Insurgent Anarchism; An Idea Whose Time Has Come

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Part I

In fall of 2011, as the autumn leaves were turning color, America's largest metropolitan city was about to grab the world's attention. On September 17, the first occupiers descended onto lower Manhattan and marched on the Stock Exchange, eventually settling in Zuccotti Park. Wall Street, the center of capitalist wealth and power was now under siege. As the word 'Occupy' indicated, it was not a one day protest. They were there for the long haul.

"The Occupy movement just lit a spark." Noam Chomsky spoke of its historical significance as creating something that never existed before and bringing marginalized discourse to the center. At Zuccotti Park, with a library and kitchen, a cooperative community arose with open spaces for sharing and mutual support.

In a time of rampant apathy and weakening civic power, the Occupy movement came as a surprise to the status quo. In the wake of the Arab Spring, some may have seen a rising tide on the horizon. From the Indignados movement, an iconic picture of Anonymous holding the sign "Nobody Expects the #Spanish Revolution" went viral around the globe. The spirit of uprising on Wall Street was also unexpected. Once the wave moved beyond the East Coast, Occupy inspired the nation and spread across the world.

Yet, after the winter's slowdown and the brutal police crackdown of the encampment, the movement lost momentum and the waves of change seemed to be evaporating. Is it true that the Occupy movement is weakening? Are people not yet ready to truly challenge the corporate greed that is exploiting the majority of population for the benefit of 1%? The truth is, the tidal wave of world revolution is far from over and just because it is less visible doesn't mean Occupy is dead.

Occupy's Anarchistic Impulse

Despite police effort to dismantle it, Occupy has already changed the direction of society. It brought a new impulse that many felt was urgently needed. Mic check and consensus decision-making arose as a new style of communication that offered alternatives to traditional hierarchical modes of communication.

David Graeber, an anarchist and anthropologist was one of activists who initiated the original plan to occupy Zuccotti Park, which was the gestation of the Occupy movement. Graeber described anarchism as a social form that embraced direct democracy and a kind of government without hierarchy. He said "Anarchism is a commitment to the idea that it would be possible [to build] a society based on principles of self-organization, voluntary association and mutual aid."

Graeber spoke of how anarchistic principles are at the heart of the Occupy Movement, particularly in its commitment to the leaderless consensus model practiced in General Assembly (GA), rather than the traditional majority-rules approach. He pointed to the movement's effort to stay autonomous and independent from the existing system. This is manifested in direct action, which he characterized as "the defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free."

Graeber (2004) offered a historical context by showing how anarchism inspired the early waves of global resistance against the WTO and IMF and also, prior to this the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, EZLN) and their revolt in Chiapas. The Zapatista's rejection of the idea of seizing power and their creation of an autonomous self government inspired the rest of Mexico. Graeber connected the dots, showing how Zapatista's

democratic practice led to the "This is what Democracy looks like" moment in the Battle of Seattle and it showed a glimpse of anarchist-inspired action:

> All of this has happened completely below the radar screen of the corporate media, which also missed the point of the great mobilizations. The organization of these actions was meant to be a living illustration of what a truly democratic world might be like, from the festive puppets, to the careful organization of affinity groups and spokes councils, all operating without a leadership structure, always based on principles of consensus-based direct democracy. (p. 83, 2004)

A decade later, OWS was like a revival of the 1999 uprising in Seattle. The trend of horizontal mobilization occurred spontaneously instead of depending on a charismatic leader guiding the group's actions. Occupy is a leaderless culture, a decentralized form of organizing. The leaderless nature of these movements are mistrusted and feared by those in power. "If there is no leader, then that's chaos; that's anarchy!" exclaimed Stephen Colbert of Colbert Report in challenging Carne Ross, the author of the book *Leaderless Revolution.* Colbert pontificated on how he wanted stability and certainty in the next day's profit. His tongue-in-cheek comment summed up the conventional response to an imagination that moves beyond the current free-market winner-take-all social structure. In response, Ross noted how the current capitalistic system is itself unstable and that this system would bring more chaos in the end.

A similar sentiment arose within the movement creating some internal conflict. Mark Binelli of Rolling Stone magazine shed light on the tension in OWS around those holding firm to anarchist principles by refusing to allow top-down structures. He highlighted the story of Marisa Holmes, a 25-year-old anarchist who had been one of the core organizers of Occupy Wall Street. While facilitating a GA meeting, the well known figure of Russell Simmons came by Zuccotti Park to participate and wanted to bump up the speakers list. He was not allowed to because this went against the egalitarian form of assembly.

Historically, the word anarchism has often been portrayed in a negative light for political aims. It was associated with chaos and violence and depicted it as a mob rule with no coherent demands except a chaotic dismantling of the existing social order. With the general ignorance around the idea of anarchism, it has become susceptible to government and media manipulation.

Sean Sheehan, a writer of history (2003) elucidated how anarchism re-emerged in Seattle at the end of 1999 onto the world stage. The media focused on broken Starbucks and Nike windows. They sensationalized this vandalism committed by a tiny minority. The massive peaceful rallies in downtown Seattle were replaced with negative and false portrayal and this mainstream perversion of the word anarchism was widely disseminated.

Once again in the rise of Occupy, peaceful protesters were regularly painted with this negative image. Fear was generated in the general public toward the movement, though it's true nature was really the opposite of violent or chaotic.

The FBI has been attempting to brand occupiers with this demonizing of anarchists, a term now treated by the US government as synonymous with terrorist. In Chicago, during the NATO summit in May, Chicago police entrapped activists by having FBI informants provide bomb-making materials. In Seattle and Portland, agents raided homes, seeking 'anarchist' literature and black clothes. Using eerily similar rhetoric to the manufactured 'war on terror' of the Bush-Cheney years, the crafted image of 'violent anarchists' has become a pretext for police to justify militarized abuse of power. Recently, new evidence has surfaced of police infiltration of Occupy. In

Austin last December, an undercover police officer was involved in setting occupiers with felony charges by distributing devices that were later considered weapon.

A recently disclosed data sheet from a company called Ntepid outlined a secret spying software product called Tartan. It revealed a high level of surveillance on Occupy and other protesters and the cognitive framework for the establishment of a witch-hunt on activists in general. The case study document titled "Tartan Quantifying Influence" illustrated data mining software meant to enhance 'national security'. This was enacted within a kind of political profiling that clearly lumped together all progressive activists with a new boogieman label of 'anarchist' that assumes violent and/or illegal actions. The data listed Occupy Oakland, journalists like Citizen Radio and even a PBS station as influential leaders in identified networks.

The concocted image of a 'black bloc' using the word anarchist to describe violent street gangs that vandalize store windows is repeatedly drummed into the public mind, as they are told they need to be afraid. But we must ask, what does the word actually mean? Is an anarchist someone who incites violence and wants to destroy governments?

Anarchist Susan Brown (1993) demystified some of misconceptions:

> While the popular understanding of anarchism is of a violent, anti-State movement, anarchism is a much more subtle and nuanced tradition than a simple opposition to government power. Anarchists oppose the idea that power and domination are necessary for society, and instead advocate more co-operative, anti-hierarchical forms of social, political and economic organization. (p. 106)

Sheehan (2003) traced back the word anarchism to its Greek roots:

> The etymology of the word -anarchism meaning the absence of leader, the absence of a government – signals what is distinctive about anarchism: a rejection of the need for the centralized authority of the unitary state, the only form of government most of us have ever experienced. (p. 25)

DJ Pangburn, editor of online magazine, cautioned the public regarding government promoting hysteria with predictions of violent anarchists in the lead up to the Republican and Democratic Conventions. Pangburn reminded people of who real anarchists have been historically:

> People seemed to quickly forget that it was anarchists who were attempting to bring a modicum of sanity to America's ethically and morally-bankrupt hyper-capitalism, in the form of weekend and eight-hour work day, as well as fair pay for the people who actually did a company's manual labor.

When current misrepresentations of the word anarchism are dismantled, something more nuanced and vital emerges. Anarchy does not mean no government or rules. It indicates a society where authority is not defined by hierarchy and power over individual autonomy. It calls for individual's direct participation in creating a social form and their ongoing engagement with it.

Inter-Net Revolution

The Occupy movement opened up a space for public discourse that has been taken over by corporate interests. In these liberated spaces, a delicate tension arose between the familiar frame

of reference for social change such as electoral systems and the more egalitarian and largely unknown or misunderstood idea of anarchism. This new movement has struggled to keep the horizontal space open and growing in the midst of a mental and physical battle that is orchestrated by those in power who are desperate to keep things as they are.

People ask how can a society be organized without centralized control and hierarchy? Once the initial negative image of anarchism is debunked and the nonviolent and decentralized nature of the model is understood, some might still feel the world imagined by these free thinkers to be impossible or unrealistic. Yet, this idea that is trying to incarnate into society already exists in our everyday life.

As we move deeper into the new millennium, many are sensing historical social change is imminent and are excitedly imagining a different world. The truth may be that inwardly, a revolution has already taken place and people's perception of the world and each other has fundamentally changed. It is a revolution through the Internet. This inherently neutral communication platform has led to a revolt of inter-networking. This is a triumph of connection over isolation, free flow over control of information and sharing over ownership. Before the Occupy movement emerged on streets around the world, millions already occupied the global square of the Internet. The miniature culture based on an egalitarian way of working together that blossomed in the early stages of Occupy had already been thriving on the web.

This is the generation of the Internet, connecting a world that is now just a click away; one that saw their reality captured in the metaphors and images of the Wachowski brothers film, *The Matrix*. Morpheus explained to Neo:

> You are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison... For your mind... You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.

Many might have seen in Neo their own struggles. The Matrix that he was born into is like the modern corporate state we all live in, where commercial interests have taken over so much of lives and torn the delicate interconnectedness of the fabric of life. Intellectual property regulations are used to protect and promote the hegemony of Western market values. Corporations like Monsanto genetically modify and attempt to control life itself. Trade agreements such as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) are all part of an artificially made world order that benefits a tiny minority.

Just like Neo, we already took the red pill and chose not to go back to 'reality'. By plugging into an universal online network, each culture has collectively been going through a kind of virtual rite of passage without realizing what they were getting into, or how deep the rabbit hole might go.

From screen to screen across the Internet, the centralized structures of outer society are melting away. Here is a world free from traditional boundaries and rules. In the digital space, this path of new potential is paved by online connections and shared visions.

Revolutionary Cypherpunks

At first, this digital space appeared as a lawless Wild West with no borders. Nobody owned the Internet. It was a field of potential that could evolve in many directions.

A panel of speakers at the HOPE 9 conference in New York City on 13 July 2012 discussed WikiLeaks, Whistle-blowers, and the War on the First Amendment. ACLU lawyer Catherine Crump pointed out how the WikiLeaks case revealed a need to reexamine laws of nation-states, specifically how to apply the First Amendment in a digitized world.

This global stateless dimension of the Internet created loopholes in existing national laws and power structures. WikiLeaks was a good example of the flexible application of law in this new border-less cyberspace. They created a model based on a reverse tax haven, in order to apply the strongest human rights laws in the world and protect themselves from persecution by regimes that wish to control information or clamp down on fundamental rights to free speech.

Digital pioneers have created rules of coding and programming that stretched traditional boundaries and limitations of this new space. Computer programmers at this early stage were like the first settlers of an online border-less land. Richard Matthew Stallman, computer programmer and cyber-guru worked with other computer savvy fellows to develop their own rules through new forms of programming and coding designed to ensure that the digital culture stayed open. Stallman later instigated the Free Software Movement to maintain a stream of source code outside the realm of proprietary licenses.

Stallman described free software as that which users develop and operate without restrictions other than keeping it free of propriety. It was created to respect developers and users right to maintain control to individually and collectively invent and improve software that cannot be locked down by vested interests. It is to fight against features such as surveillance, digital restrictions management (DRM) and backdoors that serve private interests remotely making changes to a program, even to install intentionally malicious software.

What drove his endeavor was a part of the 'Hacker Ethics'; the commitment to unlimited access to computers and internet, free flow of information and mistrust of authority. These hacker ethics are fundamentally anarchistic in their commitment to decentralization and deeply anti-authoritarian views.

Stallman's work influenced individuals like Julian Assange of WikiLeaks, especially in his association with a group known as Cypherpunks, which originated from an electronic mailing list that was set up to meet challenges concerning individual Internet security and the development of cryptography.

Episode 8 and 9 of Assange's syndicated interview show, *The World Tomorrow* focused on 3 of the seminal figures of the Cypherpunks: Andy Müller-Maguhn, member of the German hacker association Chaos Computer Club, Jérémie Zimmermann, co-founder of the Paris-based group La Quadrature du Net, and Jacob Appelbaum, American independent computer security researcher and activist working on the Tor project. Together they explored a wide range of cyber-activities such as threats online, Internet privacy, censorship bills, repressive anti-piracy laws and the future of the Internet.

Within the sophisticated discourse that ensued concerning this century's information revolution, unique philosophical views arose on the individual's relationship to society, governance and freedom. In Episode 8, Assange described how Cypherpunks worked to provide the cryptographic tools with which one can independently and effectively challenge government or insti-

tutional interference, to help people take control their own lives. In Episode 9, Jérémie Zimmermann spoke about the force of centralization on cyberspace and showed how censorship and privacy issues are really about exploitation of people's power:

> When you talk about Internet censorship, it is about centralizing power to determine what people may be able to access or not. And whether it's government censorship, or also private-owned censorship, they are changing the architecture of the Internet from one universal network to an organization of small sub-networks.

The Cypherpunks were like pioneers of the open Internet model that works to preserve freedom online. It is interesting to find so many anarchistic principles at work in their actions. One thing that guided the Cypherpunks is an ethos of independent control of networks and a general distrust of governments, as well as value of individual privacy and freedom. The methods developed to secure it were inherently non-violent and by expanding the laws of mathematics, they developed encrypted code that no level of violence could break.

These frontier hacktivists inspired and empowered a whole generation. Jacob Applebaum talked about how the Cypherpunks radicalized and empowered people with the idea of open software:

> … I mean, that's what started a whole generation of people really becoming more radicalized, because people realized that they weren't atomized anymore, and that they could literally take some time to write some software that if someone used it they could empower millions of people ….

This trend continues. In August from Twitter discussion the idea of CryptoParties was born. A Wiki page was set up recently that defines CryptoParties:

> What is CryptoParty? Interested parties with computers and the desire to learn to use the most basic crypto programs. CryptoParties are free to attend and are commercially non-aligned.

Asher Wolf, an Australia-based privacy activist who played a key role in its conception, described how it came about: "A lot of us missed out on Cypherpunk (an electronic technical mailing list) in the nineties, and we hope to create a new entry pathway into cryptography" (as cited in SC magazine, Sept, 4, 2012). Two weeks after the term was coined, CryptoParties found their way all around the world. From one movement to the other, this anarchic spirit revealed its diversity, crossing generations and borders.

Anarchy in Action

Just as the Occupy movement was initiated by anarchists, the social habitat of networking in cyberspace appears to have been inspired by this same spirit. Creative actions of anarchy are found everywhere online. Without even knowing it, millions of people are already participating in this stream.

The Open Source Movement, an offshoot of the Free Software Movement emerged to promote collaborative production and free dissemination of information. Examples of important manifestations of Open Source Software that have benefited millions of people are projects like Linux, the online encyclopedia Wikipedia and web browser Mozilla.

Wikipedia is unprecedented as a space where everyone can participate in developing the foundation of historical knowledge. Through voluntary collaborative processes, there emerge horizontal surges of creativity directed toward a common goal with no personal profit motive. This Wikipedia collaborative action evolved and inspired many different movements such as crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding used to fund other non-profit projects.

Similarly, social media links people together with the spirit of voluntary association and mutual aid. Instant information sharing and live-streams weave people in a network of citizen-led news media. This is quickly becoming a participatory process of understanding the world as it is happening. People tweet and retweet, post and share, modifying the original message, correcting errors before they are reported as fact. The advent of social media, with videos and photos is empowering people to bring out their creativity and collaborate for what they care about. Communication flows beyond borders and people access multiple views of events. Mathew Ingram, a senior writer with GigaOM opined how it "has already become a real-time newswire for many, a source of breaking news and commentary on live events". The exploding popularity of online networks in this anarchic spirit is quickly replacing traditional print media and becoming the new global 4th Estate.

As noted earlier, Anarchism is often associated with chaos and lawlessness, but it does not mean lack of order, nor does it oppose all forms of governance. Those who cherish the idea of anarchy simply oppose the concept of domination; one particular person, political or religious view taking a centralized position of authority. Peer-to-peer networks are an expression of this anarchistic stance. They bypass centralized control of information and transform social relationships that in the past have typically been formed through hierarchy of class and professions. These peer-to-peer based connections are unprecedented in that they circumvent built-in filters in the flow of information.

The peer-to-peer communication model is developing as a primary mode of working with the Internet, where each person's free choice to become a bridge is building communication avenues structurally so decentralized that they are virtually impossible to censor. They are meshed together, computer to computer, creating new pathways of freedom.

Peer-to-peer trends are implemented in many aspects of practical life. Working around the traditional centralized banking system, people at the grassroots level engage in peer-to-peer lending. Michael Bauwens, creator of the Foundation for P2P Alternatives revealed how a new form of innovation is emerging out of distributed peer-to-peer networks. He explained how P2P production is a byproduct of networked communities. Unlike the corporate model of internally funded R&D, this process engages individuals fully and often has better results as it gives them more access to the production process and more influence on the purpose and outcome. He noted how P2P production extends to direct action and participation, bringing the notion of democracy beyond a vague promise in the political realm to every aspect of our lives. With peer lending and production, why not create peer-to-peer currency? Bitcoin, digital money is one answer to this call.

The creation of this new digital currency is anarchistic, as it goes around centralized authority and the monopolized debt-based banking system. Morgen E. Peck summed up the way Bitcoin works:

> Bitcoin balances can flow between accounts without a bank, credit card company, or any other central authority knowing who is paying whom. Instead, Bitcoin relies on a peer-to-peer network, and it doesn't care who you are or what you're buying.

Recently, Bitcoin gained public attention by its usage in combating ongoing Wikileaks financial blockade. Forbes reported that following the massive release of US diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks, Bank of America, VISA, MasterCard, PayPal and Western Union stopped processing transactions for them. In spite of this banking blockade, WikiLeaks gained substantial Bitcoin donations. This was a good example of effective use of open source digital currency in counteracting private centralized monetary control and economic censorship. Although it requires some improvement such as securing real anonymity, Bitcoin as a decentralized avenue of currency exchange is a successful and inherently anarchic concept aimed at reshaping economic society.

Below the surface of the Internet, a rapid transformation is under way. Peer-to-peer connections in cyberspace found their way onto the streets. With Mic Check and General Assembly, the people are coming together to create a circle. By looking each other in the eyes, they find one another anew as peers, equal partners and fellow citizens. It is not politicians and self proclaimed experts, but peers – ordinary fellow citizens that we have come to trust.

Wherever two or more gathered in the light of cooperation, there is the anarchistic spirit. This is the path of voluntary association and mutual aid where an unmediated partnership is born. Now, we are finding a new beginning in the resurgence of anarchism.

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Part II

From Wikipedia to Bitcoin, online expressions of anarchism are constantly recreating networks through unmediated peer-to-peer connections. The anarchistic spirit of voluntary association and mutual aid cannot stem from the efforts of just one individual, but are always manifested within relationship.

Clay Shirky, a consultant on the social and economic effects of Internet technologies spoke of the emerging global interconnectedness and the possibilities it has engendered. Shirky shared the success story of a platform called Ushahidi, a program that mines and collects data and provides information for emergency situations like natural disasters. Ushahidi is shared globally to track election results and was used to gather information about the need for supplies in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and more recently for the Fukushima disaster.

Intrinsic to this model of innovation is what Shirky termed cognitive surplus; affordable technology and the presence of networks that coordinate time and talent. He described how all technology that supports Ushahidi existed for more than five years before the service itself emerged. At one point, ethnic violence erupted after an election in Kenya and in response to a media blackout of what was happening, one lawyer began blogging about the bloodshed. Soon her blog became virtually the only source of information and when she got to the point where her effort could not keep up, a couple of computer programmers responded to the challenge expressed on her blog and this led to the launch of Ushahidi. Shirky pointed out how this was an example of opportunity design rather being designed around the technology alone.

He named Wikipedia as the largest example of this cognitive surplus and pointed out how the success of this kind of platform lies in the articulation of a particular shared need. Along with the widely distributed technology, Shirky spoke of a unique network, which is the other crucial ingredient in creating a large scale of participation. The network he described is fundamentally different than traditional forms. Technology itself does not activate the kind of network that creates this large-scale effect. It simply enables what is already activated in each person and evolves in service to it. How is this kind of network different? What is activated to create a network that later is recognized as a vital force behind a large global-scale project like Wikipedia?

Anarchistic Meritocracy

In contrast to Wikipedia, the old fashion Britannica style encyclopedia was highly controlled. Selected experts would write and shape the historical narrative, while the users had no opportunity to contribute their own unique knowledge and keep the information updated. The technology that supports each endeavor is different. Wikipedia was developed within the social and technical world of the Internet, whereas conventional paper-based encyclopedias evolved with the printing press.

Compared to this current diversified Internet distribution system, the printing press had a high cost and therefore limited accessibility. The relatively expensive nature of the technology became prone to the ownership model, with commercial interests creating a gap between those who have access and those that do not. With consolidation of the press and media by large business, advertisement revenue and other interests became influential in the flow of information and knowledge. This centralized control by private companies led to the current state of mainstream media, where an exclusive circle of appointed reporters parrot the official government line. Journalists are often tied to corporate sponsors and no longer think independently or ask hard questions. White House officials pick and choose who they allow at a press conference and give credentials only to those who will not challenge power.

The ever-changing nature of the vital 4th estate is a direct reflection of the social structures and networks inside the system. Christopher Hayes, editor of Nation magazine, (2012) described how the American social model of a meritocracy — the idea that those that work hard and improve their lot can build their own prosperity, is inherent in the political fable of the US. Hayes talked about how this notion of the meritocracy itself has seeds for destruction, in a tendency toward oligarchy. Acquisition of wealth in the Wall Street culture and one-dimensional methods of measuring intelligence for higher education has defined merits and maintains this system.

He noted how the ideal of individuals being rewarded by their capacity and hard work rather than inherited position and wealth has met a reality where individuals advance in status due to

race, family or privilege within a corporate framework, creating cronyism based on self-interests. The language and story of meritocracy was used for self-protection of the elites. It was packaged and sold as the American dream, with a promise that if you work hard you will become middle-class. Now with the exploding debt economy, exploitation of cheap labor and predatory lending, the entire global economy has been turned into massive consumer fraud. Hollowed out US cities like Detroit have become symbols of these broken promises. People are realizing they have been fleeced by corporate America. This deep sense of betrayal and realization that the game was rigged is shared across political lines.

Just as with the current corporate takeover of every aspect of government, communication systems have become top-down narrow networks made up of an exclusive circle of elites, by way of association with prestigious universities, companies and a professional media class. Communication with the larger population in this model requires one to go through a pre-determined route through a central bureaucracy or preexisting power structure. The idea behind it is a belief in trickle-down opportunity where merits are granted by favor of those above.

This highly filtered network is manifested in every facet of our social institutions. In the corporate work environment, employees must go to a supervisor to get approval for proposals or changes to the accepted way of doing things, instead of connecting directly to their colleagues to enact their ideas. In fact, the current form of representative democracy in Western societies itself is increasing becoming antithetical to the meaning of the word 'democracy', as it has become a vehicle for concentration of power. In its hierarchical form, citizens are expected to believe politicians will act in their best interests and depend on them for solutions.

So what is the cost of living within such a social structure? Although this type of network brings efficiency and order, it inherently concentrates power in a few hands and suppresses the imagination of the individual. It conforms mindsets to the mold of intentions and agendas of a select few, who weave the threads of public perception. One example of this blocked creativity is seen in the US two-party dominated political system, where citizen's votes are locked into two corporate parties. Third party candidates are obstructed from ballot access by a system that sustains this two party monopoly. The consumerist culture is also an example where the individual is reduced to a corporate target of mass marketing. Through standardized testings, schools turn minds into receptacles of dumbed down vocational training and creates consumers rather then independent thinkers.

Now, with the advent of the Internet, a huge shift has occurred, which is at least as pivotal as the invention of the printing press. The move from centralized mass media to interactive digital sharing of information has opened up a whole new world of possibility. In this digital age, with unlimited and almost zero-cost of copying, everyone can create content and share it. Distribution is carried through crowd-sourcing based on grassroots peer-to-peer resonance and affinity, in the form of the viral meme, re-tweets and file sharing.

In the old forms of printing, the flow of information is controlled from top down. Production and distribution is at the mercy of vested corporate interests and a few 'experts' in the editorial room. Yet, with the egalitarian nature of the Internet, distribution naturally began to flow more freely. Mikhail Bakunin, Russian revolutionary and philosopher described anarchism as the *"absolute right to self-determination, to associate or not to associate, to ally themselves with whomever they wish".*

People freely choose who to connect with and who not to and here the power of free association ensured by the First Amendment is truly exercised. What is emerging now are networks of

anarchic meritocracy in which the everyday person creates equal opportunity to express themselves and determine what is worthy of their own newly discovered power of distribution.

In this spawning network, merits are determined by peers, by each person's resonance and passion, instead of through appointed experts and credentialed elites. If something has merit, it is shared and may even go viral. This is a network emerging out of unfiltered and unmediated connection that actively engages individuals with each other in common interest or need.

This is what Shirky described as a kind of network that creates coordinated voluntary participation, connecting individuals to larger efforts and malleable tools for successful organizing. An example of this is found in an online free ride-share service called PickupPal. It is a website where sharing of travel needs organically created a coordinated carpooling system. At one point, they were sued by a bus company which argued in court that it was unfair competition. Because the communication channels were open, people launched a campaign to fight it and their efforts resulted in changing the existing law.

When freed from old ties, in an anarchistic meritocracy the imagination begins to weave its own tapestries. Instead of being prescribed and handed down from outside, the route emerges from each individual and manifests only through connection with others. This ubiquitous connectivity is intrinsic within the Internet. If a link is broken, the human need will find another pathway. Now each person connects with the other through mutual need and what fosters networks is genuine enthusiasm and excitement experienced at a personal level. These networks evolve as new pathways and passions emerge.

This network of anarchic meritocracy is decentralized and it appears as if there is no leader. The level playing field is not imposed from outside, but instead is a result of each person connecting with their power to guide their own life. It is not as if there is no governance or leadership. In an anarchistic meritocracy, everyone that is willing becomes a leader. This is a network of unleashed imagination that stands in opposition to entrenched establishment forces.

The Death of Ideology and Birth of a Culture of Ideals

From Cairo to Moscow, from Madrid to New York, the year 2011 unleashed the power of networking that had sprung up through the Internet. Many acknowledged the vital role social media played in this global cultural awakening. In his book *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere,* Paul Mason noted how communication technology is changing basic social interaction and even one's sense of self. Mason described how a new type of freedom has unfolded recently within what he refers to as the 'networked individual.' This is expressed in the inclination to live within multiple networks with flexible commitments. This was observed by sociologist Barry Wellman early in the development of information technology, even before the Internet became an integral part of life.

Mason claimed that this newly emerged concept of the individual defining themselves by way of a network is more pervasive than ever and is influencing both behavior and consciousness. By borrowing sociologist Richard Senett's idea, Mason characterized the networked individual, as a person with *"weak ties, multiple loyalties and greater autonomy."* (p. 131)

How does the networked individual effect the way we organize society and develop individuality as a basis of relationship? Andrew Flood, a member of the Workers Solidarity Movement explored how in the Internet age, Mason's idea of this new kind of individual is bringing changes to traditional social forms and to the revolutionary process.

Flood observed how current progressive organizations are modeled on the labor union within the old factory system, where people are focused on collective bargaining rights and geographically tied to that system and community. He then compared this to a new form of organizing enabled by mass communication technology.

Social network analyst, Barry Wellman gave a useful summary on this new type of individual emerging online, with "the move from densely-knit and tightly-bounded groups to sparsely-knit and loosely-bounded networks":

> Each person is a switchboard, between ties and networks. People remain connected, but as individuals, rather than being rooted in the home bases of work unit and household. Each person operates a separate personal community network, and switches rapidly among multiple sub-networks …the organic and multidimensional relationships of communities are being transformed into narrow digitally-enabled, highly individualized, networked relationships; perhaps most widely recognizable as Facebook "friend"-ings accompanied by Facebook "like"-ings as a possible substitute for shared community values and norms. (as cited in Flood, 2012)

Some might criticize this kind of networking for the apparent lack of loyalty or stability that traditional ties depend on. They claim that the social structure will be fractured. Yet, is this really true? How are networks of weak ties and multiple loyalties different than traditional ones? This new network is averse to the old organizing principles that emerged out of the Industrial Revolution. Within traditional national, religious or political social structures, the individual is defined through belonging to that particular group. Here, opposing or alternative ideas are not easily tolerated. By fighting against different ideas, they strengthen group identity. Loyalty to the group easily places one into a simplified duality of complex power structures, encouraging such sentiments as 'us' and 'them'.

This is a structure where an idea that guides the group is easily turned into ideology. By converting masses into belief systems, ideology becomes a powerful driving force by deriving energy from those who support it. Every ideology maintains power through eliminating differing point of views and claiming superiority over others. On the other hand, networked individuals with fluid multiple loyalties follow an anarchistic muse that opposes the domination of single belief systems and dissolves traditional structures of ideology in sometimes unexpected ways.

In the US, the political system itself has become an ideology where the idea that one must go along with the controlled party system only derives its power through the engagement and participation of people. The rise of Occupy on the other hand is an expression of a movement where people come together in the recognition of the failure of institutions that are driven by ideologies.

A good example of the digitally enabled net-worked individual is found in the online collective Anonymous. This is a loosely tied global network without traditional or fixed leadership. No one can define what Anonymous is and one idea cannot fully represent the collective. *"Beneath this mask there is more than flesh. Beneath this mask there is an idea!"* (McTeique, Wachowski, & Wachowaski, 2006).

Guy Fawkes masks from the film V for Vendetta have become their iconic symbol. What binds Anonymous are primarily shared ideas. More and more the group has been taking a moral high ground by standing up for free speech, transparency and economic justice. Anonymous is a network of people with diverse backgrounds coming together for shared ideas. From this point of

view some might see Anonymous as no different from any other group. Yet, their notion of 'idea' itself is different than the way it is held traditionally. For Anonymous, the 'idea' is not attached to a particular individual, group or belief system. In their words, *"Anonymous is simply ideas without origin …. With anonymous there is no authorship. They are simply a spark but not fire. There is no control, no leadership, only influence".*

The way of Anonymous is that of the networked individual. Unlike old styles of group membership where individual loyalty is demanded in the long term, along with an almost exclusive commitment to the group's predetermined beliefs, the legion of Anonymous honors each person's authentic choices of free association with a special cause or operation. This is seen in how their various 'ops' unfold.

Through an egalitarian and consensual form of decision-making in IRC chat rooms, one may freely put forward an idea for an operation. The proposed action is voted on and if enough people step forward, the action takes place. Some might think Anonymous is like an organization with certain identifiable members, yet this is not the case. Anonymous is not a defined group and is said not to have any identified leaders. It is an open source handle. William Jackson, a senior writer of Government Computer News (GCN) described how "Anonymous is not unanimous" and that not everything done under that name is agreed to by the members.

For instance, in anticipation of the Bank of America DDoS (distributed denial-of-service) attack that was planned by a section of Anonymous, some pundits were assuming that this was the same organization as Operation Payback, the Pay Pal/Amazon DDoS group. Yet, even though there may be some overlap for those who were involved in this Bank of America action, it was actually a distinct and separate endeavor.

This way, the Anonymous notion of 'idea' is different from the one held in the traditional structure that has tendency toward exclusivity by recruiting people into a single organization. One can find multiple ways of manifesting their intention and connections and people can move from one group to the other. One tradition of thought moves toward and corresponds with another without being locked in.

What guides the networked individual is the idea directly connected with the will. Quinn Norton in the article, *How Anonymous Picks Targets, Launches Attacks, and Takes Powerful Organizations Down* articulated the inner-working of this leaderless collective:

> Anonymous is a classic "do-ocracy," to use a phrase that's popular in the open source movement. As the term implies, that means rule by sheer *doing*: Individuals propose actions, others join in (or not), and then the Anonymous flag is flown over the result. There's no one to grant permission, no promise of praise or credit, so every action must be its own reward.

This Anon's 'do-ocracy' is a type of direct action that is fundamental to anarchism. Instead of an idea being imposed from outside and abstracted from their own experience, one connects with genuine passion and enthusiasm through an agreed on joint effort. It is each person's direct link to the idea that transforms the idea into an ideal. In the past, outer dogma, traditions or inspiration from charismatic leaders were what lead people into action, but now the networked individual creates a different kind of organizing force. In this new network, the vital force comes from inside each person, from their free will to align themselves with particular ideals, without pressure or expectation from outside.

Anons also don't have other obligations that come with the formal group membership, so each operation can fully utilize and direct their passion and energy freely. As with the unique Anonymous expression 'Do it for the lulz', people also engage in the action out of pure love for the engagement and experience. They do things for the sake of it, because they love doing it rather than acting for some tangible goal and promised outcome. This forms a different kind of movement where promise and goals are not the guiding force, but people engage because participating in the cause itself gives them meaning. Loose ties are indeed a strength that engender multiple loyalties. With this emerging networked individual, there is a potential for a larger sense of union. People are not coming together by association to a particular group out of duty, but instead through ideas turning into ideals by their free choice and inspired will. This legion sees no borders or limitation as it rises through peer-to-peer communion, weaving a new destiny for humanity in a free associative culture of ideals.

Anonymous, the Mask of Anarchy

This networked individual seen in Anonymous shakes up the taken-for-granted identity. Existence in this modern world means one is destined to be defined through a Eurocentric perspective, under the dominance of a white male worldview. Most are inwardly enslaved by the single eye of empire that classifies according to particularities such as race, class, color of skin and gender into unspoken hierarchies.

Franz Fanon studied the black psyche in the white world through his experiences in the Algerian resistance to French colonialism: He said, "As painful as it is for us to have to say this: there is but one destiny for the black man. And it is white" (2008/1952, p. xiv).

This experience is not something only from a past colonial era. A friend from Jamaica once shared her first-hand encounter with embedded racism. She described how in Jamaica, social class distinctions include skin color and other physical features, and that biological markers having evidence of white blood was given superior status with greater access to wealth, education, jobs and opportunity. She described how she was a privileged brown there, but tables were turned when she moved to the US and she was made to be black in a deeply racist society.

Anonymity offers freedom from being formed by other's outer perception which often oppresses one's existence. Whether it is a defiant protester with a Guy Fawkes mask on the street or an alias activist online, anonymity frees one from restrictions that are associated with social identity and pressures to conform. It is an act of dissension, an insurrection in the best sense of the word. One can engage in actions that are usually suppressed or discouraged in the belief that they do not fit social norms and may disrupt the existing social structure. This allows each person to transform the centralized perception of privilege and increasingly exploitative corporate valuation. Just as the P2P anonymity of each Bitcoin transaction is made independently from a centralized bank, so too in this case, self-recognition is freed from outer influence of dominant structure. One wakes up from the position of being shaped by outer perception to actively engage in defining and creating their own identity.

Anarchism sees identity formation as free-flowing movement that cannot be defined or fixed from outside. The gist of anarchy opposes centralized control that blocks true individual autonomy. Just as what was done with the financial blockade of WikiLeaks, so to the character assassination of Julian Assange has been an attempt to block the autonomous process of self creation. Using smearing false portrayals with overused terms such as charged and rapist, the old school

media imprints manufactured images on public minds and imprison those who become victims of character assassination in their controlled perception.

Now the freezing force of imposed identity is inverted through the act of empathic union. "We are all Scott Olsen", We are Bradley Manning", "We are all Julian Assange. It is this stagnation of individual freedom that Anonymous stepped forward to fight.

Wherever oppression, abuse of power and bullies exist, Anonymous is found by masking one's personal identity to align with others in the shared heart of affinity in action. In this way, Anonymous as networked individuals embody the essence of anarchy. Their loyalty is not to a certain group or individual, but to the idea of decentralization and open space where each person can create their unique being and recognize the other in freedom. Intruders to this open space are caught on their radar screen. Whoever and whatever violates these principles will be met with Anonymous fury. Through passionate alignment with ideals that come through certain persecuted individuals, they dismantle a fixated perception and free those who have become victims of centralized oppression.

This mobilized identity was also seen in the Zapatista solidarity movement. Subcomandante Marcos was the spokesman for the rebel movement fighting for the rights of indigenous peoples of Mexico. The government tried to undermine him by unmasking him and revealing his identity. When there was a move to discredit him by insinuating that he was gay, Marcos replied:

> Yes, Marcos is gay. Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a Jew in Germany, a Gypsy in Poland, a Mohawk in Quebec, a pacifist in Bosnia, a single woman on the Metro at 10pm, a peasant without land, a gang member in the slums, an unemployed worker, an unhappy student and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains. Marcos is all the exploited, marginalized, oppressed minorities resisting and saying "Enough". He is every minority who is now beginning to speak and every majority that must shut up and listen. He is every untolerated group searching for a way to speak. Everything that makes power and the good consciences of those in power uncomfortable — this is Marcos.

Anonymous is a mask of anarchy, a symbol and a shield for transformation that liberates our essential being from oppressive forces. Beneath the mask there is flesh, veins that feel and remember deep ties of humanity. When someone is in misery and suffering, we feel their pain. Our freedom is deeply intertwined. A uniformed mask changes its face with active imagining. The Guy Fawkes visage has come to represent the multiple faces. It is a movement constantly changing shape through empathic imagination to unite with others in free association. By wearing the face of Guy Fawkes, an individual touches something larger and becomes a part of the creative current of essential humanity; one that is constantly being formed, dissolved and renewed again.

Rebooting Civilization

A new network of anarchism is emerging at a global level. When the formal route of nation-state diplomacy fails, citizens of one country begin to directly connect with citizens of other countries to circumvent the hate and fear-mongering of their governments. For instance, with

peer-to-peer communication, Iranian people have begun to support Israeli commoners and vice-versa, showing the world a new form of diplomacy that emerges from unmediated human connections.

People are now bypassing centralized state authority. A volunteer-run network called Global Voices provides translation for the international blogosphere, helping messages get through language barriers. Ivan Sigal, executive director of the organization pointed out how bloggers and citizen journalists are now working as cultural mediators.

Ad hoc movements have become instant mobile global aids that show what grassroots humanitarian intervention can look like as opposed to being guided or co-opted by state or corporate interests. Telecomix is a decentralized cluster of Internet activists committed to freedom of speech. It has no mailing address, no country, no bank account or physical headquarters. With no official membership, people spontaneously show up in chat rooms and start to participate. It is an anarchistically inspired network focused on direct action.

It provided tech support for the Arab Spring, both in Tunisia and Egypt with modems faxes facilitating the flow of information. When Youtube is blocked in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan, Telecomix is mirroring the videos to keep information flowing.

Are those who network through peer-to-peer technology opening the door to a new civilization and ultimately transforming who we are becoming? This is a question explored by Don Tapscott, author and chairman of Moxie. Tapscott made the claim that the Internet can reboot civilization. He described how it is building a platform that fosters a new culture of sharing and collaboration.

There is something unique about the Internet technology. Through analog communication modes, such as the typewriter or the TV, the individual only interacts with others one way through a machine. They are isolated as they express their own views. On the other hand, the Internet allows us to interact in real time, while evolving technology on the ground level. It is highly social and this level of mutual connectivity was not possible with the machines of the past.

Tapscott described how the current digital age brought a radical leap in civilization, just as the printing press centuries before had ushered in a mass communication revolution that empowered those with access to the press. The latest digital phase empowered everyone with an Internet connection to become a news network node. This is met with resistance by the existing culture that operates within the old media and the paradigm of the Industrial Age, which was centralized and filtered. Tapscott explained:

> The new media is the antithesis of all that. It's one-to-one and many-to-many. It's highly distributed, and not really controllable in a conventional sense. And as such it has this awesome neutrality. … The new culture of the web operates with a different principle creating a kind of networked consciousness: It's about achieving power *through* people rather than *over* people. It's about letting go to build more successful organizations and a more open society …

This revolution in technological infrastructure is becoming a path for a new insurgent anarchism. The creativity that flows through the actions of networked individuals on the Internet diverges from the insidious undertow of the dominant economic system. This centralized system of capitalism which depends on mass production, magnified profit motive, cheap labor and the

notion of scarcity for market value is now being challenged by activities that operate from totally different principles of sharing, mutual development and affinity-oriented organization.

In his blog piece *Watching Open Source Destroy Capitalism,* J. D. Moyer made the claim that open source principles and corporate capitalism are actually antithetical to one another and cannot really co-exist. He gave an example of the rapidly changing music industry to show the clash of new and old models. He pointed out how the drives of artistic creation and sharing of work is more fundamental to artists than money making. When this is coupled with less expensive means of production, they become naturally more engaged in open source sharing. This challenges the recording and film industries that still operate under proprietary principles. Moyer described:

> Capitalism is based on *scarcity*. In order for the principles of supply and demand and "self-regulating" markets to function as expected, production and distribution channels need to be privately owned and tightly controlled …. Open-source destroys scarcity. When the means of production are free or very cheap, when distribution is free, and when producers prioritize values other than profit (things like social value, or status/bragging rights), then prices move quickly towards zero.

The Occupy movement celebrated its one year birthday on Sept 17. It was a testimony, a public realization of the truly inhuman nature of Wall Street cowboy capitalism. Jerome Roos at ROAR-mag.org articulated how Occupy is a debt resistance movement and people are uniting through the bond of solidarity. People are waking up to a harsh reality, with exploding housing foreclosures, student debts and unemployment and all the while, bankers are given a blank check. Obama's presidential campaign promise of 'hope and change' was deeply tied into intentional fraudulent misrepresentation. Instead, the world got a continuing rigged casino stock market mutual bondage of debt that ripped off the financial future of humanity. But, rage and indignation were not the only things that Occupy brought to the surface. People are now beginning to find the true source of wealth, mutual bonds based on trust.

Open source sharing is now practiced by millions of people online, shaping a gift and sharing economy. Through creating alternative models and avenues of economic life, this is beginning to subvert the dominant debt-based economy.

What is emerging now is innovative citizen diplomacy, alternative currencies and peer-to-peer journalism. These horizontal structures and ideas are breaking down traditional vertical structures and shaking up dependent identities embedded within them. A torrent of civic imagination is swirling through the disintegrating corporate political structures. Beneath the turbulent system error of outer calamity, a current of shared creativity is silently rebooting civilization.

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Part III

Another world is already here. Civilization is rebooting itself! Across millions of screens and borderless online networks, peer-to-peer creativity of the people is opening the world to a new horizon. Inter-networking of egalitarian human connection is beginning to break up the hierarchy of transnational corporate structures and dissolve centralized power. Now, people are accessing unfiltered information and directly linking to much of the global population. Yet, this newly opened fountain of freedom is increasingly being threatened.

Over the last few decades, public space has been privatized by the power of corporations and government collusion. With corporate owned prisons that disproportionately incarcerate brown people for profit and pay-or-die healthcare systems, profit motives are taking over public services.

Today, all communication is transitioning into the digital sphere. The trend toward privatization of information systems is moving online. Corporate-designed law concerning copyright and property is trying to catch up and take control of the wide open common ground of the Internet, to reverse the freedoms now experienced by millions. "We are convinced that democracy and innovation require net neutrality. Net neutrality for us is a founding principle of the Internet" spoke Jérémie Zimmermann in its defense at an EU Commission. He outlined how it guarantees this decentralized interconnection within the Internet:

> It is net neutrality that guided the growth of this interconnection of networks that we call the Internet. It is net neutrality that is the key to the universality of this network. When no discrimination is applied regarding the emitter, the sender or the type of data transmitted, then you can ensure that every user can participate to the very same network as its peer. Everyone is a peer on the network as long as there is neutrality.

This neutrality is constantly being threatened. Legislation such as SOPA (the Stop Online Piracy Act) and ACTA (the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) were in essence desperate censorship bills put forward to ban free sharing and control the flow of information. They were camouflaged as intellectual property/copyright laws. Internet freedom advocates expressed deep concern that the passages of these bills would drastically alter the nature of the Internet and its neutrality.

The culture of sharing which has been flourishing online is now under attack. For instance, Pirate Bay co-founder Gottfrid Warg who was associated with peer-to-peer file sharing was arrested in Cambodia and deported to Sweden. Initially, his arrest was alleged to be for an outstanding one year prison sentence in a Pirate Bay case, yet later the story unfolded that it concerned a breach of data security, with suspected involvement in the hacking of a Swedish IT company. Warg himself denied involvement. He is now in Sweden being detained incommunicado and without charge. In another case, Kim Dotcom, the founder of MegaUpload that promotes file storage and viewing was taken into custody by New Zealand police in response to US charges concerning copyright infringement through his file-sharing website. His assets were frozen on warrants later proven to be invalid. This case reveals the imperial power of the US, whose claim in court was that they have jurisdiction over any company in any country, even if it is not operating in the US. And most recently, the police raided the Swedish company PRQ that was founded by Pirate Bay co-founders on the principle that anyone should be able to anonymously publish anything that is not directly exploitative of others.

The other side of this attempt to control the Internet is the issue of increasing surveillance. Corporations and governments are enacting censorship by transforming this technology into the most complete surveillance system in the world. Now, mass surveillance is not limited to oppressive regimes like China. WikiLeaks Spy Files mapped out a massive secretive spying industry with an orchestrated global intelligence network that has the capability to spy on an entire population. For instance, all communication that come from Latin America to Europe goes though an interception point in the US. Surveillance is penetrating into Western societies at a level that George Orwell could not imagine.

There have been many attempts to dismantle the decentralized architecture of the Internet and replace it with centralized filters that would facilitate censorship and increase the power of surveillance. What are the motives behind these efforts to control the Internet?

Secrecy and the One-Way Mirror of Surveillance

The efforts of governments to enact surveillance always reveals fear and distrust of the population and a pathological urge to control. This distrust of citizens was expressed by Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, the founder of modern corporate advertising. Bernays (1928) put forth the idea that "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country" (p. 37). To Bernays, democracy requires centralized control of the masses. This has become the foundation of modern representative democracy. Half a century later, his vision of invisible governance is now finding its full expression in a world order created not for the people, but for the elite 1%. This hidden controlling force behind modern corporate governance weaves each person into a social fabric that subjugates individual will to brute economic forces and leach-like profit motives.

In an insatiable growth-oriented consumerist society, people are generally persuaded to unconsciously operate as a cog in a machine to carry the will and the agendas of a few people colluding behind closed doors. Work, for the majority of people has becomes a mere passionless duty, a necessity for survival. If people were asked if they would truly choose the work they are doing now, how many would answer yes. It is not that people are unwilling to work, but work has become something obligatory. There is a whole spectrum of involuntary control of the will, from outright exploitation as in sweat shops and sex slaves to 'middle class American' living pay check to pay check to keep up with the burden of mortgage or student loan payment. Motivation here is always given from outside, with incentives from violence and survival to money and recognition rather than genuine love for what we are doing.

Now this web is tightening as the culture moves toward the inevitable collapse of a debt-based monetary system and the final phase of deep corruption and derivative destruction. David Graeber, the author of the book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* spoke of how debt operates as a powerful moral force in our society. He pointed out how in this culture, the notion of debt as sin is internalized and used to maintain a system that progressively enslaves people without them fully realizing it. He distilled the concept of debt by showing how it is an involuntary contract in society. For instance, if one wants to secure access to healthcare and a 'decent' job, they must get into overpriced higher education by way of predatory student loans. Graeber talked about how in an

equal relationship, money is simply a promise that people negotiate with one another. Instead, creditors now have inordinate power over people and debts are being used as a tool for control.

What has unfolded in the last decades in the US and throughout the globe is a process of insidious enslavement to outer governing forces with a system of resource plunder, war and debt-based subjugation. Subjugation is the act of denying one's autonomous will and allowing a hostile takeover of ones life purpose. From exploitation of workers through cheap labor, massive predatory loans through the IMF in developing countries to saddling people with sub-prime mortgage fraud in western countries, millions worldwide have effectively become indentured servants to abstract commercial interests. Ordinary people and their grandchildren are having their futures stolen by being enslaved to a controlled and manipulated derivative economy. The human will itself is 'derived' from its humanity by way of a contract 'until the debt is paid off'.

Edward Bernays' idea of governance was in essence a model for creating in the masses an unconscious bondage to those who rule. It transforms human relationship into power based slave-master dynamics and makes individuals obey orders coming from outside. Compared to outright forms of subjugation in the old model of slavery and genocide of indigenous people in colonial times, Public Relations has rendered the use of coercive force almost invisible.

Historian and activist Howard Zinn wrote:

> In modern times, when social control rests on "the consent of the governed", force is kept in abeyance for emergencies, and everyday control is exercised by a set of rules, a fabric of values passed on from one negation to another by the priests and teachers of the society (1970, p.6)

'Consent of the informed' is openly denied by military force in authoritarian regimes, while in a democracy it is manufactured through propaganda and control of communication and information. Linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky described how political decision-making processes require what he called "manufacturing consent" within the populace for governments to justify foreign acts of aggression (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). One part of engineering this consent involves constructing the perceived legitimacy of authority and engendering public trust in it. With the creation of experts, more and more people give up their responsibility and participation in vital aspects of their lives. Doctors claim to know more about our bodies than we do. Therapists want us to believe that we need to have them in order to solve life problems. Concerned and informed citizens who call for alternative energy are not allowed a voice in the halls of power, but corporate nuclear scientists advice on energy sources are always heard by Congress. Rather than public service, politics has become a career designed to please corporate masters.

Trust in 'expert' authority forms individuals to be susceptible to impulses from outside. The agendas of others are processed at face value by the people who unconsciously accept them as their own. This perceived authority prepared the ground for Bernays' vision of democracy. The invisible web of illegitimate governance relies on maintaining public faith in the legitimacy of the system. How has this been accomplished? The answer lies in secrecy and control of perception of the real actions and the rhetoric of those who claim authority.

Government and corporate leaders conceal their true motives and the nature of the system by keeping information secret from the public or manipulating perception through Public Relations. With catchy words and friendly faces, they deceive the public to hide or justify war crimes and corruption. For some time, journalists were seen as filling the role of revealing these actions

as a check and balance on corruption of government. In the last century, with the corporate consolidation of the news media and its dependence on ad revenue, journalists began to serve and guard the powerful commercial interests. Those in power depend on people not knowing the origin of the impulse that governs their own will. The ideas of democracy and individual freedom are promoted to create a false sense of independence. Within this constrained notion of freedom, individuals are led to think they are making independent choices about their lives, when in reality this is not the case.

The past hundred years has seen a steady relinquishing of consent to corporations in most areas of life. Important decisions are made behind closed doors that hide the faces of those who govern. Unless one is inside the exclusive club of ruling elites, it is unclear who is really in charge. Citizens have effectively been shut out from participating in shaping the direction of society with little recourse in the legal arena or even the traditional avenue of the court of public opinion.

Now, mass surveillance brings this subjugation and control to another level. In addressing this phenomenon in this society, author and attorney Glenn Greenwald articulated how it has lead to conformism and suppressed creativity. He shared cases that showed the effects of being watched in a total surveillance environment. For instance, experiments showed how students in the presence of cameras altered their behavior. He noted how this kind of surveillance is like a one-way mirror behind which those who surveil conceal their identities, actions and intentions. The result of this in my view, is the masses on the other side of the mirror are silently deprived of their power to shape and guide their own society.

Those who cultivate critical and independent thinking in this situation tend to hold their thoughts privately. Now this surveillance works to take down the final defense of private thoughts. Recall how in George Orwell's 1984, freethinking that does not comply with establishment discourse was considered 'thought crime'. "Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves." said O'Brien looking down to Winston Smith (Orwell, 1949, p. 211). It is total control, the elimination of individuality through making sure corporate values and views insidiously penetrate into virtually everyone.

We are all inside; everywhere we look, all we see is the reflection of corporate values and fears that penetrate from the other side of this one-way mirror. The force on the other side defines and seizes autonomy of the individual. The Internet revolutionary Julian Assange called on the world to confront this invisible international network. In the manifesto, *Conspiracy as Governance*, Assange wrote:

> When we look at authoritarian conspiracy as a whole, we see a system of interacting organs, a beast with arteries and veins whose blood may be thickened and slowed until it falls, stupefied; unable to sufficiently comprehend and control the forces in its environment.

Bernays' conception of controlled governance is realized in our modern so-called 'representative democracy'. In the transnational corporate age, this has morphed into a de facto indenturing system for a growing portion of the population. It fits with Assange's view of an authoritarian conspiracy that works in secrecy to seize power and control whole populations. This beast-like conspiracy hides its true face under the manufactured PR mask of Western institutions such as

G8, NATO, WTO and the hidden hand of the central banks. They ultimately provide the US political cover for a centralized network of transnational coercive action; corporate exploitation, surveillance and control.

The week-long NATO protest in Chicago exposed the gap between the official rhetoric and real actions of what is disguised under the rhetoric of US European alliance. Phyllis Bennis, fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies spoke at a debate on DemocracyNow! about whether NATO is needed. She pointed out how its function is "primarily political cover to United States operations…." and that "this is designed to make it appear to be a multilateral operation in Afghanistan". In a nutshell, NATO is a military operation primarily carrying US interests, yet this fact was concealed from public. Their so-called military intervention is often presented as humanitarian and multilateral in nature. What has been presented as a democratic process is in reality power dominated deal making, where there is no space for citizens to engage.

Within this climate of increasing secrecy and control, the whistleblowing site WikiLeaks rose to public prominence. WikiLeaks helped to shatter this one-way mirror of total surveillance and revealed the true face behind the mirror. They took the courageous step of shifting the culture of fear and secrecy in the direction of an open and just society by means of radical transparency. Speaking recently from the Ecuadorian embassy in an address to the UN General Assembly, Assange spoke about a young American soldier in Iraq:

> He believed in the truth, and like all of us, hated hypocrisy. He believed in liberty and the right for all of us to pursue happiness. He believed in the values that founded an independent United States. He believed in Madison, he believed in Jefferson and he believed in Paine. Like many teenagers, he was unsure what to do with his life, but he knew he wanted to defend his country and he knew he wanted to learn about the world. He entered the US military and, like his father, trained as an intelligence analyst. In late 2009, aged 21, he was deployed to Iraq. There, it is alleged, he saw a US military that often did not follow the rule of law, and in fact, engaged in murder and supported political corruption. It is alleged, it was there, in Baghdad, in 2010 that he gave to WikiLeaks and to the world, details that exposed the torture of Iraqis, the murder of journalists and the detailed records of over 120,000 civilian killings in Iraq and in Afghanistan. He is also alleged to have given WikiLeaks 251,000 US diplomatic cables, which then went on to help trigger the Arab Spring. This young soldier's name is Bradley Manning.

This alleged WikiLeaks whistleblower was attributed to have written in a chat log:

> We're human… and we're killing ourselves… and no-one seems to see that… and it bothers me…"i want people to see the truth… regardless of who they are… because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public…

When one acts from their conscience, it activates a will that was once subjugated. Being true to ones conscience means to challenge illegitimate authority that entangles and captures the will. One can then connect with authentic feeling and individual thought and this frees one from the invisible force of illegitimate governance. What shattered this one-sided mirror is the conscience and courage of ordinary people, of whistleblowers and dissidents inside the system who choose to act freely.

A sliver of light for a moment shines through a world that had been drifting into a dehumanized dystopia. In that light, we see what we have fallen into and at the same time a glimpse of who we can become. By facing the truth of murderous wars that benefit only corporations and deeply corrupt governments, the conscience of the ordinary person who strives to change wakens us to who we really are.

It is an inherent part of being human; a deep tie to all others, the sense of compassion and value of sharing and collaboration. Noone can stop the connection that has begun online. Evidence shows how blocking torrent sites have no effect. When sites such as the Pirate Bay were blocked, the number of sites offering torrent services actually increased. The WikiLeaks Cablegate release revealed that attempts to enforce anti-piracy laws in Bolivia have been a failure. Analytic firm Musicmetric reported file sharing continues regardless of industry efforts to prevent it and showed that this was embraced by recording artists as just another way of doing business. No central power can stop a P2P fueled desire to share information and create connections our human nature.

WikiLeaks's Anarchistic Roots

What makes WikiLeaks so sensational has been their success in challenging centralized control. Wikileaks stated its mission by saying they are here to open governments and achieve justice by means of transparency. From the outset, this whistleblowing site appeared to be guided by similar anarchistic principles that founded the Occupy movement, particularly in its status of a stateless entity with no allegiance to any country or media network and its stubborn unwillingness to accept the validity of outer authority. Assange's philosophical roots in the Cypherpunk movement revealed deep-seated anarchistic principles, which lie at the foundation of the basic idea behind WikiLeaks.

In a 2011 CBS News 60 minutes interview, Assange was asked by Steve Kroft if he was a subversive. He responded by saying he is sure this is what Hillary Clinton is thinking. He shared that WikiLeaks is subverting illegitimate authority and the real question we should be asking is whether the authority in question is truly legitimate.

In early 2012, in a Rolling Stone Interview, Assange expanded on his view of authority. He noted how he is not against authority in itself:

> Legitimate authority is important. All human systems require authority, but authority must be granted as a result of the informed consent of the governed. Presently, the consent, if there is any, is not informed, and therefore it's not legitimate.

This nuanced attitude toward authority has been shared by anarchists both past and present. Anarchism is not inherently against authority or government itself, but only when it is illegitimate.

Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin, widely viewed as the father of anarchist theory said:

> The liberty of man consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has *himself* recognized them as such and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever, divine or human, collective or individual.

Contemporary anarchist David Graeber clarified a misconception about anarchy and its resistance to acknowledging authority: "To be an anarchist is to be critical of authority and always examine it critically to see if it is legitimate … you don't worship authority as a thing in itself."

Graeber also described how the consensus process is by default a basic rule of anarchy; "If you can't force people to do things they don't want to do, you're starting with consensus one way or another." The core idea behind this is that no one can govern others without the consent of the governed. This was also one of the formative passions at the heart of American Constitution. The Anarchist is simply not convinced that representative democracy or the other typical forms of government are capable of actually serving this principle.

Anarchism's honoring of self-governance and the demand for consent of the governed was also acknowledged by Julian Assange. Citing Madison's view on government Assange said:

> … people determined to be in a democracy, to be their own governments must have the power that knowledge will bring – because knowledge will always rule ignorance. You can either be informed and your own rulers, or you can be ignorant and have someone else who is not ignorant rule over you.

For Assange, the power of knowledge meant that public access to information is crucial for self-governance. The act of leaking and sharing is a way to facilitate this process. Through exposing the secrecy of government and corporations, WikiLeaks reveals the true motivations of those in power who influence the will of the people. When this vital information is made available, the public can make conscious and relatively intelligent decisions to give consent to government actions or not. Assange also said that, "Leaking is inherently an anti-authoritarian act. It is inherently an anarchist act". Leaking frees the individual will that is enslaved to a system that exists without the consent of the governed.

In Wired Magazine's Lamo chat logs, Manning is alleged to have characterized the possible release of the US diplomatic cables, saying "it's open diplomacy… world-wide anarchy in CSV format… its Climategate with a global scope, and breathtaking depth… its beautiful, and horrifying…"

Leaking government secrets melts the one-way mirror and expose the illegitimacy of the mirror itself that separates us. Those in the position of being watched and shaped by reflections of global capitalist ambition can now start to find autonomy in thought and perception. They begin to take charge of their own lives rather than being defined by others. Waves of uprisings have spread around the world. From Arab Spring to Occupy, people are coming to realize that they don't need to simply be reflections in a mirror, but they themselves are active agents in their own lives and together can manifest dreams of a new society. Out of this collective awakening, new networks are emerging within which people can free themselves from blind loyalty to the illegitimate authority of the State and challenge the illegal wars and economic oppression that have become such an integral part of our lives.

Along with the reaction to the leaked materials, the attacks on WikiLeaks and Assange reveal the fearful reactions of centralized power. The legally unprecedented and unnecessary extradition to Sweden clearly stems from US manipulation attempting to silence him. This extradition case is an example of the insidious centralized power of US empirical jurisdiction over the globe.

When most avenues for appeal appeared to have been exhausted, he and his team never gave up. Instead, they worked to find a way to go around the persecution. Assange's dogged challenge of US hegemony led him to seek asylum with Ecuador.

Many have asked, why Ecuador? Famed British-Pakistani author Tariq Ali, spoke outside the Ecuador embassy regarding the decision to grant Assange asylum. He put it in a global context and talked about how South America has been long oppressed and violently controlled by the West, particularly by the US, but that major changes have been happening recently. People in Venezuela a decade ago said enough of IMF and World Bank domination and this resistance spread throughout South America. People there have been modeling what it is like to refuse to follow the Western model of development where the State works to serve private interests. They chose an alternative path by creating radically democratic governments, which ironically in some ways represent democratic values and defense of human rights better than countries in Europe and the United States.

After asylum had been granted, Assange broke his silence and spoke from the balcony of the Ecuadorian Embassy to a large crowd of supporters: "There is unity in the oppression. There must be absolute unity and determination in the response."

Through his request for asylum, Assange aligned himself with the global South's fight for freedom from imperial Euro-US power. Ecuador acted in freedom from the pressure of Western countries and decided to grant Assange asylum. Speaking on state TV, Correa said "Remember that David beat Goliath. And with many Davids it's easier to bring down a number of Goliaths."

Assange's enduring fight brought to many a new sense of worldwide solidarity. In free association and mutual aid, a powerful alliance of Latin American countries emerged. This network is bound by shared values instead of resistance. Now the world is discovering an alternative path beyond the Western domination that has been carried over from the old colonial age of the British and Spanish Empires.

In mid October, leading up to the US presidential election, WikiLeaks began election – related dump. They made the GI Files Presidential Campaign Release with intent to inform the U.S electorate. In the accompanying press release, they stated, "the only legitimate government is one that is elected by an informed population".

An unprecedented level of global activism was instigated by this organization that has no headquarters, no physical address and functions purely through donations and a dedication to justice. WikiLeaks helped to release this anarchistic spirit. Dissidents and free thinkers are now striking the chord of peaceful insurgence around the world.

From the Matrix to the Streets, Reversing the Mirror

Torrents of awakening are reversing the one-way mirror and unraveling the illegitimate web of manipulated perception. As we confirm our connection through a peer-to-peer social medium, we are helping the world realize the existence of a power within that can transform any reflected reality. Deeds and images infused by our ideals traverse across computer screens and impact hard solidified reality in the physical domain. More and more people are coming to realize their ideals are legitimate and certainly as real as those created and imposed by illegitimate power. In the Matrix, Neo encountered spoon boy, who said;

"Do not try and bend the spoon. That's impossible. Instead only try to realize the truth.
Neo: What truth?
Spoon boy: There is no spoon.
Neo: There is no spoon?
Spoon boy: Then you'll see that it is not the spoon that bends, it is only yourself."

We know the truth; people have the power within to create reality. What we see as outer social structure was created first by what is lived and felt in the heart as an idea. What is created online can manifest or be mirrored outside in physical space. "Cyberspace is not oozing out into reality, that which we encounter on some glowing screen *was always reality*, never locked away in a separate, mythical, cyberspace" said Nathan Jurgenson, a social theorist of media in the article *We Need a Word for That Thing Where a Digital Thing Appears in the Physical World.* He contended that the physical and digital world are interwoven and one does not actually exist separate or independent from the other.

In August 2011 in the city of San Francisco, the surreal scene of people with Guy Fawkes masks marching down the streets emerged during the evening rush hour. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) became a target of Anonymous fury over Bart police brutality and infringement of freedom of speech. #OpBART was launched and online activism transited to the streets. The twitter hashtag, #muBARTak acknowledged the link between censorship of dissent in Egypt under deposed Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak and the BART police act of terminating cell phone service in response to protests against police killing of unarmed civilians. It quickly found its away onto the placards on the streets. An atypical digital reality from behind the screen protruded into the daily commuter scenery.

On the one year anniversary of #OpBART, a reunion occurred and people rekindled that spirit of digital street justice. The Anonymous organizer of OpBART reflected on the operation last summer and what it did to activism:

> I think OpBART was very important. It showed how fast anon can transform from a cyber-superpower to a physical superpower and we showed how easily we can communicate from the net to the streets and do it highly coordinated. It also set the mood for Occupy in my honest opinion.… This op proved we can be anywhere at any time and do anything we set our minds to.

Now, after becoming the face of protest in 2011, Guy Fawkes masks are popping up everywhere in festive celebration of global revolution.

"We are from the Internet, but today we bring the set live and direct for the very first time in the flesh". On July 1 Robert Foster of RapNews at the rally in Melbourne in support of Julian Assange greeted the crowd before a live performance.

The online file-sharing culture is moving freely across borders and into the physical domain. In Germany, Iceland and many other countries, a new political power is emerging called the Pirate Party, which is garnering unprecedented support.

The Pirate Party has now landed in the capital of Australia. They are an official political party in the city of Canberra and are spreading around the globe, giving people an avenue to enter into the political process with these new social values. Pirate Party founder Rick Falkvinge spoke in 2006 when the torrent site Pirate Bay was first attacked by copyright industries:

> Yes, we're pirates. But one who thinks being a pirate is a shame is mistaken. It's something we're proud of … Because we've already seen what it means to be without central control. We've already tasted, felt and smelled the freedom of being without a central monopoly of culture and knowledge. We've already learnt to read and write – and we're not about to forget how to read and write, just because it's not fit in the eyes of the media of yesteryear.

The Pirate Party's idea of decentralization and sharing challenges the traditional hierarchical and centralized structure of information distribution. "There is a 'complete clash' in the European parliament between those who are comfortable with the net and the connected lifestyle and those born into a hierarchical world, who are surprised when citizens start contacting them en masse over email" said Falkvinge. It seems that most politicians are totally disconnected. For them, the open platform of the Internet seems a threat or at least totally foreign and would protect the current system as an automatic response.

Elites float among themselves, far from the commons and disconnected from the reality of everyday people. Politics is abstracted and decision making processes have become money soaked policy handed down from above. The ordinary person has been engaged in a controlled process that makes them feel they are participating in a real democracy when they are not. Yet, a new political force is on the rise that is intent on dismantling the wall of illusion between politicians and citizens.

In Autumn 2011, the decentralized culture of the Internet emerged onto the streets of lower Manhattan and quickly expanded across the US. Douglas Lucas (@douglaslucas) tweeted:

> Walking around the 2ⁿᵈ #OccupyDallas encampment overwhelmed me with the feeling that I was "at" the Internet. The tents like nodes. #OWS
>
> — Douglas Lucas (@douglaslucas) July 20, 2012

In the article *Peer-Peer Production and the Coming of the Commons,* Michael Bauwens wrote, "Occupy and the Indignados signify the birth of digital-native social movements, and a necessary politicization around the new productive and social possibilities". He pointed to "an emerging trend of collaborative, commons-based productions" and observed how Occupy Wall Street engaged in alternative economy from supporting local small businesses to complementing its free provisioning of foods with the Street Vendor Project. The line between the online and offline public space is blurring and we find signs on the streets of a map of a new world that lives in the inter-web of our collective hearts.

Charting a New World

With the Zuccotti Park eviction of OWS, media smears and coordinated police attacks, the once highly visible euphoria of the movement appears to have evaporated. There have been discussions about writing an obituary for Occupy. Will this energy for alternative social model disappear completely? The question has arisen among many, including those who participated in the movement. The original enthusiasm seems to be fading away or being co-opted by partisan politics. On Sept 17 2012 as the movement commemorated its one-year anniversary, Occupy once again showed passion for a change in society, but nowhere near the intensity of a year ago.

"Was the entire Occupy movement really just an elaborate anti-capitalist flashmob? Where the hell did we go wrong?" asked Jerome Roos at Roar magazine picking up the public sentiment. He pointed out that "The unexpected answer, perhaps, is that the question itself is wrong. Instead of "failing" as a movement, Occupy actually became a victim of the unrealistic expectations generated by its own immense success.

The protests that spread like wildfire in 2011 were a lightening rod of collective outburst rebelling against centralized control of almost every aspect of life. The solidarity of a direct hor-

izontal action opened up public space for imagination. One of the participants shared lessens learned since the birth of Occupy movement:

> The corporate media myths are a lie. We are now entering a new era of confidence and action. You may not see mass demonstrations and encampments at the parks, but if you look closely underneath the curtain of censorship, you will find a highly effective and relevant social justice movement that is slowly transforming American and global society.

Ordinary people who created mass rallies and encampments are gradually mobilizing into neighborhoods, now more quietly and incognito. In May, the Spanish Indignados returned to the streets, only now they moved beyond protest. They started what they call time banking, "a pattern of non-monetary reciprocal service". People voluntarily share their time and skills. They also created organic vegetable garden to reduce food dependency and unplug the community from capitalist production/consumption system.

From the margins, a new order is emerging. In 2008, Iceland went through financial collapse. Four years later, it is now swiftly moving into recovery. This is a result of people defiantly refusing to pay the onerous debt, putting the bankers in jail, and bailing out their own people. These positive changes launched the impulse in Iceland to crowd-source their new Constitution. At FutureEverything 2012 conference, Parliament member Birgitta Jónsdóttir called for direct democracy:

> We are the system. We are the government. We are society. We are the power. We are the law. It is not beyond us, unreachable nor undesirable to be it, the system is a reflection of who we are. In order to empower people to act on this awareness and to start to apply changes through our only means: through action, we need to have direct democracy with the liquid add-on.

The country is finding its new strength through people waking up to their own power. The Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI) is bringing together progressive legislation from around the world to create a holistic law in Iceland to battle against threat of legal attacks on journalism. It creates a safe haven for investigative journalists everywhere, and it safeguards media outlets with source protection.

In the ashes of the financial meltdown in Greece, a group of young Athenians left the busy city and created a self-sufficient organic farm on the island of Evia. Their ultimate goal is to start a school for sustainable living. They raised money by crowd-sourcing on the Internet. Instead of waiting for a government to deliver change, they decided to enact the kind of changes they wanted to see in the world.

Around the US, the occupy model of co-operation is being translated into a new kind of economy. More people are getting involved in local credit unions and alternative currency. Seeds for a world beyond capitalism are being planted. At the Green Party's 2012 National Convention, professor Gar Alperovitz spoke of how in America 10 million people are working in worker-owned companies and a hundred and thirty million, 40 percent of the society are involve in co-ops and co-op credit unions.

The culture of sharing is now becoming a philanthropy movement. Efforts to democratize giving as with the non-profit group, Citizen Effect that began in Detroit is now expanding to

cities such as Philadelphia. Creative initiatives around the globe are revealing the source of real power. People are acting as if they are already free. Graeber spoke of how anarchism is not just a matter of exposing illegitimate structures of power but also moving in a way that embodies an alternative. Now the online and offline worlds are converging and the anarchistic movement is rejecting the structure of false representation and exploring a new model of democracy through actually enacting it.

Former US Senator Mike Gravel has proposed a direct democracy initiative to create a path independent from representative government. He claimed the answer is not to protest, but to make ourselves lawmakers. In this procedure he advocates empowering citizens to go around the government and directly engage in creating laws and a more human-centered society.

On the West coast, direct democracy is on a rise. This November, California citizens are set to vote on a citizen penned initiative for labeling GMO food. By bypassing the two corporate parties altogether, it is telling that this will be the first anti-corporate, people first law in California in a long time.

Another reality that was dismissed by the dominant form of robber baron global capitalism is gradually becoming attainable. It is a reemergence of the commons based on values of sharing and collaboration. Hard work and the common wealth of human creativity are quickly becoming a new currency that is too powerful to fail.

This horizontal organizing that rejects the structure of representation and reinvents democracy is an anarchistic act. Anarchism is the idea of creating ultimate freedom and at the same time claiming full responsibility for ones choices. Those who act in the spirit of anarchism are aware of their part in creating reality and try to take responsibility for it. By simply engaging in the act of protesting, one remains defined within the existing reality one is trying fight. The reality created is simply that of resisting. Instead of fighting to gain power within an inherently unjust system, people are now realizing that they already are the source of all power and are beginning to bring that power into their everyday lives. The true strength of the people is not found in the act of seizing the reins of outer systems of power, but is created and multiplied through connecting with others.

The media widely reported that what is behind Occupy is frustration toward the 1% and corporate domination. It was a feeling that people had had enough. Although there is disgust directed to Wall Street, what ultimately guides Occupy is an imagination that gained power equal to outside reality. Occupiers already tasted freedom and are creating a new structure of self-organizing that they had already known and experienced online. People are now seeing the gap between their ideals and reality, the difference between an open society web culture and the governance of corporate propriety from outside.

The spirit of Occupy will not go away because it is not based on action led by a single ideology or slogan, but infused by an imagination and experience of what is possible. The 99% movement does not simply criticize the system that only serves the 1%, but is creating the alternative and living it.

A similar awakening happened in the 60′s, yet it did not gain quite the strength to meaningfully transform the dominant culture. The 60′s decades was an opening. With the free speech and anti-war movement, a call for counterculture wedded to nature and living in peace emerged against the rise of consumer and materialistic culture. People started to sew seeds for another world. Yet, with the CIA's drug co-opting of the movement, this bursting new impulse toward a sharing culture was squashed and it could not fully become a viable alternative path. It was ridiculed

and treated as naïve. Eventually it was degraded into an illusion, a kind of escape from Western realism and not taken seriously.

Now we are seeing a resurgence of imagination. This time it is not merely a childish dream, but has the power to become real. In the face of finding common ground beyond differences and relating to one another from this equal place, forces of domination and corporate power dissolve. Through flesh that bleeds and feels pain and joy, each click becomes an action to embody ideals in the physical plane that would otherwise might be lost in virtual reality or simply remain a dream.

On Sep 25, 2012, thousands surrounded the Greek Parliament. At the same time, an ocean of Spanish people took to the streets of Madrid to protest against harsh austerity measures and demand resignation of the government. Ever since #25s, this collective voice spread into the streets of Lisbon, Rome, Paris and Frankfurt. From the Arab Spring to Occupy to the European Fall, the debt pyramid scheme and the facade of legitimacy covering this banker-run global serfdom is crumbling. In the rotting decay of empire, what is emerging both online and offline is a creative insurgence of anarchism.

What is anarchism? The true meaning has been vandalized, degraded, twisted and demonized by fearful minds in false association with violence, chaos and destruction. But, anarchism is simply about the human spirit remembering and relating to others as free beings. It gently moves from one person to another, through heart connection. We are reminded; it is not a will of God, a King, a political or business leader, but it is in the will of each person and a consensus of imagining that our future lies.

In a sense, anarchy is closer to true democracy, where the human spirit acknowledges the sacredness and dignity of each being and diverse ideas are given a free space to flourish. It is never a law imposed from outside, but one constantly found and upheld by each person's commitment to actively support the freedom and sanctity of all living beings.

Pioneers in the digital landscape have shown what unleashed imagination can do. It is already happening and if one missed that wave of revolution, one would likely be surprised when it hits the streets. Before we saw each other in the eyes at Zuccotti Park, in our global web of imagination we have seen a new world through a shared vision.

"You may say
I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us
And the world will be as one". – John Lennon, *Imagine.*

Some may dismiss all this as fiction, but millions have already joined the peaceful revolution and the numbers are growing. By aligning with the technological and moral revolution of the 21st century, the spirit of anarchy is being rekindled. Anarchism is an idea whose time has come. Ideas once felt in the heart cannot be kept from manifesting in the world. It's time to open our eyes to the world we imagine and act as if we are already free, because we truly are free.

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