

Discussion Draft

Preliminary Thoughts on
Trust and Inclusion: Toward a Healthy Global Community

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Trust and Inclusion: Toward a Healthy Global Community

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*“The drama of our time,”
the poet Robert Duncan remarked,
“is the coming of all men into one fate².”*

I

The events of recent past has brought to the forefront of our minds the challenges that civilization has faced from the inception: the need for resolution of conflicts that, if left unresolved, will some day destroy the human race as we know it. If the 21st century were to be the one to comprehend and successfully address these conflicts, then history serves as a witness to the enormity of these challenges.

Peace has always extracted ultimate sacrifice from its victims, witnesses and martyrs³. Sacrifice, perhaps, may appear to be the only way to achieve peace, unless there is a way to change the course of history. Even such a change, if at all possible, would not be without the necessary sacrifices. Either way, many in the past have done what many in the future will continue to do with the same quixotic persuasions and compelling pursuit of peace, regardless of its consequences.

It is instructive to consider Kant's essay, "Zum ewigen Frieden⁴," and the assessment of progress (in 1917) by Thorsten Veblen, one hundred and twenty-two years after Kant wrote it. Veblen comes to a solemn conclusion that:

¹ I am grateful to George Kozmetsky, James Pelkey, Sri Sridharan and Raymond Yeh for the inspiration and guidance. (I can be reached at sshariq@stanford.edu).

² Jerome Rothenberg cites Robert Duncan in his Pre-Face to the First International Symposium on Ethnopoetics, April 1975:

“The drama of our time is the coming of all men into one fate, the dream of everyone, everywhere. The fate or dream is the fate of more than mankind. Our secret Adam is written now in the script of the primal cell. We have gone beyond the reality of the incomparable nation or race, the incomparable Jehovah in the shape of a man, the incomparable Book or Vision, the incomparable species, in which identity might hold and defend its boundaries against an alien territory. All things have come now into their comparisons. But these comparisons are the correspondences that haunted Paracelsus. Who saw also that the key to man’s nature was hidden in the larger nature...”

(Source: www.durationpress.com/archives/ethnopoetics/alcheringa/alcheringa.pdf)

³ Here is one such partial listing: <http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/martyrs.htm>

⁴ In English it would translate as, “To the Eternal Peace.”

"Many things have happened since then, although the Peace to which Kant looked forward with a doubtful hope has not been among them."

In the Preface⁵ to his, "An Inquiry into the Nature of Peace and the Terms of its Perpetuation," Veblen summarized Kant's ideal on 'enduring peace' as:

"To Kant the quest of an enduring peace presented itself as an intrinsic human duty, rather than as a promising enterprise. Yet through all his analysis of its premises and of the terms on which it may be realized there runs a tenacious persuasion that, in the end, the régime of peace at large will be installed. Not as a deliberate achievement of human wisdom, so much as a work of Nature the Designer of things-Natura daedala rerun."

And, he considers 'quest for perpetual peace' as a 'paramount human duty' and assesses prospects for peace:

"The quest of perpetual peace at large is no less a paramount and intrinsic human duty today than it was, nor is it at all certain that its final accomplishment is nearer. But the question of its pursuit and of the conditions to be met in seeking this goal lies in a different shape today; and it is this question that concerns the inquiry which is here undertaken, - what are the terms on which peace at large may hopefully be installed and maintained? What, if anything, is there in the present situation that visibly makes for a realization of these necessary terms within the calculable future? And what are the consequences presumably due to follow in the nearer future from the installation of such a peace at large? And the answer to these questions is here sought not in terms of what ought dutifully to be done toward the desired consummation, but rather in terms of those known factors of human behavior that can be shown by analysis of experience to control the conduct of nations in conjunctures of this kind."

I believe the approach to peace would need all the ingenuity and courage we can collectively muster, and much more, including divine guidance and good luck.

⁵ Thorsten Veblen's Preface and his entire book, "An Inquiry into the Nature of Peace and the Terms of its Perpetuation," (The Macmillan Company, 1917), is available on the web:

- http://paradigm.soci.brocku.ca/~lward/Veblen/veblen_01_00.html
- http://paradigm.soci.brocku.ca/~lward/Veblen/veblen_01_toc.html

II

The imperative that we face is implicit in the nature of discourse we manage to pursue. It assumes that we possess the ability to share and exchange knowledge with others across cultures, geography and time. It fails to appreciate the origins of the modern mind and successive stages in the evolution of human cognition and culture. Merlin Donald describes these stages as mimetic, mythic and theoretic⁶:

“Each stage contributed a new layer to the cumulative cognitive-cultural structure of human society. Each continues to occupy a unique cultural niche today, so that all three layers are simultaneously present in fully-modern societies.”

The approaches aimed at seeking understanding and accommodation among citizens (and policy makers) across space, time and cultures are limited to the theoretic layer. The sharing of knowledge, in order to be effective, needs to transcend and engage us with others on all three layers: mimetic, mythic and theoretic. Until this is possible, we are likely to continue to invest in engaging at the theoretic level, thus, confusing the sharing of information with the sharing of meaning and deeper understanding. As it is we are merely in a spectator sport, choosing sides and arguing for our respective teams, unable to appreciate that no matter who wins we all lose. Such is the predicament of current theoretic mindset that dominates our global discourse.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed it well, “Peace between countries must rest on the solid foundation of love between individuals.” The quest for deeper understanding is the true way and to arrive at it would require bringing us together on what unites us as humans.

⁶ Table: Successive Stages in the Evolution of Human Cognition and Culture

Stage	Emergence	Expressive style	Specific forms	Cultural layer
MIMETIC (1st transition)	early hominids, peaking in <u>H. erectus</u> ; 4M - 0.1 Mya	action-metaphor	skill, gesture, mime and imitation	mimetic styles and archetypes
MYTHIC (2nd transition)	sapient humans, peaking in <u>H. sapiens sapiens</u> ; 0.5 Mya - present	language, symbolic thought	oral traditions, mimetic ritual, narrative thought	mythic framework of governance
THEORETIC (3rd transition)	modern institutional culture	external symbolic universe	formalisms, large scale theoretic artifacts, massive external storage	institutionalized paradigmatic thought and invention

Source: Donald, Merlin, “The Cognitive Foundations of Institutional Knowledge,” Working Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Knexus Symposium, Stanford University, July 31 - August 2, 2000 (<http://iis.stanford.edu/docs/knexus/MerlinDonald.pdf>).

The quest for universal wellness is at the heart of achieving a unity at the deeper level of meaning and understanding. Individual wellness, however, is possible through healthy communities and environment that individuals live in. Earl Bakken has taken this to heart as he and the people of Big Island of Hawaii develop their island into a Healing Island⁷.

III

The foundation for developing healthy communities needs to begin with Robert Duncan's observation that "...the key to man's nature was hidden in the larger nature..." The initiatives that we may seek to develop to foster healthy communities would need to advance our:

- Understanding of how beliefs manifest the comprehension of reality and our preferences.
- Ability to build trust through sharing of meaning at all three of the cumulative cognitive-cultural layers of human society: mimetic, mythic and theoretic.
- Engagement with 'larger nature' to facilitate inner healing.
- Interconnectedness and sharing of stories among healthy communities across the world, as we seek to learn from each other
- Commitment to initiatives with potential for helping us transcend to wellness and healthy communities.

There are, to be certain, numerous compelling projects, initiatives and visions in making across the world addressing the challenges to peace that we face in the 21st century. As certain as these actions are likely to lead to the betterment of human kind, it seems equally certain that the seeds sprouting into beliefs and ideology of future storms are also being planted. These would grow into forces that future generations are certain to pay dearly for, if history were to serve as witness.

Can this be avoided? Can the history of the future someday be the history of the past? It is one of the most difficult questions we face, notwithstanding all the progress of human civilization, our knowledge and wisdom to date.

This enormity of challenge, however, is not a reason to not try. There have been successful efforts to coordinate human knowledge, and occasionally successful efforts have been made to coordinate problems humanity has faced: famine, natural disasters and infectious diseases, among others.

Below are ideas for initiating dialogue on the possible actions that a group such as ours may consider in fostering our capability as society for transcendence by inviting next

⁷ Conversations with Earl Bakken, *Alternative Therapies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, March 2000, pp 82- 89.

generation of explorers and pioneers to envision and navigate the shared space of imaginations.

Virtual Twin Towers: A Community of Envisioners

The Twin Towers are no more, however, a strong identification with the images of these towers as globally shared symbols and artifacts has emerged since recent events. It has focused our attention, feelings and hope, and has engaged the largest proportion of humanity for the first time ever since we were first captivated by the views of the earth from the moon taken by the Apollo astronauts. On March 11, 2002, a “Tribute of Light”⁸ illuminated the Lower Manhattan skyline, representing in the words of Gustavo Bonevardi, one of the architects, "a statement or a sign of life." Charlie Samuels⁹ imaginative photograph captures the essence of this statement well.



⁸ Gustavo Bonevardi, one of the architects conveys the spirit of the tribute of light, "We always saw it not so much as a memorial, because when we originally conceived it we were still hoping for people to be rescued. It was seen as a tribute to New York and to the rescue workers and to the spirit of the city, really. An act of defiance always sounds not quite right." Instead, he said, the lights represent "a statement or a sign of life." Source: Lynne Duke, "Six Months After, A Memorial Built On Beams of Light," Washington Post Staff, March 5, 2002; Page C01

⁹ Source: <http://www.charliesamuels.com/>

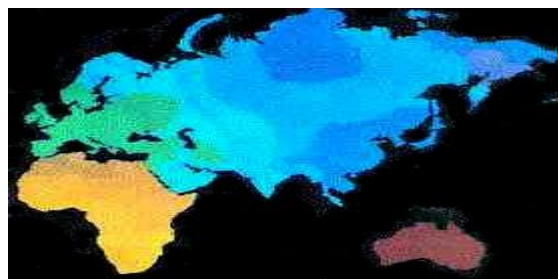
The Virtual Twin Towers would move the instantiations of Twin Towers from matter, to light, to imaginations. Imagination is the space where we are likely to be able to unite first, before we unite in real life. The Virtual Twin Towers would be a place on the Internet for everyone to express their sense of global vision. Everyone, individuals or groups, can have their own space on these Virtual Twin Towers to make their own and share it with others. Tools for creating and sharing text, drawing, murals, symbols, videos, and animations, along with language translation capability, would need to be provided. For those unable to access the Internet there needs to be access available via their local museums and libraries. An initiative such as this is a prerogative of young and old, rich and poor, local and distant across geography and time. It would be best to engage those willing to engage in imagining this together with young people, and to provide them with guidance and advise, as needed, on establishing the computational infrastructure, and its social and cultural institutions. A leading scholarly museum, such as Getty Center could serve as a convener and source of inspiration.

Shared Ancestors: A Community of Genetic Selves

Following the pioneering work of Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza¹⁰ it is now possible to imagine a way to navigate our ancestral genetic past and to identify our common ancestors. Cavalli-Sforza describes below the genetic distance that we share as humans,¹¹

Separation of People	Date	Genetic Distance
Africa and rest of world	100,00 years ago	100
Southeast Asia and Australia	55-60,000 years ago	62
Asia and Europe	35-40,000 years ago	48
Northeast Asia and America	15-35,000 years ago	30

and "The color map of the world shows very distinctly the differences that we know exist among the continents: Africans (yellow), Caucasoids (green), Mongoloids ... (purple), and Australian Aborigines (red)."



¹⁰ Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca, "A Panoramic Synthesis of My Research," presented at the Balzan Price for the Science of Human Origin, 1999. Also, see Steve Olson, "The Genetic Archaeology of Race," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2001

In fact, people are so interested¹² in these ideas that Bryan Sykes, Professor of Human Genetics at the University of Oxford, has launched a for-profit firm: OxfordAncestors.com to help people discover the identity of their ancestral mother, to find the geographic distribution of any surname and to trace male relatives with Y-chromosome analysis. As the cost of mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome analysis drops below \$100 (OxfordAncestors.com¹³ currently charges \$220 per analysis) it becomes affordable to make these analyses available to a large number of people across the world. This affords the possibility in the near future that any two people, or a group of people, may be able to know how many generations ago they shared a common ancestor.

Would a community of genetic selves seeking to know their common ancestors through advancements in Internet and DNA analysis be more at peace with each other? Would science be able to provide a way to create and help foster a belief to support a global community based on kinship? These are questions that are at the forefront of transdisciplinary exploration, as Cavalli-Sforza¹⁴ explains:

“The research of human origins has made it useful or necessary to study parallel events and phenomena in a number of related disciplines, ranging from genetics to paleoanthropology, archeology, ecology, history, demography, sociology, cultural and physical anthropology, linguistics, toponomastics and anthroponymy, and this list will probably increase in the future. ... There are definite advantages in this multidisciplinary. A major one is the intellectual pleasure of finding so many similarities between disparate fields of study, some of which belong traditionally to the two opposite sides of culture: science and the humanities. The unity of scientific method comes out very clearly from such an exercise. It is also clear that many basic paradigms, especially mathematical ones, are extremely useful in many different disciplines, including both sciences and humanities, and are sufficiently few and simple that they can be easily exported from one field to the other. The book on *The Two Cultures* by C.P. Snow has already given reasons for not maintaining the hiatus existing between the two cultures, but little has happened since it was published.”

¹¹ Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza, “The Great Human Diasporas: The History of Diversity and Evolution,” Perseus Books, 1995, page 123.

¹² The Discovery Channel premiered “The Real Eve,” on April 21, 2002, a two-hour special on how one prehistoric woman's mitochondrial DNA has been passed down to every human alive today.

Source: <http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/realeve/feature/feature.html>.

¹³ <http://www.oxfordancestors.com/>

¹⁴ Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca, “A Panoramic Synthesis of My Research,” presented at the Balzan Price for the Science of Human Origin, 1999.

This inquiry offers an unprecedented possibility for exploring the use of technological advancements in the pursuit of peace and yet simultaneously seeks to advance our capability for the transdisciplinary¹⁵ synthesis of knowledge.

IV

How does one decide what one ought to pursue? This question itself can easily generate a lively debate and discussion. It would be worth considering James March's commentary¹⁶ on the pursuit of optimism as he considers Don Quixote's justification:

“We justify what we do, not by belief in its efficacy but by an acceptance of its necessity. ... Don Quixote embraces the foolishness of obligatory action. Justification for knight-errantry lies not in anticipation of effectiveness but in an enthusiasm for the pointless heroics of good life. The celebration of life lies in the pleasure of pursuing the demands of duty.’

Perhaps we would share this call for duty and then again, “Among the miseries (old age, disease, etc.) that justify the search for deliverance, Buddha cites ‘stage fright’! In this regard, you would have to begin and end with the very human fear of being human¹⁷.”

¹⁵ “We were stumbling over the implications and mechanics of various interdisciplinary educational models until Dr. George Kozmetsky introduced the transdisciplinary concept. This concept has provided a light by which we have embarked on the implementation and development of a bold new educational process, the transdisciplinary model for education and research,” in A. Ertas. “The Academy of Transdisciplinary Education and Research (ACTER),” Society for Design Process Science, 2000 (www.sdpsnet.org/journals/vol4-4/academy-2.pdf).

¹⁶ March, James G., “Education and the Pursuit of Optimism,” appears as Chapter 20 in *The Pursuit of Organizational Intelligence*, Blackwell, 1999.

¹⁷ Cioran, E. M., “Drawn and Quartered,” Arcade Publishing, page 72.