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PT$D

Truth as Currency

In a Market of Denial

Thomas Dwyer

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Preface

"Would you rather be happy, or would you rather be right?"

That question, tossed out casually on a podcast, stuck in my thoughts and became the starting point for this book. It begins with a challenging premise: that our society operates within a **False Economy of Comfort**: a system where prioritizing ease over difficult realities comes at the steep cost of genuine understanding and collective resilience.

This book explores a counterintuitive idea: that significant trauma, the kind that shatters the foundational assumptions of safety and stability, can force a different relationship with truth. It is not a chosen path, but one where the destruction of personal comfort strips away societal illusions, compelling a confrontation with inconvenient realities. This is not to claim that trauma bestows an infallible "truth detector," nor to romanticize suffering. Instead, it examines how adversity can force a raw engagement with reality, like a shipwrecked sailor learning the currents and the stars, and asks what such hard-won perspective reveals about the machinery of denial.

Blending personal experience with concepts from psychology, sociology, and philosophy, *PT$D* dissects this machinery: the dangers of certainty, the class dynamics of truth, and the gears of self-deception. It examines the elaborate shields we construct—from professional jargon to manufactured identities—to avoid the messy work of confronting uncomfortable truths.

This journey is not comfortable. It asks difficult questions about complicity, privilege, and the stories we tell ourselves. It requires a willingness to navigate discomfort and practice what John Keats, the English poet, called *Negative Capability*: the psychological fortitude to remain "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason." [1] That capacity, fueled by *curiosity*, is what allows us to look squarely at the narratives that shape us and the denials that constrain us.

This book is an invitation to question the comforting stories of our culture, scrutinize the worth of unexamined ease, and consider whether facing truth, in all its complexity, is not just *a* course but *the* course to something more resilient, coherent, and meaningful than manufactured comfort.

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About the Author

The author brings an **Insider-Outsider** perspective to the themes explored in *PT$D: Truth as Currency in a Market of Denial*. He draws on his training as a robotics engineer, appreciating the logic of complex systems. This analytical framework is paired with his lived experience navigating significant childhood adversity, including parental substance abuse, poverty, and institutional neglect; as evidenced by a high ACE score (explained in Chapter 1). This dual vantage point shapes his examination of the comforting fictions that obscure uncomfortable truths. It fosters acute skills in pattern recognition and code-switching.

Yet this lens is no precision instrument; it is a shard of glass, shaped by trauma, offering perception that can both clarify and distort. The initial view through such a lens is a blur of pain and hypervigilance. A mind calibrated by systemic failure and personal loss must perpetually guard against mistaking malice for incompetence, conspiracy for chaos, or patterns where there is only noise. This book, then, is not just an analysis of societal denial but a simultaneous self-interrogation, the constant, deliberate act of adjusting the focus and wiping away the fog of old griefs to see the present more clearly. This is the vital and ongoing work of calibrating that lens, the primary instrument for this journey. This work is what this book calls developing *Inner Coherence*.

Central to this self-critique is an understanding of universal cognitive fallibility, what he terms the **Draped Apes** concept:

$$\{Primates\} + \{Fancy\ Clothing\} = \{Humans\}$$

This perspective posits that humans share an inherent susceptibility to bias and self-deception, a principle he applies to himself as a tool for humility.

This book traces a journey toward **Inner Coherence**: the challenging yet essential process of integrating one's experiences, values, and actions through this constant act of calibration. Throughout, he grapples with the tension between observed patterns suggesting determinism and the felt human need for agency and moral responsibility. This sustained inquiry is the essential work of mapping the terrain and charting the waters where a more coherent Self is built.

A Note on Tone: *This book addresses challenging subjects. To navigate them without succumbing to despair, the author relies on a tool he has relied on his entire life: humor. This is not levity for its own sake but an analytical instrument to expose the absurdities of denial and hypocrisy. He believes that sometimes the most effective way to expose a difficult truth is with a sharp joke, and that confronting a world built on comforting fictions demands the emotional and intellectual buoyancy of satire. If you find yourself laughing at a description of a hollow ritual or breathtaking illogic, understand that this is by design: a shared, dark laugh for resilience.*

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