Instructions for Spring 2012 Freshman Composition
Final Examination Readings

Place your name on this packet of readings you download from the Writing Program website. You will return them to your instructor after you have finished writing the final essay examination.

No class time will be allotted for discussion of the readings, but you may, if you wish, discuss them outside of class with your classmates or other students enrolled in your freshman composition class.

**Bring this packet with you to the final exam.** You will use information from these sources to support your thesis. You may underline, highlight, and annotate the readings.

You may also bring a dictionary and your *Little Seagull Handbook*. However, you **may not bring** thesis statements, outlines, prewriting, or drafts in any form to exam.

If you use MLA documentation style to credit your sources, bring the pre-printed Works Cited page you downloaded with your reading packet and, when you have finished writing, place the page in the Blue Book in which you have written your final draft.

If you use APA documentation style to credit your sources, bring the pre-printed References page you downloaded with your reading packet and, when you have finished writing, place the page in the Blue Book in which you have written your final draft.

For Writing Program essays, MLA or APA are the only two acceptable documentation styles.

For the final essay exam, you will need two large-sized Blue Books. These are available at the bookstore. (If you have large handwriting, you may need a third Blue Book.) On the front cover of each book, write your name, your WRC course and section number, the date of your final, and your professor’s name. Turn in both Blue Books to your professor **before** the final. You may use only Blue Books in which to write the final. On the day of the final, your professor will return the Blue Books to you so you can use them for the final essay. At the final, use one book for your prewriting and the other for your final draft. You will turn in both at the end of the final, along with the prompt.
FIGHTING REBELS WITH ONLY ONE HAND

By Frederick Douglass, 1861

What on earth is the matter with the American Government and people? Do they really covet the world's ridicule as well as their own social and political ruin? What are they thinking about, or don't they condescend to think at all? So, indeed, it would seem from their blindness in dealing with the tremendous issue now upon them. Was there ever anything like it before? They are sorely pressed on every hand by a vast army of slaveholding rebels, flushed with success, and infuriated by the darkest inspirations of a deadly hate, bound to rule or ruin. Washington, the seat of Government, after ten thousand assurances to the contrary, is now positively in danger of falling before the rebel army. Maryland, a little while ago considered safe for the Union, is now admitted to be studded with the materials for insurrection, and which may flame forth at any moment.--Every resource of the nation, whether of men or money, whether of wisdom or strength, could be well employed to avert the impending ruin. Yet most evidently the demands of the hour are not comprehended by the Cabinet or the crowd. Our Presidents, Governors, Generals and Secretaries are calling, with almost frantic vehemence, for men.--"Men! men! send us men!" they scream, or the cause of the Union is gone, the life of a great nation is ruthlessly sacrificed, and the hopes of a great nation go out in darkness; and yet these very officers, representing the people and Government, steadily and persistently refuse to receive the very class of men which have a deeper interest in the defeat and humiliation of the rebels, than all others.--Men are wanted in Missouri--wanted in Western Virginia, to hold and defend what has been already gained; they are wanted in Texas, and all along the sea coast, and though the Government has at its command a class in the country deeply interested in suppressing the insurrection, it sternly refuses to summon from among the vast multitude a single man, and degrades and insults the whole class by refusing to allow any of their number to defend with their strong arms and brave hearts the national cause. What a spectacle of blind, unreasoning prejudice and pusillanimity is this! The national edifice is on fire. Every man who can carry a bucket of water, or remove a brick, is wanted; but those who have the care of the building, having a profound respect for the feeling of the national burglars who set the building on fire, are determined that the flames shall only be extinguished by Indo-Caucasian hands, and to have the building burnt rather than save it by means of any other. Such is the pride, the stupid prejudice and folly that rules the hour.

Why does the Government reject the Negro? Is he not a man? Can he not wield a sword, fire a gun, march and countermarch, and obey orders like any other? Is there the least reason to believe that a regiment of well-drilled Negroes would deport themselves less soldier-like on the battlefield than the raw troops gathered up generally from the towns and cities of the State of New York? We do believe that such soldiers, if allowed to take up arms in defence of the Government, and made to feel that they are hereafter to be recognized as persons having rights, would set the highest example of order and general good behavior to their fellow soldiers, and in every way add to the national power.

If persons so humble as we can be allowed to speak to the President of the United States, we should ask him if this dark and terrible hour of the nation's extremity is a time for consulting a mere vulgar and unnatural prejudice? We should ask him if national preservation and necessity were not better guides in this emergency than either the tastes of the rebels, or the pride and prejudices of the vulgar? We would
tell him that General Jackson in a slave state fought side by side with Negroes at New Orleans, and like a true man, despising meanness, he bore testimony to their bravery at the close of the war. We would tell him that colored men in Rhode Island and Connecticut performed their full share in the war of the Revolution, and that men of the same color, such as the noble Shields Green, Nathaniel Turner and Denmark Vesey stand ready to peril everything at the command of the Government. We would tell him that this is no time to fight with one hand, when both are needed; that this is no time to fight only with your white hand, and allow your black hand to remain tied.

Whatever may be the folly and absurdity of the North, the South at least is true and wise. The Southern papers no longer indulge in the vulgar expression, "free n----rs." That class of bipeds are now called "colored residents." The Charleston papers say:

"The colored residents of this city can challenge comparison with their class, in any city or town, in loyalty or devotion to the cause of the South. Many of them individually, and without ostentation, have been contributing liberally, and on Wednesday evening, the 7th inst., a very large meeting was held by them, and a committee appointed to provide for more efficient aid. The proceedings of the meeting will appear in results hereinafter to be reported."

It is now pretty well established, that there are at the present moment many colored men in the Confederate army doing duty not only as cooks, servants and laborers, but as real soldiers, having muskets on their shoulders, and bullets in their pockets, ready to shoot down loyal troops, and do all that soldiers may to destroy the Federal Government and build up that of the traitors and rebels. There were such soldiers at Manassas, and they are probably there still. There is a Negro in the army as well as in the fence, and our Government is likely to find it out before the war comes to an end. That the Negroes are numerous in the rebel army, and do for that army its heaviest work, is beyond question. They have been the chief laborers upon those temporary defences in which the rebels have been able to mow down our men. Negroes helped to build the batteries at Charleston. They relieve their gentlemanly and military masters from the stiffening drudgery of the camp, and devote them to the nimble and dexterous use of arms. Rising above vulgar prejudice, the slaveholding rebel accepts the aid of the black man as readily as that of any other. If a bad cause can do this, why should a good cause be less wisely conducted? We insist upon it, that one black regiment in such a war as this is, without being any more brave and orderly, would be worth to the Government more than two of any other; and that, while the Government continues to refuse the aid of colored men, thus alienating them from the national cause, and giving the rebels the advantage of them, it will not deserve better fortunes than it has thus far experienced.—Men in earnest don't fight with one hand, when they might fight with two, and a man drowning would not refuse to be saved even by a colored hand.

The Boston Tea Party 16th Dec 1773

Many arguments have been settled over a nice cup of tea. However an argument over tax on a cup of tea provoked a revolution that changed the world. The tea in question was Darjeeling. On the 16th of December 1773, a group of men, their faces blackened and loosely disguised as Mohawk Indians, smashed and emptied 342 crates into the harbour at Boston, Massachusetts. The tea was ruined as a crowd of thousands watched in relative silence from the quay.
It was the most infamous tea party in history. British warships could only stand and watch. Officials waited to see what would happen next. The raiders removed their shoes to shake out any loose tea that might identify them as perpetrators. They had accomplished their goal. Ensuring that they had not harmed any other thing, they simply marched defiantly back through town.

The Boston Tea Party would change history. When news reached the English King and his Parliament, there would be outrage at the act of vandalism and 'theft'. There would be demands for justice, recompense and punishment for those Bostonians responsible. The act of 'spoiling' the cargo of tea would be considered a glove thrown down to the English by the colonists. The ensuing rebellion, would become the American Revolution. From it, the most powerful nation on the face of the earth would be born.

To understand why such an act could be considered heroic, we need to understand the relationship that existed between England and its colonies in America. In the second half of the 18th century, the English economy was in the doldrums. Seven years of war had put an almighty pressure on its finances. Its monarch, King George the third, relied on his prime minister to balance the books and afford him his own luxuries. A solution was to place tax after tax on the American Colonies.

These taxes were loathed by the colonists. They seethed at the thought that Americans should have to pay tax to a government they had no say in. It was called tax without representation. Yet squeezing the colonists, was seen as a way of raising valuable revenue, some of which helped run the governing of the territories.

In 1764, the Sugar Act was passed by Parliament. This introduced tax on sugar, coffee and wine. The Stamp Act of 1763 taxed all printed matter from newspapers to playing cards. The Townsend Act of 1767 added tax to glass, paints, paper and tea. It is difficult to appreciate quite what an importance tea had assumed since its discovery. Regarded as a luxurious and valuable item, the growing and importing of tea had become a huge business. A tax imposed on its import into the colonies was a red rag to a people already fed up with being taxed by the English government. Already there were movements uniting in opposition. Speakers of dissent called for a revolt and an uprising against such taxes and even government.

The Boston Massacre in 1770 had shown that the situation in the colonies was volatile. Yet Boston, remained a separate colony, a spark would be needed to ignite ferment and unite the colonies. Already the good people of Boston in protest had boycotted 'English' tea in favour of coffee and other herbal infusions. In fact an astonishing 900,000 lbs of tea had been imported in 1769. Three years later that figure had fallen to 237,000 lbs. Imported duty free Dutch teas were effectively smuggled in through American Merchants. Yet the English government decided to try to force the Colonies to accept the highly taxed tea piling up in warehouses of the British East India Company. Parliament passed the infamous Tea Act. It handed that corrupt and ailing company the sole rights to export tea to the Colonies. At the same time it reduced the tax, assuming the colonies would tow the line.

Yet this forced imposition, indicating an acceptance of the right to tax to colonies was a step too far. It outraged the citizens up and down the coast of the American Colonies. It undercut the existing merchants. Indignantly the newly arrived ships carrying tea, were turned away in New York and Philadelphia. In Charleston the tea was loaded into warehouses and allowed to rot. In Boston with feelings running high, three ships, the Beaver, the Eleanor and the Dartmouth sat in the harbour unable to unload their cargo.

A crowd of 5,000 watched as meeting after meeting was unable to solve the impasse. The Patriots would not allow the ships to unload. Governor Thomas Hutchinson would not permit the ship to sail from the harbour without paying its duty. A fleet of warships decreed that if the tea were not allowed ashore, it
would force the same under their guns the following day.

Fifty patriots assumed their disguises and armed themselves with axes. Calling themselves the 'Sons of Liberty' watched by the crowd they boarded the ships and demanded the keys to the hold. They may have been rebellious but they were orderly. They were disciplined and intent on one objective only. All the while expecting to be challenged they worked quickly, hacking open the chests and spilling the tea into the harbour. Eventually the entire cargo had been pitched overboard. Having swept the decks they ensured that no further damage was undertaken. The next morning they attempted to sink any remaining tea, to ensure that it was spoiled and put beyond use. All in all ten thousand pounds worth of tea was ruined. It would be the equivalent of millions of dollars today.

The King of England was outraged. Up and down the coast other colonies followed suit. Such a brave act of defiance could not go unchallenged. In March Parliament had passed the Boston Port Act. This effectively shut the port to Bostonians until they had made good the damage they had caused. The government were going to try to make an example of Massachusetts. Instead the defiance increased and an uneasy English government tried too late to offer a peaceful solution. Through this one single act of courage and defiance, the colonies were becoming united.

A month later a skirmish on the Lexington Green between the new governors' troops and patriots turned a crisis into the beginning of a war. It was a war that England could neither afford, control nor win. It had been taught a tidy lesson. It was a lesson that had begun on the wharfs of Boston, with a tea party that changed the world.

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**Letter from Birmingham Jail**

**By Martin Luther King Jr., 1963**

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta,
Georgia… But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here… Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial “outside agitator” idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants--for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will
help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs.;" when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience. You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954
outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers.

…I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

…I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a
seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses... They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

…I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Speech

By Cesar Chavez, 1978

My friends, as we enter a new decade, it should be clear to all of us that there is an unfinished agenda, that we have miles to go before we reach the promised land.

The men who rule this country today never learned the lessons of Dr. King, they never learned that non-violence is the only way to peace and justice.

The powers that be rule over a racist society, filled with hatred and ignorance. Our nation continues to be segregated along racial and economic lines.

The powers that be make themselves richer by exploiting the poor. Our nation continues to allow children to go hungry, and will not even house its own people. . . .

The United Farm Workers are dedicated to carrying on the dream of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. My friends, I would like to tell you about the struggle of the Farm workers who are waging a desperate struggle for our rights, for our children’s rights, and for our very lives. . . .

The same inhumanity displayed at Selma, in Birmingham, in so many of Dr. King’s battlegrounds, is displayed every day in the vineyards of California.
The farm labor system in place today is a system of economic slavery.

Our workers labor for many hours every day under the hot sun, often without safe drinking water or toilet facilities.

Our workers are constantly subjected to incredible pressures and intimidation to meet excessive quotas.

These women who work in the fields are routinely subjected to sexual harassment and sexual assaults by the grower’s thugs. When our workers complain, or try to organize, they are fired, assaulted, and even murdered.

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**Occupy UTSA: Students fight for justice**

**By Sarah Gibbens, April 3, 2012**

Out of an economic collapse and social injustice, a new venue of social media was born: the Occupy Movement. Originating from Occupy New York, these peaceful yet powerful protests quickly spread across the nation. Hundreds of miles south, an extension of the protest movement found its home on the streets of San Antonio. A purposely unorganized group of people from every social and economic background, gathered-and still gather-to call attention to the corruption perpetuated by government and large corporations.

Thus began Students United for Socioeconomic Justice (SUSJ). Created in November of fall 2011 semester, the club has only recently been officially recognized during this spring 2012 semester. Modeled after the leaderless unification of the Occupy Movement, Students United for Socioeconomic Justice has no hierarchical leadership within the group, choosing instead to believe in the empowerment of each member.

The group was collectively founded by UTSA students and other members of the community actively involved with the Occupy Movement. Due to name restrictions, SUSJ cannot operate under the title “Occupy UTSA,” but maintains that they stand in full solidarity with the Occupy Movement. The group also chooses to not associate with any particular political party and welcomes all ideologies. Formed to bring local awareness of the Occupy Movement, Timothy Giddens, a senior political science/Mexican American Studies Dual major and one of the group’s founders, says of the group: “we have focused our scope to bring awareness and self-education to the problems of rising tuition costs,
student loan debt forgiveness, and taking back education from the banks, corporations, and privatization of higher education.”

Giddens also believes that Students United for Socioeconomic Justice is a group that, out of necessity, should appeal to every student at UTSA. Anyone in the range of age 18 to 34 should expect to be adversely affected by rising tuition and student loans, he contested. Stated by Giddens, “this generation will be the first generation in American history that will not be likely to earn as much as their parents did, and will likely be in debt for life.” A sobering thought, as the number of students who take out loans to pay for school expense increases each year.

Giddens also attests that the Occupy movement should truly appeal to everyone, not simply students, as the Occupy movement tackles issues of social injustice, equality, equity and the economy. A common theme of the Occupy movements was a call to reduce “crony-capitalism” type policies that unfairly favor large corporations at the expense of a more common socioeconomic class or “the 99 percent” as they were often referred to by protesters. Upholding this ideal of the protest movement, Giddens believes “our failure of an electoral system should unite the general public into creating change for the future from the ground up, and move us away from money in politics.”

Gaining traction on campus, Students United for Socioeconomic Justice has, in their short time as an official organization, already held info tables, self-educational teach-ins, meetings, and collaborates with other college Occupy movements, such as Occupy UT in Austin.

Most recently, this past March 22, SUSJ, held a panel discussion on education. The group hosted four speakers from San Antonio and Austin who spoke on such education related issues as state funding, equity in legal cases against the state, teacher activism, the current generation’s economic outlook and rising tuition in regards to student debt.

Off campus, SUSJ has actively taken part in the San Antonio Martin Luther King Day March, International Women’s Day March and protested with UNITE HERE- a group working against the unfair working conditions imposed by the Hyatt. SUSJ also frequently joins in protesting with their sister group- Occupy San Antonio.

For students interested in joining this crusade against social injustice, Giddens said, “we offer hope. We offer leadership and citizen building skills, empowerment through self-education, and access to activism, direct action and participatory democracy. We offer our members a chance to think for themselves in a free space, and we offer an alternative to mainstream culture.”

Giddens hopes the legacy SUSJ might leave at UTSA, is, “to have mass support from students and the community and, in the spirit of non-violent direct action and social justice,” Giddens said.

“We wish to imprint ourselves into history. Ideally, we would love to leave a legacy of social justice and change in the lives of others.”
The Role of Civil Disobedience in Democracy

By Kayla Starr, adapted by Bonnie Blackberry, 1998

Civil Disobedience is the act of disobeying a law on grounds of moral or political principle. It is an attempt to influence society to accept a dissenting point of view. Although it usually uses tactics of nonviolence, it is more than mere passive resistance since it often takes active forms such as illegal street demonstrations or peaceful occupations of premises. The classic treatise on this topic is Henry David Thoreau’s "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," which states that when a person's conscience and the laws clash, that person must follow his or her conscience. The stress on personal conscience and on the need to act now rather than to wait for legal change are recurring elements in civil disobedience movements. The U.S. Bill of Rights asserts that the authority of a government is derived from the consent of the governed, and whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right and duty of the people to alter or abolish it.

Throughout the history of the U.S., civil disobedience has played a significant role in many of the social reforms that we all take for granted today. Some of the most well known of these are:

1) The Boston Tea Party -- citizens of the colony of Massachusetts trespassed on a British ship and threw its cargo (tea from England) overboard, rather than be forced to pay taxes without representation to Britain. This was one of the many acts of civil disobedience leading to the War for Independence, establishing the United States of America as a sovereign state.

2) Anti-war movements have been a part of U.S. history since Thoreau went to jail for refusing to participate in the U.S. war against Mexico in 1849. More recent examples were the nationwide protests against the war in Viet Nam, U.S. involvement in Nicaragua and Central America, and the Gulf War. Actions have included refusal to pay for war, refusal to enlist in the military, occupation of draft centers, sit-ins, blockades, peace camps, and refusal to allow military recruiters on high school and college campuses.

3) The Women's Suffrage Movement lasted from 1848 until 1920, when thousands of courageous women marched in the streets, endured hunger strikes, and submitted to arrest and jail in order to gain the right to vote.

4) Abolition of slavery -- including Harriet Tubman's underground railway, giving sanctuary, and other actions which helped to end slavery.

5) The introduction of labor laws and unions. Sit-down strikes organized by the IWW, and CIO free speech confrontations led to the eradication of child labor and improved working conditions, established the 40-hour work week and improved job security and benefits.

6) The Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, included sit-ins and illegal marches which weakened segregation in the south.

7) The Anti-Nuclear Movement, stimulated by people like Karen Silkwood and the Three Mile Island nuclear power accident, organized citizens throughout the country into direct action affinity groups, with consensus decision making and Gandhian nonviolence as its core. Massive acts of civil disobedience took place at nuclear power facilities across the country, followed by worldwide protests against first-strike
nuclear weapons, occupying military bases, maintaining peace camps, interfering with manufacture and transport of nuclear bombs and devices, marching, sitting in, blockading and otherwise disrupting business as usual at nuclear sites.

8) **Environmental and forest demonstrations**, with acts of civil disobedience such as sit-ins, blockades, tree sits and forest occupations, have emerged in the last decade, prompted by the continuing mass clear cuts and destruction of the forest ecosystem and widespread environmental consequences.

In all of these struggles, citizens had reached the conclusion that the legal means for addressing their concerns had not worked. They had tried petitioning, lobbying, writing letters, going to court, voting for candidates that represented their interests, legal protest, and still their views were ignored.

In each of these movements, the protesters were compelled by deep moral convictions. Their distress was strong enough to motivate them to go against the grain, to sacrifice personal comfort, to face unknown danger, to give up their freedom and risk going to jail. Their love of truth and justice drove them to action. Many, but not all, of those committing civil disobedience in the last two decades have been trained in Gandhian nonviolence philosophy and tactics.

**Non-Cooperation** is used by some protesters during civil disobedience actions. Non-cooperation may include going limp, refusal to give information at booking, fasting and refusal to participate in court proceedings.

Gandhi, who profoundly influenced nonviolent disobedience movements in the 20th century, stated that "**Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.**" Non-cooperation is not intended as a hostile act against police officers and jail guards. An understood theoretical basis is that nonviolent protest draws its strength from open confrontation and non-cooperation, i.e., civil disobedience. We retain as much power as we refuse to relinquish to the government. Non-cooperation is a form of resistance that is used to reaffirm our position that we are not criminals and that we are taking positive steps toward freeing the world of oppression and environmental suicide.

The decision to non-cooperate is a difficult choice to make, since it subjects those who choose it to greater possibilities for pain and punishment, and many times is misunderstood by law enforcement. In addition, it poses a dilemma for protesters who would prefer to communicate with the arresting officer, making it more difficult to communicate while being dragged across the ground.

Reasons some protesters choose non-cooperation:

1) **Moral conviction**: It would be wrong to be an accomplice to a procedure that supports what is morally unacceptable.

2) **To increase the likelihood that all protesters are treated equally**: Refusing to give names so that everyone committing the same act will be treated equally and fairly in jail and in sentencing. Refusing citation, bail, fines or probation keeps protesters together, increasing the potential for collective bargaining.

3) **To extend the action**: Going limp at arrest impedes the removal of the protesters, prolonging the disruption of business as usual.

4) **To demonstrate that the criminal justice system is part of the problem**: It may be a corporation that is damaging the environment, jeopardizing all our lives and our children’s future, but it is the criminal justice system that is legitimizing and supporting it.
Civil disobedience is often an effective means of changing laws and protecting liberties. It also embodies an important moral concept that there are times when law and justice do not coincide and that to obey the law at such times can be an abdication of ethical responsibility. The choice of civil disobedience and non-cooperation is not for everyone. We all choose to do what feels right to us personally. However, it is hoped that this article will make such a choice more understandable to those who have wondered about this form of protest.

Letter To All the People

By Chief Seattle, 1885

*Chief Seattle, Chief of the Suquamish Indians wrote to the American Government in the 1800's - In his letter he gave the most profound understanding of God in all Things. Here is his letter, which should be instilled in the hearts and minds of every parent and child in all the Nations of the World:*

"The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky? the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the dew in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each glossy reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give the rivers the kindness that you would give any brother.

If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life that it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also received his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.
Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth.

This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know: our God is also your God. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted with talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is to say goodbye to the swift pony and then hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

When the last red man has vanished with this wilderness, and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it, as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land for all children, and love it, as God loves us.

As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This earth is precious to us. It is also precious to you.

One thing we know - there is only one God. No man, be he Red man or White man, can be apart. We ARE all brothers after all.

How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the OWS Protests

By Matt Taibbi, Nov. 25, 2011

I have a confession to make. At first, I misunderstood Occupy Wall Street. The first few times I went down to Zuccotti Park, I came away with mixed feelings. I loved the energy and was amazed by the obvious organic appeal of the movement, the way it was growing on its own. But my initial impression was that it would not be taken very seriously by the Citibanks and Goldman Sachs of the world. You could put 50,000 angry protesters on Wall Street, 100,000 even, and Lloyd Blankfein is probably not going to break a sweat. He knows he's not going to wake up tomorrow and see Cornel West or Richard Trumka running the Federal Reserve. He knows modern finance is a giant mechanical parasite that only an expert surgeon can remove. Yell and scream all you want, but he and his fellow financial Frankensteins are the only ones who know how to turn the machine off.
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That's what I was thinking during the first few weeks of the protests. But I'm beginning to see another angle. Occupy Wall Street was always about something much bigger than a movement against big banks and modern finance. It's about providing a forum for people to show how tired they are not just of Wall Street, but everything. This is a visceral, impassioned, deep-seated rejection of the entire direction of our society, a refusal to take even one more step forward into the shallow commercial abyss of phoniness, short-term calculation, withered idealism and intellectual bankruptcy that American mass society has become. If there is such a thing as going on strike from one's own culture, this is it. And by being so broad in scope and so elemental in its motivation, it's flown over the heads of many on both the right and the left.

The right-wing media wasted no time in cannon-blasting the movement with its usual idiotic cliches, casting Occupy Wall Street as a bunch of dirty hippies who should get a job and stop chewing up Mike Bloomberg's police overtime budget with their urban sleepovers. Just like they did a half-century ago, when the debate over the Vietnam War somehow stopped being about why we were brutally murdering millions of innocent Indochinese civilians and instead became a referendum on bralessness and long hair and flower-child rhetoric, the depraved flacks of the right-wing media have breezily blown off a generation of fraud and corruption and market-perverting bailouts, making the whole debate about the protesters themselves—their hygiene, their "envy" of the rich, their "hypocrisy."

The protesters, chimed Supreme Reichskank Ann Coulter, needed three things: "showers, jobs and a point." Her colleague Charles Krauthammer went so far as to label the protesters hypocrites for having iPhones. OWS, he said, is "Starbucks-sipping, Levi's-clad, iPhone-clutching protesters [denouncing] corporate America even as they weep for Steve Jobs, corporate titan, billionaire eight times over." Apparently, because Goldman and Citibank are corporations, no protester can ever consume a corporate product—not jeans, not cellphones and definitely not coffee—if he also wants to complain about tax money going to pay off some billionaire banker's bets against his own crappy mortgages.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the political spectrum, there were scads of progressive pundits like me who wrung our hands with worry that OWS was playing right into the hands of assholes like Krauthammer. Don't give them any ammunition! we counseled. Stay on message! Be specific! We were all playing the Rorschach-test game with OWS, trying to squint at it and see what we wanted to see in the movement. Viewed through the prism of our desire to make near-term, within-the-system changes, it was hard to see how skirmishing with cops in New York would help foreclosed-upon middle-class families in Jacksonville and San Diego.

What both sides missed is that OWS is tired of all of this. They don't care what we think they're about, or should be about. They just want something different. We're all born wanting the freedom to imagine a better and more beautiful future. But modern America has become a place so drearily confining and predictable that it chokes the life out of that built-in desire. Everything from our pop culture to our economy to our politics feels oppressive and unresponsive. We see 10 million commercials a day, and every day is the same life-killing chase for money, money and more money; the only thing that changes from minute to minute is that every tick of the clock brings with it another space-age vendor dreaming up some new way to try to sell you something or reach into your pocket. The relentless sameness of the two-party political system is beginning to feel like a Jacob's Ladder nightmare with no end; we're entering another turn on the four-year merry-go-round, and the thought of having to try to get excited about yet another minor quadrennial shift in the direction of one or the other pole of alienating corporate full-of-shitness is enough to make anyone want to smash his own hand flat with a hammer.

If you think of it this way, Occupy Wall Street takes on another meaning. There's no better symbol of
the gloom and psychological repression of modern America than the banking system, a huge heartless
machine that attaches itself to you at an early age, and from which there is no escape. You fail to
receive a few past-due notices about a $19 payment you missed on that TV you bought at Circuit City,
and next thing you know a collector has filed a judgment against you for $3,000 in fees and interest. Or
maybe you wake up one morning and your car is gone, legally repossessed by Vulture Inc., the debt-
buying firm that bought your loan on the Internet from Chase for two cents on the dollar. This is why
people hate Wall Street. They hate it because the banks have made life for ordinary people a vicious
tightrope act; you slip anywhere along the way, it’s 10,000 feet down into a vat of razor blades that you
can never climb out of.
That, to me, is what Occupy Wall Street is addressing. People don’t know exactly what they want, but
as one friend of mine put it, they know one thing: FUCK THIS SHIT! We want something different: a
different life, with different values, or at least a chance at different values.

There was a lot of snickering in media circles, even by me, when I heard the protesters talking about
how Liberty Square was offering a model for a new society, with free food and health care and so on.
Obviously, a bunch of kids taking donations and giving away free food is not a long-term model for a
new economic system.

But now, I get it. People want to go someplace for at least five minutes where no one is trying to bleed
you or sell you something. It may not be a real model for anything, but it’s at least a place where people
are free to dream of some other way for human beings to get along, beyond auctioned "democracy,"
tyrannical commerce and the bottom line.

We’re a nation that was built on a thousand different utopian ideas, from the Shakers to the Mormons to
New Harmony, Indiana. It was possible, once, for communities to experiment with everything from
free love to an end to private property. But nowadays even the palest federalism is swiftly crushed. If
your state tries to place tariffs on companies doing business with some notorious human-rights-violator
state – like Massachusetts did, when it sought to bar state contracts to firms doing business with
Myanmar – the decision will be overturned by some distant global bureaucracy like the WTO. Even if
40 million Californians vote tomorrow to allow themselves to smoke a joint, the federal government
will never permit it. And the economy is run almost entirely by an unaccountable oligarchy in Lower
Manhattan that absolutely will not sanction any innovations in banking or debt forgiveness or anything
else that might lessen its predatory influence.

And here’s one more thing I was wrong about: I originally was very uncomfortable with the way the
protesters were focusing on the NYPD as symbols of the system. After all, I thought, these are just
working-class guys from the Bronx and Staten Island who have never seen the inside of a Wall Street
investment firm, much less had anything to do with the corruption of our financial system.

But I was wrong. The police in their own way are symbols of the problem. All over the country,
thousands of armed cops have been deployed to stand around and surveil and even assault the polite
crowds of Occupy protesters. This deployment of law-enforcement resources already dwarfs the
amount of money and manpower that the government "committed" to fighting crime and corruption
during the financial crisis. One OWS protester steps in the wrong place, and she immediately has police
roping her off like wayward cattle. But in the skyscrapers above the protests, anything goes.

This is a profound statement about who law enforcement works for in this country. What happened on
Wall Street over the past decade was an unparalleled crime wave. Yet at most, maybe 1,500 federal
agents were policing that beat – and that little group of financial cops barely made any cases at all. Yet
when thousands of ordinary people hit the streets with the express purpose of obeying the law and
demonstrating their patriotism through peaceful protest, the police response is immediate and massive.
There have already been hundreds of arrests, which is hundreds more than we ever saw during the
years when Wall Street bankers were stealing billions of dollars from retirees and mutual-fund holders.
and carpenters unions through the mass sales of fraudulent mortgage-backed securities.

It's not that the cops outside the protests are doing wrong, per se, by patrolling the parks and sidewalks. It's that they should be somewhere else. They should be heading up into those skyscrapers and going through the file cabinets to figure out who stole what, and from whom. They should be helping people get their money back. Instead, they're out on the street, helping the Blankfeins of the world avoid having to answer to the people they ripped off.

People want out of this fiendish system, rigged to inexorably circumvent every hope we have for a more balanced world. They want major changes. I think I understand now that this is what the Occupy movement is all about. It's about dropping out, if only for a moment, and trying something new, the same way that the civil rights movement of the 1960s strived to create a "beloved community" free of racial segregation. Eventually the Occupy movement will need to be specific about how it wants to change the world. But for right now, it just needs to grow. And if it wants to sleep on the streets for a while and not structure itself into a traditional campaign of grassroots organizing, it should. It doesn't need to tell the world what it wants. It is succeeding, for now, just by being something different.

Excerpts from CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

By Henry David Thoreau, 1848

[1] I HEARTILY ACCEPT the motto,— "That government is best which governs least";(1) and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,— "That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. . . .

[11] When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said, "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame;"(7) if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors
are the subjects of shame." No; until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

[12] Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster: for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum (8) should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing: — "Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

[13] I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through, before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

[14] Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of men being forced to have this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money or your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I
perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way
for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one,
perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies;
and so a man.

The Gettysburg Address

By  Abraham Lincoln, 1863

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in
Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so
dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a
portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.
It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground.
The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what
they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who
fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task
remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which
they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have
died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the
people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
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