rippling over years for miles. It is also a deep graveyard of ancient fossil life, full of carbon, which,

if killed, mined, and burned would desecralize it and make it—in the words of NASA scientist James Hansen—“game over for the climate.”

The formal arrest action scheduled for the day after the training (August 28th), however, was cancelled out of respect for the police and others preparing for Hurricane Irene, who was blowing in that weekend. Jim and I decided that we should get out of DC while we could so that he could have safe driving conditions home to Virginia and so that I could travel before train service was cut off into New York. I also had to rescue Tess, then a tirelessly playful three-month-old puppy, and our pocketbook from \$70/day boarding fees. It turned out that she had picked up giardia while she was held in her kennel, something I would learn while holed up in my apartment as the skies turned greenish that night.

It turned out that Irene’s center bypassed Manhattan. We had very strong winds and rains and it was tough enough, but New Yorkers celebrated relief after the storm. It wasn’t until the next day that I learned that Irene had occupied my family’s hometown of Prattsville, NY. A few days later, I arrived in front of what had been the home of my father, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents.

After my grandparents died, their children had sold their home to the Dutch Reformed Church, where my maternal grandfather served as a pastor for a short time. Though flooded to the second floor, the house was one of the few structures still standing after Irene. Gutted, the new pastor and her family were already working on restoring this historic monument that was built by 19th century architect A. J. Downing as an Episcopal manse in “Gingerbread Gothic.” Downing had shaped it as a cross, and it was sited across the street from another historic home, the country mansion, and now-dedicated museum of Colonel Zadock Pratt, who had also helped fund the old manse’s construction. Pratt was, by all reports, an industrious, ambitious, rich, patriotic, and generous man.

Born in 1790, Pratt worked at odd jobs and trained in the tannery business until 1824, when he had carefully saved enough capital to open his flagship tannery, full of his own innovations, along the Schoharie

Creek in the Catskills. In addition to the tannery, he also built his own town. As he worked, Pratt partnered with some of the biggest names in the tannery business, congregated in an area of factories and shoe stores called “The Swamp” in Manhattan. This area was located between what are now Gold and Pearl, and Frankfurt Streets, some of the richest streets in the city, steps away from Tammany Hall. Pratt, among others in the 19th century leather tanning business, became elected Tammany members and influential in politics as well as in the military and finance.

Pratt succeeded in establishing himself as a leader. His Prattsville tannery was one of the world’s largest and most productive tanneries. Hides from Buenos Aires, furnished by “Swamp” men and tanned in Prattsville in 1844, were the first to be proudly shipped from a New York harbor to Europe. In the winter of 1847-48, when the Mexican War stimulated demand for shoe leather, Pratt loaded up his belongings in a very large sled, and drove it all the way from Prattsville downstate to the “Swamp,” behind four proud, iron-gray horses, to help fetch his load’s highest price. Contractual arrangements and commissions between hide and leather merchants and tanners meant that the tanners owned the capital gain only if the leather was sold in the market for more than the merchants paid for it. This involved not only the value-adding process of tanning, but also knowing when to buy and sell the leather. According to Frank Norcross’s *The History of the New York Swamp*, Pratt was skillful at both activities and kept excellent records to boot. His gains on tanning at the Prattsville factory started at about 20 percent and rose to over 79 percent. With \$100,000 of his profits, Pratt established “Prattsville Bank” in 1842, and, collecting on good-judgment loans, he doubled its assets in ten years.

For generations, Americans have imagined that the Earth, particularly North America, is inexhaustible, thereby justifying the activities we believe will fulfill our dreams. But it turns out this belief is harmful because it is wrong. The Earth is resilient and creative, but neither inexhaustible nor unbreakable. Moreover, many of our desires have been downright greedy. Giving others a helping hand from time to time, or even a foot up doesn’t, in both moral and prudential terms (which turn out to be indistinguishable in ecological terms), begin to justify our expropriation of more than what we need. Many of us have had too much confidence in our intellectual and physical powers even to overcome unintended consequences of our activities;

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we think that we can get away with taking things from the Earth, increasing productivity, or finding replacements for things that run out. We can't. Our dreams of progress have been misconceived; their hope is a scandal.

Our riches came from the wealth of the land, including its indigenous people. Before Pratt arrived, earlier settlers had rid the area of Mahican people, wolves, and others. In order to make use of the Schoharie Creek water for his Prattsville factory, Pratt dammed the creek. For convenience, he built Main Street, cutting off a big bend

in the river and crossing the river's elevated flood plain. When the hemlocks he used for tanning were gone after 30 years, he turned model farmer.

He convinced his neighbors to follow his lead in grazing cows on cutover lands and fields to profit from highest quality butter production, further tapping the soil's fertility. Furthermore, Pratt's "Swamp" tannery business in Manhattan contributed to an industry that polluted the island's freshwater creeks and the gleaming, spring-fed, 60-foot-deep Collect Pond, turning the area into the notoriously disease-infested Five Points slum. This sickening led to the innovative design of a system of aqueducts, beginning in 1842, to deliver clean water from elsewhere. Elsewhere would eventually include the Schoharie Creek, which would be dammed again to create the Gilboa reservoir downriver past the big bend that Main Street cuts across in Prattsville.<sup>4</sup> Pratt also served two terms in Congress in the 1830s and '40s, where he originated the bill establishing the Department of Interior, which, among other things, was charged with constructing the national capital's water system in Washington, DC, and surveying and developing the biological and mineral resources of the West. Pratt also founded the National Bureau of Statistics, a ledger recording the country's profit, but ignoring the diminished treasure of nature—the soil's fertility, the water's biodiversity, the land's capacity to renew itself, and eventually the town's people themselves.

Before his death in 1871, Pratt boasted that there were no poor in Prattsville; however, for a complex of economic, social, and ecological reasons, the town's

prosperity was not enduring. In my lifetime, I watched the town dwindle to about 700, becoming increasingly poor (with an average per capital income less than \$20,000) and run down. Each of my grandparents' four children left the town to work and raise their families elsewhere, as did many others. Many of Prattsville's old Main Street houses began turning ramshackle. Church attendance also declined and businesses disappeared, leaving the bare bones: a grocery store, a hardware store, an insurance office, a couple of diners, perpetual yard sales, a bar, a video store, and a gas station. Indeed, the land is resilient; bright fall maples and sober oaks now swathe the mountains, growing in the thinned soils. The people, too, are resilient; church potlucks and local organ concerts continued to grow friendships out of a thinned society. But the land community, over generations, had been weakened. The community's shared capital of fertility had been overdrawn by demanding land-uses for almost two centuries before Irene hit.

Founded upon an elevated floodplain, Prattsville has a history of flooding. Lore says Pratt's specially imported hemlock coffin was washed away in a flood before he could be buried in it. My great-grandmother, knowing what high waters of the Schoharie behind the house could bring, became so fearful at times of spring snowmelt and summer rainstorms that my grandfather would drive her to the next town for safekeeping. Irene came in the fall, and she was of uncommon power. Five hundred miles across, the storm blew in with over 50-mph winds, shedding more than a foot of rain within 24 hours.

Several factors loaded the situation for historic disaster, including the native mountain geology and season; complications to stream flow created by the Gilboa Reservoir just downstream (and Blenheim-Gilboa hydroelectric dam four miles farther down); and the history of deforestation and grazing, with lag effects even after generations. Eroded soil, less organic matter, and less vegetation holding the soil in place means that land generally soaks up less rainfall so more runs downhill, filling waterways. Soils with less vegetation also tend to erode downhill into waterways, changing streambeds over time and destabilizing stream equilibrium, sometimes for generations. These factors may have increased the likelihood of intense flooding of the creeks that flow into the Schoharie and the Schoharie itself. Moreover, land uses that disrupt and expose soils, by removing mature vegetation and degrading biodiversity, also tend to release more and store less

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carbon dioxide. These extreme land-use changes repeated across landscapes—along with increasing use of fossil fuels—have created climate change, warming the Earth, including its oceans. Areas of the Atlantic were several degrees (Fahrenheit) warmer than average in 2011, making a storm like Irene more possible. All of this led to the historic moment in 2011 when the Schoharie river channel expanded into the valley in a raging torrent five feet above the previous record flood level (which occurred in 1996), that washed away a town, my town.

Irene swept away houses and other buildings, like the iconic O’Hara’s gas station, leaving no visible trace of them, except a couple of lilac bushes planted on either side of doorways no longer present or a set of front steps leading nowhere. Irene also swept away the soil itself; in places, it subsided under the force of the water, leaving gaping pits. Most of the homes still standing were sentenced with white papers reading “Condemned.”

In front of my aunt’s former—now condemned—home was an old *Better Homes and Gardens* issue on landscaping, upside down in the mud. I noticed that under the layer of silt deposited by the flood, a few zucchini survived in my grandparents’ former backyard, gnawed on by some small animals. I remembered finding Easter eggs hidden in that garden and eating its spring peas cooked in milk and sweet butter. I remembered how much I loved my grandparents; I was grateful to them and missed them a lot. I remembered that when we cleaned out the family’s barn a few years back, we discovered a long pair of tongs and a wooden plunger, tools of the nineteenth-century tanning trade, sitting side-by-side with a huge slab of hemlock, my great-grandfather’s feed store receipts, and a gas-driven Model-T car starter key. I cannot hide from my own family’s legacy of chasing the American dream, of gaining riches by means of industrial, capitalist, fossil-fuel-driven land uses, by which I have been privileged. This dream eventually led to the demise of the land community and our own hometown, contributing too to climate change sufferings of neighbors as close by as next door and as far away as the other side of the world, including children and those yet-to-be-born.

A FEMA tent was set up across from Pratt’s house, advertising help in accessing government resources. The Huntersfield Christian Training Center was feeding people, and its members were aiding neighbors in mucking out homes that people wanted to save. In fact, there were volunteers from all over the country

here to help out. White faces and black ones as well, a racial diversity I had never seen here before. But what stands out most vividly in my memory of those few days after Irene are the ceaseless, grinding noises. Drowning out all else were the roars of generators and industrial vacuums, and the huge vehicles being used to haul away debris. The impression of the destruction and the accumulated noise level of the machinery throbbed in my head, and I started feeling sick. I walked up the street to the edge of town and climbed up Pratt Rock from the top of which is a panoramic view of the valley and the Schoharie carving through it. This is an iconic place where Pratt had arranged to have his memorial history carved in the stone cliff—figures of hemlock trees, work horses, a scroll symbolizing the National Bureau of Statistics, a big arm with a hand curled around a sledgehammer.

I could still hear the machinery from the top of the cliff as I looked down over the river, which was still torrential and dark with soil, though mostly withdrawn now from the valley plain, leaving swaths of silt behind in which new things might grow. Town Supervisor and gas station heir, Kory O’Hara, responded to reporters in the aftermath of the storm with his own fist raised, pumping in defiance of the weather. He intended to rebuild. In spite of this can-do zeal; in spite of New York Governor Cuomo’s promise that the government would make it possible to rebuild Prattsville “better than ever before;” in spite of all the grief of the souls who had lived through the storm and who had stuck with this town through thick and thin and were planning to do so now; in spite of my own broken love for this place, I do not believe that this town should continue growing on this floodplain valley as it has, nor do I believe that it should have ever developed here as it did. I believe that love for this place means to not abandon it, but to leave it, allowing it, with our humble care, to reassert a will of its own.

At the top of the cliff, I turned away from the dramatic vista. Tess, as disoriented as I was, seemed relieved to gnaw restfully on a tree branch and scuffle around for acorns and pebbles. I laid my face down under a huge oak tree and closed my eyes. I turned my ear to the ground to listen to its older, quieter, wiser voice until it overcame the hum of the equipment below and the nauseous pounding in my own head. My sorrow had turned wildly defiant. I smelled the decomposing leaves atop the red-brown post-glacial soil, comforting, like warm bread. I wanted to howl against “progress.” I wanted to howl for authentic hope that

desires true love. I believe that we need fresh, creative dreamscapes, grounded in the realities of the beautiful, fertile ground, of where and what hometowns should be.

#### OCCUPY LIBERTY PARK, WALL STREET RE-OCCUPIED

October 29, 2011: Strangely, another October 29th. Around 12:30 p.m., exactly one year to the day before Hurricane Sandy's arrival, I visited the Occupy Wall Street tent town established September 17, 2011, in Liberty Plaza Park (a.k.a. Zuccotti Park). It so happens that my timing corresponded with another historic extreme-weather event in Manhattan and other portions of the Mid-Atlantic—an “unprecedented early-season winter storm,” according to the National Weather Service Reports. The meteorologists stressed that it was “the first time a winter storm of this magnitude has ever occurred in October.” This storm helped make 2011 the third wettest year on record for Central Park (the wettest was 1983). More than a foot of heavy snow fell. Higher-than-average ocean water temperatures, over 60 degrees Fahrenheit, kept the precipitation as rain across Long Island. But just slightly farther inland, temperatures were cold enough to support snow, along with gusts of up to 63 mph in some places. The trees in Manhattan in October were still full of leaves, which sagged under the weight of the snow. Branches and entire boles cracked apart and collapsed, as did hundreds of power lines, leaving a vast number without those things we now depend on electricity for—heat, light, communication, comfort, security, and the rest. Several people died during the storm.

It was Tess's first snowfall. We were up very early. The doormen had not shoveled yet in this privileged neighborhood; snow on the sidewalks was pristine, without shoeprints, not yet yellowed or oily. The puppy was grinning ear to ear, free to kick up her heels in the now-muffled valley between the towering apartment buildings and the American Museum of Natural History where we then lived. As the day unfolded, conditions became less pleasant on the streets. As for the people who had slept in Liberty Plaza all night in their Eureka tents, I don't believe that they were kicking up their heels; they were doing whatever they could to stay warm and to keep their fabric homes from collapsing under the icy storm.

There were police vans and policemen along the fringes of the Park, and members of media with cameras, as well as tourists and city people passing by to have a look or looking away. Across this seeming

boundary, I felt as though I were peering through the backlit windows of a family's private residence, but I understood that this was a community open to all. I stepped into the maze, where no one made me feel as if I were trespassing nor did anyone insist that I join them. Some of the tents for sleeping were actually private residences, other tarps were sheltering a comfort station distributing clothing, blankets, tampons, soap and the like. There was a food station, which smelled warm and spicy; a first-aid table; and a library. There was an area called the Think Tank, where anyone could meet in an orderly manner, respectfully, to speak, listen, and share diverse opinions about anything from anarchy to xenophobia. There were two information tents where I found greeters happy to share stories.

Standing just outside one of the open-sided information tents, I shared my sagging umbrella with another seeker as the fierce winds competed with the weight of the wet snow to overtake the occupiers. One of the resident greeters in Liberty Plaza was a young man named Justin, who was shivering under his bright orange cap, happy to share some of his thoughts. In response to recent criticisms that Occupy lacked solid objectives, he replied that the purpose of the tent town was to build community; though, he admitted, if someone donated some sheltered space, that could be okay, too. Justin explained how, when he was unemployed, he had relied on government aid and then fell into the hands of a dentist who had taken advantage of that resource. The dentist had him return for various procedures, which, rather than promoting his health, had harmed him. Justin lost both the enamel on his teeth and his trust. He explained to me his understanding of how money power had breached Wall Street well before 9/11. After the terrorist attack, trading had become increasingly electronic and international. This makes the actual locale less of a potential direct target for terrorists and reduces concern over it shutting down amidst natural disasters. Justin believed that this change was already unfolding anyway. In any case, it was easy to think about 9/11 and to feel my own erosion of trust and confidence in the old world—in the former America that so many of us have grown up with—standing there in the absence of the World Trade Center Towers. It was also not difficult to be wary of the nature we'd whipped up as the fast-moving hull sheers of granite clouds heaved waves of icy water in our faces.

The now-gaping pit of the former twin skyscrapers are one diagonal block northwest of Liberty Plaza.

The New York Stock Exchange is southeast, two blocks away. Wall Street—named for a walled river-connecting path built by 17th century Dutchmen in an unsuccessful effort to keep Lenape people and unwanted others out of their settlement—runs east and west, two blocks south. The former Collect Pond-turned-Five-Points-Slum is about ten blocks due northeast, now overtopped by City Hall and Foley Park among other structures extending into present-day Chinatown—Canal Street, the spine of Chinatown, runs along a canal originally dug to enhance the outlet stream of Collect Pond. It was used to drain the waterlogged mess of the filled-in pond area and to carry sewage and other waste into the Hudson River. This pattern of dumping would soon turn miles of the river poison. From Liberty Plaza, the glass-gleaming architectural masterpiece of Chase Manhattan Plaza is due southeast about one block. Chase Manhattan bank started out as a ruse for a water company in the wake of the tanners and others who left behind the sickening Collect Pond and moved their activities over to the “Swamp.” The innovative proposal of former US senator and soon-to-be Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr, was chosen by the city of New York and received funding in 1799. His written plans involved piping water through hollow logs from an untapped source north of lower Manhattan.

What Burr’s newly established Manhattan Company actually did was pipe water from a contaminated well under the Collect Pond to a reservoir on Chambers Street, in front of where the Courthouse now stands, and from there to homes in lower Manhattan, for a fee. In fierce competition with Alexander Hamilton, whom he later killed in a duel, Burr used the money he saved on actually providing clean water to New Yorkers to break up Hamilton’s Bank of New York monopoly by founding the “Bank” of the Manhattan Company, housed at 40 Wall Street. In 1955, more than a century after Burr allegedly conspired to start his won country out West and was arrested for treason (but later acquitted), his Bank of Manhattan merged with Chase Bank, becoming the second largest financial institution in the nation, scraping the sky to

“Individual self-interest has gotten us into this mess... and it can’t get us out. On the other hand, moral outrage might drive us to finally work together

help revive the financial district.

Not long before this merger, in 1946, the Chairman of Chase Bank, a member of the famously wealthy Rockefeller family, was appointed on behalf of the World Trade Corporation, just authorized by the New York State Legislature, to explore the feasibility of a World Trade Center to be situated in lower Manhattan. The initial aim was to encourage port and maritime activities, though that mission would shift to housing wealthy financial service companies. In 1958, another Rockefeller, the then-vice chair of Chase Manhattan Bank, announced the master plan for the complex. The New York Stock Exchange was one of its earliest tenants. Sited near the Hudson River and resting within a deep “bathtub” foundation specially prepared to keep out groundwater, the World Trade Center was dedicated in 1973. The redoubtable twin towers, though soon overtopped, debuted as the tallest buildings in the world. By 1987, the World Trade Center began generating a profit of \$187 million a year. In the summer of 2001, the World Trade center was sold to a private owner, Larry Silverman, for over \$3 billion, the largest real estate deal in New York history.

Just six weeks after Silverman’s purchase, two commercial passenger jets, hijacked and flown by men waging Islamic holy war, flew into the World Trade Center Towers. The first hit the north tower at 8:46 a.m., the second hit the south tower sixteen minutes later.<sup>5</sup> The 9/11 World Trade Center attacks ruthlessly and senselessly annihilated thousands and sickened countless other souls—all loved by others and loving others—but did not annihilate America’s civilization, which seems to have taken on a life of its own. The New York Stock Exchange closed, undergoing its longest hiatus since the Great Depression/Dust Bowl-era banking crisis of 1933, and did not reopen until September 17 (ten years to the date before Occupy Wall Street would be born). On that day, firefighters, police, and public officials were there to ring the opening bell on the trading floor.

Liberty Plaza Park, owned by Brookfield Properties, had been buried by the Towers’ collapse under a pile of rubble. It became a parking site for emergency vehicles and was reopened in 2005 with freshly planted locust trees and tulips, renamed for Brookfield Corporation’s chairman, John Zuccotti. A zoning agreement with the city, allowing Brookfield to build extra square feet and, in return, requiring Brookfield to welcome the public into its outdoor space, arguably made the OWS tent town legal and open to scrutiny.



The spirit of openness is antithetical to Wall Street's historic economic culture, which, from the seventeenth century to the present, has been rooted in senses of entitlement, protectionism, and secrecy—and unhealthy doses of selfishness and greed. The early Wall Street path, joining the banks of Manhattan's two major rivers, quickly became a thoroughfare for businesses, warehouses, churches, indeed, even America's first National Capital (now Federal Hall), where George Washington was inaugurated as its first president in 1789. In 1792—around the time the Five Points slum developed with rising thousands clamoring for clean water and dying from waterborne diseases—twenty-four wealthy stockbrokers secretly congregated around a buttonwood tree (i.e., Sycamore) outside at 68 Wall Street to discuss how the few of them could control the financial securities business.

This exclusive group of twenty-four men agreed to a minimum rate of a quarter percent commission on the value of any traded security giving, as they wrote in a jointly signed compact, “a preference to each other in our negotiations.” Others would later join in the negotiations by paying in. In 1817, the buttonwood group wrote their first constitution, establishing rules for buying and selling bonds and shares of companies, thus creating the New York Stock Exchange. In 1893, about a generation after Pratt's 1871 death, a group of mostly New York “Swamp” businessmen established US Leather as one of America's largest corporations. The new company specialized in hemlock-tanned sole leather, controlling 75 percent of its manufacture at the time. In 1896, “US Leather preferred” became one of the original twelve companies comprising the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which began publicly monitoring the ups and downs of stocks; in other words, collectively monitoring “the market.”

Convincing people to invest in growing companies' wealth meant luring them to compete for stocks and bonds and to trust brokers, bankers, and all others who profit most from managing finances. This system leads to transactions that are distanced from money owners' consciences, the sources of actual materials being manufactured and sold, and neighborly community relationships. This meant building a system that would prey on people's hopes and dreams, digesting them into the flesh of an economic body that could never be satiated. It meant creating modern dreamscapes that separate people not only from their own capital, but also from the land they depend upon.

The call that has fueled the courage of people to

build the OWS community has been to “fight back against the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process, and the role of Wall Street in creating an economic collapse that has caused the greatest economic recession in generations.”<sup>6</sup> Occupy stands up for alternatives to dangerous dichotomous thinking—merely a choice between the “free market,” which ordains a few as the worthy rich and the many as their poorer workers, or economic *jahiliyya* that condemns those stepping outside that global corporate economy to shame and brutality. What those alternatives are remains a question that must be answered in multiple, overlapping ways, informed by social and climate justice (which ecologically and morally, turn out to be the same thing). “Another world is possible,” the friends of OWS call out, “We are the 99 percent! We will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the one percent.” It is that one percent who currently control around 40 percent of “global assets,” and who dominate the industries and large-scale activities that are pushing atmospheric carbon dioxide above 350 ppm, which is leading everyone—the 100 percent—toward catastrophe.

Fossil-free, market-free, self-renewing power is what makes the voices of the OWS/ climate-justice movement audible above the din of the dominating system's machinery. A group gathers that is too big for a lone human voice to encompass or in an area with too much noise to be transcended by a single person's speech. The words of a speaker are repeated by those nearby who can hear them. This amplifies the sound both outward to the crowd and inward to the individual. When you repeat someone else's words, they tend to penetrate your mind in a deeper way. Because most of our minds can only remember accurately a few syllables at a time, maybe seven or so, an effective people's mic orator ends up creating a sort of street poetry of punchy rhythm, resonant decibels, and thick meaning that invites everyone into belonging. In certain assemblies, listeners may “twinkle,” that is, wave their fingers up in agreement or down in disagreement, communicating to all an immediate read on the group's disposition. Because OWS ideas of justice include listening respectfully to others, the mic is open to all. Those who want to speak get on “stack,” and each person in line generally is expected to yield the floor to the next within a few minutes. In contrast, on the historic trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange over wires and air waves, voices shout to be heard, and numbers shimmer in finger-tip competitions above all

to win, to conquer, and to be the one who leaves with the most money, faster, more and more money.

“Mic check! Mic check! Rain  
and snow won’t make us go! Rain  
and snow won’t make us...”

This is what the people of Occupy Wall Street recited on October 29, 2011, at Liberty Plaza Park, and it didn’t. However, the City’s government and police force were becoming increasingly ready to do so. At 1:00 a.m. on November 15, coordinated with the FBI (designating OWS as a terrorist threat), Department of Homeland Security, and big banks,<sup>7</sup> Mayor Michael Bloomberg, acting on charges of health and safety violations and complaints from neighbors, commanded the New York City police to make a secret raid on the OWS community, supported by Brookfield security officers. They violently cleared the park of people, arresting around 200, trashing tents, tossing away sleeping bags, books, food, clothes, bicycles . . . everything, except the new dreams themselves and a raft of friendships.

#### OCCUPY SANDY, OCCUPY OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

October 29, 2012, continued and beyond: Almost a year later, while a few of us held out our END CLIMATE SILENCE message in Times Square, keepers of the New York City Stock Exchange barricaded its entrance with sandbags in preparation for Hurricane Sandy. The storm, part Nor’easter, part cyclone, was officially re-graded to “Superstorm Sandy” as she hit the Mid-Atlantic states. Sandy was massive, spanning hundreds of miles, sustaining record low barometric pressure, and generating winds of around 80 mph gusting as high as 100 mph. Whatever she was, she was every bit as fierce as we all feared.<sup>8</sup> Weather models were remarkably accurate in tracking this storm and some of the consequences it could bring to New York City.<sup>9</sup> A few days earlier, Sandy’s 110-mph winds and rain demolished island swaths in the Caribbean and Bahamas, including parts of Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba, where there were more people already living on an edge more precipitous than many of our poorest poor. A high-pressure cold front (perhaps related to record Arctic sea ice melt this year altering jet stream patterns and ocean warming) to the north of Sandy turned her north to northwest—an extremely rare turn—and created havoc in Florida and on up the coast. The eye of the storm finally came ashore near Atlantic City, NJ, around 8 p.m. on the

29th. Not long after, Sandy’s winds pushed seawater toward the coast, which was already experiencing a full moon high tide cycle and sea levels historically high due to climate change. Past records and the built environment along the shore were smashed by the storm surge. Water surged into lower Manhattan at nearly 14 feet (almost four feet above the former 1960 record), salty, polluted water flooding subways, electrical power stations, natural gas vaults, businesses and apartment buildings, streets and parks. Trees crashed down, branches cracked off, and in some places, fires that could not be reached or fought engulfed entire neighborhoods.

Tess and I went out again just before Sandy’s landfall. With the rain and wind whipping us, I tried to imagine the well being of the birds, hopefully.

Wren, tiny flower  
seeds eaten, wind-winged away.  
Quiet. Sparrow hid.

We were all in this together as Central Park tossed in the gusts, Brooklyn and Queens were pummeled, and Manhattan’s “Battery” was battered. Thousands lost homes, begging for conversation to begin about immediate and future restoration of these flood-prone areas. The death toll is not yet counted. For millions of survivors, the power blinked off across the storm area, including service to hundreds of thousands in lower Manhattan and most of my undergraduate students at New York University, where classes were canceled. Those in high rises lost not only lights, but also fresh-flowing water for drinking and bathing, as well as sewage disposal. Some cell phone transmission networks also went down. Ground Zero, the bathtub of the still-gaping site of the former World Trade Towers, received the raging Atlantic. Wall Street was breached—occupied by Sandy. For the first time since the blizzard of 1888, which had helped convince New Yorkers to start burying transportation and other communications and power systems underground, the New York Stock Market closed down for more than a day due to weather.

Those of us living farther north in Manhattan and on higher ground farther inland again reaped privilege on top of privilege. We lost nothing much tangible that night. Though I was tense listening to the howling wind and crashing outside my window, I mostly slept (albeit fitfully) during the night that Sandy made landfall. Though the Greenwich Village Halloween parade was cancelled for the first time in its 39-year history,

on Halloween day, the Stock Market reopened. And, though deserted of people, with its pavement soaked through the storm, the sparkling kiosks in Times Square never dimmed, the stock ticker kept ticking; the advertisements flashed without interruption: *Coca Cola (recycle)*, *NBA2K13*, and, *Rock of Ages*, *Annie*, *Book of Mormon*, *Wicked*, and *War Horse* against a still-lead sky. Many Broadway shows indeed reopened. And tree-chippers, repair machinery, police officers, and firefighters seemed to annex the streets, their lights flashing and sirens blaring.

Meanwhile, that same day, Exxon and Shell announced that they made a whopping \$16 billion in the recently concluded third quarter. While awaiting the Department of Justice's decision on trying them for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Gulf of Mexico oil spill, BP announced a "better-than-expected" third-quarter profit of \$5.4 billion. This success made BP stock rise more than 3.4 percent in London trading. BP also boasted of its plans to "substantially increase exploration drilling" around the world and a new 19.75 percent stake in the Russian national oil company. Meanwhile, elsewhere, the Northeastern Atlantic seaboard awoke to storm devastation intensity, made more likely thanks to historically-Western-dominated-greedy-capitalistic-industrial-economic-growth-free-market-land-and-water-abusing-widespreading-mass-biodiversity-devastating-fossil-fuel-driven-global-climate-change. And these factors are spreading virtually unchecked.

Exxon, BP, Gazprom, Chevron, Conoco Phillips, Shell, Rosneft, Sincruide, Enbridge, TransCanada, Citgo, Peabody Energy, Arch, Alpha, Cloud Peak, CONSOL. The list of members of the "rogue" fossil-fuel industry goes on. As Bill McKibben put it without mincing words, they are "reckless like no other force on earth."<sup>10</sup> He also pointed out that this industry has been subsidized by governments and banks, by Wall Streets and Main Streets supported by investors and beneficiaries of all sorts—farmers, universities, churches, small businesses, families, and each person who hews to the status quo of the "sponsored dreamscape" that tickles us out of a reality that is accelerating into a nightmare. If even just a few of these fuel companies burn just their current reserves, they alone hold the power to carry Earth quickly over the two-degree-Celsius threshold rise of global average temperatures, creating a world for all that is un-imaginable.

Individual self-interest has gotten us into this mess, McKibben stresses, and it can't get us out. On the other hand, moral outrage might drive us to finally

work together effectively against this common enemy. Moral outrage might give us courage to do what is right, if we remember, as another bold climate author Naomi Kline puts it, "GREED IS GROSS" and "I CARE ABOUT YOU." Moral outrage may carry us toward a better world that may be possible, as long as we remember, in Klein's own words, that "[i]n the rocky future we have already made inevitable, an unshakable belief in the equal rights of all people and a capacity for deep compassion will be the only things standing between humanity and barbarism."<sup>11</sup> And in an ecologically interconnected, evolutionarily co-adapted world, deep compassion for the whole community of Earth's life is the only good that produces pure outrage of the moral sort that does not harm, but heals.

Consider the following thought experiment: Let's say something so big finally happens, say, for example, a sweeping drought wipes out agriculture in America's heartland. Say, for example, an extreme hurricane swamps Manhattan. Say both happen at once. Say many howl with sorrow as they wake up with bruised trust, or worse, in a world they cannot deny is no longer normal. Perhaps then, McKibben dreams, "even the political power of the industry [would be] inadequate to restrain legislators, who manage to regulate carbon."

**“In a true democracy, in a just and compassionate society that cares about our children, and inseparably our planet, we must all be leaders.**

If that were to happen, then those fossil fuel reserves would be worth a lot less, and industry stocks "would tank." That hasn't happened yet, but

in New York during the week of Superstorm Sandy, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Chuck Schumer, and Representative Jerrold Nadler—who warned that there "will be a storm of this magnitude again"—spoke out publicly to say that climate change is real. And on November 1st—five days before the 2012 presidential election—Mayor Michael Bloomberg surprised everyone when he stepped off the fence from which he had been sharply criticizing both candidates to endorse President Obama's 2012 re-election. The reason: Bloomberg believed Mr. Obama was the better candidate to tackle climate change. "Our climate is changing," the mayor wrote, and "while the increase in extreme weather we have experienced in New York City and around the world may or may not be a result of it, the risk that it may be—given the devastation it

is wreaking—should be enough to compel all elected leaders to take immediate action.” In his acceptance speech, Obama, breaking his dangerous silence, declared: “We want our children to live in an America that isn’t threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet.”

In a true democracy, in a just and compassionate society that cares about our children, and inseparably our planet, we must all be leaders. This is why McKibben and Klein at the end of 2012, toured 21 US cities with their “Do the Math” campaign to stoke love, which leads us to recognize abuse and respond with the power of moral outrage, thoughtfully concentrated in a strategic, already nation-wide action of fossil-fuel industry divestment, “Fossil Free.”<sup>12</sup> They have ignited an effort to non-violently cripple the rogue terrorists of Earth, to send a message, while strengthening bonds between neighbors. Superstorm Sandy may have helped END CLIMATE SILENCE, even as she has generously given us a preview of some aspects of our alternatives to Times Square, “the market,” and holy wars. Clinton Hill, Sunset Park, Brighten Beach, Broad Chanel, Staten Island, Coney Island, Rockaway, Lower East Side—these are the names of places where “Occupy Sandy,” a coalition of volunteers including Occupy Wall Street and the climate solution group 350.org, are meeting, intent on helping each other help each other. There was no official decision to form this coalition. It just happened because, in the words of one volunteer, “This is what we do already.”

I visited the Lower East Side’s Chinatown this past November 1st. Though suffering less dramatically than some of the more coastal areas, in this neighborhood the power had been out since Sandy’s landfall three days earlier and would likely remain out for a few more days at least. With subways down, loaded with bags of water, I negotiated from my apartment one hundred and some blocks south via foot, taxi, and bus, running for no charge, to the office of CAAAV—Organizing Asian Communities—at Hester Street and Essex, which was on Occupy Sandy’s list of volunteer meeting sites. There was a stern-faced police officer watching over the never-shortening, two-block-long line on the sidewalk out front where water, food, batteries, flashlights and the like were distributed. There were police everywhere. Some were directing the light street traffic because none of the traffic lights were working; others were patrolling the streets and sidewalks. I could hear lots of sirens for reasons I couldn’t see. None of the businesses in the area were open, with

the exception of a few corner stores selling basics in the dark for cash. Cell phones didn’t work well because of some storm-related transmission troubles. Schools were closed and so children were at home. There were a few generators roaring, but in general, people weren’t watching television or playing video games. It was chilly that day, but not freezing or raining, and there were people spilling outside into common areas where they were talking with each other, playing street games, reading, or just sitting around. Other people were unable to leave their buildings, particularly those who were elderly and immobile or sick.

More experienced volunteers wearing orange vests gently guided me to form a team with two others. One was a young man from Madrid named Jose, a recent Columbia University MBA whose Internet startup company office was in the neighborhood. The second was Lai, a young man from Brooklyn who spoke Mandarin. We three headed over to a tall apartment building at the corner of Bayard and Bowery, rising out of ground which, 200 years ago, had been the sparkling Collect Pond turned into the Five Points slum area, to check on people who were stranded and to figure out how to get them things they needed.

Walking past the temporary doorman, we found our way beyond the sealed elevators to the black stairwell. There were no windows in the stairwell or in the maze of hallway on the 8th floor where we knew that there was at least one elderly couple needing help. We had a small flashlight. I went up first, then Jose, then Lai followed shining the flashlight upwards for all of us. It was a bit intimidating at first, but soon we were laughing at how I kept wending the wrong way—into the wall instead of the next flight. Correcting this problem, we met an elderly man on the fourth floor who was having trouble with his next step, but seemed in friendly spirits. I touched him to put slight pressure on his back while Jose gave him a hand forward. Lai kept his spotlight shining on us all. The man seemed to regain his momentum and we all congratulated ourselves on making the most of our new exercise regime.

I was shocked by the light flooding in when the first door was opened by the older couple. I already had forgotten it was daytime. It was easy to imagine, though, what it must be like up here when the sun went down. And these people, unable to manage the stairs, had not been out since the storm. The husband, a man with an intelligent but illness-twisted face, wearing red sweat-pants and leaning on a cane, had suffered two brain surgeries. He needed water in order to take medicine,

and he and his wife also could use a new 9-volt battery for their radio, he said. Also, their flashlight wasn't working. Jose asked if this couple knew how their neighbors were doing. They weren't sure about most of them, but they knew there was a single woman next door. Perhaps she could use a hand. We knocked on her door next. She peeked out cautiously. We quickly realized that people were more likely to answer to strangers if they heard a friendly female voice. So my job was to be that voice. Jose was excellent at reading need. Lai, with Mandarin, broke the culture barrier and earned trust for us all.

As we canvassed the floor we saw glimpses of material lives lived side-by-side, including everything from a crystal chandelier and all the furnishings, to nothing but a single mattress on the floor and two baby strollers. As Jose voiced for all three of us, we felt most worried about those who might be behind the doors that were not opened. After knocking on the last door, we headed back down the stairwell with our list. We found one of those dark-but-open corner stores and, splitting the cost among us, spent \$27 cash on a 9-volt battery, a small flashlight, and 35 bottles of water shipped from springs in Maine, which we carried back up the stairs to four families. This time those doors we knocked on opened to us immediately. When we left, the neighbors remained in the hallway talking with each other, and Jose and Lai and I had become friends. And we knew that this work was only a beginning.

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Julianne Lutz Warren, PhD, teaches environmental studies at New York University in the Global/Liberal Studies Program and Environmental Studies Program, and is the recipient of recipient of a New York University 2013 Martin Luther King Jr. Faculty Award Martin Luther King Jr. Faculty Award. She is author of *Aldo Leopold's Odyssey* (Washington, DC: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2006, under the former surname "Newton"). Her previous contributions to *Minding Nature*, "The Waste of Hope," appeared in vol. 3, no. 1 (April 2010) and "Measures of Time" in vol. 3, no. 3 (December 2010). Additional references for "Connecting the Dots" are available upon request.

## NOTES

1 See: B. McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," *Rolling Stone Magazine*, July 19, 2012. (Available at <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>).

2 See the Center for Responsive Politics, "Selected Industry Totals: Oil and Gas" (2012 presidential election contributions), [Opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org/pres12/select.php?ind=E01), at <http://www.opensecrets.org/pres12/select.php?ind=E01>.

3 For ongoing research on world wealth (including effects of climate change), see, for example, studies published by the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), available at <http://www.wider.unu.edu/>.

Specifically, see J. B. Davies, S. Sandström, A. Shorrocks, and E. N. Wolff, "The World Distribution of Household Wealth," WIDER Discussion Paper no. 2008/03 (February 2008), at [http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2008/en\\_GB/dp2008-03/](http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/working-papers/discussion-papers/2008/en_GB/dp2008-03/). For statistics on climate change responsibility, see also, for example, B. McKibben, *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2011) and E. Kolbert, *Field Notes On a Catastrophe* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006). For reports on climate change science, visit the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at <http://www.ipcc.ch/>. For an accessible synthesis see, The Royal Society, *Climate Change: A Summary of the Science* (London: The Royal Society Science Policy Centre, 2010), at [http://royalsociety.org/uploadedFiles/Royal\\_Society\\_Content/policy/publications/2010/4294972962.pdf](http://royalsociety.org/uploadedFiles/Royal_Society_Content/policy/publications/2010/4294972962.pdf).

4 "The Swamp" of the tanners in Pratt's time was located at what was then a northern boundary of New York City. Earlier, in the 17th century, Dutch tanners had located around Broad and Beaver Street, built over what were formerly small streams inhabited by beavers. These first Manhattan tanners were located south of present-day Wall Street, named for a settlement-boundary wall built along a path connecting the Hudson and East Rivers. After the English occupied the city in 1664, they ordered the pungent tanning work to be taken outside the wall; thereafter, it was carried a short distance to an area atop one of the islands of many smaller fresh-water streams. In 1696, after the tanners sold their land profitably for house lots, they moved a bit north again to Collect Pond around what is now City Hall Park. Collect Pond was a major source of fresh water for the salt-water surrounded city, but tanneries, slaughter houses, and neighborhood sewage quickly turned it into a sickening cesspool by the end of the 18th century. At the time, the tanners relocated yet again, this time a bit east to the "Swamp." A few years later, by 1811, Collect Pond was filled in and became the infamous Five Points, America's first slum and the stinking place over which the city's dank "Tombs" prison was built.

Meanwhile, the city expanded and the ground water became increasingly polluted across the island from tanning, agriculture, human waste, and other industries. The growing need for fresh water "inspired" innovation in water supply. Invention eventually evolved into the Croton Reservoir system, inaugurated in 1842 to convey water from a watershed forty-one miles upstate via an underground tunnel through mountainous terrain, an engineering marvel. With rising population and increasing water demand, Manhattan eventually tapped higher into the Catskills. This development included the Gilboa Dam of the Schoharie Creek, the northernmost source of the city's water. See, for example, F. Norcross, *A History of the New York Swamp* (New York: Chiswick Press, 1901); E. Sanderson, *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* (New York: Abrams, 2009); J. Solis, *New York Underground: The Anatomy of a City* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and The Zadock Pratt Museum, "Prattsville Historical Information," at <http://www.prattmuseum.com/history.html>.

5 About two years earlier, Osama bin Laden, son of a billionaire and head of the global, militant Islamist organization al-Qaeda, a base for holy war, green-lighted the 9/11 planes operation. To bin Laden's mind, according to the 9/11 commission report of 2004, there were only two choices. There was Islam, the right way. And there was the wrong way—jahiliyya, the barbarous ignorance of unbelieving outsiders. Those choosing the wrong way must be destroyed in order to protect Islam, bin Laden and his men believed, particularly members of Western society, who possessed "nothing that will satisfy its own conscience and justify its existence." America, "the head of the snake" of the West, bin Laden said, was responsible for all conflicts involving Muslims and was "the worst civilization witnessed by the history of mankind"—most worthy of annihilation. See National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "The Foundation of the New Terrorism," chap. 2 in *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2004), at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-911REPORT/content-detail.html>.

6 See Occupy Wall Street at <http://occupywallst.org/about/>; for more on Occupy Wall Street's ideas see Tidal at <http://occupythory.org/>.

7 N. Wolf, "Revealed: How the FBI Coordinated the Crackdown on Occupy," *Guardian*, December 29, 2012, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/29/fbi-coordinated-crackdown-occupy>.

8 B. McKibben, "A Grim Warning from Science," *Common Dreams* website, January 9, 2013, at <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2012/11/01-8>.

9 E. Jaffe, "The 2011 Report That Predicted New York's Subway Flooding Disaster," *The Atlantic*, October 30, 2012, at <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/10/2011-report-predicted-new-yorks-subway-flooding-disaster/3748/>; see also E. Klinenberg, "Adaptation," *The New Yorker*, January 7, 2013, 32-37.

10 McKibben, "Global Warming's Terrifying New Math," 7.

11 N. Kline, "Capitalism vs. the Climate," *The Nation*, November 28, 2011, at <http://www.thenation.com/article/164497/capitalism-vs-climate#>, screen 6.

12 See Do the Math at <http://math.350.org/> and Fossil Free at <http://gofossilfree.org>.