A person in a blue hoodie and black shorts stands on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. A large, dark rock formation is visible on the left side of the frame. The text "GARY TEH" is overlaid in the upper right corner in a blue, stylized font.

GARY TEH

GLOBAL

PEACE

WARRIOR



I met Gary on a train to Davos for the World Economic Forum in May 2022. On a packed train from Zurich, a tall guy sat across from me, a big smile, not a care in the world – at the time I had no idea that this was Gary’s signature look! Peaceful, comfortable wherever he is in the world, running towards danger rather than fleeing from it... if i didn’t know any better i would think of him as coming from another world! We started talking, I shared I was going to Davos to host a side conference with my wonderful friend Hans-Martin Heierling, and that it was going to be a “sleeping on the floor” kinda roughing it conference. Behold the absolute coincidence – or was it ! – Gary was coming to join us, and he was going to be my room mate for the week. Since then we have gotten to know each other incredibly well, and he has not seized to inspire me with his ABSOLUTE authenticity, kindness, intelligence, and more importantly deep humanity. It is such an honor to share some of Gary’s thoughts with you, and snippets of his never ending and unusual journey through life. Gary is an expert in Modern Curiosities, from DAOs, to blockchain, crypto, NFTs, and always with an eye to applying Web3 (and beyond) technologies to the betterment of the human condition across the globe. If you ever wanted to meet a real superhero, here is your opportunity!

**Francois-Laurent Renet:** Gary, I have known you for less than a year, and yet the breadth of your knowledge across disciplines makes you one of the smartest people I have ever met. Where does your inspiration come from?

**Gary Teh:** I would believe “having spent more time acquiring data from the environment” as a more appropriate description compared to “smart” which assumes some form of genetic trait.

I sense this inspiration stems basically from my innate tendency for autonomy when it comes to how I spend my limited lifespan with this body of mine. More specifically being able to honestly express Me with integrity. I firmly believe this is an essential part of our universal basic human/animal rights. No animal deserves to be caged.

With that as the basis, everytime I chance upon a roadblock or see a wall in front of me getting in the way of where my animalness/gut feeling says I want to be heading, the natural instinct is to figure out how to remove or get around that obstruction so as to get my freedom and autonomy back. The byproduct of this is an infinite curiosity about whatever subject that happens to be the theme for the day. The very human follow-on action is usually an intense phase of RnD in that area of concern. That is probably the source of this breadth of knowledge you observed. Also the life hack I discovered 5 years ago which has since allowed me to consume freely downloaded books on whatever subject at two times the usual human speed has been really helpful.

**You are also one of the kindest, and most human individuals I have ever met. What do you attribute your “human” nature to?**

**GT:** I sense it basically stems back to that core belief that autonomy is our universal human/animal rights. Part of being a





Gary at the start of the pandemic in Prague just right before WHO declared worldwide pandemic

mammal is our ability for empathy which is enabled by the mirror neurons we have in our brain.

When you are attuned with your senses (mirror neurons included), when a sentient being is in pain, you will sense the pain too. I believe that is the source of kindest you observed in me.

Bulk of the lack of empathy we observed amongst fellow human beings around us can be attributed basically to ignorance. Ignorance in perceiving the world around us leads to faulty assumptions about our environment. This in turn leads to bad designs. Bad designs lead to structural problems in society. These structural problems further perpetuate ignorance in a vicious cycle.

I guess I am one of the more fortunate ones being in a starting position where I have the bandwidth. This bandwidth is enabled by access to information, time and resources. It was utilized to rethink design for the portion of the system which I am interfacing with on a daily basis.

**David Bowie said “Religion is for people who fear hell. Spirituality is for people who have been there.” Would you agree? What does this mean to you?**

**GT:** Religion is a very effective tool of statecraft employed by a small number of people to convince a larger group of people to their point of view. Prior to the circular movement, there was no differentiation between religion and government.

In the words of George Orwell 1984, he who controls the present, controls the past. He who controls the past, controls the future.

From the eastern perspective, loosely paraphrased from one of the stanzas in Sun Tze’s art of war,

*if you can subdue the spirit of the opponent, you don’t need to deal with his body*

*If you can subdue the body of the opponent, you don’t need to attack with his army*

*If you can subdue the army of the opponent, you don’t need to siege with his castle*

*If you are forced to siege his castle, it is a very expensive undertaking.*

I am starting to be of the opinion that the term “spirituality” is becoming over-used. I would interpret spiritualism as how in-tune I am with what I really feel like doing right now after stripping away all the propaganda in my head I am being bombarded with from my environment on a daily basis. From this perspective, a highly spiritual being is not very different from a highly autonomous being.

**I think stating that you believe technology plays an important role in the future of humanity is an understatement! How do you think it can contribute to good? And what are the potential pitfalls and worst case scenarios?**

**GT:** “Good” is a very vague term. I like how the James Carse in Finite and Infinite Games redefined “Good” as giving players the space to engage in the Infinite game of life on their own terms as opposed to the “Evil” of forcing players into a Finite zero sum game with definite authoritarian rules and outcomes.

So let’s redefine this question as how technology can promote more autonomy in our society. This makes the question more specific and addressable. Technology when applied properly is an enabler. It allows humans to free their time and resources to reallocate for stuff more closely aligned with their human/animal nature (highest calling).

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The problem arises when ignorance creeps in during a piece of technology's design and application. Instead of serving to free up time and resources of the masses, it gets misapplied towards ensnaring fellow brethren in a vicious cycle in one form or another in the process sucking up their time and resources.

The root cause for this ignorance is the belief that a person is only worthy if he can stand head and shoulders above his fellow brethren through some form of achievement (a zero sum situation). When operating based on this premise, the center of reference shifts from internal to external, from the infinite to the finite. Instead of feeling content with the joy of just simply being, a person starts feeling the need to mess around with the autonomy of his brethren all for the sake of feeling "special" and "worthy". That is "Evil"

**Metaverse, Web3, NFTs are all buzzwords that we don't seem to be able to escape for the last couple of years. What is your opinion on their maturity, and as to their actual added value to the world in general, and to art/entertainment specifically?**

**GT:** Metaverse seems to be increasingly associated with VR technology. From an engineering perspective, trying to build a shared virtual reality which houses the entire human race immediately puts you face to face with the boundaries of physics.

Taking a step back, I am not convinced that this use case is actually useful. I believe the actual metaverse environment when it is finally deployed is probably less massive and all encompassing than its being hyped up to be. Though I believe it will still be useful for whichever use case it gets applied to.

Side note, I still can't get around the headache I experience when interact-

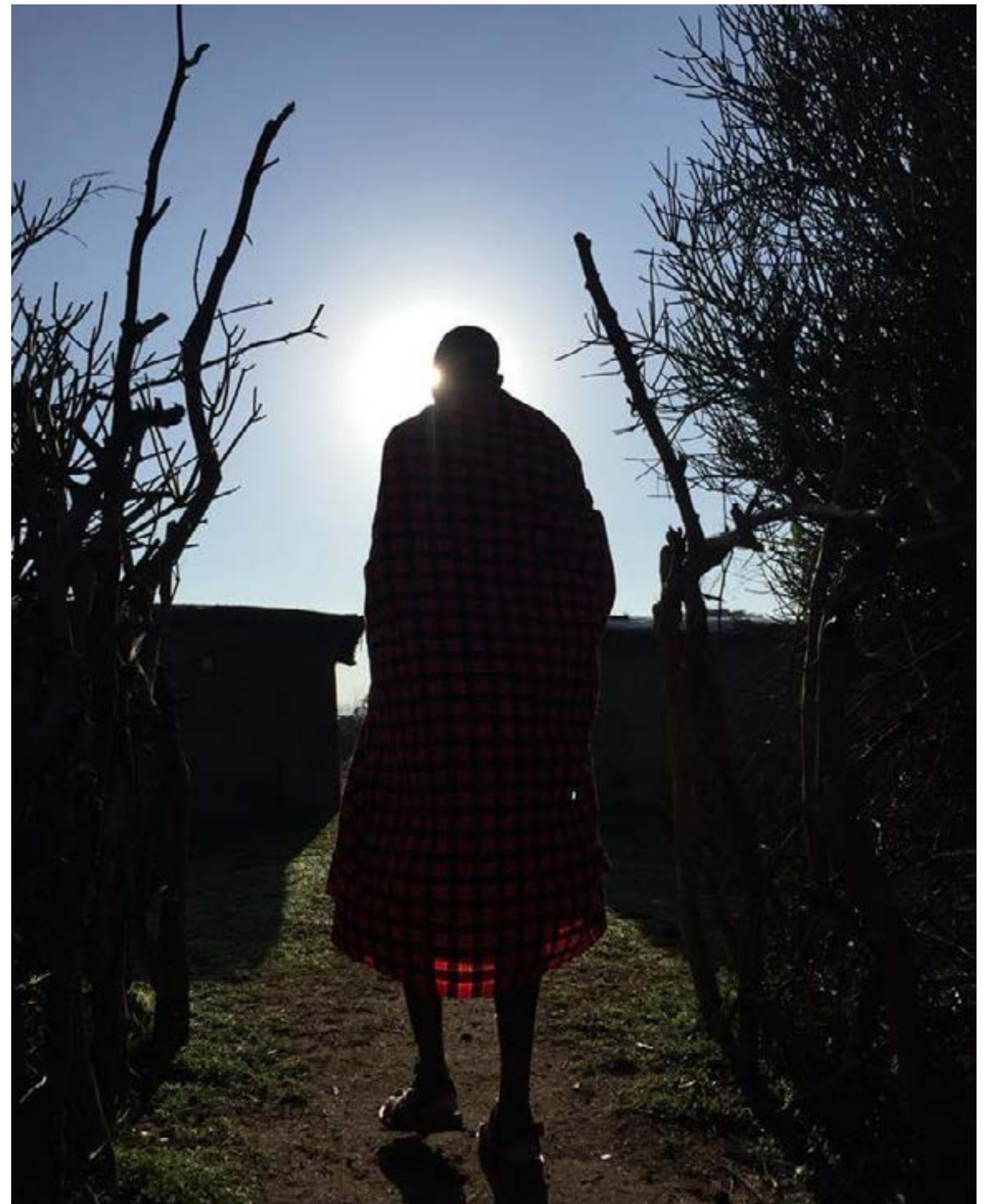
ing with 3D environments even after 20 years of progress made in this field.

Web3 from my perspective is defined as control and ownership of my own online identity and data. Based on what I observed so far, this is a popular response to the current consolidation of our internet into a few massive walled gardens by big tech. This consolidation starts becoming especially problematic, from an autonomy standpoint, when you throw wall street and government into the mix. WallStreet's incessant demand for ever increasing profits means big tech companies will slide down the slippery path of inevitably becoming oppressors in both the experience they provide their users as well as being employers. This effect is being partially counteracted by increased levels of government regulations around the world.

Unfortunately, governments are not without their own agenda. Ever since Obama first, and Donald Trump later, demonstrated that it was possible for interested parties to tap into these massive walled gardens to influence the masses for their own political agenda, governments around the world have grown ever more eager to gain control of and to leverage these walled gardens while excluding perceived opponents from access.

The internet today is less free than it was back in 2000 and will increasingly become so. The basic building blocks available in web3 seem promising. However it is still a while away before they are at the stage of maturity. The more concerning question is will the tools at the point of maturity be applied to promote freedom and autonomy (art/entertainment being as aspects of this for the individual) or command and control (censoring activities)? At this point, I am still not seeing clearly where the direction is heading.

NFT from my perspective is a very simple concept. It's basically an uncensorable



Gary walking in the footsteps of the Kenyan Masai warrior



digital representation of an online/off-line artifact. The way it is applied now is still at its very nascent stage. It will be interesting to observe how it will get more deeply adopted by the masses in different areas of our society other than digital art (as well as profile pictures).

**DAO - Decentralized Autonomous Organization - is another concept that has emerged over the last couple of years. It is probably the least comprehensible by the general public, and yet is it not in many ways the most important aspect of the entire ecosystem of metaverse/blockchain/Web3/crypto etc...? But first maybe, what are DAOs?**

**GT:** The way I would help a layman understand about DAOs is to first take that term and then throw it into the garbage bin. In its place, I would put this description: “a loose group of individuals who have somehow found each other by one way or another and happen to share a common interest”.

The interest can be as far reaching as desiring to set up a new world order or as mundane as I just love eating Japanese Ramen.

DAOs fall along a spectrum of sophistication. It's highly dependent on the make-up of their community members and their mutually defined interest. Sophistication should in no way be mistaken as maturity.

In some of the more sophisticated DAOs, members have figured out there a set of actions they can perform that generate value within their own community that is aligned with their DNA and is highly desirable. As such, they have created token economies to incentivize these actions amongst themselves. In some instances these generated values are also considered commercially desirable by external parties, hence an exchange rate gets organically established overtime between

the tokens circulated within these communities and external fiat currencies. When you take a step back and look at the population make-up of countries over the past few hundred years, the earlier ones were mainly centered around ethnicity while the more recent ones were centered around one form of ideology or another, be it religious or secular.

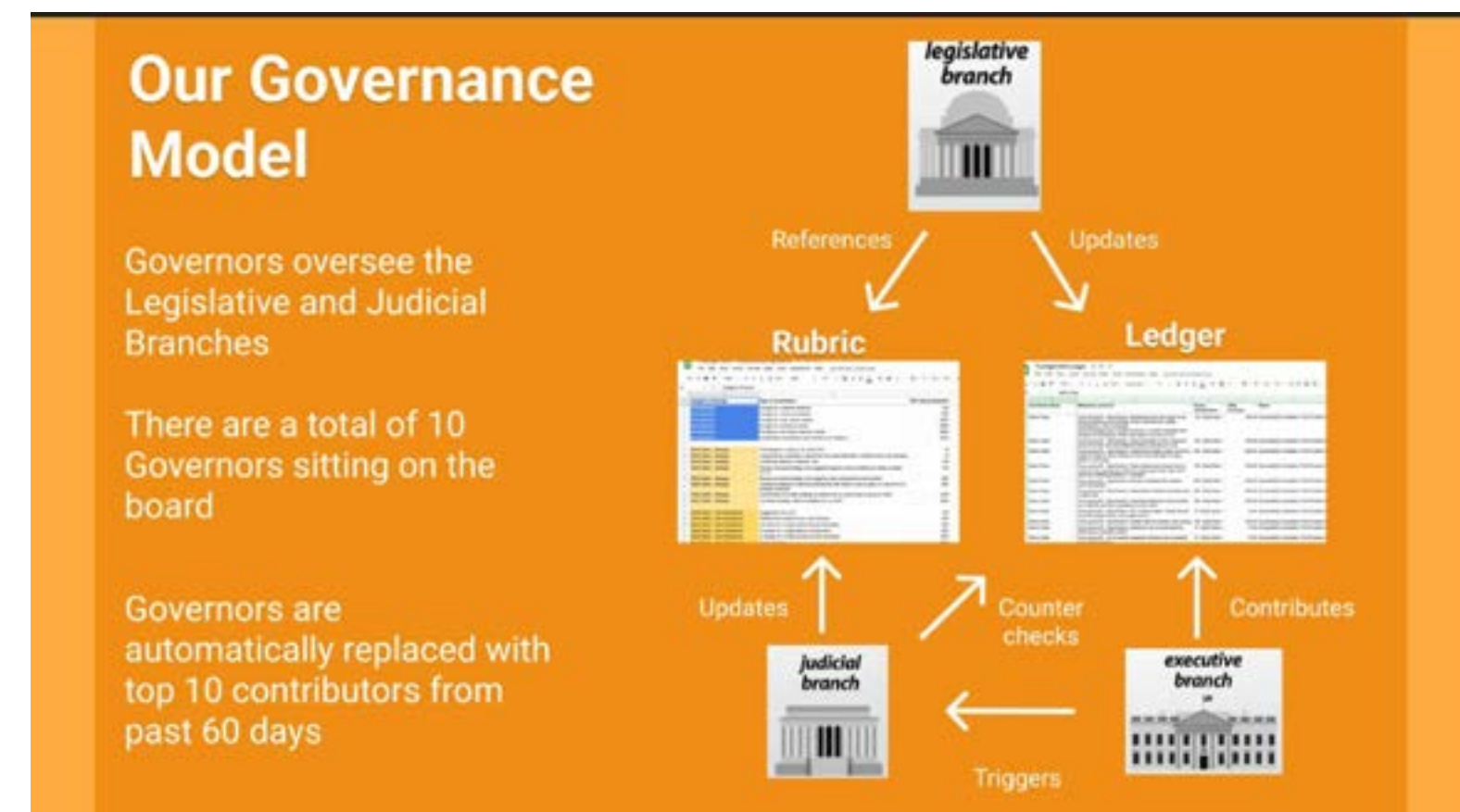
What sets a country apart from a loose group of people are the elements of rights to a piece of land (somewhat), an internal economy and a military presence to protect its borders. When Thomas Jefferson and his band of merry men came up with the first draft of the US constitution, they were just a group of individuals with a shared common interest. After they booted out the British, these folks were less considered a group of individuals but the United States of America.

Over the past few years, with the spread of digital adoption and COVID, work is no longer tied to a specific geography, citizens from countries are thus freed up to move around. Also warfare has increasingly moved into the digital realms. The idea of what defines a country is thus getting quite murky as this trend plays out.

In that regard, I will not be surprised if some DAOs eventually evolve through this murkiness and come out on the other side as full-fledged nations with rights to land access, an internal economy and a military presence to protect its borders.

**You are the founder of the True Sight DAO . What was the inspiration? What is the mission of True sight Dao? How has it evolved?**

**GT:** The idea behind TrueSight DAO organically came about through conversations within the community I was





# Recurring Themes

High impact social trends that kept surfacing over and again after our network cut through the noise



originally embedded in. It just happened that I was more active and consistent in the pursuit of my curiosity than the rest of the folks. I see myself more as a contributor than a founder.

The initial group of us were a bunch of colleagues who were keen to deploy the capital we had accumulated working in our day jobs to further our own autonomy. The annoyance we experienced when trying to decipher the ground truth about a situation from the skewed reporting by the news before deploying our personal capital to work in the public markets was what originally inspired us to action.

Little did we realize the problem of Fake News was way more pervasive than the disruption we observed in the financial markets. Fake News has leveraged the walled garden trend happening in the internet over the past few years and gained so much momentum to the extent of destabilizing Liberal Democratic systems around the world. We quickly figured amongst ourselves that we should probably shift our attention to focus on addressing this problem versus lining our pockets through careful allocation of our personal capital. If the underlying system no longer exists, our capital (mainly denominated in fiat money then) technically becomes worthless.

Inspired by this enlightened self interest, TrueSight DAO's mission is to fight fake news by providing individuals with the clarity to make critical decisions.

In the process of pursuing our mission, the size of our community grew organically. We quickly realized given the talent pool, it would be such a waste to just direct member attention towards tackling Fake News. We did some soul searching and figured Fake News was just a catalyst, our underlying motivation was to safeguard and perpetuate our values of Autonomy, Integrity and Diversity.

Autonomy in how we live our lives. Integrity in the information we get from our environment for our decision making. Diversity in the cultural and biological richness of the world we live in.

Once our values were defined, opening up our network to support more projects that safeguard and perpetuate these values became the obvious next logical step. Over the past few months existing projects being discovered by DAO members as well as new projects being started from within our community have been introduced into our network. All of them at various phases of development and levels of tokenization.

**Cryptocurrencies? Have they epically failed in living up to their promise of spreading wealth to all? Their roller coaster performance certainly seems to show all the signs of a “market manipulation” by the buying and selling by what is referred to as crypto whales, thus the anti-thesis of a democratization of the digital currency market. Thoughts? Do you think there is a place for crypto currencies to live up to their promise? If not, what is the alternative for a fairer distribution of financial wealth?**

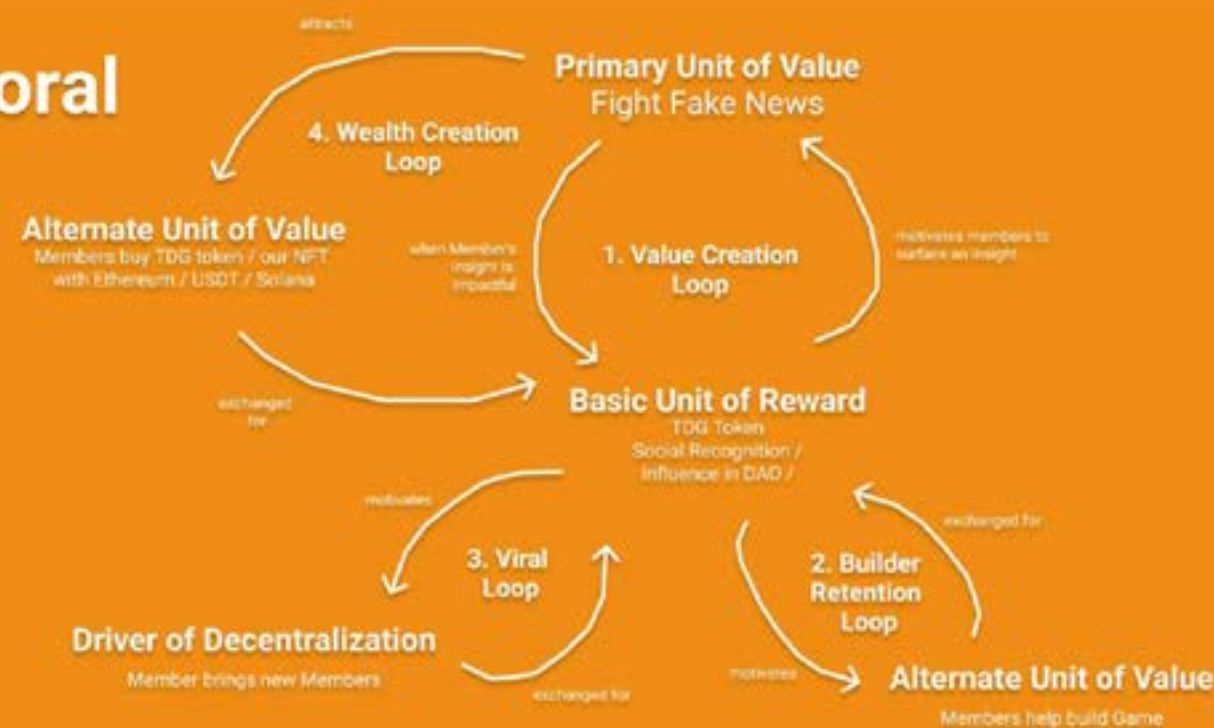
**GT:** Cryptocurrency is just a tool. “Fairer” is a very vague and subjective term. “Smooth circulation” is a more concrete and measurable one. From a system's perspective, having a “smooth circulating” distribution of wealth is healthier for the financial ecosystem.

I like to use the analogy of our blood circulation system: excessive accumulation of wealth in one part of the body while under distribution in another part of the body leads to gangrene and amputated limbs. If all the blood were to somehow get stuck and end up accumulating in some small part of the system one day due to a stroke, the entire person would just die if left untreated. The same could

# Our Behavioral Model

How it evolved

1. Value Creation loop
2. Builder retention loop
3. Viral loop
4. Wealth Creation loop







be said of our financial system, resource (money) is the lifeblood of our society, if flow of resources to one part of it were to stop one day that portion of society will just wither away. This pervasive issue with homelessness we are seeing around the US right now is one of those symptoms.

Based on what I have observed so far, cryptocurrency technology in its current form is unlikely to yield a better circulation of financial wealth. If anything, based on what has been observed so far, it's just the reconsolidation of wealth from one minority group to another minority group. If you examined Ethereum, prior to the Merge, to qualify as a Ethereum chain validator, a potential miner just needs to acquire a machine that cost around USD15K. After this recent merge where we have moved to Proof of Stake, a potential miner needs to stake around 30 Ethereum (roughly USD45K) before he/she can start mining. This has made it less economically inclusive from a wealth access perspective.

I think the main impact of cryptocurrency is the ability for consumers to more cheaply move money from one part of the world to another without paying sky high fees charged by banks for TTL. This is categorically similar to the impact WhatsApp had on Telcos when they allowed consumers to bypass paying for international fees when they needed to keep in touch with loved ones overseas. Then again how often do we really need to transfer money to some other parts of the world as end consumers? I am still not seeing the pervasiveness of this use case.

Another nascent area of impact I could think of is applicable to the builders who are motivated to launch new projects in their community to effect change of one form or another. Currently, before a project leader can launch a new project, they

will need to go raise financial capital from investors. Only after raising the financial capital, can the project leaders go about recruiting team members to start executing on the project. Cryptocurrency could be applied by projects to by-pass the fundraising stage straight into the execution stage.

**In line with the previous question, how can current technology be an instrument in a fairer distribution of resources across the globe?**

**GT:** I will dive deeper into the idea of bypassing the fundraising stage into the execution stage through the use of cryptocurrencies. This is something we have successfully experimented with within TrueSight DAO.

Members agree to exchange their time and resources to support DAO projects in hope of some future envisioned change they would like to see in their community. Their participation is tokenized as a by-product of their activities within the scope of these projects.

Some of these projects will be purely focused on social impact with no future commercialization intent, while other projects will have an additional commercialization angle to it. The revenue from these commercialization activities will be used to back the valuation of the same cryptocurrency which is issued out for activities across all supported projects.

Right now the main problem with non-profits is that they are "non-profit". They rely purely on donations and sponsorships to sustain themselves. Having the above described model in place will alleviate fears contributors might have regarding opportunity costs as they direct their time towards projects with pure social impact with no-commercialization intent. The belief is that this will relieve the gangrene effect previously described.

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**You function in a very cross cultural environment. How successful do you think we have been at bridging differences between cultures, and what challenges do we still have to overcome?**

**GT:** From my perspective, we have not been very successful in bridging differences between cultures. Culture is a function of geography. I think the more interesting question to ask is would it ever be possible for three different people, one living in the desert, the second living in a temperate forest and a third living by the tropical coast to share the same exact lifestyle.

Technically possible but a very expensive proposition that requires a lot of terraforming. That said, the alternative would be for a native resident of the desert to spend an extensive amount of time living in a different geographical region to develop this mental model. This might be more expensive but definitely way more manageable expense wise. However it will be unrealistic to expect an entire population to engage in such mental models. Merely like it will just be a subset of the population.

I think there is a different way to look at it. Besides focusing on creating bridges, we should consider recreating space between different cultures. Prior to the internet, what happens in some remote parts of the world stays within those parts and is managed by the local communities. The internet has brought the world closer together over the past decade, it also has the effect of allowing you to see what your neighbor three towns over is doing while he is taking a shower in his bathroom. Since it is such a personal subject, the observer will definitely have very strong opinions about how showering should be done that his neighbor might feel otherwise.

Even within TrueSight DAO, we encountered similar challenges. DAO members



Gary with Nomads in Tibet just prior to the 2008 Tibetan uprising





from Asia who are very familiar and comfortable with a top down hierarchical command and control operating style would be observed to clash with DAO members from the Americas and Europe who are very familiar and comfortable with an open, flat and collaborative operating style when they are involved with the same project. The way we created the space was to come up with similar projects tackling the same mission but focused on different geographical regions. This allows the flexibility to accommodate the different cultural styles across regions as well the peculiar needs of each region. There are definitely cross pollination of knowledge between projects, but their internal operations remain independent and autonomous. The one thing in common across all these projects is their activities are tokenized using the same Governance token.

**After answering all these questions, would you now tell us about yourself differently?**

GT: I generally see myself as a free flowing random stream of consciousness. If you took a snapshot at any two different points in time of what I believe is true about the world and compared them side by side, you will end up observing a whole bunch of contradictions.

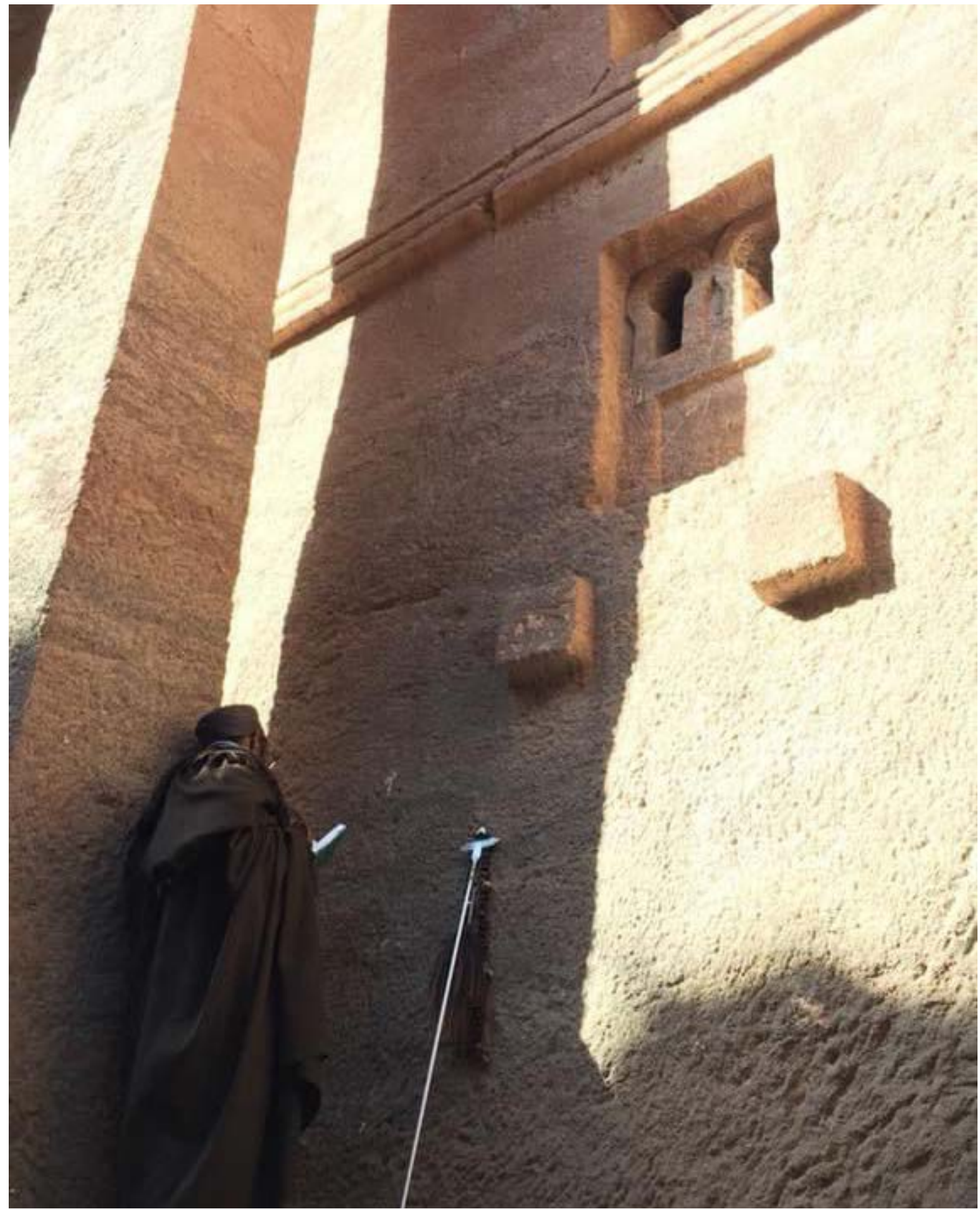
In that regard, I don't see myself as an entity that is fixed and well defined. Hence I don't really take myself and my ideas of the day too seriously. I am definitely happy if folks reading this article are keen to reach out to explore some ideas together or catalyze a change of mind on my part.

by Francois-Laurent Renet





Gary with a Uighur in Xinjiang in 2008 prior to the start of the concentration camps



Gary The pilgrim of lalibela right before the Tigray rebellion





Anarchist in Slab City