Philosophical Concepts

Truth, Coin of Collective Consciousness

> When things are not going well, until you get the truth
> out on the table, no matter how ugly, you are not in a
> position to deal with it.
> — Bob Seelert[1]

Truth is the foundation for all discourse and wise
decision-making. There is no such thing as truth in iso-
lation. The definition of meaning is a contextual and
communal process, as the following two statements[2] com-
municate succinctly:

Put enough eyeballs on it, no bug is invisible.

The truth at any cost lowers all other costs.

The first concept makes clear the role of community in
arriving at the truth of any matter. The second makes clear
the moral and financial value of truth, reducing all manner
of costs across all domains including time and space. Nei-
ther of these concepts matter to the greedy, selfish one per-
cent—they matter very much to the ninety-nine percent.

Our concept of truth becomes more universal as we
reach higher levels of consciousness and awareness, tak-
ing in a wider spectrum of information and possibility. As

we adapt a more expanded perspective on our reality, our concept of what is true and meaningful changes—from local to regional, regional to global, beyond global to the galaxy, and then to the cosmos. The evolution of our species and possibly the Earth depends upon the realization of an ever-expanding concept of truth. Anything less keeps us small, as Lawrence of Arabia is depicted to have said to Sherif Ali in the classic movie:

> Sherif Ali! So long as the Arabs fight community against community, so long will they be a little people, a silly people, greedy, barbarous and cruel, as you are.[3]

Most of us have lived in small groupings defined by accidents of geography and history. Over-identifying with our ethnic or national backgrounds, we have been these "little people." As we move into a world-centric perspective, we shed our over-identification with local and more parochial forms of thought. We seek universal truths and principles that are systemic and holistic rather than fragmented and subjective.

The truth is what one shares that one believes to be the case. It may not be true in an absolute or objective sense, but if one believes it to be true, one is not telling a lie or misrepresenting what he or she believes. Exchange of authentic perspective with openness to development and change of belief is the necessary beginning for any discourse that might lead to consensus and thus generate authentic knowledge. The scientific method, when it functions properly, allows truth to emerge via competing

hypotheses—at least in the domain of what can be quantified and verified through repetition of an experimental procedure.

It is our obligation to speak of what we know as we know it, not dissembling or deceiving. This could be considered the "moral truth," and ultimately it is what can be validated by others so that a consensus can be arrived at and shared.

Many aspects of truth *can* be known—within the limits of individual human discernment and with the advantages that accrue from a collective endeavor (collective intelligence). The sharing of truth in the form of widely available information creates a foundation for cost-effective transparent decisions that are inherently anti-corrupt in nature. In the field of open-source intelligence, one could say that truth equals all the information critical to any subject, translated into any language, available all the time.

Where the philosophy gets interesting, even challenging, is when it confronts the reality that dogma, opinion, and deception can create in the mind a view of reality that is not real, but that one considers to be truthful. This gets to the heart of why education is the root requirement and right of each individual in any true democracy, and why democracy dies when dogma, ideology, and propaganda flourish. Truth is our best effort to see reality as it really is, and make the most of it. And please note that science, faith, and philosophy should not be considered antithetical to one another.

Truth does change, both in the mind of man and in the larger reality where man resides. On the one hand,

advancing knowledge and paradigm shifts can render old truths sadly insufficient, while bringing forward new, more robust truths. At the same time, actions taken by man while operating under old truths (for example, assuming that the Corps of Engineers can pave over the Mississippi wetlands and levee the largest river in the continental U.S. without having a Katrina-like consequence) create new truths—severe weather events that are not an Act of God but rather an Act of Man acting very badly over time and space.

The truth in philosophy is nuanced. It is not just an intellectual truth that is recognized, but a spiritual and sensual one as well. Truth involves discerning moral values to live by. It appears to prosper when citizens are educated and enjoy civil liberties including freedom of expression.

The moral truth is worth dying for—sometimes a burning monk (Viet-Nam) or fruit vendor (Tunisia) is the catalyst needed to illuminate the culture of fear and lies such that the public reconnects to its own power to be the truth, to define the truth, to demand the truth. How we seek, sense, and share with one another is a function of, among many variables, one constant: whether we are in a state of grace such that the truth is the primary attribute of all that we see, smell, touch, and sense.

My own motto since the 1990s:

E Veritate Potens
From Truth, We (the People) Are Made Powerful[4]

Truth is one of the core philosophical concepts most applicable to open-source everything.

To address this concept I draw heavily on the wisdom of Will Durant, one of the greatest philosophers and historians in the English language. His 1916 doctoral thesis, *Philosophy and the Social Problem*,[5] and his life's work with his wife Ariel Durant, the eleven-volume *The Story of Civilization*,[6] remain unmatched. His emphasis on education and the resulting advance of humanity dovetails with the purposes of this manifesto in the sense that learning to discern and disseminate the truth is the ultimate role for any human.

Truth is the currency for collective consciousness, vital as a means of earning trust, which is itself a currency and a major factor in creating wealth within and among nations.

The philosophical reflections of many great thinkers help put the value and socio-cultural significance of "truth" in perspective. They frame the larger questions of who we are, how we wish to live, and how we relate to one another and to the challenges of our time. They also frame the role of truth in relation to the paranormal and the extraterrestrial, as well as the cosmic consciousness that could ultimately be where science, philosophy, religion, and ideally our individual existences become "One."

In *Philosophy and the Social Problem*, the "social problem" is that of keeping an entire public in harmony with its government, its private sector, and its divisions of ethnicity, gender, age, and education, among others. It is the problem of governance of the whole, a problem that cannot be addressed solely by force or wealth or regulation. Durant concludes that philosophy, values, and the creation of a cohesive culture are essential.

The research and then the writing of the dissertation helped Durant devise and then apply his personal intellectual and philosophical framework of "Perspectivism."

Early on he states that philosophy should be the foundation for politics *qua* political-economic decision-making but notes that it is not. He originated the view later also articulated by E. O. Wilson in *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*[7] that philosophy is what *should* be unified with science in order to produce social solutions. (Today Wilson would no doubt say "*sustainable* social solutions.") In other words, the task of philosophy is to help achieve balance between emergent individualism and the larger social construct that requires civic duty and contributions from all if the group is to be secure as well as prosperous. Along with Durant and Wilson, I lament the relegation of philosophy to the "ivory tower" of academia, lost to the public and to the body politic, more pedantry than philosophy.

In his view, philosophy plus history equals wisdom; and politics without either cannot resolve "the social problem" regardless of how much money might be thrown at specific solutions. Durant applies diverse philosophies to his contemporary circumstances to arrive at timeless wisdom, including thoughts about how money creates hoarding and speculation, inheritance incentivizes more of the same, and neither is good for society as a whole.

Wealth creates a leisure class that "buys" knowledge and defines irrational authority, thus destroying the ethical basis of civilization. Durant discussed how a civilization may be characterized by its conception of virtue,

which led me to some fruitful exploration of how the United States is a culture that has equated wealth with virtue, leading to a political culture that can be bought because it is based on rule by secrecy, using secrecy to avoid accountability. Today, having abdicated concepts of the good, the beautiful, and the true for a model of primitive accumulation and a materialist set of values, we find that our financial system is what journalist Matt Taibbi called "Griftopia." The financial interests of Wall Street leverage the two-party system as a theatrical sideshow that legitimizes and legalizes massive fraud against the public interest.[8] This is the primary reason why secrecy is necessary for those in power. As I relate in the epilogue, my conversion experience was centered on my discovery that our secret intelligence culture and process is antithetical to democracy, and enabling of plutocracy, neo-fascism, and the total corruption of our government.

Durant defines duty not as unquestioning submission to the group but as individual excellence in thinking and action. Contemporary thinkers such as Ken Wilber and Andrew Harvey (drawing on Sri Aurobindo) have called this integral consciousness, or evolutionary activism.[9] Drawing from Socrates to Spinoza and on, Durant finds that morality is not about freedom of will or individual purpose, but rather about how the group and the individuals as part of the group relate means to ends. I've learned to reframe this today as means (revenue) to ways (policies) to ends (endless war or peace, distributed prosperity or concentrated wealth and broad slavery).

Education

> Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people
> who mean to be their own governors must arm them-
> selves with the power knowledge gives. A popular gov-
> ernment without popular information or the means of
> acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or
> perhaps both.
>
> —U.S. Founding Father James Madison[10]

The core value of universal education must inform the
most intrinsic function and principle of a democratic soci-
ety, in order that self-directed reason is inculcated into the
populace. It is only by giving full attention to the task of
universal education that we can reduce our social ills. No
amount of money can have this effect, unless our efforts
are turned away from indoctrinating people into compli-
ance and toward initiating them into being self-governing
and accountable. To this end, Durant draws out the impor-
tance of *not* having a standard government-defined educa-
tion, and of making education fun, exploratory, diverse,
and open-ended. I cannot help but recall here how my
hacker friends consider schools to be prisons.

It is from Spinoza that Durant draws his ultimate vision,
one shared by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison: for
a democracy to be successful, something other than an
anarchist mob, the universal distribution of intelligence,
i.e., wisdom, knowledge, decision-making skills, is essen-
tial. Today, with modern networks of communication and
connectivity, the possibility of spreading knowledge and

techniques of reason among the populace is greater than ever before.

For Durant, the mission of philosophy is to facilitate among all people the growth and spread of intelligence, hence also the capacity to use reason to discriminate and make coherent decisions.[11] Unlike history, which reconstructs the past, philosophy seeks to construct a living future. Instead of analysis, synthesis; instead of categorization, reconstruction and redirection. Innovation and creativity come from having a whole-systems perspective, inculcated through education that recognizes a diversity of approaches.

Education and human diversity are the keys to the open-source future of peace and prosperity. There exists a basic mathematics for creating infinite wealth. We start with the fact that the only "infinite" resource we have on Earth is human intelligence. Then we migrate to the fact that today capitalism with all its benefits and flaws is focused on the one billion rich whose aggregate annual income is one trillion dollars a year; *but* they are spending their money foolishly within the industrial-era paradigm that places the power of money in the hands of banks, corporations, and governments, which are corrupt and focused on concentrating old wealth rather than creating new wealth.[12]

My appreciation for the human brain was inspired by James Bamford's discovery[13] that a single human brain is more powerful, using less energy, in a small container, than all the National Security Agency computers combined. Combine this with the insights from C.K. Prahalad's

The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits.[14] This author aggregated a tremendous wealth of information in support of his core point: capitalism is focused on the one billion rich whose combined annual income is one trillion dollars a year, while the five billion poor (three billion of them very poor, living on less than two dollars a day) have a combined annual income of four trillion dollars a year.

Now fast-forward to the possibilities inherent in a global population of five billion poor whose annual aggregate income is four trillion dollars—four times that of the one billion rich. Unlike the monetary system of the rich, the monetary system of the poor is rooted in traditional community values, focuses on the sustainable and the practical (conservation not splurging), and inherently believes in the concept of "small is beautiful." The only thing the poor are lacking is access to one another, access to information and education, and access to the power that knowledge and information can give.

No one wants to be poor. In my view, and the view of many authors who have focused on poverty and practical solutions to it, we need to move beyond the industrial-era paradigm of giving them fish, or even the information-era paradigm of teaching them how to fish, and instead move closer to the cosmic paradigm of giving them the tools with which to create their own ingenious means of addressing their problems in their cultural context and their time, while drawing—at their convenience, not ours—on our dispersed knowledge.

This is where the Autonomous Internet can be the liberation technology, not only empowering the poor but leveraging the cognitive surplus[15] of the entire human species.

Transparency

Part of defining and practically applying core values is the achievement of transparency, a.k.a. clarity, in all communications based on these values—clarity with yourself, your loved ones, your neighbors, and with strangers. Through transparency truth can be shared.

Transparency is the new "app" that launches civilization 2.0 as an open-source operating system.[16] Transparency reveals truth (thus leading to accountability), truth engenders trust, and trust is the engine of universal peace and prosperity, the most powerful social currency.

How can "we the people" expand the open-source revolution and leverage Open Source to achieve transparency, eradicate corruption, and restore the public as the sovereign power in our democracy?

This is the heart of my contribution to the open-source everything conversation. I believe that we are entering the third era of the intelligence profession, the decision-support profession. The first era was the era of secret war, spies, and combatants. The second era was that of strategic intelligence as defined by Sherman Kent,[17] but dishonored and dismantled by the growth of the clandestine service and the rise of a military-industrial-intelligence complex

able to profit from covert operations regardless of the cost to the ninety-nine percent. This third era, one I have been defining since my Fall 1992 article in *Whole Earth Review*, "E3i: Ethics, Ecology, Evolution, and Intelligence,"[18] is the era of the Smart Nation, of M4IS2, and of the long-envisioned World Brain.[19]

Openness, not secrecy, is the foundation for a healthy community or nation-state. As discussed earlier, industrial-era leadership relies heavily on secrecy, on stove-pipes, on hoarding of information, and generally on a top-down approach that assumes the "leaders" know best and that demands all those "below" them to act "because we said so."

In a closed and secretive system, leaders tend to operate according to ideological bias, and will even prefer to remain uninformed. Basing their decisions on what they want to hear, they will then potentially act in unethical ways that violate the public good. They often prefer to make decisions lacking in reliable intelligence and integrity.

A system of open information exchange based on transparency, where complex problems are treated clearly and directly, allows for all stakeholders to independently consider and evaluate all relevant data—and to share with one another a rich diversity of perspectives. Such a situation creates the conditions for a direct democracy, where an engaged and informed citizenry can determine its own fate through continuous referendum.

Diversity, a Resource of Infinite Wealth

The assumption that underlies my appreciation for diversity is this: the greatest resource we have on Earth is the capacity of the human brain. To answer our existing threats and challenges, we can leave no brain untapped. This includes the five billion poor and especially the three billion most poor, many of them illiterate but possessing enormous innate intelligence and a desire to better themselves that the one billion rich simply cannot conceptualize. Academic specialization is no guarantee of intelligence. The poor possess enormous insight into our world, formed through lives based on survival at the edge. There are also many indigenous cultures around the globe where money is barely used. These cultures retain value systems as well as barter and gift economies that provide necessary tools for redesigning human civilization so it benefits everyone.

At a very simplistic level, "diversity" is accomplished by embracing the inherent value of every brain and the inherent right of every person to "connect" to all others and to information. This particularly includes all those labeled "crazy" by the status quo mind-sets, and it especially includes "truthers" who are penetrating many decades' worth of lies to the public.

I want to repeat a story told to me by Harrison Owen, inventor of Open Space Technology and author of several books, the most recent being *Wave Rider: Leadership for High Performance in a Self-Organizing World.*[20] He was recounting the nature and outcome of a two-day Open

Space Technology conference that he ran for an architectural and engineering company which had spent more than two years and a great deal of money—in the millions—designing an airplane whose door would not work as anticipated. The bottom line: by including everyone who touched the door, including ground crew, the two-day conference fixed the problem at a cost to the company of next to nothing: the costs of the conference. By including all the stakeholders from the bottom up, results were achieved that could not be achieved by the traditional "top-down" hierarchical organization.

I have read many other such stories embodying a culture of openness and acceptance for the participation of all, regardless of rank.

In my view, we must recognize both the value of diversity and the unity that can be achieved by that diversity when we combine clarity of expression and integrity of intent. In order to do this, we must learn to share information among what I call "the eight communities of intelligence," each with its own sources and methods, none with the "whole picture." They are:

1. **Academic.** All those engaged in formalized educational activities from Head Start to post-doctoral research.
2. **Civil Society.** All forms of citizen advocacy groups, including labor unions and religions.
3. **Commercial.** All forms of business, not only legal, but also System D (the informal or underground economy) and organized crime.

4. **Government.** All forms of structured government from local to national.

5. **Law Enforcement.** All forms of law enforcement including multinational organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Does *not* include contractors.

6. **Media.** All media published or purveyed in any form, from bloggers to the "mainstream" media, that are co-opted by the commercial world.

7. **Military.** All forms of military including multinational organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

8. **Non-Government/Non-Profit.** All forms of non-profit activity registered with a government. Anything not registered falls under Civil Society.

This new meme unifies the knowledge and grassroots experience of the eight communities of intelligence so the human collective becomes the "one body, one mind" implied by the term "noosphere"—a psychic collectivity. We create the World Brain to play the World Game in which we are each a node with an all-access pass to the main event. Each of us can then participate in any and all decisions across all boundaries that we care about, and we create a prosperous world at peace by aggregating our collective intelligence and applying reason and rationality coherently to all analytic, intelligence-gathering, and decision-making processes.

Writing on the Occupy movement, *Rolling Stone* journalist Matt Taibbi proclaimed:

> 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.[21]

I share the widespread rejection by the ninety-nine percent of what our political, socio-economic, and ideo-cultural systems have become. A new collective force, a leaderless orchestration, is emergent. If this force can learn to aggregate collective intelligence properly, "we the people" can overcome the ever-more insulated and secretive ruling elite in order to institute a planetary society that works for all.