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Out of thousands and thousands of thoughts: Wandering the streets of the Hong Kong umbrella movement

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ABSTRACT

This essay discusses methods of pedagogy and educational philosophy stirred up by the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement/Occupy-Hong Kong Movement at the end of 2014. It situates these events as a way to envision a new type of public university. To this end, the essay proposes a model of 'wandering scholarship,' in which educators and activists walk through urban environments and use dialogic esthetics to reclaim them as 'Commons.' Wandering means a multisensory exploration and learning based on the historical concept of 'psychogeography,' a drifting through sites and interpellation of their embedded ideologies. As opposed to traditions of introspective wandering, this kind of 'dialogic wandering' is done within groups and encourages people to talk to fellow-walkers or random bystanders. As will be shown, these modes of wandering while addressing publics were pioneered in the 1960s student movements and also adopted in a unique manner by the young activists of the Umbrella Movement. Dialogic wandering leads to affective languages and embodied learning as opposed to modes of analytical reasoning and logic within higher education. To further study the impact of this aspect of social movements within a university curriculum, it will be shown by means of example how students can meaningfully adopt dialogic wandering to survey people's affect and ideological positioning within environments.

KEYWORDS

Umbrella movement;
walking; dialogic esthetics

Introduction: Occupying and adorning the streets

In September 2014, the political and intellectual cosmos of Hong Kong burst open as pro-democracy activists halted private cars and public transportation by occupying major thoroughfares in three different districts of the city. These actions led to heavily trafficked roadways being turned into sites of pedestrian civil disobedience and lavishly decorated encampments. The Occupy-Hong Kong movement was soon titled 'Umbrella Movement' as Hong Kong protesters had used their umbrellas as practical tools to defend themselves from the pepper spray attacks of the police, and to pragmatically fend off brutal weather conditions, such as heavy rains or piercing sunshine. The iconic yellow umbrella – yellow being the ancient imperial color appropriated by the democracy movement – was soon reproduced on street flyers, banners, artworks, T-shirts, posters, social media profiles and status reports. The yellow umbrella came to signify a wide range of pro-democracy attitudes and alternate life-styles, as in the idiomatic expression 'umbrella term,' it became a symbol of an all encompassing and multi-dimensional social movement that would attract a diverse group of citizens and political organizations.

The tenor of this essay reflects the practical and protective qualities of the umbrella and came out of watching aerial drone footage of the early days of the Umbrella movement's Admiralty encampment after the police violence had just ended. Various news stations and citizen journalists posted aerial drone footage shot from high up in the sky to give evidence of the size of the crowds, while some footage zoomed in closer and showed that people were walking through and carefully exploring these encampments.¹ They were walking alone or in small groups to check out the abandoned highways and not completely sure how to settle there. As it would turn out a few days later, activists and visitors would slowly start occupying the streets that had been cleared of traffic, bringing out tents, bedding, food and hygiene provisions, while improvising their 'arts of resistance' to engage the media and the larger public. Hence, dialogic walking in a pedagogical sense means a sensory exploring of pedestrian environments while sharing thoughts about how to dwell there and how to understand their often hidden ideological or political control mechanisms. Dialogic walking results in a unique kind of sharing of ideas, emotions, provisions and infrastructures that are different from sharing information within established public institutions and academic venues.²

The Umbrella Movement for the most part focused on and addressed Hong Kong's process of electoral reform (the direct election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive), but protesters also suggested a future for meaningful life-style changes for the average Hong Kong citizen, many of whom already lived in close proximity to the provisional encampments. The activists would demonstratively and meticulously care for the emerging street architectures, such as self-invented walkways and street signs among their tents and seating areas, and they also used site-specific art forms to converse with the meandering publics. Activists displayed an unusually outgoing attitude and would charm citizens by offering water and snacks, flyers and T-shirts, chairs or temporary bedding, along with the necessary protective gear of umbrellas and face masks.

But since the sites were visited by supporters and opponents alike, there were also extensive acts of implied or overt violence such as threats, brawls, bullying, sexual harassment, and harsh political disputes that sometimes required the services of the police. Small but intense political confrontations would continue for hours and the protesters would more than often revert to 'cooling off' gestures such as holding up their hands (like in the Black Lives Matter protests) or singing Happy Birthday to members of the opposition. As clarified by Jennifer Eagleton in a series of blog posts devoted to the languages of the Umbrella movement, the Happy Birthday song was a tactic used by protesters when the opposition became too violent or abusive: 'Singing "Happy Birthday" (sàangyaht faailohk, in Cantonese) served to annoy and disorientate them no end' (Eagleton, 2014).

In citing these modes of activism, this essay has been inspired by several traditions of 'wandering scholarship' that have informed the field of Cultural Studies and its concern with alternative modes of pedagogy and peer to peer education. There are first of all well-known canonical scholars who have challenged the elite and static establishments of art and philosophy through the act of thoughtfully walking in both urban settings and outdoor environments.³ A philosopher like Friedrich Nietzsche sought the wild outdoors to ameliorate his mental anguish, while slowly surrendering to a kind of intellectual inspiration that is outside the confines of scholarly institutions. He argued that it was not natural and even unhealthy to produce knowledge only while being housed within these institutional spaces, with 'the seated body, doubled up, stooped, shriveled in on itself' (Gros, 2014, p. 18). Other scholars such as Walter Benjamin sought out ways of loitering in and reflecting on the modern city itself through the act of walking.

Sarah Pink has given an overview of how contemporary artists and scholars have renewed these methods of walking as ways of 'opening up tactile methods of learning to represent/describe and comment on the *multisensory experience of walking* and the affective dimensions' (Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill, & Radley, 2010, p. 6). But activists specifically have rekindled the dialogic walking practices of the Parisian Situationist International in the 1950s which more explicitly proposed a theory of 'psychogeography' as politicized gestures and consciousness. Psychogeography refers to a playful rediscovery of urban environments, a tactic that enables individuals or groups to develop and share subjective ways of understanding and engaging with those spaces. The 'dérive', one of the most publicized games of Situationist

wandering and political radicalism, intends to subvert our relationship to and preconceptions of the urban environment. Guy Debord defines it this way:

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for Movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there... But the *dérive* includes both this letting go and its necessary contradiction: the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities. (Knabb, 1995, p. 50).

Hence the games and rituals of discovery are guided by a sense of critical reflection as well as a set of instructions that make people aware of mechanisms of power and control associated with environments.

The proposal for scholars to walk together and experientially sense environments can also be related to the aims of 'dialogic esthetics' in contemporary art theory, where art is seen as a medium for social and political involvement and does not come into being until people encounter and interact with those dynamics (Kester, 2000). Kester has defined dialogic art practices as those that constitute meaning not through representation, nor by challenging or subverting the formal qualities of representation (as in avant-garde art traditions), but by fostering encounters and conversations around objects and environments. These encounters are experienced as an affective feedback loop or a

relationship that breaks down the conventional distinction between artist, art work and audience – a relationship that allows the viewer to "speak back" to the artist in certain ways, and in which this reply becomes in effect a part of the work itself (Kester, 2000).

Kester derives his concept from the literary theorist Bakhtin who argued that the work of art 'can be viewed as a kind of conversation – a locus of differing meanings, interpretations, and points of view' (Kester, 2013, p. 10). This type of conversational exchange is motivated by a search for shared meaning and affects within and around works of art, whose epistemological boundaries are stretched and include surrounding contexts as loci of meaning (Kester, 2013, p. 77). This process of expansion also aims at revealing socioeconomic disparities such as ethnic segregation or lack of public access. At the same time, the conversations about art become more experiential and less analytical in that publics are invited to represent their heterogeneous mindsets and voice their primal reactions.

But why do activists want to engage in such practices and how would the public benefit from the conversational dramas unfolding within public spaces? According to Kester, one of the most significant political backdrops for this change in the function of art is the crude privatization of public spheres in tandem with the stigmatization of ethnic minorities or lower classes. As we have witnessed in recent social movements in the USA such as Black Lives Matter, African-American citizens have reclaimed urban spaces in order to protest against acts of violence and discrimination by the police. In the context of Hong Kong, activists reclaimed inner city arteries in order to lament the power of the city's oligarchy's stranglehold and its hyper-inflated real-estate markets.

One of the activists' programs was to empower Hong Kong public in the ways they might vocalize their resistance to top down government policies. For instance, activists drew on the rich resources of the Cantonese language to make up puns and ironic uses of various symbols of power that were printed on banners, tents, clothing and handbags (Gma News Online, 2014). People also self-reflected by scribbling messages on A4 sheets and sticky notes that were glued on streets, sign posts, barricades, and transportation vehicles that had been abandoned on the blocked roads. The roaring inner-city highway that became the encampment of Admiralty, comprised primarily of SAR government headquarters, was turned into a messy but cozy hub, literally splattered with thousands of art works and political slogans. Perhaps the most iconic example of this dialogic force was a large democracy wall of millions of messages written on sticky notes (later named the Lennon Wall), which came about in a matter of days and exemplified a space of collective literary outburst in contrast to the sterile government buildings.

The Umbrella Movement initiated several ad hoc referendums for Hong Kong people to vote on the future of democracy. They also organized a televised debate with Hong Kong Government officials. These intensified attempts at debate with political leaders and the public worked in tandem with the examples of dialogic esthetics being practiced within the encampments. Student activist Agnes Chow

of Scholarism explains this objective of reclaiming Commons and voting mechanisms in a news article that commemorates the Umbrella Movement:

We want to tell people that democracy is not only elections and not only universal suffrage. Democracy includes lots of things, including lifestyle, including how do you decide, how you make decisions in your life... Referendums can really represent the meaning of democracy, or you could say direct democracy, because people can directly voice out their opinions. (Zeng, 2015)

The Umbrella Movement practiced dialogic walking to negotiate their ideological views and practical cohabitations; they solicited the public to chime in and speak back to the quickly occurring events.

The dialogic concept of art and dialogic walking has a similar function of changing methods of public or academic debate. It desires to mediate between university-based thought, political debates and extramural publics in defining the role of culture and politics. This function of the public dialog within the Umbrella Movement was further developed by a group of teachers who initiated a 'Mobile Democracy Classroom' in order to hold lectures, talks and debates with activists and the public by installing a make-shift classroom that could move between the three encampments of Admiralty, Causeway Bay and Mongkok. Each of these inner city encampments of Hong Kong had developed a distinctive encampment style and ways of attracting and addressing the surrounding public. The Mobile Democracy Classroom thus moved from site to site to host lectures and talks by Hong Kong scholars, artists and activists. The lecture-series was organized by a volunteering committee and an open call was directed at academic and secondary-school teachers. All were encouraged to share multi-disciplinary and diversified views on aspects of the Chinese law and histories of civil disobedience, media cultures and art forms, ethnic minority involvement, queer rights, and gender equality. Anybody who was present at the encampments was able to join and listen to those lectures as well as participate in extensive question-and-answer sessions afterwards. In this way, they also encouraged further political insight and debate between different factions of occupiers and passer-bys and the public at large.

Besides a well-functioning Mobile Democracy Classroom, the encampments organized peer education sessions among secondary and university students who were also preparing for their regular school assignments. Protesters thus created an outdoor, d.i.y. architecture of quiet 'study corners,' comfortable and wired electronically. Chairs and tables were provided for personal or collective study, as well as providing couches and beds for reading or resting. During my extensive visits to the occupied zones during the hospitable fall season of 2014, I noticed that the study corner at Tamar Park gradually expand over a short amount of time.

These largely peaceful methods of debating, conversing, and bonding on the street were noted and commented on by the mass media and social media. News agencies were eagerly reporting about occupation culture, its nerdy impulses and maverick street personalities; the Umbrella Movement set an example for journalists to implicitly defend their own right to unfettered and uncensored news reportage. Protesters and publics made their own opinions extensively known on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and the infamous local branch, HK Golden Forum. They all exemplified the media theorem of Manuel Castells that Occupy movements in the digital age represent a new species of social movement as people engage in 'mass self-communication' by experiencing political events through autonomous communication channels (Castells, 2012, p. 15). The Umbrella movements made for a lush example of dialogic culture on and in the streets and encouraged news media, citizen journalists, photographers, artists, and everyday citizens to participate as peer educators. Hong Kong publics were forwarding and sharing high volumes of multi-lingual audio-visuals and textual updates about the movement. A live feed on the social media site Reddit entitled 'Occupy Hong Kong' was maintained round-the-clock by three young editors who aggregated, translated, and annotated multiple Chinese language and English language sources, a unique and unprecedented effort within the linguistically segregated Hong Kong mediascape.⁴

It became clear that the Umbrella Movement initiated for political reform also overhauled peer education channels and styles of reasoning in an effort to protect and improve Hong Kong civic culture. The reclaimed streets embodied alternative life-styles to those serving far-reaching privatization as well as

institutional models of art, media, and education. The role of dialogic esthetics was to enact affective discourses for far-reaching change while building novel zones of cohabitation and interaction. It could be argued that the only way to understand the complex ideological mindset of the Umbrella Movement was by ‘walking’ its popular streets zones and trails, by sensing its rich textures of reimagined urban life and by delving into its social media fads.

The Umbrella Movement has not lead to democracy, not even to direct negotiations with the Hong Kong Government nor the Chinese Communist Party, but it did establish a blueprint for an affective and civic dialogic and a reclaimed Commons within the ultra-capitalist city of Hong Kong. It radicalized educators to participate in a search for novel arts of public debate. It has also led to a palpable backlash and a demonstrated fear of political reprisal within art and educational institutions. After it was disbanded, The Umbrella Movement paradoxically became a much more divisive issue in Hong Kong society, but the methods of artful civil disobedience discussed here still linger, allowing for possibilities of dialogic wandering within a university setting.

Umbrella pedagogy inside the classroom

The Umbrella Movement’s methods of engaging the public were unique in that moment in Hong Kong history, but the events also resonated within the transcultural languages of student protests which were addressed at other universities. In the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Canada and the USA, students have occupied their campuses in order to oppose an ‘excessively bureaucratic, managerial education system.’ (Bor, Wilson, & Harper, 2015). One of the King’s College activists clarified that they sought to ‘hold an open dialog around free and alternative forms of education, while opposing the ongoing marketization of the university system’ (Bor et al., 2015). What these student occupations shared with the Umbrella Movement is an ad hoc claiming of Commons and a search for novel styles of peer education and affective debate. For instance, the King’s College students called for ‘an inclusive space that is open to all, with a safe space and hand signal policy to ensure that all voices can be heard equally’ (Bor et al., 2015). Besides introducing the hand signal policy they again used hand-painted banners to refurbish the university’s ‘stodgy’ sites of assembly and address (Bor et al., 2015).

At the time of these student occupations, Dutch philosophers of science and technology, Halfman and Radder, published a manifesto in the open access journal *Minerva* that dealt in a more in-depth manner with the changes in the increasingly corporatized university. In ‘The Academic Manifesto: From an Occupied to a Public University’ they did not explicitly refer to ongoing student occupations at the University of Amsterdam, but instead dissected the corporate university operated by ‘management, a regime obsessed with “accountability” through measurement, increased competition, efficiency, “excellence,” and misconceived economic salvation’ (Halfman & Radder, 2015). They detailed the processes that characterize an excessively corporate university while also publishing a long list of potential remedies for institutions to become a ‘Public University.’ The envisioned Public University once again entails a quest for Commons within an organic (non-bureaucratic) space that would pop up ‘like a fertile garden.’ As they write, the Public University is a ‘knowledge Commons;’ ‘... a shared, organically grown garden of know-how and wisdom’ which teems with

recipes, systems, interpretations, collections, methods, criticisms, arguments, data files, images, utopias and dystopias, experiences, measurements, and countless other results of scientific work that are all beyond the horizon of the gadget factory. This archive is chaotic but hyper-fertile, a proliferating garden bursting with problem-locating and problem-solving capabilities accrued throughout the ages. (Halfman & Radder, 2015)

In other words, the Public University endorses the upheaval of the pedagogies of the corporate university by promoting multiple ‘recipes’ for teaching and learning, a strategy that is less concerned with policies of accountability and measurement.

The Umbrella Movement made for a good example of how pedagogy and peer education can be developed in autonomous and organically organized spaces of activism. The question would be if and how such recipes can be adopted inside Hong Kong universities as a way to examine and adopt the languages of civil obedience. But rather than offering a grand vision of civil disobedience for the

post-Umbrella era, which indeed remains a politically sensitive matter, I would like to discuss one example of post-Umbrella classroom pedagogy that led to modest but significant results.

In the semester of Spring 2015, right after the Umbrella Movement occupations had been dispersed, I was asked to teach a freshman core course 'Research Methods in Cultural Studies.' This course focuses on qualitative and ethnographic research methods suitable for the interdisciplinary field of Cultural studies, which is defined (in brief) as a theoretically, politically, and empirically engaged field of analysis concerning society's socio-political and cultural histories. As laid out in the syllabus, the course would teach students 'skills and tools with which to become a passionate, engaged, and alert researchers and how to respond to socially and politically relevant topics within local cultures, and internationally.' The course outlines theories and examples of Cultural Studies research and allows student to research methods such as proposal writing, the selection of theory and background literature, ethnographic observation and participation, content analysis through a series of practical assignments and a group research project. In my previous years of teaching, I had chosen to work with a semester theme and asked students to carry out one major ethnographic project about Hong Kong subcultures, online communities, ethnic and sexual minorities as well as the representations of these groups and trends in the mass media.

Knowing that this type of mandatory methodological course can be quite unpopular with students, I considered ways to make it more engaging and attractive to them. I assumed that the students were interested in a further study of the democracy movement as they had participated in its various phases on the campus of Chinese University of Hong Kong.⁵ I decided to rework the major assignment of the course to allow students to examine the topic of 'media and art forms used by social movements to explore a civil society.' As I wrote in the syllabus:

You will be asked to do a major research project about emerging art forms and visual cultural languages of Hong Kong civil society as exemplified in the Umbrella Movement, or another group or movement in Hong Kong, including sexual minorities and subcultures. The project should study art forms or media genres that are used by citizens and communities in search of a civil society. You will examine these forms by *observing* and *interviewing* citizens, netizen artists and activists or people of the general community concerning how the form has been produced and received, and how it has had an impact on civil society.

The first weeks of the semester went fine but I soon noticed a similar luke-warm or disinterested attitude of the previous years. Since the course took place in the early morning hours and was conducted in English, which is a less popular language of instruction among our undergraduates at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, I felt stuck and reconsidered how to proceed. When examining their lack of enthusiasm, the students responded that it was still hard for them to grasp the field of Cultural Studies and secondly, that they were also a bit reluctant to engage with a study of the Umbrella Movement. At the end of the Movement it had become clear that the ideal-driven students has lost the support from their deeply worried parents and peers as well as the bottomline that pro-Beijing legislators and practical business-oriented lobbies had effectively stymied the Movement. Hence the majority of activists ended their protest actions, while a smaller number took on a more volatile position; for instance, by gathering in public spaces such as shopping malls and sometimes harassing visitors from Mainland China who were averagely engaged in profitable cross-border smuggling. Perhaps the students were also a bit tired of the topic itself, which had caused turmoil within many families and which had solidly dominated the media and public sphere in the preceding semester.

Moreover, unlike a self-organized and organic blooming of Commons within the Umbrella Movement, the students were hesitant to emotionally engage in in-depth discussions of this topic. This lack of active student participation is not an unusual attitude to this core course, but I had hoped that the semester theme would have encouraged a more heartfelt responses. After a few weeks of lecturing and guided discussions, the students finally became intellectually piqued and started working earnestly on their final projects which focused on the protest languages and art forms that had adorned the encampments including graffiti, washable tattoos, handcrafted jewelry, street theater, protest songs, and satirical comics. Students initiated interviewing methodologies as well as participatory ethnography in order to observe how protesters and publics had been communicating through these arts of resistance. The

most difficult aspect of the project was that the encampments had been cleared and students could no longer directly visit and absorb those aspects of civic culture. But there was a huge amount of documentation available and most of the activists were still accessible and eager to share information.

The students were also asked to interview the general public about the subject based on the ethnographic model of Andrew Irving, whose work questions conventional empathic interviewing methods and suggests alternative methods to elicit and document people's conscious and unconscious thoughts. As he explains:

Out of the thousands and thousands of thoughts that are simultaneously held inside people's heads on Hong Kong streets, it is likely that a sizable proportion concern people's ongoing social relations, their current life issues and circumstances, and their observation of what is going on around them. To this we must add the kinds of imaginative reverie, half-formed daydreams and inchoate streams of thought that mediate many different kinds of social activity during people's walking, working and leisure hours. For not far underneath the surface of everyday sociality, nearly all that life offers can be found (Jacobs & Yang, 2014, p. 52).

During the 2014 Wandering Scholars Conference at Chinese University of Hong Kong, Irving had been invited to demonstrate his model of ethnography. He collaborated with a student team who designed foam boards with instructions that were placed on Hong Kong's side-walks or in public parks in order to attract people and find out what they were thinking 'underneath the surface' of everyday thoughts. The foam boards held slogans and asked people if researchers could 'Buy their worries,' 'Swap Stories,' 'Engage in Thought Collection,' or to 'Listen to their Childhood Memories' (Jacobs & Yang, 2014, p. 59). Irving and his team demonstrated during the conference presentation that Hong Kong people had responded well to this spontaneous call. Even though Hong Kong publics are normally work-focused, introverted and hard to approach for interviews, it was great to witness them participate when offered a different form of communication.

When the freshmen students read about Irving's ethnographic experiment in Hong Kong, they seemed a lot more inspired to try out their own methods of culling people's steam-of-consciousness thoughts. We decided to first walk around our own Chinese University of Hong Kong campus, after which students ventured into the urban settings of their own choice. Unlike Irving, these students were not out to catch undetermined personal reveries, but they wanted to find out how people were collectively feeling about self-determination and democracy after the Umbrella Movement had disappeared. Students designed foamboards and used their hand-held electronic devices to show Umbrella artforms to people in order to trigger responses. Some students attracted people for a short conversation by showing a street theater scene that had taken place in Admiralty, while others showed a collection of Umbrella cartoons and asked people if these cartoons were effective. Still another group attracted the public by playing several beats of the famous Cantonese protest song 'Under a Vast Sky' by Beyond. They handed out gifts to people if they could guess the song (almost everybody could indeed guess that song), after which they conducted a short or long interview about different music styles used during the Movement. Yet another group of students wore their fashionable pro-democracy jewelry to attract feedback and also appeared with erasable pro-Umbrella tattoos. This group sought to find out if these wearable artworks were becoming fashionable commodities for Hong Kong youngsters, or whether they functioned as mediums for political awareness. All these strategies were employed to see if campus crowds and urban wanderers were still thinking or 'day-dreaming' about the Umbrella Movement that had just recently been dispersed.

Overall our students also received plenty of reactions and feedback and found out that there was indeed a pool of whirling thoughts underneath the surface of an embittered and divided Hong Kong society. The Irving method was attractive to students because the aim of his 'para-anthropological fieldwork' is exactly to leave behind structured methods of dialog within specialized fields, which can be at times difficult and alienating to students and the wider public alike. These Freshmen students were not peculiarly eager to try out traditional analytical academic research methods as such and could relate to the idea that inchoate human emotions and stories can be shared in a more direct manner. The use of basic activist tools such as foamboards, banners, T-shirts, music and dance appealed to strangers and allowed people to speak up or even pour their hearts out. It was an accommodating and enriching

walking exercise for students who felt at ease once they realized that people responded well to their quest for 'valid and representative' data.

Conclusion

After the Umbrella Movement had been dispersed, it was indeed difficult to explore its ideal of reclaimed Commons within an ordinary university setting. But it was not entirely impossible to wander the streets in the mode of an interloper looking for testimonies and evidence. As stated by Irving, it does not take much effort to bring some of these sublimated ideas to the surface; it is just a matter of tapping into them by adapting one's tools of communication. The exercise in this course lifted the spirit of the early morning classroom and gave the students a sense that they could seduce publics into chatting and providing data for their analysis. I myself became more enthusiastic about the course as well, realizing that it is as important for the teacher to 'think on one's feet' as it is important to gently appeal to students in the early morning hours. When designing assignments about sensitive topics such as civil disobedience it is crucial to try out alternative and affective learning methods. My interest in wandering scholarship goes back a decade but it is through the Umbrella Movement that my interests in public intellectual culture was revived. Besides that, I am a Hong Kong person in the sense that I have lived here for a decade in a small cubicle somewhere up in the high-rise city, just like everyone else, and I constantly crave the open spaces of city squares, terraces, parks and walking trails (which luckily we have a lot of).

Walking for contemporary academics may lead to transnational mobility and being a productive networker within the corporate university. But in contrast to this type of mobility, wandering can also be corporeal self-therapy and a multisensory way of learning that can accommodate interpersonal bonding and shared consciousness. These were also the principles of the student protesters in the 1960s who traversed the Parisian streets, among and within buildings, all the while splattering walls with messages to the outside world. Their Commons and subversive art forms attracted journalists, politicians and academics alike to think and to wander along.

Somewhere between the tiny fertile gardens of Occupy-Hong Kong and the hindsight analysis in classrooms, we can try to retain a little of the Movement magic. I would have to agree with Irving that human thoughts lie buried close the surface and that simple artforms and interviewing exercises can reveal untapped social values. Hong Kong proposals for pedagogy as an aspect of civil culture cannot but pay tribute to the Umbrella Movement, whose manners of uprising will continue to impinge upon the core values of our universities.

Notes

1. For an example see drone footage posted by the International Business Times on 29 September 2014. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/flying-drones-capture-dramatic-scale-hong-kong-occupy-central-protests-video-1467653> (accessed 4 February 2017).
2. In the year prior to the Umbrella Movement, I had collaborated with a group of artists and scholars and obtained a grant from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to hold a symposium entitled *Wandering Scholars*. The premise of this symposium was precisely to explore modes of embodied and affective learning by means of diversified onsite lectures, artist talks and performances, group debates and guided walks. These events were guided by the central premise that people would engage in a different manner if moving their bodies and soaking up the tactile energies of surrounding environments.
3. Frederic Gros' *A Philosophy of Walking* describes the lives and methods of a wide range of wandering scholars in the European post-enlightenment period. (Verso Books, 2014). Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* is a more popularized scholarly text about wandering scholars, which also has a feminist angle and posits that the gender politics of wandering histories need to be further challenged (Penguin Books, 2000).
4. The site is available at <https://www.reddit.com/live/tnc30xhiiqom> (accessed 10 June, 2015).
5. For instance, in Fall 2012 they had walked out of classrooms and organized a massive gathering against a 'national education' curriculum that had been imposed from the top down and they had also initiated a rally to support students demonstrating at the Hong Kong Government headquarters (Tamar Park) in September 2014, the site of the eventual Occupy Hong Kong/Umbrella Movement occupations.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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