NETWORKS OF OUTRAGE AND HOPE

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE INTERNET AGE

MANUEL CASTELLS

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED AND UPDATED

NETWORKS OF OUTRAGE
AND HOPE

Pour Alain Touraine
My intellectual father,
theorist of social movements

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CONTENTS

PREFACE 2015

São Paulo, June 14, 2013. I had just finished my lecture presenting the first edition of the book you have in your hands before an audience of several hundred people. The first question that opened the subsequent discussion came from one of the many journalists present in the auditorium, "Why do you think these kinds of movements do not happen in Brazil?" Before I could improvise a sophisticated theory about Brazilian exceptionalism, someone in the room shouted "We cannot get out! The Avenida Paulista is blocked!" Indeed, the Movimiento do Passe Livre had taken its protest to the streets. The movement would go on for weeks, then for months in a very similar form to the networked social movements that had taken place in 2010–11 elsewhere, as analyzed in this volume. Indeed, Brazil was not an exception, but an addition to an expanding galaxy of new forms of social movements. Then came Gezi Park in Istanbul, the occupation of Maidan Square in Kiev, Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution, Mexicans' mobilization against

the assassinations of the narco-state, and a multiplicity of less known protests that seem to give credibility to the main proposition of this book: that networked social movements, as identified and analyzed in the research presented here, may well be the social movements characteristic of the network society, the social structure of the Information Age.

However, the recurrence of these movements around the world at an accelerated pace is not a good enough reason to revise substantially in December 2014 a book that was finished in June 2012; because I am not in the trade of updating information – a book at a time – in the age of the Internet and instant communication of any relevant information. Yes, the reader will find in this expanded second edition a number of accounts of networked social movements that were not included in the first edition for the simple reason that they had not yet happened at the time of my research. But rather than compiling new information, the purpose of these empirical reports is to enrich the analytical interpretation of the form and meaning of networked social movements beyond the specific contexts where they originated in 2010–11. Thus, the verification of the persistence of certain key features as common to most movements in spite of the differences of contexts, goals, and demands appears to lend some explanatory value to the synthetic characterization presented in this volume; a characterization that reproduces most of the grounded theory I proposed in the first edition of this book.

Furthermore, with the hindsight of time, I have been able to examine the fundamental question that most observers addressed to these movements: "So what?!" What are the specific outcomes of the movements in tangible social terms? And particularly, what is their impact on the political system and on policy making, if any? By broadening the scope of the observation and by analyzing the evolution of

the movements over a longer time span, I am now able to venture a number of hypotheses on the relationship between networked social movements and political change. Moreover, I have been able to introduce a fundamental distinction between networked social movements and populist reactions, of diverse ideological nature, prompted by the ubiquitous crisis of political legitimacy in a time of crisis and change at the global level. Thus, there are two entirely new chapters in this volume. One chapter focuses on an analytical commentary on a number of important social movements not present in the first edition: in Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, Chile, as well as on the anti-establishment political reactions in Europe and the United States. Another new chapter considers the relationship between different social movements and political change, including the attempt by some of the movements, for instance in Spain, to be involved in institutional politics while pursuing a transformative strategy. Yet, I decided not to change the text of the case studies that formed the basis of the first edition since the social movements I analyzed will stand in history by the practices they enacted, not by a reconstructed logic that I would add *ex post*. I simply have included a few comments to explain the relative fading of the Icelandic revolution, and a few others to put into perspective the dramatic turn of events in the Arab world as the result of geopolitical interventions in the space opened by the overthrowing of dictatorships by social movements. To limit the size of the book in its second incarnation, I have deleted most of the appendices to the chapter case studies, including chronologies of the movements and relevant statistical material. The interested reader can find this information in the first edition of the book.

Ultimately, what this new edition tries to achieve is to further the debate on the meaning and prospects of networked social movements; broadening and deepening the

observation as much as possible in the hope that researchers, activists, and action researchers will investigate, in real time, the practices that are shaping the twenty-first-century societies around the world.

In pursuing this effort of observation and analysis of networked social movements, I have continued to rely on friends and colleagues, many of them social activists and participants in the movements. I want to personalize my gratitude and acknowledge their essential contribution to Arnau Monterde and Javier Toret in Barcelona, Joan Donovan in Los Angeles, Marcelo Branco in Porto Alegre, Gustavo Cardoso in Lisbon, Sasha Costanza-Chock in Boston, Birgan Gokmenoglu in Istanbul, Fernando Calderon in Buenos Aires/Santiago de Chile, and Andrea Apolaro in Montevideo. I am particularly grateful to the Redes Frente Amplistas of Uruguay for their invitation to participate in the First Latin American meeting of networked social movements in Montevideo in June 2013. The discussions in that meeting have been a source of ideas that have informed my reflection on social movements as presented in this volume. I have also benefited from my participation in several international meetings organized in Barcelona by the Research Group on Communication and Civil Society, Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, Open University of Catalonia. I want to acknowledge the Foundation Frontiers of the Mind, of Porto Alegre, for its invitation to Brazil in 2013, and for organizing a series of most interesting debates that informed my understanding of the Brazilian movement.

To all these institutions and the persons involved in organizing the events around the presentation of my work, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude in the acknowledgment that the elaboration, or re-elaboration, of a book is always a collective endeavor of many wills and intellectual contributions.

I also thank my colleague Gustavo Cardoso, from ICST/

University of Lisbon, for graciously providing me with the most complete chart of users of social networks, obtained from the Global Survey he directed in 2013, as well as Alex Rodriguez, the director of Vanguardia Dossiers, the original publication of the chart, for his generous permission to reprint it in this book.

Last but not least, this book reaches you in this new version only because of the intellectual advice of my publisher and friend, Professor John Thompson, of Cambridge University, and because of the excellent editing of my personal assistant, Ms Reanna Martinez, at the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. I want also to acknowledge the careful editorial and production work of my publishers at Polity Press. I hope all this work will be worthy of your attention.

Barcelona and Santa Monica, June–December 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 2012

November 2011 was a good month for me. I had been invited to Cambridge by my friend John Thompson, one of the most distinguished sociologists in media politics, to give a series of lectures in the University of Cambridge's CRASSH program. I was housed in the magnificent medieval quarters of St John's College, where the monastic atmosphere and collegial interaction provided a serene space/time to reflect on my ideas, after an intense year of being immersed in the theory and practice of social movements. Like many people around the world, I had been struck first, and then mobilized, by the uprisings that started in Tunisia in December 2010 and diffused virally throughout the Arab world. During the previous years, I had followed the emergence of social movements that were powered by the use of the Internet and wireless communication networks, in Madrid in 2004, in Iran in 2009, in Iceland in 2009, and in a number of countries around the world. I had spent most of the last decade studying the transformation of power relationships in interaction

with the transformation of communication, and I detected the development of a new pattern of social movements, perhaps the new forms of social change in the twenty-first century. This phenomenon resonated with my personal experience, as a veteran of the May 1968 movement in Paris. I felt the same kind of exhilaration I felt at that time: suddenly, everything appeared to be possible; the world was not necessarily doomed to political cynicism and bureaucratic enforcement of absurd ways of life. The symptoms of a new revolutionary era, an age of revolutions aimed at exploring the meaning of life rather than seizing the state, were apparent everywhere, from Iceland to Tunisia, from WikiLeaks to Anonymous, and, soon, from Athens to Madrid to New York. The crisis of global financial capitalism was not necessarily a dead end – it could even signal a new beginning in unexpected ways.

Throughout 2011 I began to collect information on these new social movements, discussed my findings with my students at the University of Southern California, and then gave some lectures to communicate my preliminary thoughts at Northwestern University, at the College d'Etudes Mondiales in Paris, at the Oxford Internet Institute, at Barcelona's Seminar on Communication and Civil Society in the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and at the London School of Economics. I became increasingly convinced that something truly meaningful was taking place around the world. Then two days before returning to Barcelona from Los Angeles, on 19 May, I received an email from a young woman from Madrid whom I had never met before, letting me know that they were occupying the squares of Spanish cities, and wouldn't it be nice if I joined in some way, given my writings on the subject? My heart accelerated. Could it be possible? Hope again? As soon as I landed in Barcelona I headed to Plaza Catalunya. There they were, by the hundreds, peacefully and seriously

debating under the sun. I met the *indignadas*. It turned out that my two main research collaborators in Barcelona, Joana and Amalia, were already a part of the movement. But not with the intention of conducting research. They were just *indignadas* like all the others, and had decided to act. I did not camp myself; my old bones would not take easily to sleeping on the pavement. But since then I have followed daily the activities of the movement, visiting the camps at times, in Barcelona and Madrid; occasionally talking, at the request of someone, in Acampada Barcelona or Occupy London; and helping to elaborate some of the proposals that emerged from the movement. I connected spontaneously with the values and style of the movement, largely free of obsolete ideologies and manipulative politics. There began a journey of trying to support these movements while exploring their meaning. With no specific purpose, and certainly no intention of writing a book – not in the short term anyway. Living it was much more fascinating than writing about it, particularly after having already written 25 books.

So, there I was in Cambridge, with the opportunity to lecture/debate with a fantastic group of smart students who were also committed citizens. I decided to focus my lecture series on "Social Movements in the Internet Age," to put my ideas in order for myself, with the hope of better understanding the meaning of these variegated movements in my interaction with students and colleagues. It went very well. It was intense, rigorous, truthful and absent of academic pomp. At the end of the month, while saying farewell, my colleague John Thompson insisted that I should write a book on the basis of these lectures. A short, quick book, and less academic than usual. Short? Quick? I have never done that. My books are usually over five years in the making and over 400 pages when published. Yes, he said, you may do another one in five years, but what is needed now is a simple book that organizes

the debate and contributes to the reflection of the movement and to the broader understanding of these new movements by people at large. He succeeded in making me feel guilty for not doing it, since my only potential useful contribution to a better world comes from my lifelong experience as a social researcher, writer and lecturer, not from my often confused activism. I yielded to his request, and here I am, four months later. It was quick, and exhausting. It is short by my standards. As for its relevance, that is for you to judge. So, my first acknowledgment goes to John, the initiator of this enterprise. He backed up his interest by following and commenting on my draft chapters during the elaboration of this project. Thus, I am deeply indebted to him for his generosity and intellectual contribution.

Yet, for all the impulse I received in and from Cambridge, I would not have been able to keep my promise without the help of an extraordinary group of young researchers with whom I worked regularly in Barcelona and in Los Angeles. As soon as I returned from England, I realized that I was in big trouble, and called my friends and co-investigators to the rescue. Joana Conill, Amalia Cardenas, and I had created a small research team at the Open University of Barcelona (UOC) to study the rise of alternative economic cultures in Barcelona. Many of the groups and individuals we observed became in fact participants in the *indignadas* movement. Since Joana and Amalia were already within the movement, they agreed to help with information and analysis, on the condition of not being involved in the final writing of the research, for their own personal reasons. Amalia also collected and analyzed information on Iceland and on Occupy Wall Street, while I used my networks of colleagues and former students around the world to retrieve information, check facts, and listen to ideas, particularly about the Arab countries. Other persons in the movement also agreed to discuss with me

or with my collaborators some of the issues and history of the movement. I want to thank particularly Javier Toret and Arnau Monterde, both in Barcelona.

Then, in Los Angeles, my research collaborator Lana Swartz, an outstanding doctoral student at the Annenberg School of Communication at USC, was also involved in Occupy Los Angeles, and also accepted with incredible generosity, intelligence, and rigor to help me in the data collection and analysis of the Occupy movement in the United States. Joan Donovan, an active participant in Occupy Los Angeles and Inter-Occupy, a veteran of many battles for social justice, and a doctoral student at UC San Diego, gave me some key ideas that helped my understanding. Dorian Bon, a student at Columbia University, conveyed to me his experience in the student movement connected to Occupy Wall Street. My friend and colleague Sasha Costanza-Chock, a professor at MIT, shared with me his unpublished survey data on the Occupy movement in the US. Maytha Alhassen, an Arab-American journalist and doctoral student in American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, who had traveled in the Arab countries during the time of the uprisings, worked closely with me, reporting on key events that she witnessed first-hand, allowing me access to Arabic sources, and most importantly educating me about what had really happened everywhere. Of course, I am the only one responsible for the many mistakes I have probably made in my interpretation. But without her invaluable help there would have been many more mistakes. It is because of the quality of her contribution that I dared to go into the analysis of specific processes in the Arab uprisings.

Thus my gratitude and recognition goes to this very diverse group of exceptional individuals who agreed to collaborate in the project of this book, which became a truly

collective endeavor, although the end result was elaborated in the solitude of authorship.

As for my previous books, Melody Lutz, a professional writer and my personal editor, was the key link between me, the author, and you, the reader, making our communication possible. My heartfelt recognition goes to Melody.

The complexity of the process of work that I just outlined, which led to this book, required exceptional management and organizational skills, and a great deal of patience. Thus, my deepest thanks go to Clelia Azucena Garciasalas, my personal assistant at the Annenberg School of Communication, who directed the entire project, coordinated research and editing, filled in the gaps, collected information, corrected mistakes, and made sure that you would have in your hands this volume with full assurance of her quality control. I also want to thank the contribution of Noelia Diaz Lopez, my personal assistant at the Open University of Catalonia, for her ongoing outstanding support of all my research activities.

Finally, as with my previous research and writing, none of this would have been possible without the supportive family environment that this author enjoys. For this, my love and my gratitude go to my wife Emma Kiselyova, my daughter Nuria, my stepdaughter Lena, my grandchildren Clara, Gabriel, and Sasha, my sister Irene, and my brother-in-law Jose.

Thus, it is in the crossroads between emotion and cognition, work and experience, personal history and hope for the future that this book was born. For you.

Barcelona and Santa Monica, December 2011–April 2012

OPENING:

NETWORKING MINDS, CREATING

MEANING, CONTESTING POWER

No one expected it. In a world darkened by economic distress, political cynicism, cultural emptiness and personal hopelessness, it just happened. Suddenly dictatorships could be overthrown with the bare hands of the people, even if their hands had been bloodied by the sacrifice of the fallen. Financial magicians went from being the objects of public envy to the targets of universal contempt. Politicians became exposed as corrupt and as liars. Governments were denounced. Media were suspected. Trust vanished. And trust is what glues together society, the market, the institutions. Without trust, nothing works. Without trust, the social contract dissolves and people disappear as they transform into defensive individuals fighting for survival. Yet, at the fringe of a world that had come to the brink of its capacity for humans to live together and to share life with nature, individuals did come together again to find new forms of being us, the people. There were first a few, who were joined by hundreds, then networked by thousands, then supported by

millions with their voices and their internal quest for hope, as muddled as it was, that cut across ideology and hype, to connect with the real concerns of real people in the real human experience that had been reclaimed. It began on the Internet social networks, as these are spaces of autonomy, largely beyond the control of governments and corporations that had monopolized the channels of communication as the foundation of their power, throughout history. By sharing sorrow and hope in the free public space of the Internet, by connecting to each other, and by envisioning projects from multiple sources of being, individuals formed networks, regardless of their personal views or organizational attachments. They came together. And their togetherness helped them to overcome fear, this paralyzing emotion on which the powers that be rely in order to prosper and reproduce, by intimidation or discouragement, and when necessary by sheer violence, be it naked or institutionally enforced. From the safety of cyberspace, people from all ages and conditions moved toward occupying urban space, on a blind date with each other and with the destiny they wanted to forge, as they claimed their right to make history – their history – in a display of the self-awareness that has always characterized major social movements.[1]

The movements spread by contagion in a world networked by the wireless Internet and marked by fast, viral diffusion of images and ideas. They started in the South and in the North, in Tunisia and in Iceland, and from there the spark lit fire in a diverse social landscape devastated by greed and manipulation in all quarters of the blue planet. It was not just poverty, or the economic crisis, or the lack of democracy that caused the multifaceted rebellion. Of course, all these poignant manifestations of an unjust society and of an undemocratic polity were present in the protests. But it was primarily the humiliation provoked by the cynicism and arro-

gance of those in power, be it financial, political or cultural, that brought together those who turned fear into outrage, and outrage into hope for a better humanity. A humanity that had to be reconstructed from scratch, escaping the multiple ideological and institutional traps that had led to dead ends again and again, forging a new path by treading it. It was the search for dignity amid the suffering of humiliation – recurrent themes in most of the movements.

Networked social movements first spread in the Arab world and were confronted with murderous violence by Arab dictatorships. They experienced diverse fates, from victory to concessions to repeated massacres to civil wars. Other movements arose against the mishandled management of the economic crisis in Europe and in the United States by governments who sided with the financial elites responsible for the crisis at the expense of their citizens: in Spain, in Greece, in Portugal, in Italy (where women's mobilizations contributed to finishing off the buffoon-esque *commedia dell'arte* of Berlusconi), in Britain (where occupations of squares and the defense of the public sector by trade unions and students joined hands) and with less intensity but similar symbolism in most other European countries. In Israel, a spontaneous movement with multiple demands became the largest grassroots mobilization in Israeli history, obtaining the satisfaction of many of its requests. In the United States, the Occupy Wall Street movement, as spontaneous as all the others, and as networked in cyberspace and urban space as the others, became the event of the year, and affected most of the country, so much so that *Time* magazine named "The Protester" the person of the year. And the motto of the 99 percent, whose well-being had been sacrificed to the interests of the 1 percent, who control 23 percent of the country's wealth, became a mainstream topic in American political life. On October 15, 2011, a global network of occupying movements

under the banner of "United for Global Change" mobilized hundreds of thousands in 951 cities in 82 countries around the world, claiming social justice and true democracy. In all cases the movements ignored political parties, distrusted the media, did not recognize any leadership and rejected all formal organization, relying on the Internet and local assemblies for collective debate and decision-making.

This book attempts to shed light on these movements: on their formation, their dynamics, their values and their prospects for social transformation. This is an inquiry into the social movements of the network society, the movements that will ultimately make societies in the twenty-first century by engaging in conflictive practices rooted in the fundamental contradictions of our world. The analysis presented here is based on observation of the movements, but it will not try to describe them, nor will it be able to provide definitive proof for the arguments conveyed in this text. There is already available a wealth of information, articles, books, media reports, and blog archives that can be easily consulted by browsing the Internet. And it is too early to construct a systematic, scholarly interpretation of the movements. Thus, my purpose is more limited: to suggest some hypotheses, grounded on observation, on the nature and perspectives of networked social movements, with the hope of identifying the new paths of social change in our time, and to stimulate a debate on the practical (and ultimately political) implications of these hypotheses.

This analysis is based on a grounded theory of power that I presented in my book *Communication Power* (2009), a theory that provides the background for the understanding of the movements studied here.

I start from the premise that power relationships are constitutive of society because those who have power construct the institutions of society according to their values and inter-

ests. Power is exercised by means of coercion (the monopoly of violence, legitimate or not, by the control of the state) and/ or by the construction of meaning in people's minds, through mechanisms of symbolic manipulation. Power relations are embedded in the institutions of society, and particularly in the state. However, since societies are contradictory and conflictive, wherever there is power there is also counterpower, which I understand to be the capacity of social actors to challenge the power embedded in the institutions of society for the purpose of claiming representation for their own values and interests. All institutional systems reflect power relations, as well as the limits to these power relations as negotiated by an endless historical process of conflict and bargaining. The actual configuration of the state and other institutions that regulate people's lives depends on this constant interaction between power and counterpower.

Coercion and intimidation, based on the state's monopoly of the capacity to exercise violence, are essential mechanisms for imposing the will of those in control of the institutions of society. However, the construction of meaning in people's minds is a more decisive and more stable source of power. The way people think determines the fate of the institutions, norms and values on which societies are organized. Few institutional systems can last long if they are based just on coercion. Torturing bodies is less effective than shaping minds. If a majority of people think in ways that are contradictory to the values and norms institutionalized in the laws and regulations enforced by the state, the system will change, although not necessarily to fulfill the hopes of the agents of social change. This is why the fundamental power struggle is the battle for the construction of meaning in the minds of the people.

Humans create meaning by interacting with their natural and social environment, by networking their neural networks

with the networks of nature and with social networks. This networking is operated by the act of communication. Communication is the process of sharing meaning through the exchange of information. For society at large, the key source of the social production of meaning is the process of socialized communication. Socialized communication exists in the public realm beyond interpersonal communication. The ongoing transformation of communication technology in the digital age extends the reach of communication media to all domains of social life in a network that is at the same time global and local, generic and customized in an ever-changing pattern. The process of constructing meaning is characterized by a great deal of diversity. There is, however, one feature common to all processes of symbolic construction: they are largely dependent on the messages and frames created, formatted and diffused in multimedia communication networks. Although each individual human mind constructs its own meaning by interpreting the communicated materials on its own terms, this mental processing is conditioned by the communication environment. Thus, the transformation of the communication environment directly affects the forms of meaning construction, and therefore the production of power relationships. In recent years, the fundamental change in the realm of communication has been the rise of what I have called mass self-communication – the use of the Internet and wireless networks as platforms of digital communication. It is mass communication because it processes messages from many to many, with the potential of reaching a multiplicity of receivers, and of connecting to endless networks that transmit digitized information around the neighborhood or around the world. It is self-communication because the production of the message is autonomously decided by the sender, the designation of the receiver is self-directed and the retrieval of messages from

the networks of communication is self-selected. Mass self-communication is based on horizontal networks of interactive communication that, by and large, are difficult to control by governments or corporations. Furthermore, digital communication is multimodal and allows constant reference to a global hypertext of information whose components can be remixed by the communicative actor according to specific projects of communication. Mass self-communication provides the technological platform for the construction of the autonomy of the social actor, be it individual or collective, vis-à-vis the institutions of society. This is why governments are afraid of the Internet, and this is why corporations have a love–hate relationship with it and are trying to extract profits while limiting its potential for freedom (for instance, by controlling file sharing or open source networks).

In our society, which I have conceptualized as a network society, power is multidimensional and is organized around networks programmed in each domain of human activity according to the interests and values of empowered actors.[2] Networks of power exercise their power by influencing the human mind predominantly (but not solely) through multimedia networks of mass communication. Thus, communication networks are decisive sources of power-making.

Networks of power in various domains of human activity are networked among themselves. Global financial networks and global multimedia networks are intimately linked, and this particular meta-network holds extraordinary power. But not all power, because this meta-network of finance and media is itself dependent on other major networks, such as the political network, the cultural production network (which encompasses all kinds of cultural artefacts, not just communication products), the military/security network, the global criminal network and the decisive global network of production and application of science, technology

and knowledge management. These networks do not merge. Instead, they engage in strategies of partnership and competition by forming ad hoc networks around specific projects. But they all share a common interest: to control the capacity of defining the rules and norms of society through a political system that primarily responds to their interests and values. This is why the network of power constructed around the state and the political system does play a fundamental role in the overall networking of power. This is, first, because the stable operation of the system, and the reproduction of power relationships in every network, ultimately depend on the coordinating and regulatory functions of the state, as was witnessed in the collapse of financial markets in 2008 when governments were called to the rescue around the world. Furthermore, it is via the state that different forms of exercising power in distinct social spheres relate to the monopoly of violence as the capacity to enforce power in the last resort. So, while communication networks process the construction of meaning on which power relies, the state constitutes the default network for the proper functioning of all other power networks.

And so, how do power networks connect with one another while preserving their sphere of action? I propose that they do so through a fundamental mechanism of power-making in the network society: switching power. This is the capacity to connect two or more different networks in the process of making power for each one of them in their respective fields.

Thus, who holds power in the network society? The *programmers* with the capacity to program each one of the main networks on which people's lives depend (government, parliament, the military and security establishment, finance, media, science and technology institutions, etc.). And the *switchers* who operate the connections between different networks (media moguls introduced in the political class,

financial elites bankrolling political elites, political elites bailing out financial institutions, media corporations intertwined with financial corporations, academic institutions financed by big business, etc.).

If power is exercised by programming and switching networks, then counterpower, the deliberate attempt to change power relationships, is enacted by reprogramming networks around alternative interests and values, and/or disrupting the dominant switches while switching networks of resistance and social change. Actors of social change are able to exert decisive influence by using mechanisms of power-making that correspond to the forms and processes of power in the network society. By engaging in the production of mass media messages, and by developing autonomous networks of horizontal communication, citizens of the Information Age become able to invent new programs for their lives with the materials of their suffering, fears, dreams and hopes. They build their projects by sharing their experience. They subvert the practice of communication as usual by occupying the medium and creating the message. They overcome the powerlessness of their solitary despair by networking their desire. They fight the powers that be by identifying the networks that are.

Social movements, throughout history, are the producers of new values and goals around which the institutions of society are transformed to represent these values by creating new norms to organize social life. Social movements exercise counterpower by constructing themselves in the first place through a process of autonomous communication, free from the control of those holding institutional power. Because mass media are largely controlled by governments and media corporations, in the network society communicative autonomy is primarily constructed in the Internet networks and in the platforms of wireless communication. Digital social