# TECHVOLUTION: A NEW PHILOSOPHY

by Johnny Majic December 2019

## Backpage

Are you happy? On the outside Westerners have flashy products, full employment, and stable politics. On the inside our middle-class deals with stagnate wages, crushing debts, increasing inequality, antisocial behavior, political hatred, rat race lifestyles, climate change. We have the freedom to vote any ideology, and we’ve tried them all, yet our problems keep increasing. In this book I argue the middle-class needs a totally new philosophy, one that says we either step up to solve our own problems, or keep suffering the unknowns of a degenerating society.

## Dedication

*This book is for the people in the open-source community. For the unspoken philosophy you handed down to me. For selflessly solving problems when updating Wikipedia, writing free software, and building cool new tech for us all. For showing me who the real protagonists are. You gave the best education a political guy can get. I hope I’ve learned enough to write this book.*

*For the antagonists, the self-entitled delegators keeping Blockbuster—and all it stands for—alive, thanks for causing history to repeat itself yet again. I hope you learn something.*

*This is especially dedicated to the extras. Because when it’s time for you to act, I pray you pick the right side.*

## Quote

“*We are really the revolutionaries in the world today—not the kids with long hair and beards who were wrecking the schools a few years ago.*”

Gordon Moore, co-founder of Intel, 1973.

# Introduction

## Looking Up

How do we develop through technological Ages? Going from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age or the Medieval Age to Scientific Age happens over generations—it’s hard to get our head around. I’ve been thinking about it for years and only now have a grasp. There’s a lot to think about when a civilization’s entire way of life upgrades to new technology.

Play games like Age of Empires, Anno 1800, and Civilization, and you’ll get a good idea of how civilizations develop. You’ll be the player “god” that saves up the resources, invests in the science, and decides when to click “upgrade.” When you do, civilization instantly transforms. Like magic, every house, factory, building, road, library, school is suddenly new and improved.

The above is just a game, of course. But we’re all in there somewhere, trying to figure out how to earn a living while our society transforms around us. It’s hard—there is no player god and no magic button. Instead, we, the people inside the game, must collect the resources, do the research, and manually upgrade every part of our civilization bit by bit with blood, sweat, and tears. We can’t sit back, click, and watch. We must live it.

Improving technology is hard work, but at least we understand how to do research and development. Improving politics isn’t so straightforward. Politics is contentious, especially when society has one foot in an old and new era. This split identity is the world of politics and philosophy, civil wars, and revolutions I want to help you make a better sense of. Because in 1970, we entered the Digital Age. Since then, digital innovators, geeks, and hackers have been upgrading our society with digital tools—while the powers that be have been holding them back.

And that’s the reason life for the middle-class has gotten worse. Things will only improve once we finish the Digital Age upgrade. There’s no game, cheats, or gimmicks. There’s just you and your friends on Main Street. You all have to get out the sweat-bands, work gloves, and new ideas to upgrade every piece of our civilization, bit by bit.

The job before us is as natural as evolution. Life only adapts and diversifies when new and improved lifeforms replace old ones. Likewise, right now, our civilization is moving from the Industrial Age to the Digital Age. You can’t sit out. Either you help our evolution, or old it back.

This book integrates technology, history, politics, and philosophy, but it’s not written for any buff. It uses the power of stories to help the people inside today’s game—the middle-class—improve their own lives. The first step is a new mindset. Because we already have digital tools. We only need a modern philosophy to enjoy all the wonders of the Digital Age.

## Looking Up to Political Philosophy

This book’s illustration has a regular person standing on Main Street. His or her’s job is to upgrade society to a new Age. What does that mean inside one person’s life? So she’s looking up, hoping for guidance and sees two options—the heroes and the villains—fighting each other. In the sky high above is the “player god” who determines the winner.

In the computer game, when the player god presses the upgrade button, every character gets all-new tools: quills become pens, telephones become smartphones, and so on. It’s what we do when shopping, reading reviews, and “saving up” for a new cool thing. Our shopping determines the health of our entire civilization. Yet we don’t think of ourselves as being “player gods”; but in fact, it’s all our individual choices that make up the “player god.”

The more individuals realize the “big picture” and act like their actions matter, the healthier their society. And the job of giving them perspective is the world of political philosophy. And it’s a mysterious world with one clear goal; make people act with the big picture in mind. The regular person looking up from Main Street is interpreting his society’s ruling philosophy, and with her interpretation, she decides how he should act within the game.

But what the heck is the big picture, and who knows it best? In everyday life, everyone says their fighting for good—no one says they’re evil. But looking back at history and the villains and heroes easily pop out. Both must exist today. But who is who?

So there you are, on Main Street, looking up, trying to figure if Donald Trump is evil, or if the United Nations is trying to make a world government. You ask if Fox News is manufacturing fake news, or maybe “all of them” are. If so, what’s real news? Should the government-run health insurance, or a big corporation?

It’s all very confusing and emotional. The sad part is you have to pick sides. After all, today, you’re the one supposed to upgrade civilization to the Digital Age. Wouldn’t it be cool if your political philosophy showed you the difference between good and evil? It is cool; it’s calming to understand politics. And that’s one reason why I wrote this book for you.

## Your Politics

When a computer player “upgrades” to a new Age, we can see technology changed. Damning a river, or putting up telephone poles is very obvious.

When the computer player “upgrades” the game’s philosophy, he installs a new ruling philosophy. For example, going from Divine Monarchy to American democracy. But we can’t see this change in real-world objects. The change happens in our minds. And that’s much harder to see. When the upgrade happens, every person on Main Street looks up and asks, “What does American democracy mean? Am I supposed to be conservative or progressive? Libertarian or socialist? Republican or Democrat?” These Factions are interpretations of the ruling philosophy—in this case, American democracy. A person uses the factions to decide what they think the “big picture” and thus form their own political opinions.

People are good at expressing and fighting for their political opinions. But understanding where their mindset comes from is entirely different. Nobody ever says, “My family is old money, so I’m coasting through life. I only work when I have to protect my entitlement; what most people would call inheritance.” Instead, the person says, “White privilege doesn’t exist stupid!” Nobody says, “I’m a gullible person who works with lots of Urban Studies graduates, so I say xher, and I don’t like Donald Trump because he’s mean, vulgar, and has orange hair!” instead that person says; “Trump is not presidential.”

The point is, the real reason for your political opinions is hard to know. We all look up at the same ruling philosophy; we all try to “think of the big picture,” yet we arrive at different answers. Our opinions are a byproduct of our psychology, job, skillset, family, culture, ethnicity, religion, and time-period. Who can understand how all these factors intermix to make your opinion? Why does one parent cry tears of sadness, the other of joy, on the same election night?

I can’t explain it either. But I can explain where you are in the story of civilization. Because starting a new Age always has the same cast of characters. Some people fight to retain power for themselves — people who want to distribute power to the people. And regular people on Main Street who either help the good guys or don’t. Whatever the reason for not getting involved doesn’t matter. People either help the good guys upgrade civilization, or don’t.

Today this translates to the digital technologists fighting to distribute the power of new digital technology to the people on Main Street. The people on Main Street have a choice, do they step up to help, or not.

## Read Now or Read Later

There’s a heck of a lot of emotions in Western politics today. Better put—people fucking hate each other. And few of those people know why. They’re just mad. And not mad in the “I stepped in the puddle” way. Mad in the comic book supervillain way.

Let’s get some perspective. Democracy spread around the world on the back of the Industrial Age. Conservatism and Progressivism were the biggest factions of that ruling philosophy. Now, at the start of the Digital Age, rather than rethink hundreds of years of “left vs. right” politics, each side blames each other for their shared outdatedness. We can make a comparison to past feuds within old ruling philosophies (the Thirty Years War comes to my mind). Either way, impeachments, disputed elections, rallies, and political deadlock is a fucking horrible place for our society to be in. When we should be upgrading our ruling philosophy to the Digital Age, the rantings and ravings of outdated ideologues disengage ever-more Westerners from politics.

We achieved great things in the Industrial Age. It wasn’t perfect, but new tools in medicine, physics, sanitation, education, agriculture empowered us to fight disease, ignorance, and hunger. But we’re not in the Industrial Age anymore.

There’s a good reason why Civilization computer games are about players building new cities, farms, sewers, and roads. These are the things that make a civilization great. Political philosophy is the way to let the people see the big picture and “play the game” well; it’s not trolling your neighbor. Today the big picture is we need a new philosophy. One that isn’t spoken by battle-worn ideologues, or doesn’t scare regular people away with “the other side is evil.” We need one that looks ahead towards the boundless horizon of a new Digital Age. One that sees Tesla, SpaceX, Blue Origin, as a sneak peek for the wondrous Digital Age future we’re all supposed to build bit by bit.

I could have written this has a political theory book or a history book. But I didn’t (I felt forced to write it actually). It’s written to the people on Main Street right now. Particularly the ones sick of politics but who love checking out what Elon is up. People who’ve played Anno 1800, SimCity, or Civilization and have been the player god, and who realize it’s the actions of regular people that make up the player god. People who can understand most of today’s political problems, like road traffic, hospital wait-times, expensive education, are engineering problems, not political problems.

We’ll get there quickly and without too much bloodshed. But that’s only if the people on Main Street realize the big picture, that we’re all the player god. And if we don’t step up, at least we’ll be able to read what we could have done when regretting the past in a big picture of remorse.

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Techvolution has three books:

**A New Philosophy**: Upgrades our political philosophy to the Digital Age. This book empowers digital protagonists like Gates, Torvalds, and Musk with the mass support of Main Street.

**Building the Life Star**: Explains the new political and economic truth we’ll see in the Digital Age. This book guides us to more accurate definitions of right and wrong that’ll help us remove most political uncertainty in society. Hint the Life Star will do for politics and economics what the scientific instruments did for physics and

**Starting Starfleet**: Shows the wondrous world of perpetual profit awaiting us when we stop wasting our money, keeping the Industrial Age alive. In this part, we’ll outline the digital products that’ll make the Digital Age way of life, where collaboration replaces competition as the default political and economical answer. We’ll send the massive saving to Musk and his protegees and hence start Starfleet.

# Prologue

## Digital Heroes

I wrote this for the people on GitHub, Wikipedia, Dribbble, Udemy, Stack Overflow, Unsplash, Slack, and wherever else you open-source Jedi like to work and gather. Learning your ecosystem of digital tools was cool. Learning your philosophy was even cooler.

You’ve changed the world, even if the world doesn’t know it yet. Most people still think that retail stores, manufacturing, and education are industries only for governments or big businesses to control. Yet because of you, there are countless new tools available for the people to take control of their own products, identities, and lives. It’s truly a new world, one where Cinderella can go to the ball simply because… everyone can.

The open-source community has busted down technological gates, so the people can share in our society’s economic prosperity. Look around. Note the parents educating their own children on Khan Academy, the moms learning how to repair iPads for extra cash thanks to YouTube videos, the artists selling their own products on their own websites, and the laid off workers using Rails to make their own apps. With your “magic” at our fingertips, you’ve empowered regular people—who are used to being extras, hoping for a better life—to start to become protagonists making a better life.

I’m one of them. I’m a lone politics, history, and philosophy geek. Your tools enable me to research, write, and host my own work. Better yet, I can find and collaborate with world-class writers and illustrators to make that work even better, then ask for feedback with a few clicks on Instagram. A few decades ago, I’d be in a library scribbling notes on cue cards and dreaming up ways to get a professor, publisher, or newscaster to look my way.

As a kid, I helped my family clean office buildings. My easy role was to pick up the garbage and blue bins. It was very simple. Years later, when working at a big office, the cleaners were short-staffed for a few weeks. Management spent hours meeting about and discussing the “garbage problem” instead of just wrapping it up (pun intended) and moving on.

That’s the Sith way; to control and delegate instead of contribute. They love being gatekeepers who hold tickets and manage who’ll “get access” to things like news services, retail stores, formal education, and especially the higher “positions” of corporate employment. This is an entire class of middlemen, consultants, managers, and executives whose skill isn’t nursing, teaching, and (definitely not) cleaning, but delegating “down”—all while looking to “rise up” a corporate hierarchy whose power comes from controlling the gates of an important but limited technology. This is just like when kings controlled who’d get into the ball and access all the benefits of royal society.

Comparing this world to the open-source community is a contrast between night and day. Open-source works together to make, improve, and open-up access to technology. Since their products are free for anyone to use however desired, there’s no gate to “keep.” With no positions, copyrights, or patents to fight over, open-source members can manage each other with leaders who lead from the front with recognized expertise. In this community, all are welcome; the more the merrier, regardless of whether you’re a genius programmer committing great code or an average user providing thoughtful feedback. Since the final product is shared, everyone has incentive to defer to the better answer. Installing gates and walls around the community contradicts the egalitarian future the community is trying to build.

This is not to say that open-source communities are perfect. Some people are too rude, projects die off, politics get involved, and so forth. In The Innovators, author Walker Isaacson explains how the trifecta of academia, corporations, and militaries were optimal for creating the digital revolution. Likewise, it was government, enterprise, and open-source organizing structures that worked to keep that revolution going. Open-source is only a piece of the puzzle.

That said, it’s the vital piece.

In fact, the open-source movement is the next step in human evolution. Because nobody owns it, gatekeepers can’t stop society’s natural problem solvers from bringing new and better tools to the people. Whether a simple rotating list of persons to take out the trash, or advanced software to give society internet streaming, as when a few hackers tore down Darth Blockbuster’s gate when he tried to keep us all buying and borrowing his DVDs that funded so many of his exclusive parties and balls.

Thus, calling open-source contributors Jedi’s isn’t a fantasy. You are the modern minutemen. The guardians of the people’s interest and betterment, who should be self-sufficient and very well-funded. But you are not. So many of you in the open-source community who write articles, answer forum questions, and make programs do it as a hobby, not a job. Even your leading organizations need donations to stay afloat. Meanwhile, old tools such as universities, television broadcasters, and insurance companies get massive subsidies, tax credits, and bailouts.

This huge difference between how the old and new tools are treated signifies our society’s great divide. Today open-source heroes work against the odds to dismantle the gates that antagonists are paid to maintain.

Once upon a time, I only wanted to learn about the open-source fight. Now I want to empower its protagonists. Telecommuting, the right to repair, home power generation, and real internet privacy are just the tip of the iceberg; a better world is waiting for the middle-class once the open-source community has the resources to not only make new tools but to replace old tools, too. You in the open-source community must get political, get mad, and learn to be selfish because today’s battle is a tale as old as time, and as classic as the most universally told stories of Good versus Evil. Open technology versus closed technology. Open gates vs closed gates. New tool versus old tool. Protagonists versus antagonists. Jedi versus Sith.

The most dangerous thing right now is ignorance. People don’t know about you or the future you’re fighting for. They’re stuck on “red/blue” politics when we should have left those outdated philosophies far behind us. Red/blue leaders tout their horns, and the believers march and yell like it’s Woodstock in 1969, because they idolize that era’s way of life. The technology of single detached homes, 9-5 jobs, gas cars, long commutes, retail shopping, centralized power, and advertisement funded nightly news is their comfort zone. It’s no wonder regular people have suffered with outsourcing, micro-managing, and climate change when the political stage is fighting to keep the past alive. The potential of digital tools is as lost to our politics, as books, guns, and telescopes were to Darth King.

You in the open-source community don’t march for change. Your digital tools force it. Granted, it’s hard to explain why. We don’t yet understand how our “cyborgology” changes us as we pick up a radio, a smartphone, or a ticket to Mars. That’s why I was so fascinated by your unspoken philosophy. You reject the conventional wisdom to become well-paid gatekeepers because you understand better than anyone the “majic” of new digital tools. You fight to distribute your tools to the hands of middle-class people feeling the pain of our society living in the past. You know there’s nobody better placed to evolve humanity past our problems.

I worked hard to turn your glorious mindset into a new political philosophy which I call Techvolution. It’s custom-made for open-source and digital tools. It works like a web framework, but for political philosophy. It combines centuries of historical and philosophical lessons most people don’t have the time to read. It cuts thru today’s political jargon with terms like “Darth Blockbuster,” the “Death Star Rulebook,” and “Jedi vs. Sith” so the people can ask themselves the biggest political question of our time.

It’s not the worn-out and drab “Am I for red or blue politics?” Instead, it’s something far more powerful and relevant: “Am I going to step up and use digital tools to transform and vastly improve my society’s way of life?”

The people don’t see this question. They’re too distracted by the “dark majic show” of fantasy football stats, fancy car commercials, and bombastic political rhetoric to realize how empowered they are to change society without waiting for anyone’s approval. Our job is to make the people look up from Main Street and realize their power and their respective responsibility.

Our opportunity comes when a regular person has yet another problem with their tax form, car radiator, asphalt shingles, or the countless other Woodstock era tools the gatekeepers maintain for their self-interest. This is when the pain of living on today’s frontline makes regular people search for a better way to live. And this moment is where I want to contribute back to the open-source community. This is where we can swell our ranks by educating others:

Old tools suck. You don’t have to take it. You don’t have to be an extra waiting on hold, getting caught by the fine print, commuting through hellish traffic only to be micro-managed by eight different bosses. All that’s bullshit. You can take charge of your life. My friends and I invent new tools so we can live a simpler, fairer, healthier, greener, happier life. But we need your help… because the only thing holding us back is our own ruling philosophy.

And when the regular person asks what the heck you’re talking about, you can tell them to read about Techvolution. Tell them it’s a new political philosophy to help the world realize how you’ve empowered workers, creators, and contributors—basically, the people who are willing to step up to become protagonists, and not be left behind in a world the open-source movement has only begun to change.

## Busting the Gates

Currently, when you phone a call center, everything is recorded. The company has access to the recording; you don’t. Likewise, when the employee logs in and out of the office, that, too, is recorded. Management automatically has access to these timesheets; the employee doesn’t.

Access to things like phone recordings and timesheets are barriers or “gates.” They give power to one person over another. Customers can’t confirm what was agreed to during their last phone call, and employees can be grilled for a long lunch, yet unpaid overtime is easily forgotten by the same manager.

A lopsided balance of power allows customers and employees to be taken advantage of and encourages mistrust, bad products, and inefficient workplaces.

The greatness of the open-source community is threefold. First, it sets a great example because it entrusts everyone with all information, because why should people working together hold information back from each other. Second, it seeks contributions, so open-source loves to bust open gates to get more people in. And third, since open-source technology is owned by the people, we can empower ourselves with tools that we once wrongly thought (or, in most cases, continue to think) only big companies are “allowed” to have, such as phone transcriptions and timesheets.

Busting open these gates is what advances the world. It equalizes the balance of power, gives individuals dignity and responsibility and therefore fosters collaboration. We have the technology to do this now. We just need the people to step up, participate, and demand it.

old philosophy in a new world *This is an example of a GitHub “repo,”. This one stores the computer code that helps run apps like Basecamp, Airbnb and Shopify. Programmers, from elite to novice, individually ask questions, find bugs, contribute their work and it comes together via GitHub’s software with minimal supervision. The process works similarly to Wikipedia. It’s very organized; even with over 5,000 contributors over 15 years, you can see who has done what and when. This software is priceless and is yours to use however you want. Get familiar with how open-source works. It’s a tell-tale sign for the openness, responsibility, and immense value of future work cultures because digital tools make worker-to-worker collaboration so easy, effective, and powerful it’s hard to compete with. And the best part, no garbage meetings or delegators are needed.*

# ACT ONE

## The Beginning

It all started with a door in my face. And then, actually, a few more. I was either being too stubborn or too hopeful. Either way, I eventually learned my lesson. I was selling a web app that those in upper management were never going to buy.

Before you wonder, it wasn’t a matter of price, because there was no price. It wasn’t a question of competition. None of that either. And I can promise it worked, because I had spent years in a cubicle doing the frontline job it worked for. After years of thinking about political and economic theory, I’d written (another) book about some untapped possibilities of new tech like smartwatch apps, bio-monitors, and bitcoin. I only made this simple web app (using open-source technologies) to validate some of my ideas.

I was right to. They were good ideas. I figured out how to solve a problem—and save 100 million dollars, 300,000 hours of worker productivity, and even dozens of lives—all for virtually no cost. Why wouldn’t I want to tell people about the theory behind it?

Sadly, I was a fool. I didn’t know it at the time, but I wasn’t even knocking on doors. I was knocking on gates. See, I wasn’t talking to the frontline workers—who thanked me—but to the bureaucrats, lawyers, managers, and executives who were well paid to “meet, discuss, delegate” about such “garbage” problems. I went against all they stood for; solving their problems was asking them to fire themselves. Worse, I was asking them to invalidate their identity as being “superiors”. They put up gates to shut out, not promote, innovation.

In fact, they never said no to me. No needs a reason. Instead, they simply said it was against the rules to say yes. You know—those obscure rules, hidden inside regulations and contracts. They believed in the rules, especially the one against frontline workers deciding on their own tools, and taking out their own garbage, so to speak.

Like anyone, I knew bringing new products to market is hard. I knew sales is difficult. I even knew antagonists exist. But I didn’t realize how defensive they were. They masked their self-interest with self-righteous excuses. I was just an “uppity extra” in their eyes.

I don’t want to talk about my experience too much; it’s just one example in a roiling sea of others. All that’s important is this: there was a huge problem costing millions of consumer dollars, weeks of workers’ time (lots of it unpaid overtime), and maybe even your life—and it was against the rules to solve it. Even if I had won this battle, it would be a tiny victory.

So instead, I’m going to talk about winning the war.

That’s why I decided to contribute back to the open-source community. Despite already having the technology to transform our way of life, antagonists maintain gates all over the place to protect the pre-digital “Woodstock of 1969” way of life because they know—even if subconsciously—they’d lose their status, positions, and identity in a digital economy. To improve our lives then, the people need a new ruling philosophy… one that says improving our society is the only rule that matters.

## The Power Of Stories

Do you love stories? I think it’s a safe bet to say that you do. Who doesn’t? They entertain us after a hard day of work, bring us together to share our joys, and (my favorite) open our minds to the different rules and philosophies of foreign cities, mythical worlds, and galaxies far, far away.

Stories are so powerful because they’re so simple. Protagonists are good because they want to fix a problem. Antagonists are bad because they don’t. Stories aren’t debates. We take the protagonist’s side. Thus, Romeo and Juliet’s love is beautiful and worth dying for, while their families’ feud is ignorant and stupid. Luke Skywalker’s rebellion is righteous and worth fighting for, while Darth Vader’s empire is wicked and should be destroyed.

Our moral clarity about a problem turns the protagonists into our heroes and the antagonists into our villains. We thus follow their story with strong emotions, which burst out at the climax as we find out who wins.

Our hero fights hard to defeat the bad guys, but his superior morality, justice, and heroism aren’t enough. He’s often too weak or unskilled, and the villain beats him bloody. On the verge of failure, the hero needs to find something that’ll turn the tide in his favor. He seeks, sees, and reaches for his salvation: a tool or a weapon, like a gun, magic book, or lightsaber.

Will our hero reach it first, or will the enemy? We in the audience, like extras in the story, hold our breath because the story’s society is controlled not by desires, opinions, or rules, but by which character holds the tools. The wielder is the victor. The victor writes the rules. It’s the lesson that we the people need to learn for ourselves. It’s the only way we’ll stop being extras and start being protagonists in our own lives.

## A New Empowering Philosophy Called Techvolution

The rules surround us every day. We think they control us. They don’t. I’ll show you why.

Talk to any political junkie, no matter when, and they’ll say there’s a big election coming up. They’ll say something like “if the red team wins this one, then education, healthcare, infrastructure, and everything else will go to shit.” What he means is elections decide the rule makers, and that blue rules are good while red rules are evil.

If you buy it—and most of us have at some point—you watch blue cable news, read blue blogs, listen to blue talk radio. You fill your head with blue’s philosophy. Soon enough, your car has blue bumper stickers, and you’re waving blue bristol boards while screaming blue chants at rallies, marches, and protests. You feel like a hero! You’re fighting against the evil red philosophy!… Or, if you got sucked in by the other side, evil blue philosophy!

Let me ask you this: if you’re a regular middle-class person and you ignored the election, how much would you bet that you would know who won just by continuing to live your life? When Team Blue wins, does traffic suddenly disappear? When Team Red wins, does everyone suddenly exercise? Do you breathe fresher air or see fitter neighbors? Do your real-life problems get solved when one color’s philosophy writes the rules?

If you think regulations, laws, and marches change the world, and if you’re dead-set on the red vs. blue storyline because you know it decides the future of our society, may I ask, what problems have red/blue solved in the last few decades to deserve your loyalty? If you are still loyal then you can stop reading now, there’s lots of pundits, columnists, and commentators waiting to sing to their choir, telling you to stay an extra and fight “the enemy” until you’re literally blue in the face.

If you don’t like the choir, or you’re starting to realize the “other side” consists of workers like you who are a part of the same struggling middle class, you’d probably like to keep reading. I wrote this book to make you a force in politics; a protagonist who controls his or her own life.

The first thing to realize is whichever colour wins an election this year or the next and re-writes the rules, regular people will still pay taxes, have a huge mortgage, waste hours in traffic, pay increasing energy bills, sleep less than they’re supposed to, buy unhealthy food, watch climate change, overpay for questionable education, get confused by their health insurance, endure customer abuse, work unpaid overtime, get micro-managed by an increasing number of managers, be told by ignorant consultants how to do their work, and hope their job (which they likely hate) isn’t downsized or outsourced.

Under blue or red rules, the struggling middle-class lifestyle stays the same, because the tools with which we live our lives—like suburban homes, gas cars, call centers, centralized power stations, paper-based regulations, mass-produced unhealthy food, movie remakes and sequels, occasional doctor check-ups, television for entertainment, an insatiable education industry, company-controlled work timesheets, and everything else in the pre-digital Woodstock era which built suburban America and Canada—all stay the same.

The rules, no matter the color, don’t control the fate of middle-class people. Our tools determine our way of life. Nothing changes or can change between red and blue, because neither’s philosophy—from conservatism to progressivism, capitalism to Marxism—is about putting new tools into the people’s hands. For the middle class to empower itself, we all must realize what’s really going to change if we don’t add more options to our toolboxes?

It’s not our politicians’ fault. The philosophies they follow were created when we only had a few tools at hand. Red/blue philosophical fathers like Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx never had running water, listened to music on the radio, used the internet, made a phone call, opened a fridge, took penicillin, knew about electricity, started a motor, learned about evolution, or typed on a keyboard.

Instead, our red/blue philosophical fathers had mud roads, grandfather clocks, and abacus calculators. Doctors of their time prescribed blood-sucking leeches as a medical cure. Being hungry and sick, cold and ignorant was a daily way of life back then. Red/blue philosophers dreamed of improving this primitive world with better tools. And, truth be told, they did! Our ancestors used their dreamy philosophies to unite and build the first rudimentary steam engines, sanitation systems, science labs, telephone networks, broadcast televisions, and computers the size of rooms.

During this massive industrialization era, the people needed to be extras, regulated and managed inside huge corporations and color-coded parties; someone needed to be on the factory floors and filling the desk jobs using primitive tools to make much better ones. To their credit, the blue and red philosophies at least gave extras a voice in how our tools’ factories, regulations, and profits were controlled.

Today, however, we live inside the world old philosophies dreamed to make. The world of mud roads, wood fired stoves, lantern night lights, telegraph communications, horse and carriage transportation, is no more. We’ve grown a huge ecosystem of cities, factories, offices, telecommunications, and layers of infrastructure. Mass industrialization is thus over. It’s time to de-industrialize, rethink our society’s priorities, and revamp our rulebook as we free the extras using the digital tools they worked so hard to create.

There are many wonderfully powerful digital tools waiting to transform our way of life. The iPhones, Tesla Solar Roofs, Lyft, WhatsApp, Kickstarter, YouTube, Snapmaker, Khan Academy, Ruby on Rails, HoloLens, Basecamp, Nano Membrane Toilets, Vimeo, Microsoft AI platform, SquareSpace, Onnit, Airbnb, and Firefox and so many others are all so incredibly versatile, influential, and easy to make that they liberate individuals because they’re customizable to fit every person’s individual needs, enabling each of us to work—like open-source shows possible—far more efficiently, independently, and collaboratively in our home and work lives.

I’m not talking about an idealist, imaginary world envisioned from storybooks. We’ve already seen how this place of worker-to-worker collaboration already exists. We’re living in its midst. Wikipedia, YouTube, Quora, Stack Overflow, VS Code, Firefox, Wikipedia, Common Voice, USB Implementers Forum, GitHub, LibreOffice, and Linux are only a few examples of the wonderful world of cooperation working today. It’s called the open-source community because software and ideas are “openly shared” to help create new tools. Millions of people—creators and contributors, designers and coders—who don’t care about a person’s title but only how well he or she helps the community solve problems both big and small, are already working and living inside a fundamentally new story that’s responsible for our awesome online world. There’s no reason more industries can’t adopt this worker-to-worker collaboration mindset and force other industries to also empower workers and customers.

Once they do, more workers will be encouraged to solve real-world problems with technology. Today open-source members hate the “busy work” of aimless marketing meetings, useless PowerPoint presentations about the “garbage problem,” and confinements within outdated technology because “that’s what the boss knows.” My goal is to help rid our society of old philosophies that hold back the vision of these creators and contributors. My mission is to let these protagonists prosper with the mass support, appreciation, and transformation of the middle-class to work and think more like them.

People often say we’re all addicted to our phones. We aren’t. Checking news feeds, downloading augmented reality games, flying drones, and taking endless photos are the acts of regular people learning what their new tools can do. Our ancestors did the same the last time they were extras, learning about printed books, telescopes, and muskets. Those were simply addictive toys until new philosophies turned them into lightsabers. Despite the rules, these new tools empowered people to read unknown history, see the universe for themselves, and revolt against royalty as the new tools and new philosophies opened the gates to the ball that turned the people from extras into protagonists.

Just so, we can stop using our tools as toys and start wielding them as lightsabers to fight for a better way of life. We’ve just been waiting for a new philosophy to turn them on. Whatever problem you have, from concerns about online privacy, to hatred of government waste, to confusing tax code. Red/blue only gives us the options to vote for government to regulate a solution, or a business to make a product that we buy and can’t control.

Tecvolution says we can make our own product that forces government and the market to keep up. Firefox is already fighting for online privacy, and we can do the same thing with any problem we have; once we see realize digital tools are our best weapon to get a better life, and Techvolution, the freedom to use whatever we want, is the most important right and responsibility today.

## The Power of Philosophies Is Either to Hold Us Back or Push Us Forward

When you look up at the night sky you see a dazzling show. It can seem to defy explanation. But even with the naked eye you’ll see trends. The stars never move, some “objects” (really planets) look to be wandering, and it looks like the Moon, Sun, and everything else revolves around you. With all these trends, our ancestors were so sure Earth was the centre of the Universe it was a pivotal part of the “Divine Rights of Kings” philosophy that ruled Europe, and much of the colonized world, for centuries.

When you look at the night sky with a telescope, like Galileo did, you see it differently. Jupiter has Moons, Venus has phases, and it looks like Earth is just another planet. When Galileo told everyone these facts, the “divine leaders” were threatened. By using a telescope Galileo was basically saying “we don’t know until we test, so let’s use instruments to test what we think we know”. Scientific inquiry questioned the ruler’s divine leadership. They thus suppressed Galileo and didn’t facilitate the new truths his new tools were discovering.

Galileo is just one example of how the people controlling long-established philosophies find it very hard to embrace the capabilities of new tools. The lesson for us is, to make use of new tools, we must embrace a new philosophy.

In 2019, we also have a philosophy behind the times. Look at space travel. It isn’t just cool, but a major step for humanity that means better satellites, worldwide internet accessibility, and ensuring intelligent life doesn’t put all its eggs in our one earthly basket. All possible if we can build an affordable rocket.

It was private companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin (funded by a few rich guys) who answered the call. They even learned to land rockets so they can be reused, a monumental achievement that makes space travel even more possible. But many people, especially red/blue politicians, still didn’t care.

When you’re dependent on old philosophies, you’re also confined to its old tools and live within its old narratives. Today the red/blue philosophy obsesses over minute tax cuts, pages of government regulations, and endless media soundbites because those are the tools their philosophy says are important. New and super-powerful technologies like SpaceX are just a novelty act that fall beyond the practitioners of old philosophies comprehension and comfort zones; like telescopes once were to other political leaders.

That’s the power of a philosophy. It filters the definition of good and bad for its believers. The lesson is to make use of new tools, we need a new ruling philosophy. Otherwise we stagnate. Today, we need a new ruling philosophy that harnesses our new innovative and powerful digital tools so we can improve life on, and beyond, Earth.

old philosophy in a new world The possibilities of new technology are lost on those obsessed with the old enemies of old philosophies. Here’s one example from a personal Twitter feed from December 22 2015 when SpaceX landed its first rocket. At the exact same time red/blue ideologue Bernie Sanders was ranting about regulation battles with “Wall St.” instead of taking a minute to appreciate all the new solutions SpaceX just opened to humanity. I happened to be following Sanders so I don’t mean to pick on him. The middle-class needs to stop putting their faith in old philosophies and instead follow today’s protagonists putting incredible problem-solving tools into our own hands. Like we followed Galileo generations ago.

## Your Place in the Struggle

Fighting to transform society to the possibilities of new tools is a classic human story. It happened when Galileo fought a religious establishment with a telescope, George Washington fought a political establishment with a musket, Steve Jobs fought an economic establishment with an iPod.

We can learn from this history lesson. We will empower you with a new philosophy so you too can step up and transform your society with digital tools. Note that this is not a book about how to invent tools. Amazing books like Rework and Zero to One already do that. Nor is this a book about the history of invention; The Innovators does that better than I could dream of doing. If you want brilliant critiques of our society, The Incerto and The Great Degeneration are waiting for you. Instead, this is a book about how new tools empower society, and how we can distribute the power of those tools to improve the lives of regular people today.

Today’s philosophies don’t mix well with modern technology. For one they’re happy with old Woodstock era technology. But worse, our outdated philosophies and their supporters consider us, the middle class, as extras: people to man—and not to command—the machines of governments and businesses. They don’t notice gatekeepers keep adding rules to the red/blue rulebook that prevent the people solving our problems at home and at work. This is the equivalent of Blockbuster getting to write rules to keep us renting DVDs instead of saving time and money with YouTube and Netflix; basically, the opposite of evolution.

We fight back by changing the rules of our society with an updated ruling philosophy that encourages evolution. Techvolution is thus inspired by Nature. Notice that gatekeepers don’t exist in our world’s ecosystems. Evolution doesn’t have anyone telling a cheetah she’s running too fast, that the ants are too cooperative, or that a camel is too water-efficient for his own good. Individual lifeforms adapt as best they can to their own problems, and the winners survive. There are no middlemen and no gatekeepers, just problem solvers. And the problem solvers live on.

Human biological adaptions take so long, however, that ours have effectively stopped. We’ll never biologically evolve to fly, do advanced calculations, or breathe Martian air. Humanity continues life’s evolution with tools. We’re basically cyborgs who adapt by upgrading our tools to the latest problem in transportation, calculation, and breathing. Hold a spear or a gun, an abacus or a calculator, a plane joystick or a space ship joystick, and you’re a different and more powerful cyborg each time.

Nonetheless, our problem solving is held back when old philosophies empower gatekeepers. The big picture of civilization is a struggle to overcome problems by upgrading technology and inventing new tools. The big picture of our politics is a battle to control the power of new tools; a recurring story of inventors and gatekeepers reaching for the tools to either maintain or bust open gates. The extras look on, trying to see through antagonistic rules of an aged ruling philosophy to help the heroes evolve humanity.

This classic battle between using new tools to increase personal power, versus empowering the people, is a war seemingly as old as time. One such story is Star Wars, which is about a galaxy with an all-powerful energy field called the Force. Luke Skywalker’s Jedi warriors’ harness “the light side” to help others. Darth Vader’s evil Sith lords’ harness “the dark side” to help themselves and hurt all who oppose them.

In our world, we like to call our technological protagonists “trailblazers.” Like Jedi knights, they struggle to empower us cyborgs with new tools. But we don’t have a political name for the antagonists. Gatekeepers are often bad, but sometimes gates are good, and often these people are just doing their job. Thus, I collectively call the antagonists to our technological evolution Darth Blockbuster: people who actively and knowingly prevent human evolution for the sake of their self-interest.

Since biological adaptions and upgrades are evolution, I’ve called human technological evolution Techvolution. This book is about inventing Techvolution, the philosophy to rewrite the rules of society and to kill Darth Blockbuster, so regular people can solve problems with technological upgrades as smoothly in human society as lifeforms do in Nature with adaptation and natural selection.

To make Techvolution a reality, you, the current middle-class extra, must join the fight raging in our civilization. Right now, open-source inventors are trying to transform society and Woodstock era-delegators are trying to keep it the same. Human evolution depends on you picking between an old ruling philosophy filled with regulations, infotainment, and other reasons to keep your frontline problems alive, and this new one that says you should step up, use digital tools to solve your own problems, and became your own hero. And I really do pray you pick the right side.

## Cast of Ideas and Characters

Before we go any further, I want to lay out the philosophy of Techvolution more clearly. To do so, here are a few terms that will put us all on the same page:

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**Philosophy:** The largely unspoken ideals that tell members of society what’s right and wrong, good and bad, in science, art, morals, politics, and economics. Philosophy is a civilization’s collective consciousness used by members to make rules around questions like: What is scientific truth? Who should govern? How should resources be organized?

**Ruling philosophy**: A civilization’s chosen philosophy. One that all factions agree on. Examples include the “Divine Rights of Kings,” derived from Christian theology and used in royalist Europe; “Marxist-Leninism” of the Soviet Union; and the combination of “red/blue” philosophies of the Western world today.

**Rule book**: The written and unwritten social, workplace, and legal rules that govern everyday life. The rule book is interpreted from the ruling philosophy. Technology: A catchall term for things we make tools from, like concrete, lumber, nails, shingles, insulation, and bricks.

**Tool**: A catchall term for things we create with technology to solve a problem, like guns to kill bad guys, books to record and pass on knowledge, and houses to shelter in. Frontline: The point of contact between a tool and the problem. Nurses giving vaccines, cleaners cleaning a city bus, and soldiers on the battlefield are all examples of frontline settings. People on the frontline have jobs to solve specific problems with a demonstrable skillset.

**Hierarchy**: A power structure that manages every tool’s use by society. Kings and queens with the keys to the castle, for example. Hierarchy’s grow larger the more important a tool gets. The bigger the hierarchy gets, the more detached it gets from the frontline. People in the hierarchy have titles like prince and executive, baron and supervisor to mark their position—and, in a sense, their territory and “rights”—in the power structure.

**The story of civilization**: The invention of new technology and the creation of new tools to overcome the most recent frontline problems. As new tools are adopted, they topple the hierarchies huddled around the old tools. We use tools to evolve.

**Protagonists**: People who invent, spread, and use new technology and new tools for the greater good. Usually close to the problems on the frontline, they individually struggle, but their continued self-sacrifice slowly and collectively improves life on Earth. I call them this world’s Jedi knights. We call their leaders trailblazers who often skirt the rules; Galileo, Nikola Tesla, Jay Last, Michael S. Hart, Steve Jobs, Linus Torvalds, and Elon Musk are among their number.

**Antagonists**: People who selfishly resist new tools in order to defend their wealth, power, and prestige atop a hierarchy. Antagonists usually manage companies or institutions based on dated technologies and think that working on the frontline is beneath them. They work to control the rule book so they can hide behind it. We don’t often individually identify them. I coined the term “Darth Blockbuster” so we can.

**Extras**: Everybody in the middle of a battle between antagonists and protagonists. Because they have no direct loyalty to either side or their tools, extras can pick winners and losers. Usually extras are in the middle class; not so poor as to be desperate, but not so powerful that they want to keep the world the same. Sadly, extras don’t realize their power.

**The Death Star**: The rule book when it’s controlled by Darth Blockbuster. Today it exists inside countless regulations, agreements, contracts, laws, and manuals that prevent new tools being used by people.

**Techvolution**: A new philosophy empowering seamless human technological evolution by ridding Darth Blockbuster of his power, by giving extras the right to decide when society should upgrade our tools.

**The Life Star**: A rule book based on Techvolution, governed by human technological adaption and natural selection that makes sure humanity always serve the greater good. We’ll find out how it works throughout this book.

**Plot**: Getting the extras to step up, replace their ruling philosophy, and use digital tools to transform their way of life.

## Nice to Meet You, Stargazer

You might be an open-source protagonist, or an extra looking for work, either way I’m calling you Stargazer. It’s a name in honor of a person who looks for the beauty of Nature, whether it’s in the face of a person trying to learn a new skill, or in the endless sparkle of a clear night sky. Only the people willing to wonder about a better world are the ones willing to work for it.

Whoever you are Stargazer, you need to know that the story to advance human technological evolution can only begin with you. You won’t be transported to a foreign city, mythical world, or a galaxy far, far away. Right here and now, wherever you are on Earth—that’s exactly where you need to be. The time has come to change our ruling philosophy to take advantage of digital tools.

And who am I to tell you all this? I’m nobody special. I haven’t led the country and you haven’t seen me on the news. In my youth, I was a cleaner, labourer, movie usher/projectionist, and die-hard ideologue. After dropping the latter bad habit, I studied political philosophy, history, and innovation at the University of Toronto, usually while working full-time. I have a strong dislike for garbage meetings and other excuses people make-up to avoid work. I hate people with superiority complexes; especially when they’re in positions of authority and suck at their jobs. That’s why I learned far more about innovation by continuing working at the frontline as a line worker, an account manager, and a claims adjuster. Making a new tool and meeting my personal Darth Blockbuster was an education unto itself.

My life’s experience began to teach me Techvolution. Watching the middle-class struggle to make a living owning, maintaining, and working with outdated Woodstock era tools—and knowing that the open-source community was meanwhile showing us a different way, a better and more liberating way—ultimately motivated me to sit at the keyboard and uncover the political philosophy that could connect the people with amazingly empowering digital tools that will improve all our lives.

But this book is not about me. It’s about you. You are in a position where you wield a diversity of incredible and cutting-edge tools, even if you’re unaware of it right now. From hospital cleaners to internet technical support, from engineers to claims adjusters, the bottom line is that you are at the frontline. Only workers on the frontline know firsthand the exact tools our society needs to keep us healthy and evolving in the story of civilization. The daily pain of real work makes you powerful. A piece of knowledge Darth Blockbuster will never have.

That’s why you Stargazer, if you want it, you are the hero of Techvolution. Don’t be surprised. Average Joes and Janes are always the heroes. Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Neo, and Cinderella were all regular people. Heroes aren’t born. They’re stargazers, dreamers, believers, and achievers. They become heroes when they step up to defeat the bad guys.

History is calling someone to step up now. Climate change, polluted oceans, individual isolation, traffic jammed roads, mass extinctions, exported manufacturing, rampant self-entitlement, massive government debt, decaying infrastructure, domestic terrorism, fractured national identities, low trust in institutions, and other structural problems will only get passed on to our kids unless the middle-class steps up now. So why not you?

Always remember you are not alone. There are many like you, bands of regular people on the frontline with shaky employment or soul-crushing commutes sick, who need to, and are ready to, improve their lives and our society’s health. I’m like Obi-Wan Kenobi, Morpheus, or the fairy godmother; merely a guide to teach you how to defeat the villains. So, the time is now, Stargazer, to leave the farm and join the rebellion.

The rebellion I speak of might be different than what automatically comes to mind. It is not a physical revolt. It does not involve rallies, marches, or protests. It’s a rebellion of the mind. Darth Blockbuster and his Death Star rule book stagnate progress and evolution by retaining old tools and preventing us from using new ones to solve frontline problems efficiently and effectively. We must defy him and destroy it. We must change our ruling philosophy. Only when Darth Blockbuster is gone will the middle class have the breathing space to flourish once again.

## Heroes Reach for the Tools

We’ve come some way in the story Stargazer. Let’s take a minute and answer some questions you might be thinking.

First off, a new ruling philosophy doesn’t mean you throw away all the old stuff. Old philosophies, red/blue among them, will always teach us lessons, help us do our jobs better, and enlighten our personal opinions. Today old philosophies should not be our ruling philosophy because they weren’t created with digital tools in mind.

Techvolution is. It’s designed to make the best use of digital tools. Let me explain how Techvolution can be our ruling political philosophy by discussing evolution in martial arts.

Humanity has many martial arts: karate, kickboxing, wrestling, jiu-jitsu, judo, and boxing being among the most popular. Each martial art adapts the human body to do specific technique like punches or choke-holds. Each martial art also makes rules, so only their chosen techniques are allowed during competition; there’s no kicking in a boxing match, for example.

In the early 1990s, the martial arts community got curious and wondered whose martial art would win a real fight. On reflection, it seems funny that this was an original idea, but before the 1990s, people just assumed boxers or wrestlers could not fight outside their rulebook. All fighters were supposed to be ideologically loyal and sing to their choirs about their techniques being the best. If a fighter got their ass kicked in a real fight, they’d often blame themselves or say the other guy “broke the rules” and “cheated.”

When the martial art community threw away their rule books and held “no rules” tournaments, they were fittingly rewarded with Nature’s officially best martial art. The best martial art was none of them; or all of them. The best fighters trained all techniques and used the ones they thought would defeat their opponent based on the exact moment they were fighting them. A large toolbox of techniques and an open mind to adapt proved to be the best martial art. Fighters embracing adaption and natural selection was the start of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), a new sport that cherishes the evolution mantra “admit defeat and learn.” And while boxers still punch the best, and kickboxers kick the best, evolution powered MMA fighters will almost always beat them in a street fight.

Red/blue ideologies are like non-MMA martial arts. They teach a limited number of techniques, limit themselves to their own rule book, and often think “the other side” is ignorant. Ideologues often accuse non-believers of cheating after losing a debate or election. However, in their area of expertise, from monetary policy to farm regulation, red/blue have a massive reservoir of know-how. This single book can’t replace all that knowledge. It would be laughable to suggest it could.

But we still need a new ruling philosophy. One created from the lessons of evolution and digital tools old philosophies did not factor in simply because they’re so old. There’s no other way to harness digital tools fully. Hence why this book is about making human technological evolution, Techvolution, the most protected political right (and responsibility) today.

You can think of Techvolution as “mixed philosophy politics.” Under Techvolution, a person is free to study and believe in old philosophies. But no one should think the rule books of old philosophies determine right and wrong when up against a person’s right to evolve on the frontline. Because to evolve humanity, we the people on the frontline—the people in the real fight—need the freedom to decide which tool best solves a problem. The right to evolve must trump all other considerations. Giving old philosophies, or people whose power and prestige is based on old tools, the right to decide human technological upgrades is a recipe for inaction. This set-up is basically why the middle-class is getting beat up by relatively simple problems like road traffic, waiting on hold, and confusing loan contracts.

Importantly, since Techvolution is a vital right, it must also be a responsibility. Here are some tools the middle-class should grab hold of today.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation recently funded TerraPower, a new nuclear reactor fueled by depleted uranium. Among many other reasons, because they could use supercomputers to design it, TerraPower made nuclear power much safer. Bill and Melinda hope dozens of their reactors will keep the world’s lights on for generations, but even they can’t afford to buy them. Should we tell our governments too? I don’t know, I’m no expert. But nuclear power is clean, and continuing to breath in smog and ejecting greenhouse gases into the air is hardly a good thing. So, considering that electricity powers all digital tools and digital tools empower the middle-class. And some of our wealthiest and smartest people think TerraPower is a good idea. Then it’s something we should all think about out of pure evolutionary self-interest.

3D printers are like inkjet printers, except they fuse particles together and thus can print 3D objects, even ones as complicated as a violin. They’re very common in industrial prototyping. Regular people could use them to print lost buttons, toy action figures imagined by kids, or custom-designed garden tools. The best part of 3D printers is there’s no factories, cargo ships, tractor-trailers, marketing campaigns, or retail stores needed. Anyone can print whatever they need whenever they need it. Sadly, most people have never even seen a 3D printer never-mind bought one of its printed products. It’s a shame we should fix quickly.

I didn’t draw any of this book’s illustrations. I’ve also never met the artists who did or even spoken with them. Instead I used paint.net to edit photos and put them together in design software called Figma. Then I found illustrators via online marketplaces and said: “please draw me this.” Within days I had the illustrations I needed. Today anyone can work with experts to write computer code, make a gift, or design a custom 3D printed construction tool. All with no job interviews, management oversight, or upfront cost. Online worker-to-worker collaboration is that easy; once we think to look for it.

As said before, the Woodstock era is a dead. We’ve exported the millions of skilled jobs that funded it, distracted ourselves from that stupidity by borrowing money to buy flashy products from industries that keep needing subsidies or bailouts. The expectation that middle-class people will get one job for life and safely assume “the government” or “the market” will solve all our problems does nothing but give false hope of a “forever Woodstock lifestyle.” And think of this, about 80,000 people worked at Blockbuster, about 5,000 work for Netflix. Why would that automation trend stop for your industry?

In my experience, many people often reply “won’t happen to my job”; then go back to watching Netflix.

Digital tools don’t threaten us. They’re our salvation. If we use them we can educate ourselves, lower our own cost of living, earn our own income, and most important, collaborate. Can we become entirely self-sufficient? Probably not, but we can deal with layoffs, price-gouging, and bad jobs better with a level balance of power.

Keep in mind, all the examples of digital tools in this book are just a snippet. There are many more out there, and once the open-source Jedi finally get our support, we’ll be spoiled for choices. And regular people imagining a cornucopia of digital tools is the rebellion inside our mind the world needs right now.

In short, Techvolution says, be selfish! Demand your freedom! Freedom to speak our minds made the most of the printing press. Freedom to investigate Nature made the most of scientific instruments. Freedom to question royalty made the most of the gun. Freedom to buy products made the most of factories. And the freedom to solve your own real-life problems makes the most of digital tools.

Techvolution starts in your head. While you’re watching a political debate, or attending a company meeting, ask yourself, “what’s in this for me.” Of course, red/blue politicians won’t talk about a direct democracy app, and I don’t want you to tell your boss to go to hell and quit your job. But society first changes in your mind. As you keep asking “what’s in this for me,” you’ll seek out new digital tools. When you hold new tools, you hold political power. And holding power is how extras become protagonists.

That’s why controlling tools is the Nature of all political battles. Whether in galaxies far far away, street fights in parking lots, wars between nations, or your own life. It’s why antagonists so often make new tools against the rules. And why I needed to write a book to remind everyone rules are supposed to serve human evolution, not get in its way. But since today the rules are in our way Stargazer, we must pack our bags, rally our friends, and get ready for a fight. It’s time to blow up a Death Star.

# ACT TWO - BLOWING UP THE DEATH STAR

Before you face Darth Blockbuster and try to blow up his Death Star rule book, Stargazer, you must learn what weapons you have at your disposal. The most formidable? The all-powerful energy field inside every lifeform. No, not the Force. I’m talking about evolution.

## The Magic of Evolution

Evolution empowers life by giving every new lifeform a slightly different variation. With variations, life can constantly test for environmental changes in things like water levels, temperature, and food supply. The variations unfit for the changed frontline die off and the fittest survive. This natural selection help life find which lifeforms best represent it on Earth.

Evolutions works so well because its constant variation production creates biodiversity. The more lifeforms there are, the more life can probe and better adapt to environmental changes. When temperatures increase or rain patterns change, the more lifeforms feel the pain, and therefore the sooner life can adapt a solution to the frontline problem.

When enough lifeforms populate an area, all the available resources are harvested. Increasingly, lifeforms depend on each other, and start to collaborate instead of compete for resources. So flowers depend on bees and vice versa. At this point Nature divides up an area in ecosystems.

Ecosystems can be described as a cyclical food chain of many different plants, herbivores, carnivores, and decomposers, with each resource feeding the next resource. To keep an ecosystem sustainable, each species must reciprocate. Grass turns light, water, nutrients, into biomass, eaten by the grazer, who feeds and is kept in check by the predator, who itself eventually dies, as do all lifeforms, returning all the nutrients back into the soil for the grass to keep growing. Each lifeforms checks the other to be sure no one hoards or freeloads. Foreign species mess up this balance, sometimes being so invasive they wipe out parts of the ecosystem.

Evolution may not be the Force, but it’s certainly magical. In tune to Nature’s own special rhyme and reason, evolution turned a lifeless planet into an oasis of many different ecosystems. The big drawback is time. Biological variations can take millions of years to respond to environmental changes. Think of the poor polar bears. They’ll never understand why Artic ice isn’t reforming as massively each year. And even if they could, no lifeform can proactively change their biology. And it’s not like we can just send them somewhere else like the Amazon because that’s ridicules, but we can’t send them to Antartica either, because they’d run avoc on the local ecosystem as an invasive species. The polar bears need a healthy, and very cold, Artic ecosystem, or they die.

In contrast, humanity can change—not our biology, but our “cyborgology,” if you will (and hopefully in time to help the polar bears). We have the power to feel frontline pain, reflect on the problems causing it, and create a new tool to overcome the problem.

Techvolution is therefore intentional evolution. It’s a more advanced and quicker form of evolution that isn’t a magical mystery, as natural evolution is to polar bears, but is instead something we can fathom and understand. The question is, what drives us to evolve, when Darth Blockbuster’s Death Star often says it’s wrong?

genius-innovation

genius-innovation

## The Majic of Techvolution

We call someone a *genius* when he or she uses existing technology to make a new tool. Happily, these trailblazers are self-motivated and we already celebrate their intellect and innovations. But innovation isn’t the only step toward Techvolution. We truly evolve only when the *extras* choose to accept and use a new tool.

For example, think of computers and people need to know to type. Computers could be everywhere, but if people refused to type, then computers would be useless. Only when individuals decide to learn how to use a tool, does it enter into our ecosystem and change the world.

So, what trick does Nature play on extras to reach for new tools when so often would could be risking Darth Blockbuster’s wrath? The answer is a force found within us all.

Unlike evolution, the trick is not actually akin to magic that we won’t ever be able to fully decipher or replicate. The difference is that we humans understand we’re dropping one tool and familiarizing ourselves with another, like when swapping out the DVD player for Netflix. Yet there’s still something wonderfully mystical about choosing to leave one’s comfort zone to learn a new cyborgolgy. I call it majic; it’s pronounced like magic, but spelled differently to note the key difference to its homonym: it’s the free choice of a regular person to proactively and intentionally evolve, even if they don’t know exactly how they will when they make the decision to do so. Majic encompasses our yearning to explore, to learn, to evolve, to live to our fullest potential; all of which require new tools to empower us to make real the dreams that exist in our minds. It’s the first step to a different tomorrow.

Typically, we underappreciate how cool it is to learn new tools. But every time we try, we’re like a drowning desert fox wearing fins and goggles and yelling “I’m getting better!” as he flounders in the water. Pushing our boundaries is what life is all about. It’s majic that keeps us jumping back into the water and out of our comfort zone.

Techvolution is the ruling philosophy that encourages extras to “majically” bond with any tool they want so they can solve frontline problems. Yet what do we do when the Death Star say it’s wrong?

**Majic**: The natural inclination of a person learn, use, and hold new tools to increase their natural abilities.

New Tool/majic

New Tool/majic

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* Note: Majić is my family name. I lucked out because it reads like “magic” in English, and most people have to ask me twice because they think they misheard it the first time. It may seem egotistical to coin it as a term here, but I couldn’t think of a better work (I swear). Primarily, the use of “majic” pays tribute to my parents. If you’ve liked this book so far, you’ll know why.
* Sticking it to my personal Darth Blockbuster makes me smile too.

## Using Majic to Filter the Rules

Despite our problems with our current philosophy, society always needs one philosophy that reigns above the rest. We use it to create the ground rules that glue us all together. Without a ruling philosophy, the story of mankind would be a story of chaos. There would be no such thing as civilization.

Darth Blockbuster fights to control the ruling philosophy. When he succeeds, he writes rules to keep the tools he controls, and therefore himself, in power. Corporate manuals, university guidelines, social justice blogs are among the pages of his Death Star rule book. These rules interfere with regular people majically bonding with new tools. But how can you tell if a rule is good or bad? How can you pinpoint a rule book as a Death Star? Darth Blockbuster doesn’t tell people he’s Darth Blockbuster. Instead he says he’s an Executive Vice President, Baron, or expert lawyer. Are these people genuine authority figures in the story of civilization, or Darth Blockbusters protecting their paychecks?

It’s essential to filter out the good from the bad rules throughout our everyday lives. It takes practice and it demands cultivating our integrity and inner truths. Yet it’s a struggle that’s been taking place for centuries. As an example, you needn’t look further than this story of a Maryland farm boy named Frederick, who was born approximately two centuries ago.

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Our story is about a Maryland farm boy named Frederick using tools to overcome ignorance. His farm is one of those you might have seen on shows like *Little House on the Prairie*. Salt of the earth farmers raising crops and families in 19th century rural America. No internet, no school systems, no much to learn by how to survive with your hands and the fortune God gave you.

Frederick worked the fields with his mother. It was hard labor of course, there weren’t many machines around, so he had to work hard, for himself and his mother.

In a few years, Frederick was sent to work with a relative in Baltimore. The house was large and the young family could use a hand cleaning, shopping, doing chores. It made his mother happy he wouldn’t sweat so much, yet Frederick was a farmer and unsure of the big city.

The patriarch of the house was named Hugh. He wasn’t around much. His new wife Sophia was. She was a foreigner used to colder climates who didn’t know many people yet, so she stayed in a lot. Sophia was nice and treated Frederick nicely too. Not as a farmer, but as an interesting person. She made Frederick feel at ease.

One day, Sophia handed Frederick a list of items to pick up from the store. Frederick’s eyes looked down, his shoulders slouched, like a dog who disappointed its masters. Frederick mumbled “I can’t read.”

“My God, well that won’t do!” Sophia responded, then continued “Reading is good. How else can a person give and receive information from… from… the world! I’ll teach you; we’ll do it together.” So, Sophia taught Frederick to read. Just a few weeks, and he got the basics. Sophia performed majic and was overjoyed.

Frederick even more so! Finally, all those markings in the store, on street corners, in books, in newspapers, in the Holy Bible, mean something, a new world! Go left, turn right, open, closed, discounted, welcome, and Salvation, all a door to a new world.

Now Frederick danced to the store, he whisked himself to do his chores, because he was learning to read a little more every day. He loved how the world kept getting bigger, and information kept pouring in.

One day Hugh came home early. He saw Sophia and Frederick reading at the dinner table. Hugh walked into the room. “Boy, get out, and wait in the hallway. Face the wall.”

Frederick got out, went outside, and faced the wall. Seconds turned to minutes. Frederick rolled the newspaper in his hands tighter. He didn’t want to go back to the farm. But even more, he didn’t want his angel to get in trouble.

Inside the room, Sophia was curious “What is it?”. Hugh responded “This isn’t Ohio… Darling you can’t do that. We could get in a lot of trouble. You can’t teach them to read.”

Sophia responded “everyone learns to read in Ohio.”

Hugh takes a seat. “This isn’t a free State. He is a slave. What do you think happens when slaves read? Don’t you think they’ll start thinking?” Sophia’s eyes went wide. Hugh continued “It’s against the rules to teach a slave to read… now teach the boy.”

As Frederick heard the hallway door open, he straightens up, and grips his newspaper.

Sophia says “Turn around.”

Frederick does, and looks at his angel, the one who talked with him like he was a person. And she looked back and only saw *her boy*.

Sophia slapped the newspaper from her boy’s hand. He didn’t let go. She slapped again, and again and again. Each slap hurt more than a dozen whips on his scarred back.

She slapped, and slapped, and slapped, and slapped. Sophia was told society’s rule book and it “clicked” for. Now she knows what evil is and she will not do it. Sophia then and there became a demon protector of vile racism to justify human slavery.

Frederick’s world shutdown again. The one white person ignorant enough to treat him like a person, was now an educated convert to the rules that put him into chains. Physical chains if needed, but evil prefers mental chains of ignorance; they stay on so much easier.

Weeks later Frederick was still in despair. His daily routine was the same. Yet, working under demonic masters is just different. He didn’t dance to the store, he didn’t whisk to do his chores, and he never saw Sophia smile again. Demons are always on guard.

One day while doing his chores, Frederick saw a newspaper, the avenue to knowledge whose path Frederick was once on. He looked at the markings, saw some words he knew, and one word he didn’t. Yet he still stared at it. Why?

The answer slapped him harder than the demon ever did, he read the words “The Free States in the North”. He heard the word freedom before, but he didn’t know freedom was a real place.

A shockwave went through him when he realized if slavery was a place, then so must freedom be a place too. Frederick realized he could break chains! Because ignorance was always his demon, and knowledge was always his angel. And he fought ignorance, and received knowledge, whenever he read.

So, Frederick taught himself to read. He practiced with ignorant white kids on the streets. He practiced reading items at the grocery store. He practiced on every street sign. And he practiced every time he was at the Baltimore dock; the dock I said, you know the place, where ships will take you anywhere in the world. If you can read the schedule.

One day Sophia waited for her boy to return. But the boy died when the man Frederick Douglass walked onto the ship headed north to freedom. The man knew the exact time, place, and fare he needed to get on. He read it, himself, on the schedule. Reading opened the world to Frederick, and now the free world was opened to him.

The story gets better. Frederick Douglass becomes a brilliant orator and writer. In a world with no radio, video, or telephones, he travels the Northern States and Europe telling everyone the truth about slavery. When the American Civil War (1861-1865) broke out, his books helped Britain reject recognizing the South, and thus deprived it of much needed support. The irony of a slave educating people about slavery, and thereby helping to end slavery, is the cherry on top of this great story.

*Story adapted from A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. Free on Project Gutenberg.*

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Frederick Douglass was a true Jedi Master. His great bravery, persistence, and intelligence helped to showcase humanity’s endless potential. The big lesson we need to learn here, Stargazer, is how to use majic to tell the difference between good and bad rules.

Sophia taught Douglass to read. She wasn’t told to. She did it because we love teaching our chosen tools, whether they’re soccer balls, new apps, or how to tape drywall. It’s as natural to spread our tools, as it is for a species to propagate.

Teaching and learning is very meaningful because it’s the moment of creation. When a magician makes a playing card disappear, we smile in awe and childish wonder. That’s cool, but nothing new was created, so we soon lose our joy. However, when a majician connects someone with typing, building, or reading, they’ve similarly performed something awesome, but it’s not a temporary trick to be enjoyed in the moment; they’ve upgraded someone’s cyborgology and effectively created a new and improved person. This makes us smile for a long time. Creation is majic, majic is Nature’s long-lasting dopamine fix.

Yet human made rules *sometimes* say upgrading to a new tool is wrong. Upgrades aren’t “allowed”—and this decree may be issued either directly or indirectly. Medieval parishioners couldn’t read a science book, French peasant farmers couldn’t have a musket, a 1990’s kid couldn’t download a digital song. Today millions of tired mothers can’t telecommute.

Rather… they can, they all have high-speed internet and home computers, but they don’t.

The question is: why not?

There is no easy answer. Remember in no story does anyone ever say they’re evil. Society’s rule book will never call itself a Death Star. The lesson Stargazer is it’ll never be easy to know the difference between good and bad rules. Anyone can proclaim rules. Even kids on the playground can say “only tall kids can play” and others, based on personality, will obey or not.

Majic is thus our best judge of the rules. Majic feels right. It naturally makes us smile. It improves us and our way of life. From teaching a kid to walk, to teaching a grandmother to “Skype in” and watch her grandkids first steps; teaching and learning new tools opens our hearts because it solves problems and enhances our existence.

So, when you’re teaching or learning a new tool and someone steps in your way with a rule, ask yourself if you feel wonderfully inspiring majic, and if you do, ask the rule maker why he doesn’t. Perhaps there’s a good reason. But keep Sophia in mind. Performing majic made her feel good, while following the rules only made her feel safe. The Death Star operates by fear.

And safety is fleeting Stargazer. No ruling philosophy lasts forever, thus all rule books eventually expire. Majic never will. It always was, and always will be, in our souls. It’s how we naturally test our rule book. Electricity, the microchip, the iPhone were all made by people who broke the rules. Yet we celebrate their innovators today because they invented new tools that let us feel and spread majic today.

Ignore majic at your peril. Look at Sophia, she gave one of our greatest writers and orators his start, yet she lived a miserable life watching him achieve greatness because she broke the rules. Unhappiness is the inevitable punishment to everyone who ignores the joy of learning, or helping others learn, new tools that sits inside in all our souls.

## A World Without Majic

Stargazer, this recuring story of is what Frederick Douglass was doing. Relative to use it’s an extreme example, but he had societal role he didn’t like, and once empowered to break it, he did and joined a community of equals inside a democracy with members and non-members.

So, asking if you’re happy is asking if you’re happy with your place in society. If you’re not, it’s a sign we’re trying to make a new ecosystem. And that’s exactly what we’re trying to do with digital tools, trying to make a economic ecosystem with members and non-members, where each lifeform is free to live as they want, because each person has a job to do in a food web. I don’t think most people are happy. But we can be, and to destroy the Death Star holding back humanity, we must be. And here’s how the open-source movement fought back, and showed us how we don’t have to wait to improve our own lives and put smiles back on our faces.

# A TECHVOLUTION BATTLE SCENE

In the 1970’s the transistor, internet, computer monitors, microchips, and other digital technology, started to leave labs and research centres and make new tools. Finally, society had new tools again, powerful enough to change our way of life empowering the middle class to leave the one-sided factory and office jobs, and become more self-sufficient again. Of course, that’s when Darth Blockbuster starting firing Death Star blasts defending his way of life.

Some examples. In the 1970’s AT&T defended the telephone communications by successfully lobbying government to ban Americans from using internet modems. In 1984, the entertainment industry defended broadcast television by suing home video cassette recorders (VCRs) and only losing by one vote in the Supreme Court. In 2001, the music industry defended music compact discs (CDs) by successfully suing digital songs. Likewise, Tesla, Uber, AirBnB biggest competition has been in the courtroom. Throughout society the antagonists found ways to keep digital tools from the people.

This was wrong. Inside the ruling philosophy of Techvolution, the extras would have fought back harder, because they’d understand it was their cyborgology being held back. But nonetheless it happened. Sadly, the antagonists even resisted help. As Napster was introducing digital songs to America–and being sued for it–the people were majically bonding with Napster because it had no scratches, no driving, and no buying 18 songs to get the 2 good ones you really wanted.

Music executives had already tried to make their own platform. They didn’t know technology so they kept failing. Steve Jobs stepped in with iTunes to make “thieving customers” buying customers again. Despite the crisis of Napster, Jobs said he’d “never spent so much of my time trying to convince people [music executives] to do the right thing for themselves”.

The problem wasn’t Napster. It was Darth Compact Disc. To be fair, he knew how to manage a huge corporation, make a product people (had) wanted to buy, and get his employees paid. Yet he didn’t know anything about new technology and so fought against losing his position with rules, not tools.

iTunes was successful. People were willing to pay for a quality digital song distribution. Not because the rules. But because it was better cyborgolgy. It’s a lesson for us as we begin to update from Darth Blockbuster’s other old tools. Here’s how the battle looks, one that we’ll have to fight a few more times on our way to happy middle-class life.

## Inventing Adaptations

In biological evolution there are continual adaptations of existing lifeforms, and then sometimes fully new lifeforms. In Techvolution this is the difference between upgraded technology, and an entirely new tool.

Upgrading any technology is an iterative change, like going from sedan’s to SUV’s, VHS to DVD’s, tube TV’s to LCD’s. Each is different technologically, but they do the same job, so no new majic is needed to attract users. As a result, no political battles are started.

But when we’ve upgraded enough technologies, like microchips, touchscreens, batteries, and Wi-Fi, a genius can unlock a new tool like smartphones. And this requires new skills to learn, thus new majic to attract them to do it. When an extra decides to drop an old tool and reach for a new one it is a big deal.

New Tool Creation

New Tool Creation

Why? Well, because creating a new tool asks a climactic and political question: who controls it? After all, whoever does, is more powerful. The weilder of the new tool can let extras connect with it to solve their problems. Or withold it and convince the extras to keep using old tools. Like muscle cars trying to keep customers away from Tesla with techniques like mass advertising, car culture, and spectacular chromes platedd V8 power! Because of how anti-evolutionary these these techniques are, I call them “dark majic”.

Thus, while the story of civilization can be described as the struggle to overcome problems by upgrading technology and inventing new tools, it’s also about the battle to control them. The people with the old tool fight to retain their power, while inventors and innovators imagine a new society that shares it.

This is why the eternal story of civilization is protagonists like Steve Jobs making new tools, antagonists like music company executives attacking new tools, and many extras watching them fight. Our politics is an ongoing history of technological change, with protagonist and antagonist both reaching to control the tool and make themselves the winner.

Today the extras lack self-awareness regarding their power to decide the battle’s outcome. I’ll show you Stargazer, how important you are. Not too long ago, it was protagonists and extras who worked to invent a and implement a new tool just by being curious and loving majic.

**Dark Majic**: Methods and techniques to keep a person using a tool for the benefit of the tool’s controller and not the user.

Dist-vs-retention

Dist-vs-retention

## The Extras’ Extraordinary Potential

The environment keeps changing. Life needs to know how and uses its lifeforms to probe for answers. Similarly, the human environment keeps changing, and so humans also have to probe for answers. We ask questions like why are the movies so expensive, or more importantly what are proven techniques to stop malaria infections. We need a way to answer our questions and true to ourselves, we tackle this challenge by using our available technology to create a reference tool and upgrade it when possible.

Our first reference tool was the wisdom of our elders. The first technological upgrades were papyrus scrolls and ink (around 2300 BC) and books (around 300 BC), which turned some elders into experts like Hippocrates and Aristotle. When wood-pulp paper (1200) and the printing press (1456) were invented, humanity unleashed mass-produced books. Now experts could share knowledge between themselves and educate the masses. We called the reference books encyclopedias.

Encyclopedias were a massive hit; up until a generation or so ago, many households proudly included a physical encyclopedia collection in their library. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (1878) was the standard. In 1933 it started to be re-publihsed every to keep people updated to the latest facts. In the following decades, the computer, digital printer, and telecommunications meant encyclopedias were written and stored digitally. But they remained a set of printed books and CD’s controlled by experts.

Then came the world wide web (1991), a new technology that unlocked many new tools like websites, forums, blogs, and something called “wikis”. Wiki software lets anyone write or edit a webpage by pressing “edit now”. All changes are saved, so anyone can erase errors or vandalism by pressing “undo now”. For years programmers used wikis to collaboratively write technical manuals.

As web tools boomed in the late ’90’s, protagonist Jimmy Wales wondered if the web could upgrade encyclopedias. Today, most of us who were curious about things like the movies or malaria know this story ends with a free online encyclopedia anyone can edit called Wikipedia. But it didn’t start out that way.

Wikipedia started as Nupedia (2000). Nupedia was a free online copycat of Encyclopedia Britannica where only “expert” professors made articles. Wikipedia (2001) was a side project. Only programmers knew “community content creation” would work.

Everyone else assumed regular people would only read the work of professors. The first issue with this theory was that the professors didn’t like to share their knowledge. In its first year, Nupedia had 12 articles. Wikipedia had 40,000, which most professors, performing dark majic, loved to belittle as rubbish. Professors even went further into the dark arts and disallowed students from referencing Wikipedia’s articles in their school work. Yet professors refused to improve, or to assign students to improve, Wikipedia.

The second issue was that it turned out “expert” answers and “regular” answers are the same. The movies are expensive because of a 1948 government rule banning studio’s working with theatres–so they can’t vary ticket prices regardless of movie budgets–and mosquito nets are a simple and effective tool against malaria infections.

Thirdly, Wikipedia was so easy to use many extras became protagonists! A huge community of non-academics voluntarily shared their knowledge one “edit now” at a time and fiercely protected their common knowledge with “undo now”. Nobody told them, paid them, or made a rule to force it. Because performing majic, and expanding someone else’s cyborgolgy with things like millions of Wikipedia articles, is Nature’s dopamine rush.

And lastly, so many people loved the performance and flocked to Wikipedia’s answers. The extra’s mass support quickly made Wikipedia king, while giving the technological gates of Nupedia and Encyclopedia Britannica quick deaths.

That’s the story of Wikipedia. Made by new protagonists, made the standard reference tool by empowered extras. Few believed it was possible, because even professors don’t understand new tools always unpower the few, to empower the rest. Interestingly, after I finally conceded temporary defeat to my personal Darth Blockbuster, I uploaded a few pages to Wikipedia instead. Not as helpful as my app, but it took just a few weeks of work, and one “edit now” button, to make it real. It felt majical to bypass the rules. It also put a smile on my face.

Wikipedia development

Wikipedia development

* The Encyclopedia Britannica was a physical book with limited pages. That means there was a debate what to include, and all updates required printing a new book. Wikipedia is totally different. It has limitless pages and updates instantly. This difference showcases why red/blue politics can’t harness digital tools. Both ideologies were invented to deal with physical property like books. Conservatism says protecting personal property keeps society rich because everyone has incentive to create new property or keep what they have in good condition. Hence conservaties don’t like things like taxes or regulation that intefere with their “I know what’s best” mentality. Progressives think different. They say property really belongs to the community and so they want to regulate it to be sure selfish people (conservaties) don’t control it.

Neither of these solutions are valid for digital property. It doesn’t spoil, so there’s no reason to “own” it. And it’s limitless, so there’s no reason to “regulate” it. Yet property protection, and property regulation, are what both conservatives and progressives know how to do. Since they control our ruling philosphy we’re missing out on using digital tools to make many other kinds of Encyclopedia Britannica to Wikipedias upgrades.

### You Can Win

So that’s how we won a battle in the fight for Techvolution. It’s a battle that made me, and everyone else who write and read Wikipedia, happy because we’re evolving humanity is natural for us. The excuses and rules in the way of evolution are made by old cyborgs, who either don’t want to drop their tools and learn new ones, or who perform dark majic to convince other people to do the same.

Wikipedia’s victory is another example of the this archetypal story of technological evolution. Like Galileo and his telescope, George Washington and his musket, and Steve Jobs and his iTunes, Wikipedia was a victory for protagonists. What makes this era especially interesting—and what makes preparation for this battle all the more urgent—is the ease with which extras can seize and command digital tools if they would so desire, empowering and evolving themselves.

Now imagine a world in which digital tools are set free! Stargazer, that’s the story you must jump into with lightsabers a-blazin’, dicing up old evil storm-trooping tools, to smooth out humanity’s natural evolution. The open-source community are making new tools. But they are facing down Darth Blockbuster on their own. They need as much support as Wikipedia received.

Note however, our lives cut across thousands to millions of problems. Thus, our villains are not in a massive group like “the rich” or the “the unions” as old philosophies label. Our villains reveal themselves inside thousands of companies, institutions, and organizations, and they fight back by suppressing new tools to keep their version of the Encyclopedia Britannica or DVD alive.

Together, protagonists and extras can end all these Darth Blockbusters. I know this is possible because history has proven it. Our battle today was fought generations ago with Darth Blockbuster’s master: Darth King.

Darth King lived inside palaces, using society’s money to host splendid banquets and balls. His absolute power was hidden inside a ruling philosophy of the nobility’s “divine right” to rule. Slowly, as protagonists invented scientific instruments, books, and guns, a new philosophy was born. A philosophy of science, enlightenment, equality, and democracy, made real when the protagonists and extras fought as one in the American and French Revolutions. These revolutionaries were inspired by the new philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Battle Scene

Battle Scene

# ROUSSEAU’S EXTRAS

## Freeing Cinderella

“Extras are born free; and everywhere they are in chains.” Actually, he didn’t. But he would have, if he’d thought to label the people he was describing as “extras” in a play. Rousseau was neither the king of France nor the richest man in England. Instead, he was a poor writer who copied sheets of music to make the rent. More than 300 years later, he is at last recognized as being a great philosopher, a political visionary, and a protagonist who helped free the world with his new philosophy.

Rousseau lived when kings and queens, dukes and duchesses ruled civilization. A time when Mozart played inside exquisite palaces during the nobility’s many banquets and balls. This was the opulence that had Cinderella dreaming her days away as she cleaned a dirty chateau. Sadly, unlike the fairy tale, the extras didn’t have a fairy Godmother to make their dreams come true. Instead, the commoners cleaned the nobles’ vast libraries, used guns while dying in their wars, and were told to ignore what scientific instruments revealed. The extras were excluded from the power of new tools because they believed their beloved Holy Bible said only Darth King had the “divine right to rule”.

Rousseau called bullshit. In truth, Jesus was a carpenter, a commoner just like any other extra—you could argue—who rose to become the ultimate protagonist. Who is anyone to say other extras can’t live up to their own potential? Rousseau believed that books, guns, and scientific instruments should liberate the extras who were only in chains for the happiness of con artists. The self-proclaimed “divine nobility” didn’t like hearing that. This powerful self-protecting community declared Rousseau a banquet-pooper, and chased him out of Switzerland, France, and England. Maybe that’s why Rousseau rented instead of owned.

Starting in 1776, within Rousseau’s lifetime, Darth King started to face the music when the American people started a revolution. One year after Rousseau died, the French had their own revolution in 1789. And on it went from country to country because Rousseau, and others like him, make the extras realize they should become protagonists with a ruling philosophy “of the people, for the people, by the people”. Cinderella soon forgot about the fancy ball, and instead sung the music of freedom in a choir of equals, that sounded something like this:

France that Europe admires Has regained Liberty And every citizen breathes Under the laws of equality, One day its beloved image Will extend throughout the universe. Peoples, you will break your chains And you will have a homeland!

Revolutionary songs like this spread the people’s liberty, equality, and fraternity throughout the world. In a few years, civilization changed its ruling philosophy from knowing the nobles were divine, to knowing they were villains who resorted to hiring mercenaries to fight their people. And the nobles, in turn, failed to realize that “their” people didn’t need them anymore.

When the people took control of books, guns, and science, they put presidents and senators, judges and sheriffs in power, who ruled at the request of the people who built a civilization of democracy, equality, and checks and balances, because no one was divine. A change empowered by tools, thought of in philosophy, yet made real with the bloodshed of revolutions on the frontline.

Rousseau died never having found a home. After they won their revolutions, a population of heroes put him to rest inside the glorious Panthéon, heralding him as a renowned breaker of chains, in a free world he helped build. Where any guy can be the prince, and any girl can be Cinderella.

The question for us is, how did Rousseau make an entire people change their ruling philosophy, and how can we do it better, because I’d really like to skip horrible revolutions.

Revolutions!

Revolutions!

## Society’s Three Stories

In light of the above, Rousseau’s words echo this sentiment: let the people prosper with new tools. Let the nobility return to their natural equality inside a democracy where anyone is free to be the the ruler, or a rich businessman, if they can solve problems and thereby earn the public’s approval and consent. Rousseau never said there shouldn’t be leaders; but that leaders should earn it.

Rousseau made the people realize the society they lived in, the one filled with tools, should define their way of life. When the people realized they didn’t have to be so oppressed, the ruling philosophy of “divine leaders” looks so behind the times. This required change invoked a revolution, a sudden questioning of a civilization’s ruling philosophy. The American, French and all other such ensuing revolutions were so violent because the divide between ruling philosophy and frontline society was so wide.

A *Techvolution* is different in the sense that it doesn’t require bloodshed or abrupt change; it mirrors evolutions, which tend to be more gradual and natural. Thus, to enable techvolution, and rid the world of revolutions, we need a road map of tool development. Roadmaps can be sketched from the teachings of history, handed down to us through stories. It shouldn’t come as a big surprise that Rousseau was also a novelist.

Thus, Rousseau understood stories—not just fictional ones, but real-world ones, best explained the fabrication and inner workings of any society. He understood, too, that there are good and bad stories… and that each stems from a storyteller who has a very particular purpose. These stories are especially appealing to extras. And for that, if nothing else, you really should sit up and pay attention. Learning about stories will help you understand your own reality.

So let’s explain stories. Every story contains a plot: a sequence of events where a protagonist fights an antagonist to overcome a problem. The fight to change reality happens in three parts. The first is the introduction of the problem and characters. The second is protagonist and antagonist thinking up plans and attacking each other. The third part is the conclusion, where we find out which side wins. Although it’s easier to see in some more than in others, all stories have this structure.

The difference between good and bad stories is how much it mixes things up to keep you in guessing what’s going to happen next. While some bad stories are non-stop action scenes, and some stories are non-stop talking scenes, good stories mix the two up to tell a logical and surprisng story with a thick plot. Here are the three different kinds of stories.

**Classic movies:** are good stories with fights about real-life problems. Protagonist leave their typical day and personality, and challenge themselves to rise to the occasion and overcome a new found problem on behalf of humanity. Antagonists of course fight back.

Protagonist and antagonist repeatedly think of new ideas and act on them. Usually this means both characters fight to create and control tools to make themselves the winner of the back and forth battle.

Mixing logical problem solving, with new ideas, gives classic stories “logical surprises”. These plot twists make what’s going to happen next unknown and keeps audiences glued to their seats. The conclusion can anything from a big victory for the good or bad guys, or anywhere in between.

There’s no way to know which stories will resonate with audiences, but only good stories can resonate with audiences and become classics like *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliette*, *The Matrix*, and *Star Wars*. These stories are often archetypes like “Rags to Riches” or “Forbidden Love” that are so natural they exist in all cultures and religions in some way, and hence why they reasonate so well for people living life on the frontline.

**Art films:**- are not about any specific problem. The film is more of a personal journal about not overcoming problems, for example personal loneliness, or hating ones job. The main character is thus selfish and self-important. Not because they do not take on a problem, but because they want to be the protagonist even though they aren’t leading the way for others to follow.

Because their heroes don’t take on problems and fight off antagonists, art stories end up with lots of talking scenes, usually with the main character talking about themselves and how much they wish they could solve their problem.

The result is films with no action, that fill their time showcasing idiosyncratic behavior, and storylines with no problem solving to logically tie events together. Without action, these stories are surprising to the point of being weird, with conclusion that never change the reality because the hero didn’t even try to.

Without logical surprises, art films need to get weirder and weirder to maintain interest. To insulate themselves from criticism art filmmakers usually give themselves awards, grandeur, and titles and end up-like their protagonists-on stages talking about themselves in a bout of self-gratification. Film festivals like Cannes, Sundance, Toronto mainly show art films.

**Spectacle movies:**- are about an obvious problem, i.e. Godzilla is here, so run like hell and keep running until the movie is over. Spectacle movies are thus very logical because the problem is very simple; survive or die. However, since the action is so instinctual, there’s no time for the protagonist to think of new ideas. The result is very logical but unsurprising stories.

To maintain interest, spectacle movies have to keep reusing successful stories and characters while ramping up special effects, gore, and raunchiness. It doesn’t work for too long, so spectacle producers look for new customers with hype-filled mass marketing campaigns. Most franchise movies, sequels, and remakes are spectacle movies.

All three stories!

All three stories!

In storytelling, logic and surprises counter-balance each other. Withholding the logic solving a problem makes self-important art films, and withholding surprises makes simple spectacle movies. Classic stories are good because they mix the two and create “logical surprises” that open our minds and change things. This is why art/spectacle stories don’t have “spoilers”, while we want to “go in fresh” for classic stories.

You can see the difference in your favorite sitcom such as *The Office, Seinfeld, Friends, HIMYM, The Big Bang Theory*. They start off as classic stories, with characters who actively deal with relatable problems like not liking their jobs or being tired of dating. We see ourselves in these characters, which is why we cry, laugh, and all that when regular everyday stuff happens to them, because we know it could also happen to us.

However, in later seasons, to keep their now popular characters alive, the sitcoms keep them living the same stories. Kramer can’t get a job, Raj can’t get a girl, Dwight can’t get self-aware. Here sitcoms become art and spectacle stories. Art, as in these characters don’t learn to overcome their personal problems. And, spectacle, because we the audience keep watching even though we already know what’s going to happen. We watch our favorite actors, characters, sets, catch-phrases, instead of waiting for logical surprises. You keep watching only because you’ve grown accustomed to them.

Rousseau noticed society has these classic, art, and spectacle stories, and that human society’s travel through them as they do in long-running sitcoms. Rousseau also noticed how one story works for equality and democracy, and the other two work to enrich the artists and distract the masses.

Classic heroes

Classic heroes

## The Politics of Stories

So these are the three categories in a nutshell. Classic heroes tackle real-life problems. Art heroes are self-obsessed. Spectacle heroes are a distraction.

Their purpose and meaning do not end there. In the world of politics, this means the ruling philosophy of classic stories are about equality and democracy that solves real-life problems, while a ruling philosophy art and spectacle stories are about maintaining a hierarchy that avoid real-life frontline problems.

In which category would you classify The Matrix? This story depicts a dystopian future in which most of humanity is unknowingly trapped inside a simulated 1990’s reality called the matrix. It’s created by machines to distract humans while using their bodies as an energy source. Neo, the protagonist who was once a mere extra, is recruited to help the few untapped humans’ rebel against the machines. His job is to make the sleeping masses inside the matrix realize their reality is fake.

This story is basically majic vs. the rules. Neo wants the masses to realize the matrix’s rules are bullshit. When they do, they can remove the plug, and re-learn the majic of using their own tools to live a free life.

The machines antagonist, Agent Smith, can control much of the matrix, but not all of it. Enforcing the rules of the ruling philosophy of slavery, makes “the agents” bound to its rules too. Neo has a new ruling philosophy of freedom. Thus, he isn’t bound by the matrix’s rule book. A freedom he wants to teach others.

Neo takes on the machines. Unbound by its ruling philosophy, he learns to manipulate the matrix better and better. He jumps higher, runs faster, and soon dodged bullets. The machines, unable to match his wisdom, fight back with dark majic.

They get one of the freed humans to turn on Neo and his supporters. Not with the allure of power, but with the allure of going back into the comfortable matrix. The familiar spectacle of Rolling Stone concerts, television sitcoms, and V8 engines is all this modern Judas wants. The traitor knows its fake, but will accept it because “ignorance is bliss”. The machines agree to give this to him, so they can forever stay on top.

The traitor losses. Neo is too powerful. In the final battle with Agent Smith, he not only can dodge bullets, but stop them in mid-air. He completely sees past the “spectacle” of items that the traitor said was “bliss”, and only sees the matrix’s code, and can thus rewrite it as he wants. Neo soon kills the agents, calls the machines, and says:

I came here to tell you how this is going to begin. I’m going to hang up this phone. And then I’m going to show these people what you don’t want them to see. I’m going to show them a world without you. A world without rules and controls, without border or boundaries A world where anything is possible. Where we go from there, is a choice I leave to you.

Since this is a classic story, once Nero’s done freeing the people, him and his friends return to being equal members of the free community. Neo’s hierarchy of support was temporary, being based on solving a frontline problem. Perhaps he’ll be the hero of the next story, but maybe not. It depends on the problem and who the people want to be their problem solving hero to be. Regardless by stepping up, Neo can continue being the protagonist of his own life, by deciding who he’ll follow, not letting the agents decide for him.

Spectacle and art stories do not solve frontline problems. Thus, their hierarchies can go on for as long as their storytellers can convince people to watch them, or live inside them. These storytellers, who are the leaders, are self-important, self-involved, who can’t solve problems, and the masses are just like the people stuck inside the matrix; distracted from the truth with a world of spectacle like shiny cars, copyrighted music, 9-5 work days, and sitcom re-runs, which people stay attached to via dark majic of advertisements, marketing, and loyalty to an old culture.

This is the harsh reality of majic. The real-world in the matrix is cold, dark, and damp. Neo must convince the people living in freedom inside this unpleasant reality is better than the tyranny of a pleasant fiction full of the spectacle and dark majic.

The longer the spectacle lasts, the longer the self-important artists, like Darth King, and Darth Blockbuster, can go on living inside self-obsessed stories. They’re happy with the way things are. They want to be heroes atop the hierarchy forever.

But like an aging sitcom, it never lasts. Eventually the people’s problems pile up, and they soon need a true hero again. That means a hero who can see through the spectacle of the ruling philosophy, and lead the people to a new society that distributes the powers of modern tools to humanity can starting solving problems an evolving again. It’s better for everyone when the people rise up before a bloody revolution hits. Hence when Techvolution is so much better to fight for.

The lesson is this Stargazer. Whether living inside a story, or looking at one, we can tell the difference betweed classic, art, and spectacle by looking at how new tools are treated. Classic stories embrace new tools because they solve problems. Art stories dislike new tools because they force self-obsessed main characters to step up or step away from the limelight. And spectacle loves new tools but uses them to ramp up the spectacle so the masses don’t ask for the power themselves; like when Darth Blockbuster rented digital effects filled movies but didn’t want us to stream them.

So let’s use our understanding of stories, to understand the political philosophy of our societies.

**Good ruling philosophy**: Meant to facilitate the creation and distribution of new tools. It’s lead by individuals selected by the people, who rise to the occasion to become protagonists. Once their spectific problem is over, leaders willfully returns to being an equal member of the community.

**Bad ruling philosophy**: Meant to withhold the creation and especially distribution of new tools. Led by leaders who don’t want to empower the people or and return to equality. Instead hey distract the masses from their unearned, and increasingly self-serving leadership, with spectacle.

## Neo Douglass

The story of the matrix is a common one. Most oppressed peoples could sympathize with it. Frederick Douglass certainly could. Mister Auld was the agent of slavery, Douglass the hero responsible for waking himself and everyone else up. And Sophia is the masses, the extras, who must choose between majic and the rules.

Dougless and Rousseau were each the Neos of their times. They both woke people up to the reality that self-indulgent art and distracting spectacle, when used to enrich the rich and distract the masses, are bullshit, and society should focus on solving real-life problems by empowering people with tools. Real heroes fight for this individual empowerment, and when done let their hierarchies melt away into the free soil of equality.

Telling the difference between a true hero like Douglass, whose given political power from the people so he can win them greater freedom, and selfish heroes, who simply take political power and keep it for themselves is hard. To most easily tell the difference, we need to analyze the story we’re in. Is it a classic one, or a art and spectacle one. For his part, Rousseau defeated Darth King, by making the people realize they were watching spectacular re-runs while the nobility was in exquisite banquets and balls.

Classic heroes

Classic heroes

## Protagonist Kings

Not all kings are con artists. We remember Medieval Time fondly in childhood stories of gallant knights for good reason. These kings were the heroes of a classic story because they defeated monsters to create a peaceful country for people to live in.

In Rousseau’s time “holy” noble families ruled every European country. But they were in power because of their ancestors. After western Rome fell in 476 western Europe entered the Dark Ages (500-1000). So called because there was no books, ink, or literate people to write anything down. Nor was there much else, like sanitation, military, judicial systems. Civilization was gone. Anarchy ruled. The Dark Ages sucked.

People like Clovis I, Charles Martel, and Alfred the Great took charge. They were master warriors who uses swords, bows, armor, and cavalry to fight off invaders. Even better, they headed large families who kept some peace. They built castles to protect the newly remade wells, hospitals, and markets.

This was a classic story because a hero saw a real-life problem, was determined to change it, rallied supporters, and fought the evil villains. Fittingly, a hierarchy formed around society’s use of Medieval’s Europe primitive tools. We call it feudalism. You’ve probably seen it in Robin Hood, Vikings, or Game of Thrones. Feudalism was a rigid hierarchy of kings, bishops, dukes, sheriffs, knights, priests, tradesman, and peasants. In return for loyalty, the people got what was called the “King’s peace”, which slowly let the people update their cyborgolgy with shovels, oxen, thatched houses, buckets, sickles, and other tools.

The people happily declared the leaders holy, because the country’s stability was vested into the heroes own person. They were basically like mafia bosses. These kings didn’t rule inside a official parliament or bureucracy. Like a Odysseus, Robin Hood, or Neo they were themselves were protagonists; making them Protagonist Kings. This was the start of the “noble divine right to rule”.

Since society had no political institutions like dependable judicial systems, standing police force, or governmental departments, the personal rule of the nobility was definitely holy, for if they disappeared, so did the political peace keeping millions of peasants safe.

Under the rule of Protagonist Kings, Western Civilization rebuilt poltical instituions like court systems, town councils, sanitation departmnets. But it was slow going. By the time Western Europe had a fully functioning civilization again, (around the Renaissance depending on how you define it) nobody could remember why the story of divine nobility started. Who could blame them, there’s more time betweem us and Galileo, then to them and the fallen Roman Empire.

As Europe went through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the invaders were increasingly gone, the water was running, the roads were clean, the markets were busy. The once Protagoinst Kings, were now merely executives of a very large, bureaucractic governments. The only thing that didn’t change was the culture of noble divinity. The leaders had the title of king, but were not protagonists. They instead were villians protecting their privledge, who refused to let society grow out of the “nobles divine right to rule”, and became Antagonist Kings.

## Antagonist Kings

During the Renaissance nobility was established as a divine right or a hereditary gift. The nobles were no longer military leaders fighting off Vandals, Vikings, and brigands, but simply born with “noble blood”. They only waged war against each other, and usually only for personal glory. But otherwise they sat atop a hierarchy who paid no taxes, did no work, and answered to no one. The nobles used relative peace and prosperity to replace armor with dresses, churches with cathedrals, castles with palaces, and battlefields with banquets and balls.

Loving life, and without opposition, these nobles conned the people, and themselves, with art and spectacle. They lived inside an self-important art culture, where ever more self-importance, eccentricity, gossip, and titles, was the norm. And they distracted the people with spectacle to watch. Brilliant cathedrals, palaces, and wars against other kingdoms to keep the masses occupied. Like franchise movies, all these spectacles got more intense to keep the story interesting.

Visit European classic castles and extravagant palaces, modest churches and brilliant cathedrals, and you’ll see the transformation civilization had from classic stories to spectacle in Europe’s buildings. Compare the clothes of armored clad Charles Martel, and the dress wearing Louis XIV, and you’ll see the transformation from function to art.

During this transformation frontline problems piled up for the people. Their situation barely changed, and arguably got worse, from 1000 to 1778. Their houses were still thatched. They still used hand tools. They still paid almost all the taxes. They were still banned from advancing in official society. Feudalism became a caste system controlled by con artists who are rightfully called Darth King because they fought against natural equality and distributing the power of new tools to the people.

In short, Darth King told themselves they were literally sent from God, and thus they were main characters whose leading role status should thus never end. The practical reason for noble divinity, fighting off anarchy, was ignored. The nobles lost the plot of their own stories. They held their people back from learning and adopting new tools. It sent Darth King’s civilizations into revolutions, and cost him his head.

Revolutions!

Revolutions!

## Our Story

I’m not sure if you know this Stargazer, but the Devil was once an angel named Lucifer. He lived with God up in the clouds with the rest of the heavenly beings. Rejecting God’s commands, Lucifer grew vain and greedy and actually the supremacy of God. God thrown Lucifer down from Heaven to be the dark lord of hell.

That’s not all. Free from the restrictions of justice, fairness, and good, Lucifer can assume any form, and be anyone, at any time. The Devil can live within us all, because all humanity is tainted with the greed to be think they can be gods.

At least that’s the Christian tale of good versus evil. I’m sure many religions share a similar story. It’s definitely been echoed throughout Wester literature. Lord Voldermort, Lord Sauron, and Lord Vader were all once heroes. Each grew evil as they were unwilling to give back their power when corrupted by evil ambitions of lifelong supremacy. It’s probably so common in literature because it’s so common in humanity; power often corrupts.

This same story happened to kings of Europe. It’s repeating itself in our modern times as well. Our antagonists are also fallen heroes.

It’s important to note, while Rousseau’s followers may have been political free, they were economically poor. Hunger, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, were all rampant. The time was basically one of “economic anarchy”. This is when “red/blue” philosphies, bent on political liberation from kings and economic liberation from poverty, were born.

Like how society loved the original kings for winning the “King’s peace”, the original economic kings were heroes for winning massive economic growth that won the "Executive’s prosperity. They said follow me, recognize my property rights, let me run the economy, my company’s will keep you employed and improve your life with new tools like lightbulbs, stoves, and telephones.

Slowly but surely, they did. They told a good story during the Industrial Revolutions The people were again a happy audience helped humanity overcome economic anarchy. And we did that with many of the primitive tools of today. Schools, colleges, and universities educated the masses. Gas trucks and cars moved resources and products much faster. Oil and coal powered everything.

Darth Blockbuster’s forebears like Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Louis B. Mayer, did what Clovis I and the rest did. And like how Darth King was only exposed when new tools empowered the extras so they didn’t need to be peasants anymore, Darth Blockbuster was only revealed when digital tools were so powerful, the extras didn’t need to be 9-5 working consumers anymore.

Using Western European history as an example, this story of heroes leading society against political anarchy and then centures later economic anarchy are both stories of fallen angels. Stories that went from being classics, to art and spectacle.

The political story ended with centuries of violent revolutions. There was no other way to get the power of modern tools from the undeserving self-important leaders.

That should both worry you and make you happy Stargazer. First the worrying part; Darth Blockbuster defends primitive tools because he controls them. He surrounds himself with story of self-importance, and distracts the people with spectacle. John Wayne noticed this started, not surprisingly, in the 1970’s for movies:

Now the goddamned stock manipulators have taken over. They don’t know a goddamned thing about making movies. They make something dirty, and it makes money, and they say, ‘Jesus, let’s make one a little dirtier, maybe it’ll make more money.’ And now even the bankers are getting their noses into it.

This same story happened throughout the suburban “American Dream”. Detached homes got ever more specular, McMansions, designer kitchens. Cars got bigger, more size, more chrome, more horsepower. Televisions increase in size. Food portions increased, sugar was added to everything. Rather than transform society to the capabilties of digital tools, Darth Gas Cars, Darth Telephone, Darth Sugar made their tools more spectular.

The good news is, where not at a revolutionary let’s burn down society point yet. We can transition to a new story ourselves. And everyone benefits, because all art/spectacle stories eventually end, so we have a deadline we all should want to never see. And to beat that dead horse, we can take the initiative if we see that tools, and the freedom to use them as we want, is the most important political right and responsibilty of our lives.

But before we get to that, there’s something else. Something that’s gone very wrong…

# THE BIG FIGHT

## Breaking News

I’m not perfect. Far from it. Johnny Majic is just a regular guy. For whatever reason I’ve always been pretty good at retaining knowledge and analyzing history and politics. But I can’t do math in my head, nor a million other things.

What I’m basically saying in this book is many people in positions of “power” are like Blockbuster in 2009, living on borrowed time. They don’t know it because, like characters in an art film, they are stuck in a role of self-importance, which is like what happened to the late kings of Europe. Art at the top comes with spectacle to distract the bottom; whether fancy cathedrals or car shows.

Art protagonists culture insulate themselves from pleas for a classic stories with a culture. This culture gets weirder and weirder to non-fans, but make more and more sense to people inside. After all, it’s all singing to the choir. But recycling old ideas dengenerates each successive photocopy.

This is where red/blue philosophies are today. Their partnership with industrialization and economic growth go them this far. But with digital tools transforming both those eras into an obesession with individual empowerment and a thirst for economic efficiency, red/blue are trying to mantain their status as a ruling philosophy with spectacle.

That’s why they’re so dramatic with the name calling and yelling. That’s why “Breaking News” is always on the cable news shows. They are finding new examples for the choir to keep singing. It’s pretty telling that the two impeacements in living memory are over a sex life and phone call, meanwhile American industry has been gutted, wars have been fought for dubious reasons, stock market manipulation is accepted, so many other problems that directly affect the middle-class is accepted.

Digital tools should be empowering extras to be their own heroes. Open-source and others are fighting to distribute digital tools to the people. To keep the extras hooked on the Woodstock era lifestyle red/blue know and understand they’re served spectacular politics 24/7 on cable news, talk radio, and other choir benches.

The point is this. When someone says it’s time to move on and end the story of red/blue philosophies and start to upgrade our ruling philosophy to the possibilities of new tools, they fight back with personal attacks. Because like a art story, people inside red or blue storylines are so neurotic and introverted, that they think the world is defined from their own philosophies.

To to get it over with, I’ll shame myself with their rules. So if by chance Techvolution is read and followed, both red and blue with tell their choirs I’m a closet socialist progressive, or intolerant conservative! Or some other reason to shame me personally.

Resorting to personal attacks are good signs of a bad ruling philosophy.

But they can be distracting. What both red and blue truly hate is their choir watching YouTube, Netflix, or even worse living their own lives. But nonetheless they’ll shame me anyway.

So let’s get this over with. What rule did I break? I downloaded a movie from the pirate bay. You think that was that wrong?

### Stargazer Turns on His Lightsaber

It’s amazing to think about, but think about this everytime you watch Netflix today, was once watched after driving to pickup a DVD.

DVD’s were a major revenue stream for movies. Heck people were filling their basements of DVD’s. In 2008, hackers put together BitTorrents. A technology that spliced files into tiny bits, and let people share their content. It was an amazing new tool, that was most often used to distribute songs and movies. The studio’s saw the record companies fall to Napster and adopt iTunes, but didn’t learn from the lesson.

I don’t want to actually personalize anyone as “Darth Blockbuster” (especially if I never met them). But it might be a good idea for you to take a minute and visit YouTube and search around for “movie piracy” documentaries. It was once a hot topic and news broadcasters did lots of reports about losing the movies to the doom of BitTorrents.

The big concern was loss of of revenue. From their perpective DVD sales kept the industry afloat. Replacing them with streaming, especially illegal streaming, was in their eyes people sneaking into the movie en masse. And this wasn’t just an industry problem. The movies are the cultural backbone of the world. They need to be protected.

Thus, they called movie downloaders pirates. Even though most had been loyal customers for generations, all of a sudden these same people were thieves and criminals.

Luckily I was a usher and projectionist in a movie theatre around this time. When added to some history and analysis, we get to peak behind the curtain of the movie industry.

### Technological History of the Movies

Assuming you tried, it’s funny how easy it was to find Darth Blockbuster on YouTube. Now, I need to know how movies and television technologically evolved. This would take weeks at a library. But I have Wikipedia so it’ll take a few hours. Rubbish indeed professors.

So let’s go.

The first thing to understand, is movies didn’t invent stories. We’ve always, and always will, tell stories. They help us understand our lives and societies. Religious sermons, epic poetry, and stage plays have filled our need of stories throughout the years.

The movies, and later television, are merely tools that help tell stories. Each is a creation of three pieces of technology. Data transmission, data storage, and data viewing. Movies started in 1894 when Thomas Edison’s laboratory invented the kinetoscope; the first machine that moved pictures through a light source fast enough to give the impression of seamless movement. Hence the name “moving pictures”, simplified as “movies”.

The kinetoscope was like a vending machine for movies. Customers looked through a peep hole to see clips of boxing matches or dance routines. It was a popular novelty, kind of like GIFs on Instagram. Edison owned the patents and created the New Jersey based Motion Picture Patent Corporation (MPPC) to make sure everyone in the young movie industry paid their dues.

After a few years of MPPC’s interference and legal threats, in what amounted to shakedowns, movie companies moved to Los Angeles to get away. As new projector technology came, MPPC lost its patent monopoly anyway. The movie industry was free to grow in LA’s good weather, cheap land, and no stifling East Coast corporate hierarchies.

And best yet technology kept improving. New projectors could show movies on huge screens. Although reels weren’t long enough yet to show long movies. With the new projectors, movie theaters called Nickelodeons (because admission cost a nickel) opened up across the country. The movies were still novelties, showing exotic animals, news reels, or sports highlights, but getting better, like Instagram stories, instead of GIFs.

By the 1920’s film reels were long enough to show three act stories. Although sound still wasn’t synched with film, so movies had subtitled dialogue and theatres used live music bands to communicate emotions.

In 1927 film was finally synchronized with sound, giving movies dialogue and music. For the first time in history, full stories were not limited to a physical theatre. Any movie theatre in the world could show any story. A new storytelling tool was thus created.

Like Instagram or Netflix popularity today, the people certainly felt the magic of good storytelling, and the majic of needing the theatre. No longer a novelty, the movies attracted millions every week. American industry rushed to control the booming industry. American culture was told on the silver screen. Leading actors became cultural icons. The industry exploded with profits. Although the people controlled none of it, their interest and loyalty made it happen one movie ticket at a time.

Of course, all the technology that made the movie industry so rich and powerful was physical. Data storage, transport, and viewing was physical film, light projectors, and delivery trucks.

This didn’t change until a new tool was born in 1948. Televisions used a different mixture of technologies. Huge magnetic tape reels stored content. Radio transmitted content over the airwaves. And televisions received the transmissions, and displayed the content on tube televisions.

Broadcasts television companies like NBC, ABC, and CBS, now competed with movie theatres. TV story quality wasn’t as good, but the convenience was huge; especially as Americans slowly moved away from the cities packed with movie theatres into the suburbs packed with TV’s.

From the 1950’s to the early 1980’s nothing much changed in the entertainment industry. Movies and television got better technologies. Film reels got clearer, color, and widescreen. Likewise, televisions got bigger and bandwidth improved with cable. But no new tools were created. The people still couldn’t choose or produce their own content.

Then came new tools. The magnetic tapes databases that stored TV broadcasters’ content, got small enough to make home video cassette recorder (VCR). VCR’s cut out the broadcaster, who of course sued the manufacturer Sony for letting people break the rules and “time shift” television shows. The case ended up in the Supreme Court in 1984.

In a 5-4 vote the power to record and watch videos was distributed to the people; the extras were free to add the VCR to their cyborgology. VCRs, home cameras, and renting movies became very popular in the late 1980’s. The most successful video rental company took the name “Blockbuster”, the common term for popular movies. The entertainment industry quickly forgot about its VCR objections, and gladly put its content on Blockbuster’s busy shelves.

Home entertainment tools kept getting better. In the late 1990’s came DVD’s and flat screen televisions. DVD’s were more advanced CD’s, and worked like videotapes, except they were digital. Meaning data was stored as “1 or 0”. Plasma or LCD flat screens televisions were much bigger than tube televisions, and since they were digital too, they were High Definition.

Even more people rushed to upgrade their cyborgology with DVD’s and home theatres. Blockbuster rental stores were even busier, especially as people started buying hundreds of DVD’s for home libraries. The entertainment industry loved it. They didn’t even care movie theatre attendance dropped heavily and many went bankrupt. In fact, they started to use theatres as marketing hype. The money was in DVD sales.

Yet they didn’t notice, that the data transmission, data storage, and data viewing technologies of the movie industry was now almost entirely digital.

Except movie distribution. People still had to drive to pick up their DVD’s or less likely visit a movie theatre. Hence, people still needed to concentrate around movie theatres, rental stores, or TV guides (i.e. the castles with gatekeepers), to access their digital data.

Until they didn’t.

The internet, the transfer of digital information that was used for email and webpages since the 1970’s, had kept getting better and faster. And in the early 2000’s the internet got High Speed, and could finally transfer 1’s and 0’s of a DVD faster then someone driving to pick one up.

And here enters The Pirate Bay (2003). Like Napster, it introduced digital movies to people first. Although the entertainment industry used digital cameras, film projectors, email, webpages, YouTube for years, they didn’t want people using a new tool, but to keep using their profitable DVD technology; they even made two new ones called Blu-Ray (2006) and HD-DVD (2006).

The people wanted the better tool. The one that made their life more profitable. After all the countless hours needed to invent new digital tools was mostly done on their tax dollars in government labs and military funding and university institutions. Pirate Bay was the first to offer the new technology as a new tool to the people. It was a pain, it was hard to learn, but it was better than driving.

Remember the industry called this people thieves! Customers are pirates! People are evil, people are cheap, people are thieves! Really? Then explain the graph below, the one what shows how the evil people responded with protagonist Reed Hastings in 2005 made a new internet tool and gave internet movies to the people. What we call Netflix, by 2009, when Hollywood was panicking about BitTorrents, the people were finally given internet streaming. This was the same fucking time as Darth Blockbuster and the industry was complaining about human evolution.

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If middle class Americans and Canadians are pirates, why didn’t Blockbuster stores have steel bars? The same reason why we don’t steal Netflix. Blockbuster was a fair deal, until data streaming movies was possible. Then Netflix was.

The people elected to download movies from pirate bay because it was an upgrade available to their cyborgology. The only natural rule is natural selection. When people choose the best tool, they evolve into better cyborgs. It’s not the people’s job to wait for an industry to catch up to Nature. It should be the other way around.

Maybe the industry would have noticed that. Instead, they were too busy surrounding themselves with art and wanted people to being distracted with spectacle (Blu-Ray, HD-DVD). While calling their own customer’s thieves, the movie industry held countless banquets and balls on the people’s DVD dollars; movie premieres, talk shows, award shows, and launch parties. Read books like Hollywood Interrupted and the revelation of the #MeToo movement, and these parties were, never mind self-congratulatory, but often even evil.

The industry became self-obessed artists patting themselves on the back for making every weirder films, while manufacturing cheap spectacle to distract the masses. The masks of royalty appeared again. Success wasn’t defined by those on the frontline, but by politicking and ingratiating oneself to the putrid politics of a aged industry.

The Oscars, Correspondence Dinners, Emmy’s, Golden Globes, Cannes Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and so many others. All modern version of banquets and balls, with gates to keep you out, and rules put in place to make the good times of the DVD going. Party loving, profit loving, foresight lacking is a recipe for antagonism, hence Darth Blockbuster rose up.

While the spectacle of Blu-Ray and HD-DVD tricked some extras, like with Wikipedia attracting people despite the supposed experts objections, the vast majority followed the natural majic of online movie streaming instead, even when it was against the rules to improve society.

Digital tools empowered the extras to fight back, and check his self-important art story. Nevermind that the people flocked to HBO and Netflix not only for the better technology and value, but because these companies emulated early Hollywood and told classic stories like *The Sopranoes*, *Breaking Bad*, and *Game of Thrones*. The people sought out these products.

In short, the movie industry was led by people who didn’t know how to tell stories. They re-used past hits to squeeze as much out of the glory days as possible. Hence, so many movies were sequals and remakes that were simply bad stories.

The artists inside the industry got back at them with a system of “one for them, one for me” and made increasingly weired, unenjoyable, and politically charged art films.

Here’s the frontline difference between spectacle/art, and classic stories.

If rying to make people shake in their seats by adding a motor isn’t bullshit… So the people revolvted to new leaders. Heroes that used modern tools to do a good job and tell quality stories.

Techvolution tells them its right to do it. As for it being against the rules, it was, but the rules weren’t updated to digital tools so who cares.

As for me. I was naive back then and never downloaded any movies. I was the sucker buying DVD’s.

Hey, do you think Darth Blockbuster will buy back all those DVDs, Blu-Rays, and HD-DVDs he told me, and us, was better than downloading? I wonder did those go up, or down, in value?

Behind the Curtain

Behind the Curtain

### Decision Time

Your Darth—in whatever industry and in whatever outfit he may be—is a Sith Lord. While he may be a great person, nice to you and his employees, wears nice clothing, tips well, whoever he is doesn’t matter. He is an antagonist to the progress of society. He fought against video tapes, interest songs, and internet streaming. If society was up to Darth Blockbuster, we’d all be paying for long distance, writing directions on napkins, waving down cabs, paying for late charges, and putting quarters into pay phones.

What’s going to happen when 3D printing threatens his merchandising. Or when Virtual Reality let’s people live their own stories. Or whatever! We shouldn’t have to argue for new tools!

But since the 1970’s our society, our politics, has been falling apart because of Darth Blockbuster. We try to fix things with red/blue politics, but they don’t understand real politics is the control of new tools.

So we the people work two jobs to pay the bills. While our climate is changing. Why our roads are traffic jammed. Because we as digital tools are invented, the Sith keep writing laws, regulations, and fighting lawsuits to try and made us live like it’s 1970 forever.

# A SURE VICTORY

Can’t make up your mind. This will help. The force is strong with whoever holds digital tools. And that by design. The thousands of protagonists who built digital tools wanted to empower individual people like you.

The very foundation of the internet is based on the rock-solid value of individual empowerment. And this fact means Darth Blockbuster never did, and never will, stand a chance against today’s internet Jedi.

## Jedi Paul Baran

The internet has many protagonists. Paul Baran is one of the big ones. Here’s why.

The internet is a network. There are many ways of sending data through a network. The simplest is how phone systems do it with a direct circuit link between two phones. A call’s connection only stops when someone hangs up.

Alexander Graham Bell invented “direct circuit links” in 1876 and put it into action when he co-founded the American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) in 1885. For generations direct links was how all telecommunications worked. But when the Soviets tested a hydrogen bomb in 1955, Paul Baran took it upon himself to make a new tool to help prevent a nuclear holocaust.

Baran realized to prevent nuclear war, the world needed a communications network that would survive an atomic attack. Only robust and reliable communications would ease American and Soviet trigger fingers during tense times.

Baran worked alone after work. By 1960 he came up with the two ideas he needed. The first was that his network should have no hubs or organizations (like telephone’s have) to control the flow of information. Central hubs make systems vulnerable to attack or failure. Instead data flow should be completely distributed so every node can send and receive information equally. Baran’s nodes network looks like a fishnet. When each node has three or four links, the network can survive any attack.

Next Baran had to figure out how to send information across the network. This led to his second idea, which was to break up the data into standard-size little packets. Each message would be broken into many packets, each of which would scurry along different paths through the network’s nodes and be reassembled when they got to their destination. If one packet didn’t get there in time, it was quickly resent. This way there’d be no “dropped calls” and communication would always stay open. Baran published his ideas into very detailed technical specs and made sure everyone, especially the Soviets, could copy his work.

Baran then walked into a nest of villains in America. When Baran’s employer RAND recommended his “node-packet data network” idea to the Air Force (in control of America’s nuclear missiles) they wanted to build it. But when the Department of Defense got itself and the Defense Communications Agency involved Baran soon found out working with so many bureaucrats was hopeless.

So Baran tried to convince AT&T, in control of America’s telephone network, to supplement their system with his node-packet data network. “They fought it tooth and nail,” he recalled. “They tried all sorts of things to stop it.” They would not even let RAND use the maps of its circuits, so Baran had to use a pirated set. He made several trips to AT&T headquarters in lower Manhattan. On one of them, a senior executive who was an old engineer looked stunned when Baran explained that his system would mean that data could go back and forth without a dedicated link remaining open. “He looked at his colleagues in the room while his eyeballs rolled up sending a signal of his utter disbelief,” according to Baran. After a pause, the executive said, “Son, here’s how a telephone works,” and explained a patronizing and simplistic description.

The metaphorical Death Star rule book became real! It was against the rules to make a reliable communication network that might help prevent a nuclear holocaust. Good thing Jedi’s don’t give up. Baran continued to push. AT&T finally had him and other outsiders to a series of seminars explaining how its telephone system really worked. “It took ninety-four separate speakers to describe the entire system,” Baran marveled. When it was over, the AT&T executives asked Baran, “Now do you see why packet switching wouldn’t work?” To their great disappointment, Baran simply replied, “No.”

To heck with Darth Telephone!

A decade later Baran’s network was built when the US government’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) saw the wisdom in a node-packet distributed communications network. In 1969 ARPA used Baran’s technical specs to build ARPAnet, the first version of the internet. The people who made it were hellbent on empowering individuals, and the made sure the internet could not be controlled by any government or corporation.

Baran’s network is why our smartphones, websites, Wikipedia, any digital tool connected to the internet empower individuals. In the DNA of the internet is a distributed node network that nobody can control or shutdown. An individual has the exact same access as any corporation or government.

That’s why the internet is majical. Whoever uses it, is automatically empowered.

*Paul Baran’s story was adapted from Walter Isaacson’s awesome book* The Innovators, *Chapter 7.*

# DARTH KING CHARLES

Antagonists may be well intentioned, but they’ll never change their minds. Indeed, the problems we’re having in our world right now, new powerful tools being witheld from the people’s hands by the leaders of old ruling philosophies, has happened before. Let’s go back the ruling philosophy of the noble’s divine right, see how it all worked out for Darth King Charles.

## Place in Line

When Rousseau was being chased around Europe in the 1760-70’s, King Louis XVI rule France and King George III ruled England. Both faced revolutions inspired by the pain on the frontline their high-spending lifestyles and government mismanagement caused. However, these weren’t the first kings to face revolts.

Before Rousseau explained frontline problems to the people, the people still revolted against noble’s excesses and incompetent leadership. Among the first to face the people’s wrath was King Charles I, who ruled England from 1625-1649.

Charles ruled as an absolute monarch under the “nobles right to rule” ruling philosophy. England had a Parliament but it was supposed to advise the king and not tell him what to do. After some revolts in the Middle Ages, parliament did however earn the power to approve taxes.

After years of his forebears mismanaging government finances and overspending himself, Charles needed money. The people and their parliament refused to say yes until they got more political powers. Charles refused to talk to them. Instead he sent parliament home, and ruled by himself for 10 years. He raised taxes by using some very old feudal rules. One retroactively fined some men for not showing up to Charles’ coronation 10 years earlier. Charles’ version of the fine print didn’t endear him to the people.

Parliament eventually got sick of this subversion, raised an army, and fought the English Civil War (1642–1646). The army was local men devoted to their parliament. Its officers were chosen by merit, while Charles’s men were mostly nobles who hired mercenaries to fight for them. The war between “parliamentarians” and “loyalists” was so bad it inspired the saying that life without a working government is “nasty, brutish, and short”.

After four years Charles lost. He was held under arrest, while rules for a “constitutional monarchy” were being made by the Parliamentarians. But then Charles escaped, hired a new army, and fought the Second English Civil War (1648–1649).

Charles lost again. The victorious Parliamentarians were now enraged. They forgot about a constitutional monarch and charged Charles for crimes against the English people. While they didn’t have a new ruling philosophy, the people were at least questioning the one in power.

Charles didn’t budge. The rules were on his side. The Bible said he was God’s representative on Earth. He was the natural leader the same way a father is the leader of his children. Which is why Charles refused to speak the court; a father doesn’t answer to his children.

But then Darth King Charles did speak, and that fact, showcases how set the Sith are in their stories.

### Charles Speaks

Charles had a speech impediment. Often called a stammer or studder. No one then, or even now, understands what causes it. It’s a piece of biological cyborgology that doesn’t work properly. A person can talk fine when alone or with pets, there’s sometimes a mental block in the mind when people are around.

That’s because for a stutterer, talking is like playing guitar with music notes written on the fly by a gremlin. Some words are easy to say, some are difficult hard, and some decide which at the last mili-mili-mili-second. The stutterer must jump around the words in real time. Fail and you miss a — beat.

But a stutter isn’t just about pauses, repetitions, or missing beats in a sentence. Stuttering is like having a mini-seizure. Your body seizes. Your neck tenses. You stop breathing. It’s horrible. I should know, because I suffer from the same affliction as Charles did.

The physical pain isn’t even the worst. Getting that look from people is. The “what the fuck is wrong with you?” look.

*“Hello, my ~~name~~ I’m Charles. I wa-want can want to ~~help~~ discuss, the situation with the, ~~Parliament~~ House of Commons…”*

The prospect of talking, except to yourself and a dog, which Charles had two of, causes huge anxiety. The idea of never conversing with anyone causes huge loneliness and depression. The King’s Speech showed it well. Stuttering usually forces a person to be shy, passive, eager to please, and come up with weird reasons for their erratic speaking like hand gestures, random silence, binge drinking, and swear words (which, like talking to yourself or dogs, for some reason never cause a stutter). It’s entirely possible Charles’ relationship with Parliament was so bad because he simply didn’t want to talk with them. Not that he would ever admit he had an impediment. After all, he was a king!

My speech impediment was the reason I got a job in a car insurance claim department. After a vice president at an old company secretly told my supervisor I wasn’t allowed to talk to customers, for fear of embarrassing the company, I was like shit I guess I don’t have this damn gremlin under control. I wasn’t even that mad about it (although I was that it was an open secret for over a year). I never told anyone I had the impediment, so despite therapy as a kid, it was obviously still a problem.

So, fuck it. I decided to jump in the ocean and sink or swim. A car insurance claim call-center for a stutterer is like swimming the open ocean. A daily workout of all-day phone calls, angry drivers, customer service expectations, no “outs” like swear words, drinking games, or wonky behavior to hide behind. I was like that drowning desert fox learning to swim telling myself; “I’m getting better!”.

And it was far worse than I thought. The insurance company wanted adjusters to answer ever more phone calls. To incentive us, they’d ring a monotone “bell” because… I don’t know. They never said why, we employees learned questioning “the bell” was a bad idea. Management used it as punishment; “answer more phone calls or we’ll make the bell faster and louder!”.

I’m being serious by the way. We were often more stressed then the person who just had a car crash. Whatever the reason, DING-DING-DING-DING almost all day, which gave people who weren’t stutterers huge anxiety, breakdowns, and stress leaves.

Super-shock speech therapy! After about a year I didn’t have to massage my jaws at night to release it from all the teeth shattering jaw-clenches I did to divert vocal stuttering. I was cured!

The point is this. That’s what it took for me to mostly never stutter (except when people try to limit my word choices in pretentious situations). It’s like night and day. The anxiety washed away. A hidden outgoing personality was brought out and frankly is fun, although still surreal, to be.

Yet Charles never had this lesson. Despite being adamant he was God’s chosen leader (or perhaps because of it), he was famously shy and quiet his whole life because that’s the gremlin likes it. Even when fighting for 16 years defending his ruling philosophy, Charles still probably had to massage his strained jaws every night. I can sympathize. The gremlin is an asshole.

Charles would have to talk. He was accused of being “a Tyrant, A Traitor, Murderer, and a public enemy to the Commonwealth of England”. The people weren’t replacing one king for another, and therefore staying loyal to the ruling philosophy of divie nobility. They were saying the leader of their country was a bad ruler, supposing they had a say who rules them. This idea is the origin of the king in the title image, the one the Jedi and Darth Vader are fighting over. That king represents the “state” which is exists from a social contract with the people, not because of divine right to rule.

Because a ruler of a state can be a king, a consul, a prime minister, or a president. Thus, Charles wasn’t only defending his life, but the ruling philosophy that says the nobles are above the people.

The prosecutors didn’t have Rousseau’s new ruling philosophy to replace the “divine rights of nobles”. They simply said Charles was a tyrant and asked for the death penalty. Charles still wouldn’t speak. He didn’t believe his life was on the chopping block. Kings don’t answer to children.

Charles wasn’t pretending or bluffing. He wasn’t proud, or stubborn. He psychologically couldn’t understand even the idea of being wrong. Like an antagonist, he lived in a different story with a different ruling philosophy. One that made him the hero.

The judges convicted Charles anyway. He was sentenced to death by removing the head from the body. Charles was flabbergasted and now wanted to speak in his defense. The next chance would be standing at his own chopping block.

Fuck the ringing bell of a claims department, imagine that stress of a stutterer minutes from execution, having to say something to justify 16 years of civil war.

Charles only had words to justify himself, and the ruling philosophy of the English throne to his (supposed) subjects and to history. And… and… no stutter. Not once!

He didn’t just speak, he spoke so eloquently many people, even those who hated him, were impressed. Fuck… I’m happy for him. I can say beyond a reasonable doubt it felt like God killed the gremlin. What vindication! Indeed, Charles’s last words were a clearly spoken:

Truly I desire their (the people’s) liberty and freedom as much as anybody whomsoever; but I must tell you their liberty and freedom consist in having of government, those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. It is not for having a share in government, Sir, that is nothing pertaining to them. A subject and a ruler are clear different things…therefore I tell you that I am the Martyr of the people. I die a Christian according to the profession of the Church of England, as I found it left me by my father… I have a good Cause and I have a gracious God. I will say no more.

Clearly spoken words about being totally behind the times. I’m still happy for his moment, but he gave England 16 of civil war because he thought he was a living god. The truth was, kings were no longer needed. The people could rule themselves. Charles should have been happy his children grew up. He could have helped them grow up by conceding powers to Parliament and avoiding 16 years of war. But he never comprehended that. He never tried to step beyond his comfort zone and expand his mindset or evolve. Instead he lived in splendor, hide behind spectacle, and used the people’s money to hire foreigners to kill them.

Later kings still didn’t learn. Even more distanced from the frontline inside their palaces, banquets and balls, their heads filled with different gremlins that said the rules are just, good, and will never end. France, Spain, Russia had country wide bankruptcies, food shortages, and revolutions, and it didn’t matter. The ultimate gremlin is isolation from the frontline. Many more Darth Kings faced the chopping block with the voice of God calling them martyrs.

So the question now is… why did you think Darth Blockbuster would ever admit he was wrong and change his ways?

## Summary

I’m going to cut this short.

Listen to me. When your cars breaks down, you call a mechanic for help, right? If he showed up with no tools, you’d get mad. You wouldn’t ask his reasons for not bringing tools, nor would you discuss the weather with him. You needed “Mike the mechanic” to show up and solve your problem. Without the tools he’s just “Mike the person”, and frankly useless to you.

If there were no tools, you’d have to resort to regulations and campaigning to get people to help you. But with tools, all you need is the tools and a person who can use them. Tools are political problem solvers. Tools are political power.

Middle class people have a host of problems like increasing insurance, prescription drug, and tutoring bills. You need solutions. When someone says they can help, you must ask what tool they have, or will give you, that will help. Anything else is smoke and mirrors. You don’t need to see regulations, laws, or blog posts anymore then you need to see the mechanic’s favorite car repair manual. You need tools.

Red/blue philosophies show up with no tools. Not because red/blue leaders and supporters don’t care. But because their philosophies don’t know better. They’re stuck inside an old ecosystem before the Digital Age. Thus they believe in a political ecosystem with members and non-members, but an economic island still trying to grow. But digital tools make economic ecosystems possible. But since our ruling philosophy is old, it’s stuck on old tools, and thus they tell the middle class to walk to the nearest gas station and hope for help, and they promptly blame the opposing political party when we complain.

That’s not horrible, until you consider that with a new digital car, like a Tesla, our broken cars can now call the mechanic, give him a diagnostic to his smartphone immediately, and he’d be able to tell what the problem is, and most importantly, tell the scared person the side of the road, what to do next.

Now consider it’s often against the rules to solve our problems so simply. Patent laws, insurance regulations, nondisclosure agreements, non-compete clauses; a mountain of rules any antagonist can search through so he can force us to keep walking to gas stations.

We must realize how much new digital tools help. Here’s an exercise to do it. Every time you want to watch a Netflix show or YouTube video, get in your car, drive five miles, wait 10 minutes, throw away six bucks, drive back home, and then press play. Watch the movie, drive back within 24 hours or get charged a late fee. Easy to forget, but that’s what watching content on demand with videocassettes and DVDs was like.

Netflix was a big victory. But a rare one. Today, how we pay taxes, recognize education, repair electronics, transfer home ownership, decide our investments, sign sales contracts, get hired, fire someone, use warranties, access medical records, and so much more, works like how we rented a DVD. An unnecessary and expensive pain in the ass enforced by a Death Star of rules. It echoes the philosophy that preached to our ancestors that voting, reading science books, and owning a musket were all against the rules. Totally bullshit, and holding us all back from the land of equality, responsibilties, freedom, and accountability we want to live in. And we will, once we think of politics as holding tools.

# ACT THREE - CLIMAX

# Climax

If someone were to tell you how to vote, while looking over your shoulder, you’d be weirded out and call the police. And society in general would agree nobody should tell you, nor force you, how to vote. You yourself haven’t done anything to earn that right. It’s a byproduct of living inside a political ecosystem with guns used by recognized policeman, fair judges of a court system, and the absence of invasions or desperation that lets every member of the community cast a vote.

Your life wont get better until you think of a tools in the same way. The solution to your political and economic problems. Using red/blue philosophies is a recipe for living in the past.

Everytime you listen to a political speech just notice how many times they talk. Once you ask yourself what tool am I getting to bring down taxes, cap the debt ceiling, fight climate change, then you’ll talking solutions. Until then you’ll be experincing societal collapse.

## Lessons

I can’t fix an engine. I can’t cook a tasty meal. I can’t do a hand-stand. I can’t juggle. I can’t do math in my head. I can’t do most things out there. At almost everything I’m average, at many things I suck, and a few things I’m good. My special skills are abstract reasoning, an understanding of social rules, and being polite. Put this together with a decent memory, and an interest in history and political philosophy and you get this book.

I tried to make the history lesson as readable as possible. Almost all the topics and subjects are metaphors for the lessons Europe learned from going to the divine rights of kings, to the rousseau philosophy of political democracy and equality we live in today. Here they are:

The frontline is Nicolo Machiavelli’s “effectual truth”. Machiavelli came from a poor family, whose father gave him many books from the recent printing press. Machiavelli was the first philosoper to get to read lots of different philosophy and history books, and he noticed trends. He told superstitious Europeans, they didn’t need to put their faith in God, because we can keep looking for trends, master them, and start to overcome problems like hunger, disease, and all that.

Soon later Galileo, Francis Bacon, and lots of other people, read this insight, and invented the Scientific Method, which systemized looking for “effectual truth” by simply testing Nature with instruments, and discovering the truth, not inventing it with reason. Hence it’s the “point of contact” between a tool and it’s use is an experiment. Thus the truth of the experiment is our guide, not the rules of the social heirarchy.

Natural equality, the extras waiting to become protagonists, is from Thomas Hobbes. He lived during the English Civil War, when people were again sick of the king but didn’t have different ruling philosophy to replace him with. Hobbes invented human equality by saying in Nature (he called it the State of Nature), all lifeforms live freely, thus why shouldn’t humans. Hobbes said people should still be loyal to a king, yet not because he’s divine, but because it’s in the best interest to have a stable and firm government because when that goes away–as Hobbes was personally seeing–people turn horrible. Because the king wasn’t divine, his power to rule came from the consent of the goverened, who are like him, equals.

Something … comes from John Locke. He came after Hobbes and agreed with his State of Nature, but said the people didn’t need to put all their trust into a person as leader, but instead put their trust in the institution as leader. Meaning, the people should follow a president, not a king. That way the people can elect, new leaders while still getting the stability of government. Hence, the leader can always be a protagonist, and anyone who fights the will of the people, the people on the frontline, is an antagonist.

Ruling philosophy, old philosopheis, comes from Rousseau. Rousseau merged all the thinking from Machiavelli to Locke, and said the people can’t rule within the confines of an old philosophy. Thus, even though philosophers from Machiavelli to Locke were giving new philosophy, they didn’t say to breakfree from the past. Rousseau say change it all, which is why the people used him during their revolutions, and why I talked about him above. We also need to change it all.

The Sith and Jedi, protagonist and antagonist, is Hegel’s Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis dialectics. After centuries of histories, looked back at the trends, and said there was a ruling philosophy, whose problems manifested into a competitor, the two would eventually fight it out, and make a new ruling philosphy that merged the two together. He also said master–slave is a relationship that recurs throughout humanity, and is the reason we looked at Frederick Douglas and Neo, who while was the physical slave, his captors were the mental ones, bound to a horrible social system as much as Frederick was. Frederick’s process of self-discovery, was how slaves realize their status and break free.

Cyborgology, and majic, are Darwinism. The evolution of lifeforms based on their tools to collect resources. Life started out as simple organisms, and as these primitive lifeforms struggled to survive, they adapted better –biological–tools to do so. Eventually the benefits of biology maxed out with us, and so we have to continue evolution with tools. We similarly started to evolve (techvolve) with primitive tools, which slowly got better and better.

Death star, Darth Blockbuster, and dark majic come from modern psychology. And this is the real reason I wrote this book.

All of this is hard to understand. It seems simple because it’s your life, and you think your opinions matter. But there’s a reason we go to the doctor when we’re feeling sick. They know the human antonmy, and we don’t, even though we own one.

So the question is, if these are the characters inside the repeating story of civlization, which one do you think you are?

## Stargazer

Stargazer, once upon a time everyone was an astronomer. Anyone could look up at the sky, see the amazing show up there, and make up whatever they wanted. Some answers make more sense, but explaining what was up there, from angels to fireflies, is impossible to see, so impossible to disprove.

What digital tools will do, is tell us who we are. It will track our individual decisions, and reveal us to ourselves. And are people going to want to learn the lesson, and step out of their own matrix, or are they going to justify their belief system the way so many justified the Earth being the centre of the Universe.

And that’s the climax. A question as big as any ever asked. What’s going to happen when we start to realize how much Death Stars and dark majic our political decisions are made under. Religions, philosophies, corporate manuals, and so forth making people press the button because they can’t say no.

Let’s take a look.

# EPILOGUE

## My App

I never wanted to write this book. I wrote a similar book years ago “A Non Functioning Society: Why the 2008 Economic Crisis Was Only the Beginning”. All the lessons from here are there. For example, it predicts the western world is trying to assert a economic ecosystem, and thus needs borders. Trump and Brexit were as predictable as the orbit of Mars once Newton wrote gravity’s equations.

I wanted to showcase how we can make smooth out our economic problems making solving real world problems with digital tools. Which be definition means people solving their own problems “Think Global Act Local”. “Techvolution” would be a way to make digital products. That didn’t work out.

My app. Using modern web development, it took just a few months of work. Take some free code from GitHub, an inexpensive cloud computing account, and the design skills of a novice. It was simple. Might not even get me a job in “tech”.

The tool wasn’t polished because new tools never are. But it was, and would have been, so effective because it came directly from the frontline. A place far away from today’s ruling philosophy.

Here’s how it worked. Today’s car insurance claim system depends on drivers exchanging information like names or insurance policy numbers after a car accident. Drivers are frazzled so they usually don’t. My adjusting job was talking to these drivers to process their insurance claims. The one supposed to return drivers back to normal; at least as best to normal as money can get them. A big problem was simply knowing who the other driver and adjuster were. Since we often didn’t know, we had to search for it; literally calling around or hoping someone calls you. Delays piled up like crazy.

Adjusting sucks. Our only tools were a telephone, email, voicemail, checkbook, google, and a supervisor telling us to hurry up or get fired. Beyond st-st-stress stressful, very emotionally taxing.

Until you speak with a driver who is a real person.

Real person because their accident wasn’t an inconvenience but a life changing horror. Maybe their arm was amputated, or their friend was ejected from the car, or their kid burned alive twelve hours ago.

You’re mind shuts up Darth Call Centre the moment you talk to this real person. They have a problem and your soul wants to help.

Why did this happen? That’s all drivers want to know. Was someone trying to beat a red light? Was the road not salted for ice. Was it drunk driving? What’s the reason for the sudden terror of pain? It’s soothes people to know why the accident happened; it really helps knowing it won’t happen again.

My app combined several existing technologies, email, internet, GPS, google maps, and web apps, to make a new tool. It let insurance adjusters post an accident on a google map, and verified their identity by their work email. Since every accident shares the GPS coordinates, all adjusters, regardless what drivers do, can find each other. It’s minimal operating cost was paid for by rental car companies and repair shops, who loved the ability to email invoices directly to adjusters without having to call first.

A simple new tool that only someone on the frontline would ever feel the pain to make.

Society would have saved hundreds of millions in insurance claim operating costs. That’s cool. Adjuster’s and drivers would save hours of their day. That’s cool too. But this is the part worth fighting over. With my app, for the first time, we’d have a database of the exact location and causes of car accidents. Thereafter we could cross reference with weather, traffic, demographics, and many other databases. We’d finally learn why car accidents happen, and start to fight back.

This database doesn’t exist today. So, when tree branches grow over stop signs, tires are faulty, intersections jam up too much, pot holes get too big, or anything else repeatedly causes accidents, we don’t even know. With machine learning and artificial intelligence, we’d find trends to the millions of accidents, and tens of thousands of deaths that happen every year.

In a world held a bit steadier and comforted just a little more by such an app, who would be the loser?

People who don’t feel frontline pain. In my case executives, lawyers, marketers, and consultants. Like Darth Blockbuster, they didn’t know one thing about their own industry. Not one. It existed only to stand above in an art film of self-entitlement. Their self-entitlement, blank faces, clueless looks, arrogant smirks angered me so much it merged years of political theory in my mind, and let me see a new ruling philosophy called Techvolution in my head.

It was still hard writing this book. It involved condensing so much political and economic theory and history (there’s a lot) into such a short space. I was mentally pretty tired, and despite indulging in Jack Jones’ “The Impossible Dream” too much, a little bitter. Then I watched an episode of Netflix’s *Black Mirror* and went back to work.

This episode was the tale of a crazed man, who wants to talk with the powerful CEO of an Instagram-like app called Smithereens. He holds a company intern hostage, awaiting the CEO’s call. Police surround him, corporate lackies try to deflect him, bullets are fired at him, but he still wants his phone call. Nobody knows why.

I started to cry. I soon wept. I understood this man and I knew why he went crazy.

I knew distracted driving had killed someone close to him. The man had been driving, and he checked his Smithereen feed, saw a picture of a dog or something, and he missed a drunk running a stop sign, and his beloved fiancée died.

I didn’t know it was his own distracted driving, but I knew the pain the actor played out so well. I knew that because I heard it through the same crazy cries from mothers and daughters, husbands and sons. Each just wanted to tell someone why it happened, so maybe it wouldn’t happen again.

I made a new tool that would have helped. Not solved. Not actual magic, but it majically would have gotten us closer. It was against the rules because solving problems is a good story the makes people realize art and spectacle is what Darth Blockbuster lives on is bullshit.

He’ll never say that, or even know it. He thinks frontline pain is a thing to stand above, not ever feel and solve with new tools. Darth is nothing if not detached. He is the epitome of apathy in the face of others’ pain. That’s his worst and most irredeemable quality.

I did my best as a protagonist. I was not good enough to prevent anyone’s Smithereens, but I did my best. The point isn’t that I wallowed in self-pity or guilt. The point is that neither self-pity nor guilt need to exist in the digital age. We can do better! The philosophy of digital tools isn’t a place of sword wielding heroes with a mass of peasants behind them. I pushed as far and high as I could.

Am I done fighting? No. I’ve picked up another tool, though, one that fits better in my hand and that may allow me to still reach out to many others who feel the need to evolve: a book. But I am just a speck in the sea that’s got to rise up and rinse the world of old sins and false beliefs. Other protagonists can pick up where I left off—they can go further than I could even dream of. That’s how society truly evolves: a pyramid of helping hands, not a pyramid of chopped limbs and ripped-up ideas. Everyone is either an extra choosing the best tools, or a hero working to earn their favor, in the ruling philosophy of Techvolution.

Who are you, Stargazer? Who will you be?

Every person I spoke to was being rational. They were simply following orders. I was the outsider trying to tell them they don’t need to. But were perfectly happy to keep doing so, and felt justified. In an industry so dependant on old tools, following orders was the means to success. Free thinkers were dangerous. New tools were a mortal threat.

I never wanted to write this book. There’s no way to make people realize which character they are. Protagonist, extras, antagonist, Darth Blockbuster, all that is hidden by dark majic and social rules.

It doesn’t tell us the philosphy that need, it’s telling us the philosphy digital tools will show us. Just like scientific instruments revealed the Natural world to us, digital tools will reveal us to ourselves. We’ll be challenged us to act based on our contributions to a higher purpose, instead of our psychological bent. Like scientists today use instruments to uncover the rulebook, digital tools will help us uncover who we are, and what our politics and economic tools and leaders should be. A rule-book already in use by open-source because it fosters evolution, not kill it like its opposite. I called it the Life Star.