



We the people RESIST. image courtesy of #jez3prez

## On the Question of the Anarchives of Occupy Wall Street

#jez3Prez & Atchu

To Present Readers (and “the Future”):

*Don't remake the '60s; make the '10s! If you would be 'the 99%'—Be the 99!  
This is not only possible—it's necessary (Abu-Jamal 2011).*

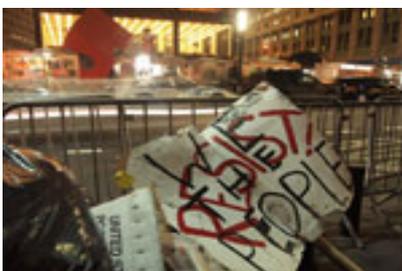


IMAGE COURTESY OF #JEZ3PREZ

There is a hysterical absurdity, perhaps even a bit of hypocrisy, to the idea of creating an archive for Occupy Wall Street (OWS). One need only look at Orwell's *1984* to bear witness to the danger therein: “Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present,

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controls the past” (Orwell 1984). The archive, as an institution, shapes the present through its particular vision of the past, and to create an OWS archive risks perpetuating the archival practice of fabricating history from a hegemonic perspective. But this is not an inevitability, and we do have a choice in how we archive. OWS presents us with the challenge of how to preserve the memories of others *with others*, not as something for myself alone, even if it means inviting paradox into the ordered realm of history. If we believe “another world is possible,” then another archive must also be possible.

The challenge to remake the world begins with a radically inclusive, directly democratic, open-ended, and open-sourced archive—a model called *the Anarchives*:

[T]he meaning of “archive,” its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded...The archons are first of all the documents’ guardians...They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives (Derrida 1996, 2).

The archivist appears as a purveyor of history, dictating what events should be documented and how; what will be hidden or disposed of. For example, while Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States* showed us history through the unique lens of “common struggle,” it did not fundamentally change the mediation between history and its framers. And so the question, as L.J. Amsterdam put it, is: “Shouldn’t archives be about relationships between people, not a about a relationship between a person and an object?” This mediation is the crux of the matter, for if OWS springs from a radical challenge to institutionalized power, then any OWS archive must commence with an engagement of this contradiction. The document, whatever it may be, is designed to convey a message and a bond between individuals; the object is merely a surface on which this history may be directly inscribed: see the painting of “Not For Sale” on the MoMA/Sotheby’s banner, or markings written on the back of a map (OWS Arts & Culture Tactical Map of lower Manhattan), or words written on a bruised man’s body (“Were puttin’ our asses on the line” [sic]).

#j27 Occupy Museums Moma Sotheby’s Lockout #occupywallstreet; Videographer: Paul Talbot

But who holds the key to the archive? Who decides who holds it? Our avenue of attack on this potential paradox commences when the archivist invites new players into their game. In [Revolutionary Games](#), we call it “The Fabrication of History.” Ask yourself how the photograph of “A sign posed amongst trash...” is fabricated and how you could otherwise describe it. Recall one of your memories from OWS and see how many different ways one event could be told. Repeat ad infinitum. History is made of these threads woven in any particular way. And we weave our own history, though certainly not alone. Yet we have asked these archons to carry the burden of history: interpret our memory and protect us from ourselves. Thus, they become our katechons.

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OWS Arts & Culture Tactical Map of lower Manhattan

IMAGE COURTESY OF #JEZ3PREZ

But we are many and diverse and decentralized. The archons have captured merely a fraction, packed it among their current collections, and kept them from further circulation in a centralized location. Thereby, they have inadvertently limited the meaning of those documents, limiting the accumulation and growth of history in an object, as well as the access that any particular individual has to that history. The next step is not to amass and centralize these materials in a single collection, but to build the capacity for sharing our data, stories and memories. Nina Mehta of the People's Think Tank writes: "[The Anarchives is] not even about different perspectives on history, because that assumes a History. It's about exploring what it is we are seeing; about understanding whatever IT is, as a multiply-defined, understood, practiced, experienced and studied object." The archive serves as a *time capsule*, made to NOT present the audience to itself; instead, we receive a deferred history, a White Rabbit, something that is constantly late. What happens if we follow the rabbit down this hole? We destroy what we were trying to protect: we *take an object out of time* in order to preserve it.



"Were puttin' our asses on the line" [sic]

IMAGE COURTESY OF #JEZ3PREZ

Even in the midst of revolution, what new prison are we preparing for ourselves? The limitation of archival history is to admit a new realm of possibility. But, as the Novad legend says, "We began as aimless (p)articles, wandering through the universe...we found ourselves pulled together towards the same center of gravity, a dream we could not forget, an unshakeable memory of a self that we had never noticed there." From that the Occupy movement was unleashed, like fireflies setting wildfires, or that's generally how the story goes. Like any myth, this is subject to change as we go, and it

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grows as we grow. History changes every day, and archives will come and go, but the Anarchives are simply forever, and they have their own way. It is history with a grain of salt. It changes the world as we try to interpret it. The [Tamiment Library](#), which has distinguished itself above all others in supporting the autonomous efforts of archiving at OWS, seems to understand this better than most. When OWS changed the conversation around the world, it was offering new visions of possibility. We must burst beyond the four opaque walls of the paradigm of the archive! Our archive must be able to travel through space and time to see history more from a sense of memory than time.

If “archives as we know them are built on an ideology of waste,” which comes from a history of centralization and control, then the Anarchives must derive from an alternate ethos, perhaps best expressed as “Sharing is Caring” (Bold 2012). As opposed to a monument to an essentialized past or future existence, the Anarchives are any open space in which history is allowed to take place. And we need it. So quotes Kanene Holder, self-proclaimed Database Dumpster Diver, from an African proverb: “Until the lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.” Now let us rise like lions to the task; another world awaits.

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**#jez3prez** has been collecting documents on Occupy Wall Street since the first General Assembly on Bowling Green; the collection has since become the basis for the Anarchives. **#jez3prez** is an anarchist with a selfless agenda to run Everybody for President; it is a historical fiction that **#jez3prez** is actively documenting and fabricating. For example, it is reported that, in a spontaneous act of anarchival direct action, **#jez3prez** pissed in the vault of J. P. Morgan’s estate on 23 Wall St. **#jez3Prez** often appears with his notorious brain-buddy, Atchu, in their work on Revolutionary Games. When asked to provide a description of **#Jez3Prez**, Guadalupe Caballero of the “Midwest” said the following: “He’s possessed by no-possession...possessed by no-thing, no-one, no-time, no-place.”

**"Atchu"** (yes silly street names) is a primary care physician and master in public health that went to #OWS looking for himself and revolution, only to discover he was actually looking for redemption. After finding other like-minded (lost) forms-of-life, he realized that these were nihilist projects so he stopped searching. And that's when he found it. Anarchist by poetry and writer by accident, Atchu works within movement with strategy, philosophy, revolt, and art. With **#jez3prez**, pretends to travel across the world spreading the seed of dissent and cultural rebellion so needed at this point in time, everywhere he goes.

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## Works Cited

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