

Occupy Baltimore a Reflection
Howard County Friends of Latin America

Jud(e)ith Lombardi, LCSW-C, Ph.D.

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My interests in video-ethnography, videotaping people doing what people when including oneself in the process, led me to Occupy Baltimore and the Occupy Movement. I first went to Occupy Baltimore on October 4, 2011 to document the process.

Video Day 1 (cameras everywhere) of Baltimore Occupy (time)

I became a social worker because I was interested in people, a “social” activist as a consequence of my experiences as a social worker, and more recently a social ARTIVIST since I want a new society. It seems one has to be artist in order provoke social transformations in a late age.

During my first visit to Occupy Baltimore I discovered there was yoga on Sunday morning. We often forget that taking care of oneself is an important element of activism, and I was intrigued by the idea of doing yoga in a public space -- so I went. (45.sec)

Video Day 6 (yoga) Baltimore Occupy (time)

The term conversation has many meanings. At this moment, I choose to use the word conversation to describe a particular human dynamic of interaction in language, one that starts with asynchronicity and moves toward synchronicity.

Asynchronicity is experienced as a friction, a conflict, an inconsistency, being on different planes, in different clocks, or out of synch with the other participants.

In order for the friction, conflict, asynchronicity, to serve as a provocation for a conversation, it must be just enough to create a curiosity and interest. It may be question or a comment or statement that creates an opening to explore the participants’ mutual interest in the conflict, tension, asynchronicity and its potential resolution.

There is hope on the part of the composer of the friction, conflict, asynchronicity that the others will reciprocate so that the dynamics of the conversation might intensify and diversify as participants remain open to the possibility that a new idea, a new approach, or new awareness might emerge through conversation.¹

¹ From Richards Anticommunication Imperative paper in which the idea of asynchronicity in conversation is drawn from Gordan Pask’s “conversation theory.”

Demonstrating has always been a fundamental element of the Occupy Movement and Baltimore is no exception, in fact one of the things Occupy Baltimore still does is demonstrate. I now want to share footage from one of the many demonstrations that occurred during the occupation at McKeldin Square.

Day 21 (march against discrimination against, intro GA) Baltimore Occupy

General Assembly is a core of the Occupy Movement. That the Occupy Movement makes decisions vis-à-vis consensus drew me into Occupy Baltimore, because I think doing consensus is transformative.

So I was ecstatic to be involved in a movement that at its core was consensus model, a model for making horizontal rather than hierarchical decisions, a model that structures encourage participation by all in attendance, a model that opens space for embracing conflict without violence so that something new might emerge -- through conversation.²

I attended **my first General Assembly** October 14, 2011. It was after that that I began to blog my thoughts and experiences about the Occupy Movement and particularly Occupy Baltimore.³ <http://jlobardi.net/blogs.html>

² When attending General Assemblies I regularly notice that when conflicts emerge many participants appear to want to cease the moment rather than seize the moment as an opportunity for conversation.² I think avoiding our differences, and the tensions and conflicts that coincide with them is problematic to the GA process, to the Occupy Movement and to the transformation of society toward a society I desire to be a part of.

I think we need a new way of thinking about ways of thinking that can dialectically dance together, like [when peace is a need](#). Another story. -- Thank you.

³ **My first GA:**

I went to my first OB general assembly meeting at McKeldin Square in downtown Baltimore earlier this week. The organization of the meeting was nested in [consensus model](#) so that everyone had the opportunity to participate. YES, in a world where it is so hard to find groups willing to practice consensus -- it was thrilling.

I embraced the opportunity to speak, shared my solidarity with the group and my desire to generate a new more honest language. A language that is not embedded in the paradigm of [patriarchy](#) or other SOS, instead I want a language that speaks us rather than us it.

Listening to committee reports, hearing the media continuously pounding the OCCUPY movements for clear goals, I wonder and suggest that (we) create a list of what (we) don't want instead of a list of goals. ([cybernetic explanation](#))

I have met many interesting people through the Occupy Movement and no one more interesting than Shorty.

Day 21 (Shorty, goals, etc.) Baltimore Occupy

Goals and OB Purpose and Goals

Through the transformation of this public space, Occupy Baltimore is expressing solidarity with other Occupy Movements throughout the nation and the world who are forcing attention to the issues of political and economic injustice.

Our purpose is to open for all people a lasting, transparent, and honest Democracy organized in a consensus model. Our goals will be defined by that consensus of our General Assembly. We offer back to the people what corporate privilege and political complacency in our nation has taken from them.

The videos I have constructed about the Occupy Movement address many of the current concerns of Occupy Baltimore including: housing foreclosures and evictions, current practices of the Baltimore Development Corporation, the post office crises and the Cradle to Prison Pipeline phenomena around building jails rather than decent schools and recreational centers.

Many of these videos can be found on my website blog:

www.jLombardi.net/blogs/html

Occupy Baltimore has General Assembly meetings on Tuesday night at 7pm at McKelden Square in downtown Baltimore. There is often a demonstration before the 7pm meeting. Check the website occupybm.org for more information.

Articulating what (we) don't want in relation to knowing what (we) desire opens space for anything relevant to (our) desires to emerge. To limit our selves to "goals" will limit (our) imaginations and thus possibilities. (designing society)

I am NOT saying it's not important to know what each member and (we) as a unity desire. In fact I think it is a legitimate imperative that (we) come to know what (we) desire as individuals and as a unity, so that conversations that embrace and encourage conflict (without violence) might generate something unique. ([when peace](#) is a need)

Bio 2012
jLombardi.net

Judith Lombardi graduated from the University of Maryland School of Social Work in 1981. She worked in nursing homes with the elderly, in residential care for adolescents and with non-violent offenders in the prison system. She ran a private practice for a decade focusing on the needs of “emotionally disturbed” children, their families and agencies working with them.

In 1996 Judy earned a Ph.D. in Human Relations and Cybernetics from the Union Institute. Her dissertation was a video and contextual essay entitled “from what to when is (not) violence?”

Dr. Lombardi then taught sociology at Stevenson University for a decade, until 2011.

As a video-ethnographer Jude went to Occupy Baltimore on October 4, 2011. Since then she has videoed events, facilitated at General Meetings and maintained a personal blog about the Occupy Movement.