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Revolutionary Ideology in the Information Age: Technology of the Occupy Wall Street Movement

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Acknowledgements:

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Abstract:

The research presented in this project draws heavily on themes of social justice and human rights. The purpose of this inquiry is twofold. For one, it functions as an SIT Graduate Institute "Capstone," which meets the graduation requirements for a Master's degree from the school. Secondly, the function of this project is to provide a space to investigate how the theory and practice of social change accounts for today's most powerful non-militaristic technology. Exploring the connections between technology and social change, the focus of this project is particularly concerned with the Occupy Wall Street movement that has emerged the United States beginning in late 2011. The body of this document is divided into three sections, corresponding with the research methodology of a qualitative inquiry. Data is first presented in the form of an experiential testimony. This data is then interpreted as themes are extrapolated and framed in terms of human rights. Finally, the findings are then analyzed and discussed in terms of two established theoretical frameworks. These frameworks—which are identified as the Dialectical Method and Technological Determinism—represent two vastly different perspectives of how technology evolves. Yet, the data and analysis presented in this project show how these two frameworks arrive at similar conclusions about the connections between technology and social change.

Preface: Course Link Capstone

My Capstone project takes the form of a reflective and analytical discussion about Social Justice in today's society. Knowledge, skills and awareness that I acquired at SIT Graduate Institute have been central to this project. The topic presented within this project is a synthesis of my education and experience. Using the Course Link Capstone format of this project allows me to incorporate research alongside a personal testimony as I observed the formation of a grassroots social movement. In this Capstone, I demonstrate how I have linked my own

experience to the theory and practice discussed during SIT's Education for Social Justice Class. The education component focuses specifically on two items. First, this project demonstrates the value of experiential education specifically with regards to grassroots organizing. Secondly, the discussion of technology throughout this project is rooted primarily in media literacy. The topic of this project describes the intersection of these two types of education as it relates to contemporary American society.

Data presented about the Occupy Wall Street movement in the first section has been garnered through my own participation in the movement between September and December 2011. Additionally, the commentary throughout this project about the Occupy Wall Street movement has been gathered from interviews that occurred on Democracy Now during and since my time as an intern there. The data presented in the first section is then interpreted into several key themes, outlined in section II. Two theoretical frameworks are presented in section III. First, the Dialectical Method is introduced as one explanation of the relationship shared by technology and the Occupy Wall Street movement. This theory was discussed throughout the Education for Social Justice Class specifically as it related to the philosophical materialism tradition created by Karl Marx. Technological Determinism is the other theoretical framework introduced in section III of this project. This framework offers a more mathematical and quantifiable account of the relationship shared by technology and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Technological Determinism is presented intentionally to oppose some aspects of the Dialectical Method. The opposition created by these two theories has enabled me to further demonstrate the Dialectical Method as it related to the topic of this project.

The focus on technology and social change is important to my life's work. My personal stake in the struggle for universal human rights has lead me to believe that technological

development can solve some of the largest problems confronting humanity today. Solutions to real world challenges regarding food, energy and the environment should be considered with regards to the appropriate management of technology. The data presented within this project comprises only a small fraction of the work that I feel needs to be done around this subject. As I have experienced and shall discuss, technology and social change have the potential to determine the quality of each person's life, both now and in future generations. The specific scope of this project examines how the tactics and ideology of the Occupy Wall Street social movement have incorporated the most current technology.

Research Questions:
Primary Research Question:

What are the origins of technology and how have humans used technology in social change?

Supplemental Critical Questions:

(1) How have our social values been affected by technology?

(2) How has technology been used to help and hinder the human condition?

(3) How has access to technology factored into the social and political structures that humans have created?

(4) What sort of laws has humanity adopted regarding the relationship between people and technology?

Methodology:
Qualitative methodology presented in SIT's Practitioner Inquiry course is incorporated throughout this project.

Social theory is essential to the scope of this project. Primary source material of notable social theorists provides the discourse for the examination of social change. These theorists include Karl Marx, Gene Sharp, John Rawls and Amartya Sen. For each of these authors, this project's

investigation into social theory will focus specifically on the qualitative roles of technology, especially as it applies to nonviolent struggle and human rights.

Scientific theory is equally as important as social theory to this project. Outlining both social and scientific theories illustrates two different dimensions of technology. Therefore, the discussion of scientific theory will also rely on primary sources from a separate theoretical discourse. These sources will include Gordon Moore, Seth Lloyd and Dick Rumelt. The primary purpose of including these sources is to address the origins and evolution of technology. Incorporating a quantitative approach alongside the qualitative nature of this project provides a separate lens with which to view the same topic.

Participant observation: As part of my experiential education, I have been and continue to be a part of the "Occupy Together" Movement. Experiences during my direct involvement in Occupy Wall Street events between September 17 and December 17 (2011) are shared and interpreted as they apply to the primary research question.

Experiential Interviews: Another part of my experiential education was spent working at Democracy Now from June until December 2011. During this time, I witnessed the interviews as they occurred on the show every weekday. Information presented in these interviews spoke to the emergent political events and social phenomenon in the world today. The content of these interviews, as they appear in this project, offer voices and current perspectives from those directly involved in issues of technology, social change and human rights.

Personal Interview(s): I interviewed contemporary social theorist Gene Sharp. During this interview, I followed proper research protocol. I have written an informed consent letter as well as a number of sub questions, both of which were given to Gene Sharp before the interview. The

contents of this interview are incorporated into this project as a way of framing the message and

purpose of a current social movement from the perspective of an established expert in the field.

Introduction:

All too often within the field of Social Justice, practitioners are involved only with the

specific issues where they can personally connect and change things for the better. It takes a

specific incident like the recent murder of Trayvon Martin to catapult individual issues into the

national discussion. This "issue-by-issue" approach to protecting human rights often isolates or

privileges one aspect of the struggle. As a result, the systemic and institutionalized nature of any

issue is commonly downplayed or overlooked. Recognizing how their own struggle is connected

with the struggles of others around the world, a group of activists have come together to address

the injustice they see in the system and institutions of the global political economy. This group

of activists, known as the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, has harnessed the power of

information technology to support their ideology and tactics of nonviolent struggle. This

capstone project explores and describes the various ways in which technology has been

employed by the OWS movement as a way of galvanizing people in the struggle for universal

human rights.

Part I.
Presenting the Data – Experiential Testimony

1.1 – Creating a Social Movement:
This section presents the author's personal experiences and observations about the
recent formation of the Occupy Wall Street movement for social change.

On the afternoon of September 17, 2011, a group of activists calling themselves Occupy Wall

Street marched through lower Manhattan. Activists and journalists gathered at Bowling Green

Park to rally and plan the route for their march. Because their original destination–the New York

Stock exchange—had been barricaded from all sides, the group chose Zuccotti Park as their

destination. As they arrived, they renamed the space "Liberty Plaza." Soon after, Liberty Plaza

was organized to support a few hundred inhabitants. Using this space as their operational

headquarters, discussions and events occurred on a daily basis as a way of transforming this

group of activists into a nationally recognized movement for social change. This movement

soon crafted a collective vision of its intentions and began taking action to achieve this vision.

As explained on their official website, OccupyWallSt.org (2012):

> Occupy Wall Street is leaderless resistance movement with people of many colors,
>
> genders and political persuasions. The one thing we all have in common is that We Are
>
> The 99% that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1%. We are using the
>
> revolutionary Arab Spring tactic to achieve our ends and encourage the use of
>
> nonviolence to maximize the safety of all participants.

This self-proclaimed description of the OWS movement encompasses a moral justification for

the OWS movement.

The tagline of "We Are the 99%" has become perhaps the most prevalent language that is

directly affiliated with the OWS movement. This tagline has appeared on banners, signs, pins,

clothing, Twitter feeds and projected images that are used by the OWS movement to publicize

their message. The underlying message of this tagline is that activists everywhere should come

together in international solidarity because of their common experience of economic oppression.

Hence, people of any nationality can identify this with this tagline. By framing their message

with this language, the OWS movement nods to the Marxist conception of class struggle. As put

forth by the OWS movement, the people of the 1% are those whose economic and political

influence has created a system of corruption and exploitation. As explained by Columbia

political science professor Dorian Warren (2011), reforming this system is precisely the devotion

of the OWS movement. On the October 10 broadcast of Democracy Now, Warren stated, "Its

key that the critique is not about Republicans and Wall Street. The critique is about the entire political system, which people see as corrupt, and both parties have participated in this corruption of the political system." By committing themselves to the reform of this systemic corruption, members of the OWS movement have established a moral justification for their own existence as a movement.

As the OWS movement became more focused and organized, tactical decisions became an increasingly pervasive issue. Discussions were overheard on a daily basis that addressed how the movement would sustain itself. The first tactical decisions that emerged from the OWS movement involved the organization of various committees. In order to organize such a large amount of people in a public space, basic human needs had to be satisfied. Committees were first formed by volunteer organizers. These committees focused on practical concerns such as sanitation, food, health, medicine, fundraising and legal rights. These committees took on their own leadership structures, yet each committee operated under the common value of decisions made only by consensus. All of the inhabitants at OWS complied with the needs of these committees, which sometimes created conflict over the use of space and resources. To address these conflicts, specific spaces at Liberty Plaza were designated for food, sleeping, discussion, art, educational workshops, notable speakers and internet outreach. This form of organization allowed for communication between the various committees to become more structured and frequent. As the OWS movement took on greater measures of organization, the use of open group dialogue became the movement's greatest asset in overcoming any internal conflicts.

Tactical discussions continued as the movement gained more momentum and participation. Throughout the OWS movement, decisions have occurred almost exclusively through negotiation and consensus. Space was created to give a voice to anyone who wished to

be involved in the decision-making process. The format of conversation known as the general assembly occurred every night during the OWS encampment at Liberty plaza. The nightly general assembly created a space for people to communicate openly and learn from one another. Idea presented at each general assembly were filtered and discussed by the group in order to arrive at conclusions. Conclusions that arose from the nightly general assembly adopted a dialectic format, which will be discussed in greater detail in section 3.2 of this project. For now, the most important thing to recognize about the format of each general assembly is that group consensus was always the desired outcome. Everyone who participated had to agree on ideology and tactics in order make decisions based on these positions. The shared intention of each general assembly enabled people to focus on the common goal of deciding on a plan for action and then coordinating how to implement this plan. Each general assembly followed was structured according to the *progressive stack*, where anyone who wished to participate could stand up and address the group. The flow of conversation was always moderated by a facilitator. The role of the facilitator was to ensure respect was shown for all speakers and that no one overstepped his or her bounds by speaking too much. The facilitator made sure to create a safe and comfortable space for everyone to be involved, especially those who represented socially marginalized positions.

The decisions that arose from these nightly discussions were publicized for all to see. One pamphlet released by the formal New York City General Assembly is entitled "The Declaration of the Occupation of New York City (2011). This pamphlet contains the following excerpt, which demonstrates the decisions of the general assembly:

> We, the people, acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the
> cooperation of its members; that out system must protect our rights, and upon corruption

of that system, it is up to individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their

neighbors; that a democratic government derives its power from the people, not from

corporations, which exploit the people and the Earth. (pp. 11)

The pamphlet in which this excerpt appears also contains a list of corrupt corporate and

government practices that have become the focus of the OWS movement. This list, in its

entirety, can be found in Appendix I. These are the issues that the general assembly has decided

are central to the focus of the OWS movement. The following issues are included within this

list: economic injustice, quality of education, discrimination, censorship, working conditions,

military expansionism as well as a number of other prominent concerns professed by the people

who associate themselves with the 99%. With these issues established and publicized,

participants in the OWS movement began to engage in direct action as a way of creating the

changes they wished to see in the world.

1.2 – Technology of the OWS Movement

The technology of the OWS movement discussed in this section is also included in the author's experiential testimony. This discussion provides a glimpse of the mechanisms adopted by the movement for the purpose of processing information.

As indicated above in the quotation from the OWS website, this movement has

dovetailed with the recent Egyptian struggle to depose the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak. The

tactical methodology of the OWS movement has been directly influenced by Egypt's role in the

Arab Spring. While the Egyptian example was focused specifically on the ouster of President

Hosni Mubarak, the goals of systemic economic and political reform also align with the message

of the OWS movement. Inspired by the tactics used in Tahrir Square, the OWS movement has

organized in a similar fashion. The impact of one particular online video blog is an example that

illustrates the Egyptian movement's style of organization. The words of Asmaa Mahfouz, at the

time a twenty-six year old Egyptian activist, were a call to action for all Egyptians to assemble

for a demonstration in Tahrir Square:

> I, a girl, am going down to Tahrir Square, and I will stand alone. And I'll hold up a
>
> banner. Perhaps people will show some honor … I'm making this video to give you one
>
> simple message: we want to go down to Tahrir Square on January 25th. If we still have
>
> honor and want to live in dignity on this land, we have to go down on January 25th. We'll
>
> go down and demand our rights, our fundamental human rights. (2011)

In a similar fashion, the OWS began with a call to action on the activist website and magazine

Adbusters.org. The original call to action was disseminated through email to anyone with an

Adbusters subscription. A section of this email read, "America needs its own Tahrir acampada

now more than ever. Can we get 20,000 people to flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents,

kitchens, a democratic assembly and occupy Wall Street for a few months?" (June 8, 2011).

This message was soon echoed throughout a wide variety of activist networks, independent

media outlets and online forums such as Twitter and Facebook.

Websites on the internet such as Facebook, Twitter and the like fall into the camp of

social media. The social aspect is often greatly publicized by the people who access these

websites. Yet, these websites have also become the most efficient tools in advancing the agenda

of the OWS movement. With an account on a social media website, any user can rapidly interact

with hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. These websites are designed to

facilitate communication by hosting public networks that are accessed by any computer with an

internet connection. Networks like those of social media create a shared space, which the OWS

movement has used to provide people with important information. An article featured in the

Huffington Post by Craig Kanalley (2011) looks specifically at how social media has become a

tool for those seeking social change. In the article founder of Change.org, Ben Rattray, explained "The best way to get people away from their computer is through the computer; you can't organize thousands of people in New York City [the way Occupy Wall Street has] without the web." Rattray points out that the web has been crucial to the operations of the OWS without offering a lot of detail about exactly how the web has been used in these efforts. To begin an examination of these details, let us take a deeper look at social media as it functions within the OWS movement.

All social media interfaces are considered to be emergent forms of information technology. Incorporating a user-friendly design, all social media platforms can be accessed by any person with an internet connection (regardless of age, gender, class, color or creed). These interactions occur as individuals publicly share ideas and experiences in a virtual environment. Essentially, individuals who use social media platforms have become their own independent sources of media. Within certain guidelines for appropriate content, people are able to transmit and receive information as they deem necessary. The information shared using social media platforms is not restricted by any government or corporate underwriting or influences. Instead, individuals have the autonomy to use social media as a way of advancing their own personal interests. Each social media interface hosts its own nuanced form of literacy, but they all share a common purpose of enabling individuals to harness the information-processing power of mass communication. Accordingly, the information-processing capacity presented by social media is a unique attribute of the Information Age. The sheer number of people who access social media on a regular basis comprises the largest network of individuals sharing information that the world has ever known.

Facebook is the most widely used social media platform. In order to use Facebook, individuals create online profiles and use these profiles to network with other people. Networks are built as two individuals agree to be Facebook friends or when any number of individuals joins a Facebook group. Often times, Facebook groups are created to gather people with the intention of stimulating discussion around a particular subject. These groups were instrumental in the organization and launch of the OWS movement. Months before the inaugural march of the OWS movement, open event invitations were spread around Facebook. These invitations were created by OWS organizers and contained information about preplanning meetings. Anyone with a Facebook profile and an awareness of the effort to organize could access these invitations and see where and when the preplanning meetings were going to occur. When September 17 was chosen as official day when the movement would be launched, the *Occupy Wall Street Facebook Event* was created. This event quickly became a networking phenomenon. Anyone involved with the preplanning activities publicized the event by inviting everyone affiliated with their Facebook profiles. As September 17 arrived and the movement was launched, close to 14,000 people on Facebook had demonstrated their support by indicating that they would attend the event. See the chart listed in Appendix II for a visual depiction of the magnitude of Facebook activity surrounding the OWS movement as of 10/04/2011.

Twitter is the second most widely used social media platform and also has been vital to the operations of the OWS movement thus far. Individuals using Twitter create profiles (which are markedly different from those on Facebook) and use these profiles to broadcast and receive tweets. A tweet is a post or a status update on Twitter that contains 140 characters or less. Information on Twitter is organized into threads of tweets known as Twitter feeds. Each individual thread can be identified according to its unique hashtag. For example, #OWS and

#99percent are both hashtags that link to Twitter feeds where information about the OWS movement can be found. Twitter has been used by journalists and activists alike to document or report information about events. As people witness an event unfold, they are able to use their smart phones to log into Twitter and tweet about the details of whatever they are witnessing. In this way, Twitter has been used as a communication tool that allows information to be instantly disseminated from OWS events as they occur.

Simply by monitoring the proper hash tags on the Twitter feed, anyone with an internet connection can receive constant updates about things going on all over the world. In terms of the OWS movement, the Twitter feed has been useful in broadcasting information about the general assemblies, direct action events or unplanned confrontations with police. Supplementing the broadcasting of this information, Twitter also has a feature known as the live stream. Using this feature, data from most audio or visual recording devices can be broadcast on the Twitter feed as the data is recorded. For example, the events of the OWS movement's opening march were broadcast through the Twitter feed as they occurred in real time on September 17. This feature enabled activists and journalists to experience the event when they were not physically present. It is important to note how Twitter, and especially the live streaming feature, have become a tool to help ensure justice and accountability in the face of wrongdoing.

The instant documentation and transmission provided by video live streaming has never before factored into the tactics of grassroots social organizing. At several critical incidents, video live streaming created a strong source of leverage for the OWS movement. One incident that was captured on video portrayed a pair of Occupy Wall Street protesters being pepper-sprayed in the face during a protest in September in Manhattan. New York Police Deputy Inspector Anthony Bologna was sued in February 2012 for his behavior during this incident. A

video that was live-streamed on Twitter was the most important evidence leading to the decision. The lawsuit states, "Anthony Bologna maced the plaintiffs as they were exercising their constitutionally protected rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of assembly" (Democracy Now, 2/14/2012). Bologna was convicted because the technology used to capture his actions had the information-processing capacity to record and broadcast the incident as it happened.

Another critical incident where information technology was empowered by the OWS movement occurred during a march organized across the Brooklyn Bridge. The march occurred on Saturday, October 1, 2011 and coverage of the event appeared on Democracy Now's broadcast the following Monday. According to the Democracy Now coverage, thousands of people came out to support this event. Of those who attended, 700 were able to begin walking across the bridge. These 700 people were then arrested for attempting to cross the bridge, despite their allegations about police entrapment. When confronted with police in riot gear, the 700 OWS activists joined arms on the bridge and began chanting, "The whole world is watching!" (Democracy Now, 10/3/2011). As they heard this chant, police were keenly aware that their actions were being live streamed on Twitter. This awareness became a safety net to ensure that brutality and violence were not used to violate human rights or suppress the movement.

Another aspect of the technology used by the OWS movement involved harnessing the power of groups of people speaking together in unison. The human microphone, as this technology has been dubbed, functions as an acoustic amplification system. It is an important distinction that the human microphone is labeled as technology because it facilitates the processing of information. The specific function of the human microphone enables an individual

to address a group of any size in any space. Here's how it works: First, the attention of a group is channeled using a verbal call-and-response. Someone will begin by proclaiming the words "Mic Check," and those within closest proximity will echo these same words. Then, the same person will repeat the call of "Mic Check" and more people in a wider proximity will respond. The idea is that an increasing number of people will become part of the human microphone with each successive calling of "Mic Check." Once an appropriate degree of collective attention has been channeled, a single speaker will begin to transmit a verbal message.

As the source of this message, the speaker becomes the epicenter of the human microphone. The message will be spoken slowly and clearly, using only a few words at a time. Each phrase uttered by the speaker will then be echoed by the surrounding members of the group. If necessary, the human microphone will utilize additional generations of the same echoed message. These additional generations will allow the message to reach people who are furthest from the epicenter. The speaker will utter the next phrase only after the previous phrase has been echoed such that it has clearly reached every person in the group. The technology of the human microphone has been employed by the OWS movement in a number of different ways. Most commonly, the human microphone has been used as an organizational tactic to convey logistical information to those participating in direct action events. For example, the human microphone has been used to inform large groups about plans. Such plans have often involved meeting at a certain time or place, marching on a particular route, or how to engage if confronted or detained by police.

Perhaps the most controversial use of technology associated with the OWS movement involves a more militant approach. As defined by Dictionary.com (2012), the term *hacktivism* refers to "the practice of gaining unauthorized access to a computer system and carrying out

various disruptive actions as a means of achieving political or social goals." Since the inception

of the OWS movement, a hacktivist collective known only as "Anonymous" have allied

themselves with the cause. One member of this collective who has chosen to go by the alias

"X," described the mission of Anonymous on an interview with Democracy Now: "We're

information activists just trying to make our world a bit freer and a little better" (Democracy

Now, 8/16/2011). Specific details about the degree of exchange between Anonymous and the

OWS movement remain somewhat unclear. However, it is quite clear the OWS movement has

considered the tactical use of information technology in their efforts to validate their message.

Cyber attacks and the publishing of leaked documents are two examples of this tactical

use of information technology. Using these methods, hacktivists affiliated with the OWS

movement have exposed information about how the 99% have been systematically and

economically marginalized by big banks corporations. For example, a *Huffington Post* article

published by journalist Ryan McCarthy (2012) reported that Anonymous is claiming

responsibility for publishing leaked emails from a former Bank of America employee.

Anonymous claims that the content of these emails proves the "corruption and fraud" practiced

by the nation's largest bank. These emails, which can be found through McCarthy's article,

detail how Bank of America has profited at the expense of their own clients. Feeling that this

type of deception and profiteering are not legally justifiable, the OWS seeks to raise public

awareness about such wrongdoing. Specific blogs and Twitter hashtags created networks to help

organize and spread information about these types of corrupt or fraudulent practices.

1.3 – The OWS Movement Today
This section provides more depth about the ideology and activities endorsed by the OWS movement in order to offer a sense of how the OWS movement has progressed and where it is headed in the future. The Democracy Now excerpts featured throughout this section how the independent media, through its use of communications technology, has publicized the voices of the OWS movement.

Shortly after OWS had been established in New York City, similar occupy encampments appeared in cities across the United States such as Washington, Boston, Oakland and Atlanta. Liberty Plaza hosted the OWS encampment in 2011 between September 17 and November 15. Police evicted the OWS inhabitants and dispersed the encampment before dawn on November 15. When the inhabitants returned to reestablish the Liberty Plaza encampment on March 17, 2012, police once again assembled to prevent the space from being reclaimed. Testimony from one OWS activist named Jen Waller, as featured on Democracy Now, provides a description of the police behavior on the March 17 event. In a speech describing her experience at Liberty Plaza, Waller (2012) said:

> "It is when we speak out against the 1% and defy them by fighting for public space that we are brutalized. On Saturday night, as I simply sat in a park, I was violently arrested with my friends and watched as blood-thirsty cops stomped on their faces, knelt on their necks, pulled them by their hair and slammed them into windows."

The description above highlights the violent repression employed during this eviction. Similar stories of police brutality have become a fairly consistent theme throughout OWS events. Examples of such violence can be seen in the police evictions of other Occupy demonstrations around the country. Particularly two more prominent examples are the October and November 2011 incidents involving Scott Olson's coma in Oakland and the pepper spraying of students at UC Berkeley. Yet, OWS activists continue to stand up for the movement's underlying message even when confronted with the threat of violence.

In spite of the OWS encampment being forcefully abolished by the New York Police Department, the Occupy movement remains vibrant and active today. As of January 9, 2012, activist and independent journalist Jane Hamsher (2012) had documented a total of 62 cities

where occupy encampments could be found. The OWS movement has inspired a larger

movement on the national scale that calls itself *Occupy Together*. In an interview featured on

Democracy Now, Columbia political science professor Dorian Wilson described Occupy

Together as "the first anti-authoritarian populist movement in this country" (10/10/2011).

Wilson distinguishes Occupy Together from previous populist movements because of the lack of

charismatic leaders. In a separate interview, Arun Gupta, journalist and founder of the New

York City independent media publication *The Indypendent,* touched on similar points about the

future of Occupy Together. Gupta explained, "the reason that this movement is a success is

precisely because it didn't come in with any demands, because it was shapeless. So this

shapelessness is what really allowed it to grow and to become this vessel for all this rage and

outrage against a failed system" (Democracy Now, 10/5/2011). Since October, when both

Wilson and Gupta made these remarks, Occupy Together has continued to use this lack of rigid

organization as a way to propel the movement forward and gain more participation.

Describing his interpretation of the national movement, Wilson said, "This is a 21st

century social movement, where the activists are taking advantage of new social media, from

Twitter and Facebook, but also they have a commitment to inclusivity and democratic decision

making" (Democracy Now, 10/10/2011). By retaining this value, multiple voices can speak

about the issues that concern all of us. However, this widely inclusive approach also comes with

its own drawbacks and limitations. For example, arriving at consensus in a general assembly, no

matter how many people are involved, is always a daunting task. For this reason, Occupy

Together has been extremely slow in releasing any kind of publicity or demands about the nature

of the movement. As explained by Gupta, "if [Occupy Together] came in with demands, it

would have probably failed, because then the media would have attacked the demands as being

either inadequate or too 'pie in the sky'" (Democracy Now, 10/5/11). Yet, activists who

participate in Occupy Together feel that they need to recognize some common demands in order

to feel ideologically united across the country.   Looking towards the future, the movement must

overcome these organizational challenges while still remaining true to its values of inclusivity

and democratic decision-making.

Part II.
Interpreting the Data – Establishing Themes

2.1 – The Message and Purpose of the OWS Movement
        This section presents data provided by Gene Sharp during an interview. Interview questions are listed in Appendix III of this document. Sharp is a nonviolent theorist who currently serves as Professor Emeritus at University of Massachusetts. Sharp's responses throughout the interview are presented in non-italicized font. Italicized font throughout this section indicates the contextual significance of the OWS movement as it related to Sharp's testimony. The testimony presented by Sharp speaks identifies both strengths and challenges for the movement. Several critical questions are raised about the future of social change in America.
        The many "occupations of Wall Street", around the United States, and far beyond, clearly

demonstrate a widespread profound dissatisfaction with consequences of the present economic

and political orders. They also reveal a shared search for answers. The occupiers can influence,

to an important degree, the image and message they project. Disciplined, peaceful, courteous

behavior and tenacity can bring respect. Contrary behaviors will likely alienate sympathy and

make hostile government and public reactions more likely. *Looking at the current tactics of the*

OWS movement, it is clear that nonviolence is a significant source of leverage. For a detailed

discussion of the philosophy of nonviolence, please refer to the essay found in Appendix VI of

this document.   Nonviolence as a core principle is instilled in the tactics and ideology of the

OWS movement. As in the previous examples with police officer Anthony Bologna, information

technology has documented instances where peaceful protests were violently repressed.

Exposing violations of human rights in this manner has given the OWS movement a tool to facilitate oversight and accountability.

The long-term consequences of the occupations are difficult to predict. As primarily symbolic actions, the occupations can convey strong and deep discontent with the apparently increasing concentration of wealth on the one hand and the apparent growth of the part of the population mired in poverty and debt. Present economic misfortunes feel more serious than previously because correction by political measures does not seem to be available to the public. A widespread sense of helplessness now seems to paralyze people who are suffering from extreme economic inequities and deteriorating economic conditions. The present occupations spread awareness that many people suffer from the same problems and also that the occupiers are open to a credible path to both economic and political empowerment. *People have awakened to the power of information technology as a realistic solution. To overcome feeling helplessness, people are gathering in public spaces to share information. Forums such as the general assembly provide structure and organization to the way information is communicated within the movement. Through the shared understanding created by this structure, large groups of people determine a grand strategy and its specific plans of action.*

If one expects that occupations alone will change both economic and political arrangements, one will be disappointed. However, the limits of symbolic occupations to improve conditions are likely at some point to be impossible to ignore. The ways actually to achieve greater control of one's economic plight and political life are not completely clear at present. *Planning for the future is essential to the OWS movement. Because the movement is such a new entity, having only begun in September 2011, it is still critical stages of infancy. Only time will tell if the struggle to sustain principled action towards clear objectives can remain consistent.*

But, it will make a significant difference if activists within the movement continue to organize and share ideas. The actions and reactions that stem from these ideas are the best indication of the OWS movement's ability to affect change.

Critical questions about the OWS movement: (1) Do we need more Independent members of Congress like Independent Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont? (2) Do we need stronger methods of nonviolent action, beyond symbolism to make actual changes? (3) Do we need more consumers' and producers' cooperatives? (4) Do we need more businesses led by owners who are committed to serving their customers, not simply getting rich? (5) Do we need more or less free trade? Do we need significant changes in the tax system? *The critical questions presented here follow a progressive trend because they assume that change is the desired outcome. Contradictions inevitably unfold from the myriad of responses that individuals will offer to these questions. Mutual understanding is created in navigating through these contradictions.*

(G. Sharp, Personal Communication, April 4, 2012)

2.2 – Defining Technology

Current technology of the OWS movement raises a critical question about the origins of information processing.   This section discusses the evolution of technology in terms of information processing capacity.

Communicating quantifiable bits of information is the universal aspect of all technological structures. This understanding enables a more thorough investigation of how the OWS movement has used a particular technological structure, the microprocessor, to harness a collective power. In the most general sense, a processor is anything that processes data. At its most fundamental level, processing information entails taking data in (input), and then using the input to put data out (output). Hence on the most abstract level, a processor is a mathematical function. It takes in numbers, and puts out numbers. Yet, on a very concrete level,

microprocessors are responsible for transmitting and receiving information within our most

current technological structures like computers and phones. To gauge the power of a

microprocessor, all information is quantified in terms of *bits*[1]. More bits per unit time therefore

means more power. Lloyd (2006) proposed that "To understand any physical system in terms of

bits, we need to understand in detail the mechanism by which each and every piece of that

system processes information" (p. 6). These quantifiable bits of information are a fairly new

concept in humanity's understanding of technology. Yet, they have undoubtedly created a

massive breakthrough in the way we understand the evolution of technological structures.

Technology in our lives today, regardless of what form it may take, allows us to interpret

these bits of information as we communicate with one another. Hence, technological structures,

from the most basic tools to the most complex computers, enable some type of communication.

All forms of communication embody the way that information can be transmitted and received.

Lloyd (2006) called attention to the event known as the Big Bang. As far as physical sciences

have conjectured, this cosmological event was the first form of communication that ever

occurred. Information was processed for the first time during the Big Bang, not by humans, but

instead by cosmological technology. Ever since the Big Bang, technological structures have

been constantly changing. Looking back through evolutionary history, Lloyd (2006) offered a

short list of formative developments that have marked communication milestones in the

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[1] For most people, the notion of the "bit" being a fundamental component of the universe is a tough pill to swallow. How do we know that bits exist in things like rocks and trees? From the scientific perspective, all physical objects are simply a complex arrangement of elementary particles, which interact with each other. These interactions are governed by physical laws, which merely stipulate how these interactions are permitted to occur. These two statements ultimately reduce to each particle representing bits of information (such as a processor, maintaining numerical information about its energy, charge, spin, etc.). The interaction of particles, which are always governed by the laws of physics, represents the most basic way that communication can occur. Both of these phenomena are stated mathematically, which implies that they are quantifiable. This quantifiability means that even if these particles don't "look" like bits, they "act" like bits. Once this idea is established, a chain is created, in which older forms of technology are used as the building blocks for newer technology. There have always been implicit boundaries on the way in which technology can transmit and receive information. The evolution of the universe has demonstrated an intrinsic desire to transcend those boundaries.

evolution of technological structures. Some items on this list include the development of language, the evolution of sex, and the creation of life. As new technological structures develop, humans find new ways to communicate and connect with one another. We have created computers, telephones, electricity, a postal service, a printing press and so on, all in pursuit of the same desire to facilitate communication.

As this communication is studied, distinct technological *Ages* have helped scholars classify the various stages of technological evolution. Ages elapse in a procession, one after the next. The name of each age reflects characteristics of the newest emergent technology. Examples from human history include the Bronze Age or the Iron Age. Examples from earth sciences include the Mesolithic Age and the Neolithic Age. The contrast between examples from human history and earth science is intentional. This contrast, which will be explored in much greater depth throughout the third part of this project, shows how technological structures are not necessarily created by humans. For now, the important takeaway is that technological Ages represent the human approach at documenting the technological structures that have facilitated communication during different points in time. As technological structures continue to develop, each new Age is initiated by an Information processing revolution. Lloyd (2006) explained the connection between technological structures and technological Ages as he stated, "Every information-processing revolution is associated with a new technology—the computer, the book, the brain, DNA" (16). Biological structures are included in this list because they process information the same way as any other technological structure. When new forms of technology significantly change how information is communicated, an information-processing revolution has occurred. A new Age is ushered in.

2.3 – Arriving in the Information Age

With a new perspective on technology, it is clear that communication in contemporary society has been following a trend of digitization. The most current technological Age has allowed for the introduction of microprocessors and integrated circuits into social infrastructure. Scholars, especially in the field of computer science, identify the current age as the *Information Age* because of the way information technology has changed communication between people.

Information technology is concerned specifically with the hardware and software of computers. This technology has been rapidly developing ever since Alan Turing invented the Turing Machine in the 1930's. This particular machine is widely regarded as the first digital information processor and a precursor to all of today's information technology. Beginning with the Turing Machine, the development of information technology has transformed communication by harnessing the power of digital information. The creation and widespread use of the internet, which is also directly related to the Turning Machine, is a clear example of this transformation of communication. The above discussion of social media demonstrates some ways that these new features of communication are used in the Information Age. Emerging forms of communication have revolutionized the way people are able to network with one another. As with the onset of any new technological Age, specific technological structures have become the catalyst for change. Structures such as microprocessors create the impulses that control our information technology. They are responsible for processing power within all information technology. Yet, they often go unnoticed because they are so physically small. Despite their size, these structures are the most powerful information processors humanity has ever witnessed.

In the Information Age, computers and smart phones are core components of our communication infrastructure. As discussed in the previous paragraph, these devices are dependent upon the electrical reactions that occur within tiny microprocessors. Binary electrical interactions are digitally programmed into microprocessors. Using a language comprised of Boolean operators, microprocessors rapidly compute bits of information. Hence, the term

"computer." Each individual bit of information will move through an electrical circuit, changing

input into output. Information technology processes these bits as they follow specific protocols.

Coupled with advanced networking capabilities, microprocessors enable the most sophisticated

technology to date. The purpose of outlining the interworking of microprocessors is to highlight

the forms of power enabled by microprocessors. The rapid speed at which microprocessors can

function is the defining characteristic of the Information Age. Digital networking has rapidly

become the preferred method of communication. Since Turing's time in the 1930's, accessibility

of this digital power has been enabled by increasingly advanced technological structures that

become much physically smaller over time. It is a wonder that people today to harness the

power and complexity of information technology within the space of their pockets!

2.4 -- Freedom of Information as a Human Right

Based on the social theory of John Rawls and Amartya Sen, information freedom should be interpreted as basic human right. This section examines how and why the freedom of information has become an essential part of the OWS movement's underlying message.

As we interpret the ramifications of information technology, ethical discussions have

addressed the issues of information sharing and accessibility. Legislation that addresses the

Freedom of Information have been passed in almost every developed country around the world

to prevent the exploitation of information technology. This type of legislation guarantees the

right to access bodies of public information, particularly on digital databases. The notion of

information freedom has received a great deal of recent political attention. For example, United

States President Obama recently delivered a message to the Iranian people on the Persian New

Year of Nowruz. Specifically discussing access to information technology, Obama (2012) said,

"The United States will continue to draw attention to the electronic curtain that is cutting the

Iranian people off from the world. And we hope that others will join us in advancing a basic

freedom for the Iranian people: the freedom to connect with one another and with their fellow

human beings" (Democracy Now Broadcast 3/21). Here, Obama demonstrates a belief in information freedom. But on what grounds can Obama distinguish the freedom of information as "basic freedom" or human right?

The work of social theorists John Rawls and Amartya Sen provides support for how the freedom of information should be understood as a basic human right. In an essay entitled "Elements of a Theory of Human Rights, Sen (2004) wrote, "Few concepts are as frequently invoked in contemporary political discussions as human rights. There is something deeply attractive in the idea that every person anywhere in the world, irrespective of citizenship or territorial legislation, has some basic rights, which others should respect" (p. 315). Sen then went on to state, "An ethical understanding of human rights goes not only against seeing them as legal demands but also differs from a law-centered approach to human rights that sees them as if they are basically *grounds* for law, almost 'laws in waiting'" (p. 326). The notion of information freedom is perhaps the most significant grounds for new legislation today because it permeates so many interactions in everyday life. Recognizing this fact, the OWS movement has adopted the struggle for information freedom as a core component of its underlying message.

Consider how censoring an individual from accessing information technology and digital networks severely disadvantages that person's communication with the rest of the world. This disadvantage represents an infringement of basic human rights. Every person should have the right to access information technology because it is so essential for growth and development in today's globalized society. Hence, the lack of access to this type of technology has become a source of struggle against the 1%. John Rawls supports this notion in his landmark political philosophy publication, *A Theory of Justice.* Explaining the first principle of how he perceives justice, Rawls (1999) wrote, "each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme

of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others" (p. 53). Hence, it would be unjust to deny certain people access to the power of information technology. If others enjoy the same freedom, each individual should have some form of access because information technology is built into the communication infrastructure of society. Rawls went on to explain how all of his principles "apply to the basic structure of society and govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages" (p. 53). Aligning themselves with Rawl's first principle of justice, the OWS movement demonstrates how access to information technology and digital networking should be considered basic human rights because of the social and economic advantaged they provide.

2.5 -- The Democratizing Force of Information Technology

This section will examine how access to information technology has transformed the struggle to achieve universal freedom of information.

Humanity has witnessed how technology can be used for both constructive and destructive ends. For example, the development of atomic energy has provided power to cities and has also completely destroyed them. Most often, decisions around the use of technology are made by ruling institutions. Governments and businesses have lobbied for laws that decide how technology is used, especially regarding the production and distribution of goods. Look back to atomic energy once again as evidence of how legislation and then federal subsidies have dictated our use of a certain technology. Marx (1848) explained how the ruling class "is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and exchange" (ebook). Historically, as Marx's observation implies, the modes of production and exchange have been dependent upon the interests of those who have greatest access to emerging technology. Marx's observation cannot be disputed with regards to today's information technology because of the ongoing militarization and commoditization associated with digital information.

Marx had no way of accounting for the ways that information technology has also become a democratizing force. As discussed throughout this project, humanity has recently been experiencing greater exposure to new forms of information technology. Individuals today have a specialized and digitized form of literacy, which has changed the way we communicate with one another. Consider just how computers and digital networks are built into the infrastructure of the world's political economy. More and more machines are holding the jobs that only humans once held. Every day, interactions between computers determine aspects of life, particularly in industrialized countries. Humanity is still learning about the potential opportunities created by all the technology that has inundated society during the Information Age. As we learn more about this technology, it is clear that people of any social class can collectively harness the power of digital communication. Through the use of computers and networks, individuals have the ability to communicate with thousands of people at the same time. There is no question that digital communication has been used malignantly, both on individual and organizational levels. In its Declaration of the Occupation of New York City (found in Appendix I), the OWS movement identified fraud and deception in the ways that Wall Street has utilized information technology. But, alongside these instances of corruption, digital communication has enabled people to come together from all over the world and remain connected. The OWS movement has demonstrated how information technology has become the focal point of these global connections. They utilize these connections to their advantage as they strive towards their goals of economic justice and information freedom.

Two historical examples support the way the OWS movement has utilized information technology in the struggle for information freedom. First, *New York Times v. United States,* also known as the Pentagon Papers Case, was a landmark Supreme Court case in 1971. This case

represents one of the most distinguished historical rulings in favor of the freedom of information. According to Justice Black (1971), "Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people." Clearly, this example precedes the widespread use of information technology. However, this case does demonstrate the importance of any media source, either individual/independent or corporate/conglomerate, being committed to the freedom of information. As explained by Justice Black, freedom of information is essential to the proceedings of the democratic process.

The second example that supports the OWS movement's use of information technology is found in the controversial dealings of the website known as Wikileaks. This website made national headlines when, in 2010, it received classified military documents from US Army Private Bradley Manning. Manning's action immediately sparked heated discussions about patriotism, security and freedom of speech in the way Wikileaks publically exposed this information. One group felt that Manning and Wikileaks deserved unabashed praise for their actions, while another group felt just as passionately about condemning the same actions. Regardless of anyone's individual opinions about the aftermath of this situation, Manning leaked the documents as a way of exposing the truth about corrupt military practices. According to its official website, the function of Wikileaks (2012) is "to bring important news and information to the public… One of our most important activities is to publish original source material alongside our news stories so readers and historians alike can see evidence of the truth." It is precisely this devotion to truth that highlights the democratizing force of information technology. For a more elaborate discussion of the two previous examples contribute to the democratizing force of technology, please refer to the essay found in Appendix IV of this document. Considering this

democratizing force, the bottom line is that information technology provides humanity with such

a vast network of rapid communication. As a result, individual voices are more easily heard as

they use information technology as one of the most effective tools in exposing sources of

corruption and enforcing accountability. Using information technology in this way empowers

individuals—regardless of their race, class, gender or any other identity component—to stand up

for what they believe in.

Part III.
Analyzing the Data – Comparative Theoretical Analysis

3.1 - Two Theories of Technological Evolution
As we look back at how technology gradually evolved to reach the Information Age, two distinct theories have emerged to explain the inner workings of this evolutionary process. Each of the theories listed below will be briefly explained and then connected to the underlying message of the OWS movement.

1) The Dialectical Method
2) Technological Determinism

3.2 - An Introduction to the Dialectical Method
This section will explore how the Dialectical Method provides one interpretation of how technology evolves. Within the scope of this project, the Dialectical Method is concerned with how humanity and technology have evolved together because of the intricate relationship they share. The discussion of the Dialectical Method throughout this section is concerned directly with critical questions (listed at the beginning of this document) about how humanity has influenced or controlled the course of technological evolution. Answering these questions will illuminate and synthesize various perspectives of how humanity has interacted with technology to advance certain interests over others.
The *Dialectical Method* takes the form of discussions that are intended to produce shared

understanding through interpreting contradictions. This method embodies the foundation of Karl

Marx's social theory of dialectical materialism, which has been a major influence for the purpose

of this project.   The focus of the dialectical method is to overcome or synthesize multiple

perspectives on the same subject, which often stand in opposition to one another. Particularly

regarding the interpretation of history, oppositional perspectives commonly take the form of

either a dominant narrative or a counter narrative of the same subject. As we bring the

technological component into this discussion, the Dialectical Method offers insight into the

dynamics that explain how humanity and technology are intricately related. The relationship

between these two entities entails a certain amount of complexity because its features are not

static. Instead, both humanity and technology have evolved as a result of how they continually

influence one another. Contradictions arise as we try to determine the cause and effect

relationship shared between the evolution of social and technological entities. Which is the

catalyst and which is the result? In answering this question, it is apparent that a certain degree of

pushing and pulling occurs because of how humanity and technology interact. Neither

technology nor humanity can be totally separated from its counterpart because of the dialectic

link that they share.

The Dialectical Method presents this idea of pushing and pulling as a type of *fundamental*

motion[2]. Individuals will confront, describe and navigate through contradictions as fundamental

motion affects the relationship between two things. In more concrete contextual terms, this

motion can be witnessed as contradictions arise in the evolutionary relationship between

technology and humanity. Consider the follow two statements: (1) As our technology evolves,

so does our society. (2) As our society evolves, so does our technology. With these statements,

a contradiction unfolds because neither statement by itself can accurately reflect the dialectic

relationship shared by these two entities. Yet, taken together, these two statements cannot define

the role played by either entity in the cause-effect relationship. The unfolding of contradictions

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[2] The concept of contradictions created by fundamental motion also appears in the classic philosophy of western thinking. In John M. Cooper's (1997) translation of Plato's *Cratylus,* the character of Socrates explains one philosopher's perspective on the same fundamental motion as that which appears in the Dialectical Method. Plato wrote, "Heraclitus says somewhere that 'everything gives way and nothing stands fast,' and likening to the things that are flowing of a river, he says that "you cannot step into the same river twice" (p 120). These words from Plato capture an idea that seems to unite the philosophies of contradiction from different regions all across the world—everything is always in flux.

such as in the example above is best explained by social philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. To quote

one translation of Hegel's (1969) *The Science of Logic*, "Contradiction is at the root of all

movement and life, and it is only in so far as it contains a contradiction that anything moves and

has impulse and activity" (67). Here, Hegel described how contradictions are seen as the result

of anything that experiences fundamental motion. It is precisely this motion that allows growth

and change to occur in the way humanity understands dialectical relationships and works toward

reconciliation of these contradictions.

Many notable philosophers prior to Marx and Hegel have observed contradictions as a

result of this same fundamental motion. In abstract terms, Lao Tzu (1993), the father of Taoist

philosophy, alludes to the same fundamental motion in his conception of the Yin Yang. In one

chapter of the *Tao Te Jing*, the Taoist sage is attributed with the line, "All things are held in yin,

and carry yang" (42). The image of the Yin Yang aids us in picturing the pushing and pulling

associated with fundamental motion. Yet, as we picture the circular outline of the Yin Yang, it is

important to note that within dialectic relationships, fundamental motion is not necessarily

symmetrical. Nevertheless, two individual components—Yin and Yang or humanity and

technology—cannot be separated from one another because of the motion they sustain together.

As a result, the Yin Yang as a whole cannot be defined by either of its component parts. Instead,

the whole can only be understood in terms of the interconnectedness and perpetual motion shared

by each of its parts.

Contradictions are evident as dominant narratives and counter narratives describe the

same events. Marx takes Hegel's ideas one step further by examining how these contradictions

are directly rooted in material conditions and production relations. For example, a hacktivist

with the last name Hammond identifies himself as a member of the internet collective known as

Anonymous. Hammond was vilified as a cyber terrorist by the dominant narrative for his

intercepting and distorting information on the internet. At a hacking convention profiled in

Chicago magazine (2007), Hammond told his fellow hackers that he is driven by his hatred of

social inequality. According to the counter narrative espoused by Hammond and other members

of the hacking community, hacking is often conducted for a noble purpose. Hammond

explained, "Our civilization is facing a radical, imminent mass change. The alternative to the

hierarchical power structure is based on mutual aid and group consensus. As hackers we can

learn these systems, manipulate these systems, and shut down these systems if we need to." The

two narratives about Hammond's hacking activities demonstrate how a contradiction is created

when the same event is perceived differently. But perhaps more importantly, these two narratives

also show how the Dialectical Method provides insight into the greater social ramifications of

Hammond's view of technological evolution within the Information Age.

      The first step of the Dialectical Method in confronting any contradiction is to pose

critical questions. When considering the contradiction that arises from the evolutionary link

between humans and technology, the critical questions listed at the beginning of this document

become tools for organizing information. These critical questions provide supplemental insight

into qualities, which begin to define relationships between humanity and technology. Each

individual must arrive at his or her own answers to these questions. Doing so will create deeper

personal understandings about the relationship between humanity and technology. In responding

to these questions, individuals should not be concerned with which answers are "right" and

which are "wrong." But instead, personal perceptions of this relationship are then discussed with

the intention of synthesizing individual perspectives into a greater shared understanding. The

intentions behind this discussion are to arrive at conclusions that interpret contradictions in new

ways. The participatory nature of these discussions allows for the shared understanding that is

created to incorporate aspects of both the narrative and counter narrative. Using elements from

both of the narrative and counter narrative allows individuals to navigate through contradictions

in order to reach new understandings about the issues at hand.

3.3 – The Dialectical Method & the OWS Movement

The analysis provided in this section explores how the Dialectical Method has been considered within the tactics and ideology of the OWS movement.

As explored in the previous section, the evolution of humanity and technology share a

dialectic link. To conceptualize the inner-workings of the relationship between these two

entities, we turn to the work of author, social philosopher and renowned political revolutionary

Karl Marx. Consider the following excerpt from Marx's (1865) *Communist Maifesto*:

> When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do express the fact, that
>
> within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the
>
> dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old [material]
>
> conditions of existence. (E-book)

Let us interpret Marx's words within the scope of this study. For one, technology can be used to

create new social values. But on the other hand, social values can be used to create new

technology. Individual answers to the critical questions posed at the beginning of this document

are useful in creating a plan of action that accounts specifically for how human and technological

entities influence one another. Such a plan has been crafted by the OWS movement. The

contents of this plan are based upon the history of how each different Age's social values have

been directly affected by emergent technology. The plan of action adopted by the OWS

movement has and continues to follow this same model because it incorporates information

technology as a tool to facilitate social change.

As previously discussed, one central value of the OWS action plan is nonviolence. This particular value is supported by the movement's use of non-militaristic technology in aiding methods of noncooperation and direct action. It is mandatory that anyone affiliated with the movement must abide by the value of nonviolence as a way of demonstrating one aspect of the world that they wish to see. This value is reflected in the *Declaration of the Occupation of New York City* (2011) as such, "To the people of the world, We, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square, urge you to assert your power. Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone" (p. 11). The role of technology is implicitly embedded within these statements by the OWS movement. Even the way that this message is transmitted has happened primarily through the use of information technology. As technology of the Information Age becomes increasingly more powerful in terms of processing information, those looking towards the future are striving to utilize this power. By using technology to help cement the importance of nonviolence as a social value, the OWS movement is attempting to ensure that technology of the future will develop to uphold with this same value of nonviolence. However, certain interests that align with the ruling class often utilize technology as an instrument of violent oppression. Complacently allowing this repression to occur paves the way for technology of the future to develop more efficient ways of conducting the same forms of violence. Accounting for these projections, interests like the OWS movement value technology as a way of shaping social values to create the need for technology that will help solve the social problems that afflict our society today.

In considering how the OWS movement values technology, the idea that social problems can be solved through technological development is greatly appealing to those

involved. The OWS movement has essentially created their own social values surrounding the

use of technology. Using technology to promote their message regarding freedom of information

has therefore become one of the movement's greatest tactical strengths. In doing so, the

movement is practicing what they preach. As explored in the above discussion of the Dialectic

Method, new social values are an important factor in how new technology is created. In turn, the

creation of new technology then allows for the revision, reinforcement or deconstruction of the

social underlying values. Hence, the OWS movement seeks to raise consciousness about how

technology can be used to address social problems. To raise consciousness in this way, the OWS

movement has demonstrated the way they value technology as a method of nonviolent struggle.

3.4 - An Introduction to the Theory of Technological Determinism

As explained by Smith (1994), *Technological Determinism* is the belief that "social progress is driven by technological innovation, which in turn follows an inevitable course" (p. 38). This section will examine the theory of Technological Determinism as another explanation of how technological evolution can be interpreted. The philosophy of Technological Determinism provides insight into how humans have interacted with technological development, both in the past and the present. Technological Determinism also considers how future technology will continue to evolve despite any human efforts to contain it.

Any perception of present technology cannot be accurate without accounting for the

features shared by the past, present and future possibilities of all technology. As mentioned in

previous sections, forms of technology and communication have occurred even before humans

were present on earth. The theory of Technological Determinism highlights how technology

follows a predictable, traceable path that is not controlled by any cultural or political influence.

The origins of this predictability will be discussed in detail later in this section as a way of

providing context for the course of evolution that has brought us into the Information Age. But

for now, it is important to note how Technological Determinism posits that technology is

developed as part of a greater predetermined process of evolution, free from human influence.

As discussed in the section entitled "Redefining Technology," the origins of technological

evolution can be traced all the way back to the Big Bang at beginning of the universe itself. Lloyd (2006) explained how each information processing revolution "has laid the ground for the next, and all information processing revolutions since the Big Bang stem from the intrinsic information processing ability of the universe" (p. 5). In order for the universe to remain stable and sustain life as we know it, information is continually processed by all of its cosmic technological structures. For example, the sun at the center of our galaxy continues to produce light because it is internally processing information that allows it to do so. It is precisely this intrinsic information processing ability of technological structures throughout universe that Technological Determinism considers to be the origin of all evolution.

The work of MIT Professor Seth Lloyd (2006) elaborated on the same deterministic perspective. Lloyd's publication *Programming the Universe* incorporates a scientific approach to show how technology evolves in a predictable manner. Lloyd asserts, "Once a physical system possesses the ability to process information at a rudimentary level—performing simple operations on a few bits at a time—arbitrarily complicated forms of information processing can be built up from these basic operations" (p. 11). As suggested in this excerpt, any system that processes information will continue to do so at greater and greater speeds over time. This continuous chartable growth is the main thrust of Technological Determinism. The use of controlled numbers of bits, like those that operate computers or phones, demonstrates how technological growth can be pinpointed with quantifiable values. As Moore (1965) observed some time ago, our digital devices have been following a trend of becoming both smaller and more powerful over time. The proof he offered has become commonly accepted as the discourse of Moore's Law.

As a framework for the beliefs of modern day Technological Determinism, Lloyd speaks specifically about information technology. Lloyd (2006) outlined this framework in terms of *Moore's Law*[3], which embodies a series of observations about the trends of growth shown by our technology. Lloyd presented this framework as he wrote that we are in the midst of an information processing revolution right now, "one driven by the rapid advance of the electronic computing technology embodied by Moore's Law" (p. 11). Some relevant background information on Moore will highlight the significance of this law. Gordon Moore was one of the founders of Intel Corporation. Intel is the world's all-time largest multinational distributor of semiconductors, which are essential in all information technology because they create the electrical impulses inside microprocessors. Hence, the information technology we use every day is all dependent upon properly functioning semiconductors. For his innovative developments in the field of information technology, Moore is considered to be one of the foremost figures of how we understand Technological Determinism in the Information Age.

Today, Moore is considered somewhat of a visionary within his field. Over 50 years ago, he successfully predicted the exponential growth trend that we have seen in information technology. Moore (1965) explained that "there is a minimum cost at any given time in the evolution of technology [and this cost has] increased by roughly a factor of two per year." Within the field of computer science, scholars such as Rumelt (2003) regard Moore's law as a

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[3] A great deal of speculation has occurred on the subject of Moore's Law. Because of its controversial status, there is a need to continue to revise Moore's Law as new evidence surfaces. Moore's Law specifically relates to the semiconductors and computers, which are both components of the current Information Age. While Moore's Law has demonstrated a prophetic level of accuracy regarding the actual development of semiconductor computers, physical barriers suggest the limitations of Moore's Law in its current incarnation. Since matter is composed of individual atoms, there is a physical limit to how small a semiconducting circuit can be made. This limit means that the exponential growth mandated by Moore's Law cannot continue unbounded. Once the atomic scale is breached, semiconductor computation will follow a different trend, which will taper off. The overall trend is witnessed in many natural processes. These processes begin with exponential growth, but eventually encounter a limit, especially with regards to certain physical resources (usually space). This limit occurs in any system where the basic component divides, and thereby grows by a constant multiplicative factor (for instance population growth). The inclusion of this limit has defined the "natural growth curve". It seems likely that Moore's Law will follow the natural growth curve, and as semiconductor computers plateau, a new technology will begin to follow its own natural growth curve.

standard for judging modern technological development. Rumelt wrote, "It very clearly tells you that if you take the information processing power you have today and multiply it by two, that will be what your competition is doing 18 months from now." While Moore's Law proposed a fascinating idea, the accuracy of 18 month intervals has come into question.

The chart below provides a visual representation that shows the acceleration within Moore's prediction. The chart also depicts the *natural growth curve.* The distinguishing factor is that natural growth will taper where exponential growth continues to accelerate. Both curves show that the growth of information technology within the last decade has reached exponential trends. Yet, the multiplicative constant of exponential growth will only maintain its course for a limited period of time. The deceleration of the natural growth curve shows how the growth in the chart below has tapered since the beginning of 2010. This same pattern of natural growth has been present in the emergent technology of every technological Age. A new age begins as new technology is introduced and then follows the same natural growth curve.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH VERSUS NATURAL GROWTH
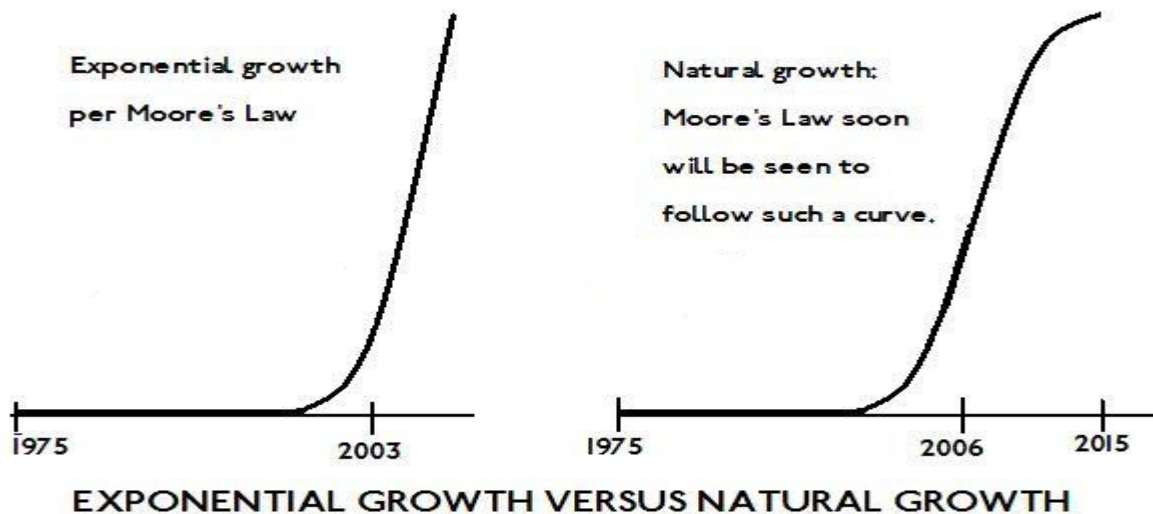
3.5 - Technological Determinism and the OWS Movement
The analysis provided in this section explores how the theory of Technological Determinism has been considered within the tactics and ideology of the OWS movement.

As rapid exponential growth occurs, new technology quickly improves upon prior models. For this same reason, old computers continue to have less and less value as new models are released. With every new development in the Information Age, humanity becomes more familiar with information technology. And as we reach the tapering section of the natural growth curve, greater and greater numbers of people gain access to devices such as phones and computers. As a result, Technological Determinism speculates that a greater cultural literacy with information technology will continue to emerge as more people gain access to this technology. Looking towards the future, this literacy will only improve as information technology becomes easier to use and more widely accessible. In the Information Age, the greatest degree of communication occurs primarily through digital networking. Consider how information is digitized through the widespread use technology such as phones, email, social media and direct connections such as skype. We can also expect that networks of digital information will continue to improve in speed and efficiency as they continue to evolve. Accordingly, digitization has undoubtedly changed production relations around the world, and will continue to do so. Accounting for this growth, activists have figured out ways to use digital information as a tool to help achieve the objectives of the OWS movement. Essentially, the increasing literacy with information technology has become a significant factor in the way the OWS movement has been waging nonviolent struggle.

Several disruptive attacks on both government and corporate institutions have been discussed throughout this project. Professor Gene Sharp (2005) explained how disruptive methods in nonviolent struggle are used to "intervene directly to change a situation" (p. 62). Using information technology, this type of direct intervention has been a primary tactic of the OWS movement. The events of the direct action that occurred on the Brooklyn Bridge,

discussed in the first section of this document, demonstrate how social media was used to coordinate and document the direct actions chosen by the OWS movement. Additionally, the hacktivist collective known as Anonymous has also used information technology as a form of nonviolent disruption. Coordinated cyber attacks have accessed secured networks to intercept information, leak evidence of corruption and disable targeted websites. Well before the beginning of the OWS movement, Sharp (2005) outlined 198 different methods of nonviolent struggle. Yet, Sharp did not mention the use of information technology in cyber attacks, hacktivism and social media. Their omission from Sharp's exhaustive list of nonviolent methodology shows the novelty and innovation of these methods as the appropriate technology has only recently become available. For more detail on how the OWS movement has devised and acquired tactics that utilize information technology, please refer to the essay in Appendix V of this document.

The emergence and availability of powerful new technology has shown that there are realistic alternatives to violence in the struggle for human rights. Consider how renewable sources of energy have become a hot topic for technological development, especially in recent years. Technological Determinism indicates that this technology will continue to evolve regardless of the human influence. Therefore, it is the responsibility of humanity to utilize this technology in an ethically responsible fashion. The use and abuse of new technology has consistently created a need for legislation that determines guidelines and limitations. This type of legislation seeks to enforce accountability on those who have exploited information technology at the expense of others, and prevent such happenings from occurring again in the future. Even with protective legislation, technology continues to be exploited as profiteering, theft and other forms of information exploitation occur.

On the institutional level, human rights are infringed upon through information surveillance campaigns and insider trading. From our discussion of hacktivism, it is clear that the OWS movement has also exploited technology. Yet, they do so in the name of justice and accountability, not for personal profit or gains. Throughout the OWS movement, harnessing the power of emerging information technology has been considered to be one of the best means of providing the tools to create a more just society. As discussed in the section entitled "The Democratizing Force of Information Technology," the methods of digitized communication have created new avenues for arriving at consensus in any group decision-making process. Consider the testimony of Anonymous operative Hammond in *Chicago Magazine* (2007) that appears in section 3.2. Hammond clearly recognizes the power provided by information technology and has chosen to wield this power in pursuit of his idea of justice. As it continues to become more powerful in its ability to process information, the OWS movement is devoted to developing nonviolent uses of information technology that will help create the world that they wish to see.

Conclusion:

The current system and institutions of the global political economy have a vested interest in continuing to profit from the technology associated with industrial production and consumption. But looking towards the future, we can expect that human needs concerning food, energy and the environment must be factored into the ways technology is developed. The human rights associated with these needs cannot be ignored, especially when they reach increasingly larger scales. Professor Gene Sharp explains, "Digital media are useful tools of communication among potential resistors. But they are only tools of communication. They don't tell you what to do. The fact that you know what kind of regime it is doesn't tell you what to do about it. A telephone will not tell you what to do. Learning that requires greater knowledge and wise thinking." Taking these statements into account, it is clear that technology is not the end-all-be-

all solution to humanity's social problems. However, to the extent that humanity shares a dialectic link with the evolution of technology, it is a moral imperative that the newest developments are created to address needs identified by those in marginalized positions. In the future, we can also expect that new technology will continue to revolutionize the ways we communicate and interact with one another.

It is to be expected that, in the future, activists and profiteers alike will conceive of new ways to use technology to advance their own objectives. But perhaps the most important take away from the data presented in this project is as follows: Heightened access and literacy regarding information technology have made it so those in power can no longer control the way information flows through society. It is the responsibility of each individual to control his or her own access and exposure to technology. Acting on this notion, information activists such as those affiliated with the OWS movement recognize how technology has become a driving force in the struggle for universal human rights. By remaining vigilant about the proper and just development of technology, those concerned with the future have the potential to address the most salient issues that arise and threaten the welfare and stability of our society.

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APPENDIX I

Complete List of grievances as they appear in the Declaration of the Occupation of New York City. Together, these grievances comprise the underlying message of the OWS movement.

They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage.

They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.

They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization.

They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless animals, and actively hide these practices.

They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.

They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.

They have consistently outsourced labor and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay.

They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility.

 They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams that look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance.

They have sold our privacy as a commodity.

They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press.

They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products endangering lives in pursuit of profit.

They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

They have donated large sums of money to politicians, who are responsible for regulating them.

They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.

They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could save people's lives or provide relief in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit.

They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit.

They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media.

They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners even when presented with serious doubts about their guilt.

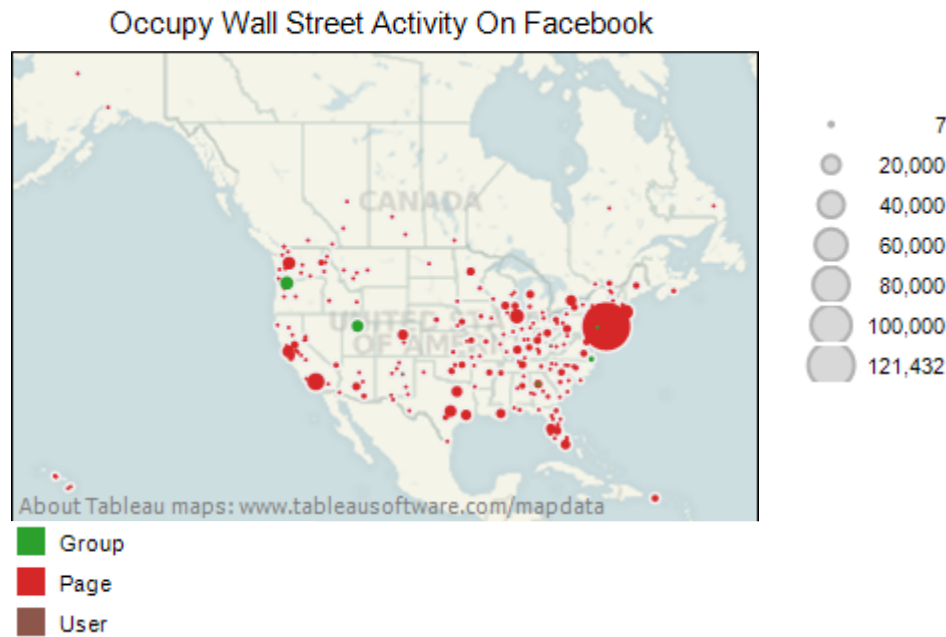They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad.

They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas.

They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts.

These grievances are not all-inclusive

Appendix II
Chart depicting the chartable OWS activity on Facebook as of 10/04/2011.

Occupy Wall Street Activity On Facebook

·	7
○	20,000
○	40,000
○	60,000
○	80,000
○	100,000
○	121,432

About Tableau maps: www.tableausoftware.com/mapdata

■ Group
■ Page
■ User

Data Source: http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/10/04/1022722/-Occupy-Wall-Street:-List-and-map-of-over-200-US-solidarity-events-and-Facebook%C2%A0pages and Facebook API

Appendix III
Interview and discussion questions for Gene Sharp

General Interview Questions

1. What insight can you provide with regards to the emergence of computers and digital information as instruments of social change?

2. What can be said about the way the Occupy movement has been organized? In your opinion, what have been some of the most successful tactics that have been employed?

3. What suggestions or topics of discussion would you have for organizers of the Occupy Movement?

4. How have past nonviolent social movements used either technology or media to their advantage?

Questions specifically about your work

5. How should the formation of a grand strategy account for today's widespread access and use of information technology such as social media and digital networking?

6. The internet provides digital networking for the storage of information. What are your thoughts about additional nonviolent methods that incorporate the Internet as a form of empowerment? How could any new method using the internet be applied especially to "Noncooperation" or "Nonviolent intervention"?

Appendix IV
Information Technology in Independent Media
By: Jed Blume

I have come to understand media, in today's day and age, as the crossroads where information and technology converge. With a widely inclusive definition, it is appropriate that "media" signifies a multitude of different structures. Consider how communication is the common denominator among every type of media. Interactions occur among all sources of information in the world—verbally, digitally, biologically and otherwise. These interactions represent the domain that we use to understand the inner-workings of any type of media. As today's technology evolves, digital computing machines have become increasingly more integrated into our society. As this evolution continues to unfold, we can observe the visible effects of how access to sophisticated computer technology has revolutionized the way we communicate with one another. With exponentially greater technology becoming more broadly available, how will information be organized and distributed in the future?

New-age media allows information to be transmitted and received faster than ever before. Only two hundred years ago, correspondences between people on separate continents travelled much slower because it was primarily written and mailed. Nowadays, would you even need a pen? Through the internet, anyone can interact with people all over the world using the technology of interactive audio/video digital projections. It is no exaggeration to claim that the internet has connected the world at light speed. Hence, our digitized communication has given

rise to new forms of literacy. Generally speaking, media literacy describes one's competency with using various types of technology to broadcast and receive information. Media literacy draws upon a wide range of variables. Today, internet communication is one of the more prominent variables. Generally speaking, the trend of increasing internet access has allowed people to communicate in new ways because of its faster and more complex networking. When using the internet, there are three types of networking dynamics at play—1) person-to-person 2) person-to-machine and also 3) machine-to-machine. In other words, media literacy involves a component of communication between people, between machines and an important integration of communication between people and machines. Understanding internet networking in this way, the capacity of our collective media literacy is continually on the rise as internet communication and technological development occurs in all three of these levels of networking dynamics.

Websites on the internet such as facebook, twitter and the like fall into the camp of social media. The social aspect is often greatly publicized by the people who access these websites. Yet, these websites have also become the most efficient tools available for increasing the scope of global communication. With an account on a social media website, any user can rapidly interact with hundreds of thousands of people across the world. These websites are designed to facilitate communication by hosting public networks that are accessed by any computer with an internet connection. Networks like those of social media create a shared space, the likes of which we have never seen before. Because all social media interfaces incorporate a user-friendly design, a person with an internet connection (regardless of age, gender, class, color or creed) can interact with others to share ideas and experiences. Each social media interface hosts its own

nuanced aspects of literacy, but all of them share a common purpose of enabling individuals to effectively become their own sources of media.

As sources of media, individuals tend to represent their own interests. There exists no corporate nor government underwriting for individuals as they express their ideas and experiences. Today, social media provides an outlet for this type of expression. When using online social media forums, public information can be expressed freely and openly. People are more likely to be open in the United States especially because this type of internet communication is protected by the freedom of speech amendment to the American constitution. Even when this type of communication is not specifically protected by legislature, we have witnessed people using social media as a forum for free expression in instances such as the recent Egyptian Revolution. In this way, social media websites have become the most basic components of independent media. "Independent," in this context, refers to the way any form of media can operate autonomously. Essentially, independent media operates without the censorship, regulations and politics of mainstream media. It is important to distinguish the major factors that separate independent and mainstream media. As previously noted, funding or underwriting is definitely one major aspect of this distinction. Content is another major aspect. In determining whether a media source is mainstream or independent, the best litmus test is to investigate who controls the content. Quoted in a book entitled, *Emerging Struggle for State Sovereignty* (1979), former Congressman John R. Rarick alludes to the controlling forces behind the mainstream media. He said:

> The Council on Foreign Relations—dedicated to one world government, financed by a number of the largest tax-exempt foundations, and wielding such power and influence over our lives in the areas of finance, business, labor, military, education, and mass communication media-should be familiar to every American concerned with good government and with preserving and defending the U.S. constitution and our free-

enterprise system. Yet the Nation's 'right -to-know-machinery' --the news media--usually so aggressive in exposures to inform our people, remain conspicuously silent when it comes to the CFR, its members, and their activities. (1992)

Every source of independent media has total control over its own content. Consequently, individuals who use social media and blogging websites have created a strong pillar of independent media. Yet, beyond the scope of the individual, a number of organizations have formed with the sole purpose of publicizing independent media through different mediums. Because of the number of resources involved, these media organizations are able to distribute their content to larger audiences. Some of the more popular American independent media sources include Democracy Now, The Independent, The Nation, Adbusters alongside a slew of others. Amy Goodman (lecture, 2011), the founder, anchor and executive producer of Democracy Now, commented on the function of independent media in a metaphor, calling it the "underground railroad of information." This comparison captures the fact that information, which is often shrouded or neglected by the mainstream media, moves freely through all sources of independent media.

Like the historical Underground Railroad, the independent media is often steeped in controversy. This controversy arises because investigative journalism tends to present counter-narratives that diverge from the mainstream media coverage. The practice of investigative journalism exposes information that has intentionally been skewed, distorted or convoluted. An investigative journalist will look deeply into a single topic of interest. The intention is to use the media as a tool for whistle-blowing or calling attention to wrongdoing. Consider investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill (2011), who was quoted in a *New York Times* article as saying "What drove us was telling stories we felt were being ignored, misreported or underreported by corporate media outlets." One notable recent example of investigative journalism has been the

independent media's coverage of the recent Occupy Wall Street protests. Specifically, Amy Goodman (2011) points out how Democracy Now's coverage of these protests have featured "people speaking for themselves." Goodman uses this phrase to contrast how the mainstream media has relied upon the opinions of professional pundits rather than actual protesters in their discussion of the Occupy protests.

Independent media sources, whether they are individuals or organizations, share a common vision about the freedom of information. In the last decade, we have witnessed a number of distinguished whistle-blowers come forward to visibly flag corrupt practices. The independent media has provided time, space and publicity to help disseminate the information provided by these whistle-blowers. We witnessed perhaps the most notable instance of this alliance between whistle-blowers and independent media in 2010. Private Bradley Manning of the US army submitted classified military documents to the independent media organization known as Wikileaks. Manning's action immediately sparked heated discussions about patriotism, security and freedom of speech in the way Wikileaks publically exposed this information. One group felt that Manning and Wikileaks deserved unabashed praisefor their actions, while another group felt just as passionately about condemning the same actions. According to its official website, the function of Wikileaks (2006) is "to bring important news and information to the public… One of our most important activities is to publish original source material alongside our news stories so readers and historians alike can see evidence of the truth." It is precisely this devotion to truth that highlights how the people of Wikileaks, alongside every other source of independent media, are devoted to the freedom of information.

Protecting the freedom of information is not a new notion for our society. However, it is a notion that has constantly fallen under attack by the institutions of the ruling class. People in

support of information freedom cite how information transparency is the best tool for preventing

corruption. Without the proper degree of transparency, individuals can evade being held

accountable for their decisions. *New York Times v. United States,* also known as the Pentagon

Papers Case, was a landmark Supreme Court case in 1971. This case represents one of the most

distinguished historical rulings in favor of the freedom of information. According to Justice

Black (1971), "Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in

government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any

part of the government from deceiving the people." From the verdict and discussion that

followed this case, it is clear that the Supreme Court recognizes the power of the media as

watchdogs over our country's institutions.

Any form of media can become this type of watchdog. Though, mainstream outlets often

work in collusion with corporate and government sponsors. This collaboration has the potential

to become extremely detrimental to the good of the public. If the media censors information, an

institution can operate with minimal transparency. In effect, an institution that can control its

own public image has the freedom to conduct extrajudicial operations. Consider the recent

phone-hacking scandal associated with Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. This corporate

agency, which is the world's second largest media conglomerate, was illegally hacking into

people's phones and voicemail boxes to retrieve information for their stories. Because the

Murdoch Corporation controls so much of the media, they were able to cover up their crimes for

quite some time. This example demonstrates how the collusion between big media and big

business removes the moral constraints of oversight and accountability. Without other forms of

media to monitor the activities of our largest institutions, Murdoch's News Corporation might

still be illegally hacking into public phone lines.

Corporate media outlets do not empower individuals to speak out in the face of injustice. The Murdoch story broke because journalists at an independent media organization known as *The Guardian* exposed a breach of human rights. Clearly, *The Guardian* used its power as a media organization to blow the whistle on *News Corporation*. As people banded together to bring justice to the Murdoch Corporation, the public awareness of this scandal became a force of adjudication. As with the *News Corporation* example, the voices of the general public are all too often silenced by the censorship that occurs within the mainstream media. It is crucial that today, we, as our own sources of media, remain autonomous from corporate and government interests. Independent journalist Amy Goodman recognizes how the media can use its influence to ask the tough questions about corporate and government institutions. Goodman (2011) expressed this opinion as she labeled the independent media as "the greatest force for peace on earth." By protecting the freedom of information and increasing transparency all around, the independent media ensures that equitable practices remain at the core of our institutional infrastructure.

We are currently experiencing an unprecedented degree of control over the information in our lives. As we have been witnessing, the independent media is an increasingly pervasive component of interpersonal communication. Information technology continues to develop and permeate further into our lives. Right now we have computers, phones, ipods and the like, but what is to come in the future? Consider how today's technology allows us to organize and transmit messages that reflect our social values. With cameras, microphones and live streaming video, we can publicly display our own experiences as sources of independent media. In conjunction with these developments in technology, internet connections have allowed us to transmit events in the moment they occur. Because this technology is so accessible, humanity

has reached a new era in how we perceive the media. As this new era continues to unfold, people will see new ways that technology can affect our communication process. Yet, new technology and media have the power to become forces of censorship and repression. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to use technology and their voices to promote the freedom of information as a way of creating positive social change.

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Appendix V

Voices from the Egyptian Revolution:
The Changing Face of Egypt since the Arab Spring
By: Jed Blume

Throughout 2011, Egypt has been making headlines around the world. The Egyptian people have witnessed great victories alongside great traumas. A series of popular uprisings, which spread through North African and Middle Eastern countries, eventually acquired the tagline of "The Arab Spring." However, each individual country that witnessed an uprising during this time must be distinguished because of its specific political and contextual nuances. This paper will focus specifically on Egypt, incorporating the voices of those who were directly involved in the country-wide protests. While this history is still unfolding, it is essential to empower the individuals who were present in the organization and implementation of the

country's popular uprisings. These uprisings, which have succeeded in deposing long-time leader Hosni Mubarak, eventually became known as the January 25th Egyptian Revolution. Synthesizing a number of Egyptian people's voices into a cohesive narrative allows for an historical interpretation from the perspective that is most often censored or silenced.

Egypt, a country of about 85 million people, hosts Africa's second largest economy. The country is located on the Northeast corner of the continent and has political ties to the Middle East, as well as the rest of North Africa. According to the CIA world fact book (2011), Egypt hosts over 82,000,000 inhabitants as of July 2011. Of those inhabitants, 20 percent live below the poverty line and 26.2 million of them comprise Egypt's labor force. As a political entity, Egypt has witnessed a number of revolutionary struggles. In recent history, the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 overthrew the constitutional monarchy and conclusively ousted the colonial British occupation. Only some 33 years prior, the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 was another popular uprising that resulted in limits of the British colonial hegemony. The 1919 revolution also lead to the drafting and establishment of a new constitution. Today, the country is on the verge of transitioning towards yet another political structure. In theory, Egypt's most recent legislative branch had a bicameral parliamentary composition with both an upper house and a lower house. However, Egypt has been under a state of emergency almost continuously since 1958, with only an 18-month reprieve in 1980. This state of emergency legislation allows the president to hold ongoing supreme executive power. Under the state of emergency, Egyptians have been subject to indefinite detention of civilians, prohibitions on political gatherings/demonstrations, and censorship of speech and association.

The state of emergency legislation has been a contentious issue for quite some time in confrontations between Egypt's populous and its government. According to *Washington Post*

journalist Daniel Williams (2006), an official from the *Muslim Brotherhood* named Aly Abdul

Fattah said, "The extension [of the state of emergency] is aimed at silencing the Brotherhood and

maintaining the status quo. This extension is a lethal poison for Egyptian political life."

Historically, the Egyptian government has outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood as a political party.

Since 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood has banded together with Egypt's urban working and

middle classes in order to help democratize the country's government (Traub, 2007). The

Egyptian populous, including the Muslim Brotherhood, recognizes how this state of emergency

has allowed the government to consolidate its power and censor any voices of opposition. In a

discussion on the news program *Democracy Now!* (2011) independent journalist Sharif Abdel

Kouddous described legislature that repeals the state of emergency legislation as "one of the key

demands of the revolution."

For the past 29 years until the beginning of this year, Hosni Mubarak was the president

and chief politician of Egypt. In discussing the events of the January 25th Revolution, it is

essential to incorporate aspects of Mubarak's background. Before entering politics, Mubarak

was the Chief Air Marshall who commanded the Egyptian Air Force. Mubarak held the office of

vice president under his predecessor, Anwar Sadat. When Sadat was assassinated in 1971,

Mubarak was promoted to the office of President. Only seven days after Sadat's assassination,

Mubarak began his first term as the president of Egypt (Melina, 2011). There is no limit on

Egypt's consecutive presidential terms, which each last 6 years. However, Mubarak has the

legacy of a dictator more than of being a popularly elected leader. During most of the elections

throughout the span of his presidency, Mubarak faced no opponents. His supreme executive

power had the ability to sustain itself because of Egypt's ongoing state of emergency. In 2005,

the Muslim Brotherhood was able to run as an independent party in parliamentary elections.

While the Muslim Brotherhood was able to win 88 seats, Mubarak's party was accused of corruption for fraudulent ballots and rigging the votes (Garg 2005).

Mubarak resigned his position as president on February 11, 2011 amidst an ongoing nationwide movement against him. This movement became visible as mass public demonstrations or uprisings had been swelling with popular support for several years prior to Mubarak's resignation. Loose networks of individuals, alongside formal organizations in Egypt, became a part of these public demonstrations. Hence, there are no formal attributions regarding the movement's official beginning or clear delineation of leadership. One example illustrating the movement's amorphous structure was the impact of one particular video blog. The words of Asmaa Mahfouz, a twenty-six year old Egyptian activist, are a call to action for all Egyptians to assemble for a demonstration in Tahrir Square:

> I, a girl, am going down to Tahrir Square, and I will stand alone. And I'll hold up a banner. Perhaps people will show some honor … I'm making this video to give you one simple message: we want to go down to Tahrir Square on January 25th. If we still have honor and want to live in dignity on this land, we have to go down on January 25th. We'll go down and demand our rights, our fundamental human rights. (2011)

These were the words that began the civilian occupation of Tahrir Square, which was a forum for change in the January 25th Revolution. Asmaa Mahfouz was also one of the founders of the *April 6th Youth Movement*. This coalition of young activists played a major role in galvanizing support for Egypt's nationwide demonstrations. The date April 6th refers to the spring of 2008. Another activist named Ahmed Maher created a facebook page to rally support for workers who planned to strike on April 6th. The facebook page quickly attracted more than

70,000 members who received regular updates about important information regarding the movement (Wolman, 2008). The Youth Movement recognized the organizational power of using social media technology in this way. Social media such as facebook and twitter were used to disseminate information to members of the movement in order to coordinate mass action. According to its official webpage (2011), the April 6th Youth Movement calls for Egypt "to be ruled by a public character which has been agreed upon for the sake of the nation, its dignity and establish the principles of democratic governance." This quote also reflects the vision held by Egyptian activists for the way the Egyptian government should be run.

Like the video blog posted by Asmaa Mahfouz, those affiliated with the April 6th Youth Movement have supported issues in the greater struggle for political rights. One of these issues known throughout Egypt involved the brutal murder of a young activist named Khaled Saeed. The exact circumstances of his death in Alexandria on June 6, 2010 remain disputed. Yet, witnesses have described seeing Saeed apprehended by two police officials, who removed him from an internet café and beat him to death. As described by *Democracy Now!* host, Amy Goodman, photos of his battered corpse were widely disseminated online, starting a campaign "against widespread intimidation and killings by police under Mubarak" (10/27 show). Goodman went on to explain how a facebook page entitled "We Are All Khaled Saeed" rapidly gained popular support because it called attention to Egypt's widespread police brutality. Organizers of this facebook page saw how social media played a key role in bringing people together. Through this type of practice and the results it produced, Egyptian activists recognized the importance of social media. And so, these virtual networks were already in place when it came time to organize the January 25th protest, which effectively transformed into the 18-day uprising that overthrew the Mubarak regime.

Upon Mubarak's resignation, executive power was transferred to the Supreme Council of Egyptian Armed Forces. This group is comprised of twenty of Egypt's top military officials and headed by former Minister of Defense under Mubarak, Hussein Tantawi. Egypt under the Supreme Council has been experiencing the same type of military rule as it had under Mubarak. The state of emergency has once again been extended. Since taking power on February 12, 2011 the Supreme Council has been under pressure by the civilian population to hold general elections and move Egypt further towards democratization. According to an article by Sarah Lynch (2011) in *USA Today*, "Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi for the first time gave a deadline for presidential elections of June 2012, saying he was prepared to hold a referendum on immediately transferring power to a civilian authority." If Tantawi follows through with this claim, it would represent major gains in the rights of the Egyptian people. However, history has shown that people in positions of power are often reluctant to relinquish their power. Mubarak's regime was a prime example of how a concentration of federal power used fraud and censorship to suppress opposition, even in an electoral process monitored by the state.

As of the date of this draft, tension is still peaking throughout Egypt. There have been a number of occurrences where violence has been used to suppress peaceful political demonstrations. Across the boards, Egyptians are ready to see democratizing changes in the way their country is run. It has been some time since Mubarak resigned his power, yet an oppressive regime still remains under the Supreme Council. Egypt's state of emergency has not been lifted, political censorship is still widespread and free elections have yet to occur. In spite of these obstacles, the Egyptian Revolution has made so many significant strides forward since its inception in January 2011. Beyond Egypt, the international community has also acknowledged the stirrings of success in the country's campaign for change. In October 2011, Ahmed Maher

visited the United States. He was invited by Arabs and Arab-Americans to come speak in Washington D.C. One major component of this visit was to hold "a seminar and discussion to talk about structure and groups and how to organize groups and how to attract more people to the sit-in or demonstrations and how to use nonviolence" (Democracy Now: October 25). Inspired by the Tunisian precedent, Maher shared these tactics as a way of building global solidarity in support of campaigns for democracy.

As clashes in Egypt continue to erupt at political demonstrations, those most involved in the January 25th Egyptian Revolution are carefully calculating their next steps. Basem Fathey, another founder of the April 6th Youth Movement, has been involved with the Revolution since it began and remains hopeful about more progress in the future. In an interview (2011), he explained that Egyptians "are in the middle of two things, in the middle of our dreams and aspirations that we got after the uprising in January and February and the bad situation that we were [in] under Mubarak. This is exactly the case: it's something in the middle." Of course, there are no certainties about the next chapter in Egypt's future. A lot of work and maintenance must occur as Egypt experiences this large-scale transition. The overwhelming consciousness behind the current forces for social change in Egypt has tapped into the greater zeitgeist; one that manifests in similar revolutionary struggles across the globe.

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<u>**Appendix VI**</u>
Satyagraha and Beyond: A Practical and Philosophical Guide to Nonviolent Action
By: Jed Blume

When people organize to address conflict, an important decision arises concerning the use of violence in their campaign. Historical leaders in the realm of social change have demonstrated both sides of this debate. Many of these leaders have realized that there is no foolproof formula for bringing large-scale change to any social structure. As a result, all types of campaigns regardless of how they view violence have experienced their fair share of both successes and failures. Yet, all too often, the historical and academic study of conflict focuses exclusively on violence and war. The use of violence has a legacy of tactical and logistical documentation, as it is responsible for some of the greatest social changes that humanity has ever witnessed. When using violence, the underlying objective is to create this change by literally killing as many members of the opposition as possible. In the realm of nonviolence, however, the underlying objective is just the opposite—to create change while preserving the sanctity of human life, regardless of party affiliation. To better understand exactly how the nonviolent methodology is employed, it is necessary to turn to the life's work of perhaps the most important figure in nonviolent ideology, Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi lived between October 2nd 1869 and his assassination on January 30th 1948. He was a political, moral and spiritual leader throughout his life. Gandhi stood out among other activists particularly because of his leadership in India's nonviolent struggle for independence, which was granted through Britain's Indian Independence Act on April 15th, 1947. In his own autobiography (1993) Gandhi speaks of a childhood realization that became the basis of his moral code, "one thing took deep root in me, the conviction that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective" (34). As Gandhi

grew and became more politically involved, he remained consistent with his conviction to the notion of truth. The cornerstone of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent organization is known as Satyagraha. According to authors McKay et all (2009) in *A History of World Society From 1775 to Present,* "Gandhi conceived of Satyagraha, loosely translated as 'Soul Force,' as a means of striving for truth and social justice through love, suffering, and conversion of the oppressor. Its tactic is active nonviolent resistance" (859). During his life Gandhi led two different Satyagraha campaigns for human rights, one in South Africa and one in India.

A Satyagraha campaign is built by individuals who share a common ideology and a common view of change. Most often, these individuals also share a common source of oppression as well. Much like soldiers in a war, individuals in a campaign (known as satyagrahis) must adhere to a strict discipline of conduct. This discipline allows the satyagrahis to function as a cohesive unit as they advance the overall process of the campaign. As has been demonstrated by Gandhi himself, the process of the campaign is carried out through a number of steps, which are detailed as follows, "(1) Negotiation and arbitration. (2) Preparation of the group for direct action. (3) Agitation. (4) Issuing of an ultimatum. (5) Economic boycott and forms of strike. (6) Non-cooperation. (7) Civil disobedience. (8) Usurping the functions of government. (9) Parallel government" (Bondurent, 1971, pp. 40 – 41). Each step plays an important part in advancing Satyagraha towards empowering the oppressed. Though, certain steps will become more important depending on the content of each campaign. For example, steps such as negotiation and issuing an ultimatum are a vital part of every campaign. But, these steps may not amount to any visible progress when facing a violently repressive dictator. In this case, more emphasis will be needed on steps in the campaign such as preparation for direct action and economic boycott.

In any context, a Satyagraha campaign will be conceived by a political motive. Both the South African and Indian examples strove to liberate a group of people who were legislatively and often physically oppressed by the existing political institutions. As contemporary philosopher Gene Sharp (1979) observes, the goal of group liberation is just one of the multifaceted benefits that individuals will experience throughout a Satyagraha campaign. Sharp observed, "A comprehensive program of nonviolent social change is viewed as having three main parts: (1) improvement of individuals in their own lives and ways of living; (2) a constructive program to begin building a new social order even as the old one still exists; and (3) the practice of various forms of nonviolent action against specific social evils (81). Here, Sharp's analysis captures how the process of a Satyagraha campaign works to affect change on both micro and macro levels. Individuals experience personal benefits through advancements in their quality of living. The group experiences collective benefits through equitable reforms of policies or institutions. But, perhaps the greatest benefit of participation in a Satyagraha campaign is the dignity that each individual will feel as he or she adopts a nonviolent approach in their collective actions towards social change.

Turning back to Sharp (1979), another unique benefit of the Satyagraha campaign is illuminated in the way people connect with the nature of the struggle. Sharp captured Gandhi's sentiments as he explained, "The constructive program work, Gandhi insisted, was to be undertaken for its own sake and not with the aim of exploiting the people by gaining their sympathies and thus control over them. Such work would establish living contact with large numbers of people. It would convince one's opponents of the peaceful intentions and sincerity of the people participating in the constructive work" (85). This strategy for recruitment is certainly effective because it allows individuals to make voluntary decisions about engaging in

action to change their lives and their societies for the better. But more importantly, this strategy

for recruitment is widely appealing because it is based on a constructivist philosophy. In order to

understand the philosophical basis that is inherent within all Satyagraha campaigns, it is

necessary to take a deep look at how Constructivism influences the process.

In essence, constructivist philosophy is the basis for understanding how nothing can have

an absolute definition. Instead, an idea can only be defined as it is relative to other ideas. In an

essay entitled "Critical Theory and Constructivism" the philosophical theorist Clark Schofield

(2008) asserted that Constructivism "believes there is no single valid methodology." As was

discussed earlier when looking at the steps of the Satyagraha process, each campaign is

extremely sensitive and adaptable to its own context. While the steps of a Satyagraha campaign

do outline a type of projected progression for the campaign, it is the interpretation of each of

these steps that most lends itself to constructivist philosophy. Consider Gandhi's leadership in

the demonstration that marched to the ocean to harvest salt in protest of the salt tax law. In this

example, a committed group of Satyagrahis decided upon contravention of a specific law that

lent itself to mass disobedience. In other parts of the world and under different legislation, the

same action may not have been appropriate or effective whatsoever. Hence, the constructivist

influence in any Satyagraha campaign ensures that specific plans for action are relevant, using

the outlined steps more as guidelines than as anything else.

On a personal level, individuals feel confident and affirmed in constructing values around

their own interests. On a group level, people together can collectively harness much greater

power than an individual. In this way, Satyagraha becomes the expression of group values,

coupled with a calculated plan for action. A constructivist program accounts for a plurality of

values. Sharp (1979) captured this complexity of Constructivism as he stated, "The constructive

program is an attempt to build the beginnings of the new social order while the old society still exists. The nonviolent revolutionary—which Gandhi claimed to be—thus begins to build the new even while struggling against the old. One does not need to wait for the capture of the state machinery to begin" (81). In this way, Satyagraha illuminates the dialectic between the interests of oppressed people and the interests of socially dominant groups. When engaging in a constructivist program, Satyagrahis can see how their own interests and values are marginalized because of their incongruity with the dominant interests and values. As a result, each constructivist program must address the way participants should live as members of the very structure that they are struggling to overcome.

India's first nationwide Satyagraha occurred between March and April of 1919. During this time, a number of tactics were employed with the intention of coercing the government to repeal oppressive legislation known as the Rowlatt Bills (Boudurant, 1971, p 74). As part of this campaign, a specific type of strike known as a Hartal was organized as a way to pressure the colonial regime into negotiations. The Hartal, which closed shops throughout the country, shows how the satyagrahis can use their involvement in dominant society to gain leverage when struggling against dominant interests. With the intention of honoring their own interests and values over those propagated by dominant society, satyagrahis are willing to make personal sacrifices in order to further the constructivist program. It is only by considering the plurality of interests and values that satyagrahis are able to make this distinction. Seeing how Satyagraha encourages people to honor values beyond those of dominant society, Sharp (1979) explained, "The constructive program has been described as the scaffolding upon which the structure of a new society is built" (81). The image of a scaffold, here, elucidates the way that social change

often builds upon existing structures. In this way, Satyagraha utilizes the mechanisms of an existing social structure to incite the type of change that its participants wish to see.

As a way to integrate the steps and the philosophical underpinnings of Satyagraha, consider one author's translation of the guiding principles:

> The Essentials of Satyagraha in action: (1) Self reliance at all times. (2) Initiative in the hands of the satyagrahis. (3) Propagation of the objectives, strategy and tactics of the campaign. (4) Reduction of a minimum consistent with truth. (5) Progressive advancement of the movement through steps and stages determined to be appropriate within the given situation. (6) Examination of the weakness within the satyagraha group. (7) Persistent search for avenues of cooperation with the adversary on honorable terms. (8) Refusal to surrender essentials in negotiation. (9) Insistence upon full agreement on fundamentals before accepting a settlement. (Bondurent, 38 – 39)

These principles demonstrate the way Satyagraha is both a group ideology and a process of social change. Organizing in support of these principles enables the Satyagraha campaign to function as a cohesive unit, collectively harnessing the sum of its component parts. Nonviolence remains the core guiding principle of any Satyagraha campaign. Notice how each item in the above list ensures an adherence to discipline and growth on all levels of interaction. This discipline and growth are tantamount to effective nonviolent direct action.

History has proved countless times that people organizing nonviolently in the face of injustice can become a powerful force in the face of any institution. As seen with the most successful examples of Satyagraha, part of its power comes from the sheer amount of people who choose to be involved. Another major part of its power comes from the discipline of those

involved to remain nonviolently committed to the cause, even when violently repressed. In spite of the personal sacrifices they must make, satyagrahis are empowered by using their voices and their actions in the struggle for social change. This struggle occurs because oppressed people come together and stand for large-scale structural changes that should be both beneficial and necessary for everyone. As societies continue to grow and the underlying power dynamics continue to fluctuate, Satyagraha, too, will be adapted and altered to address the spirit of the times.

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