

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
**HOW BITCOIN ENDS FIAT'S
DESTRUCTION OF OUR COLLECTIVE
AND INDIVIDUAL NEUROLOGIES**

By Dan Weintraub

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*For Hannah and Eli
May the world become all the quieter
and gentler in your time*

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PART I:
**NEUROLOGICAL
MELTDOWN,
PHYSIOLOGICAL CRASH**



INTRODUCTION

Sitting in my 150 square foot minimalist living space in Boston, sipping homebrewed java and listening to Miles Davis on my little speaker, I am struck by how easy it feels to breathe. I am quiet of heart and mind. My needs seem stunningly few. Contrast that with the clamor and all manner of races to the bottom that are occurring just outside my window, and I am again compelled to reflect upon the ever-diminishing returns vis-a-vis our neurological states in this the so-called age of wealth and innovation.

Truth is, I've been thinking about and writing about this for a while now. I have penned and published several books during the past years on human neuro-physiology, and the place where I have landed in the end – my thesis, if you will – is this: *In Bitcoin we have perhaps our last and best opportunity to arrest and reverse the destruction of our individual and global neurological systems. In Bitcoin we have a chance to save ourselves from... ourselves.*

This essay is in some ways an extension of a piece I penned for my collection of Bitcoin essays that was published this past winter. This particular offering differs from its parent piece in that I have extrapolated far more comprehensively on the original premise,

and included a number of conjecture points aimed at further delineating my argument.

The bottom line is that we are in trouble. Fiat currency is not something we can simply throw out as a bad idea. Fiat currency is the result of centuries of global monetary and financial choices, of paths pursued and roads paved. Fiat money is both reality and memory. We have internalized our global money-as-debt and credit system just as we have internalized belief in church and mosque, in our systems of education, in the very concept of progress itself. But just as the metaphorical frog in an increasingly warming pool of water cannot recognize his plight until it is too late, we seem shockingly blind to the fact that fiat currency's impact upon our neurological systems is patently destructive – we are suffering terribly, and we're too intoxicated, too mesmerized, to recognize our illness.

This *study* is hardly the stuff of rigorous scholarship. My reliance upon data to defend my thesis is minimal. I suppose it's mostly food for thought. And with that disclaimer out of the way, here is what I think:

We are dying, and Bitcoin is perhaps the last hope for our species.



THE BASICS OF NEURO- PHYSIOLOGY

I am not a neuro-scientist. If anything, I am a self-taught dilettante who has explored deeply the expansive universes of neuroscience and neurophysiology during my three-decades-long career as an educator and in my own journey of self-exploration.

What I have come to believe during this time is that our lack of understanding about how we work neuro-physiologically leads us to misunderstand why we do what we do. As I wrote in my book about the neurology of acting like an asshole, *“...we often behave badly because we’re not aware of the power that our neurophysiology holds; we’re not aware of the fact that we get feelings and sensations in our bodies, and in an effort to get rid of those sensations, or in an effort to pursue more of those sensations, we can do some really lousy stuff. While I am not positing that we are utterly powerless to our neuro-physiology, what I am saying is that a lot of bad behavior can be traced to the off-lining of our prefrontal cortices and instead to a misguided attempt to manage our out-of-balance neurological ecosystems...”*

Basically speaking, the complex cocktail of neurotransmitters and hormones that move through and

act upon human systems from moment to moment, in concert with the singular narratives that define our own personal histories, precipitates myriad feelings and impulses. Followingly, and in response to these feelings and impulses (whether consciously or not), human beings act and behave in ways intended to bring them to a place of neurophysiological balance and homeostasis. In other words, we respond to feeling states by undertaking actions (or thinking thoughts, entertaining fantasies, etc.) aimed at either changing such states, enhancing such states, or maintaining such states.

For example, an individual who finds comfort and perceived enjoyment in a hyper-adrenal state of being, and who in contrast finds discomfort in more serotonin-informed states, might seek out activities and behave in ways that trigger an adrenal response and that simultaneously muffle the sensations of supposed well-being precipitated by a surge in serotonin uptake. This individual's homeostatic point of reference, neurologically speaking, demands that she undertake activities, think thoughts, etc. that push the adrenal envelope. We might refer to such a person as an *adrenaline junky*, but in some ways that diminishes the significance and universality of the story. A fairer rendering would be that this person, for reasons entirely unique to her, feels *at home* when she is awash in the sensations precipitated by a release of adrenaline (in concert of course with other bio-physiological processes). And in an often quixotic attempt to reach such a state of being, this person pursues a lifestyle that helps her reach neurological homeostasis.

What I find quite fascinating is that each and every person on this admittedly troubled planet has a unique neurological homeostatic point of reference, and this place of relative balance (home base for them, if you will) is longitudinally determined. In other words, for the overwhelming majority of folks, their default state of comfort is entirely singular to them, and that state of being will not change all that much during their lifetimes. We are, as the saying goes, who we are. Yes, daily meditation practice and other reflective/intentional activities *can* shift our experience in relation to our neuroplastic selves, but even these shifts do not unseat our core from its existential throne – we remain the same neurological and biochemical beings at a most fundamental level. (This is one of the reasons why, in my opinion, our reliance upon psychotherapy and other like practices can be problematic. Therapy as a 21st century construct has many benefits. Becoming an adroit observer of self is a wonderful skill to hone, and therapy helps build this muscle. But therapy does not alter our core, it simply helps us build awareness and construct daily practices aimed at pushing back against behaviors that do not serve us well. In the end though, therapy does not change our neurological center, and our misguided belief that it does can lead to years spent in pursuit of a dream that cannot be realized.)

My primary argument in this book is...

- we, as a species and over generations and even centuries, have seen the emergence, internal-

ization and reification of a generally higher (inflated) homeostatic baseline,

- that this shift over time is the direct result of inflationary monetary practices within a debt and credit based global financial system,
- and that such a shift is literally destroying our nervous systems and our bodies.

Caveat: I recognize that my description of neurological processes above is an eye-rollingly simplistic take on an extraordinarily complex human physiological biome. Such an admission notwithstanding:

1. We are living entities on a constant quest to reach neurological states that feel tolerable and even delightful.
2. More often than not, we move through our lives entirely unaware of this neuro-physiological imperative.
3. As a species, our neurological tolerance levels, our demands for increasing stimulation, have grown to a point where, like sentient coral reefs in a warming neurological sea, we are slowly but surely reeking havoc on our nervous systems – and in doing so, we are simultaneously destroying the bodies that house our conscious and unconscious selves.



AN INFLATIONARY HISTORY: NEURO-PHYSIOLOGICAL EXCITATION RUN AMUCK

Inflation is a compelling construct. We tend to associate inflation with issues surrounding currency, overall money supply, cost of goods, etc. But the general idea of inflation can be assigned value in myriad other and ancillary realms. In this case, when I refer to inflationary neuro-physiological dynamics, I am suggesting that, existing parallel to the inflationary nature of our credit-debt fiat monetary system, is an inflation of the stimulatory needs humans experience vis-a-vis reaching neurological homeostasis.

I'm sure many of you reading this have seen the Seth MacFarlane film *A Million Ways to Die in the West*. As a devotee of slapstick humor, and as someone who has yet to figure out how to grow up (I'm almost 60 and my favorite stars of the grand stage are Beavis, Butthead and Johnny Knoxville.), I absolutely adored *A Million Ways to Die in the West*. Anyway, there's a funny scene in the movie during which two of the main characters see kids rolling hoops through the streets of a dusty, downtrodden late-19th century western town. The dialog goes like this:

Edward: "I see kids everywhere with those stick-hoops lately."

Albert: "Me too. It's gotta be bad for their brains, right?"

Edward: "Ya, it stunts their attention span. I read an article in the paper."

Albert: "Ya I saw that. It's like they lose the power to innovate because they're staring at the stick hoop all day."

Edward: "Yup."

This brief scene is a satirical knock on my boomer generation's claims about kids and screen time. And for the purposes of this investigation, I am looking at the stick hoop example through the lens of neurological stimulation. My argument is that human beings have, over generations and centuries, experienced an ever-growing increase in both the need for, and the manner of delivery, of neurological stimulation.

Admission: I clearly have little to no empirical data to defend such a supposition. There is no 500-year-long study of human neurological shifts about which I am aware and to which I can refer. And human dynamics being as they are, the complexity of the human condition is difficult to quantify. My argument therefore is based upon conjecture and anecdotal evidence.

Consider as but one paradigm the changes that have occurred over the past several centuries with regard to work and leisure under the umbrella of technological change. What was a day-in-the-life of an average young adult like in the United States, say, 150 years ago - in 1872? There was schooling for some,

work for others. In rural America, a majority of time was spent outdoors. America was on the verge of embarking upon a second Industrial Revolution, with the advent of steel and fossil fuel industries coming to the fore, and yet virtually all of life was lived in analog terms – the existential accelerant of digitization was still generations away.

People being people, there was of course all manner of activity and drama that served to excite the nervous systems of those whose neurological baseline demanded such stimulation. But my contention is that time-relative dynamics predicted a lower threshold for nervous system stimulation, and that this lower threshold exacted a less destructive toll on our neuro-physiologies than that which we experience today. Where our forebears of centuries past may have found sufficient endorphin access from a walk in the woods, today we need to run marathons in order to experience the same feeling-states on our psyches and bodies; where our great great great grandfather may have hit the metaphorical dopamine and adrenaline pipe by heading out into the wilderness to track a mountain lion, today his progeny dons the VR goggles for days on end and heads out into the universe to do battle with Creoitian Flooken-shirps in order to feel...something...*anything*.

Examples of such acceleration and concentration in the nature of stimulation are endless. And yet my primary argument centers not so much around one particular dynamic (though accelerating technologies – literally, technologies that make us go faster – and our subsequent reliance upon them is perhaps a

compelling piece of the puzzle) as being the culprit, but more upon the multitude of impact-points that monetary inflation has had on society at large.

In a nutshell, when money became either relationally-diluted or entirely decoupled from a regulating commoditized standard (gold, for example), or more significantly when credit money became the standard by which societies operated, and when this ever-expanding money supply led to a concomitant increase in both the numbers of wealthy individuals per capita and the sheer levels of wealth to which these folks acceded, entire societies began to experience a slow but steady increase in the kinds and numbers of assets that these people desired (*needed?*) in order to reach their increasingly heightened levels of neurological homeostasis.

Again, by way of example: go to any affluent suburb around Boston (or in any major metropolitan area for that matter), drive around for a few hours with someone who grew up there, and you will hear the same story over and over again – all of the old houses have been torn down, and in their stead have arisen what would just a generation or two ago have been considered ungodly mansions, monuments to excess and avarice.

This is not just run of the mill “keeping up with the Joneses” types of behavior (though that does surely play a part in this story). In order to experience an acceptable level of neurological stimulation, people today buy more and bigger and faster things – they *have* to, just to feel OK (and they can, in light of their ability to access increasing millions of Fed-conjured dol-

lars). And while this economic dynamic is lauded by many as a virtuous cycle – a cycle that has produced wealth and a higher standard of living, a world of innovation and societal advancement – my argument is that, because we as a species haven't evolved physiologically at a speed that parallels such neuro-stimulatory acceleration, that our collective nervous systems are shot; and with a damaged nervous system comes all manner of physical and mental illness.

We are sick and getting sicker, and fiat money is to blame.



THE HISTORY OF CREDIT AND DEBT MONEY

I am not going to spend too much time describing a dynamic that has been aptly recounted by a multitude of scholars over the past decades. Here is the basic gist:

Prior to the Commercial Revolution, commodities like gold served as both stores of value and as currencies. But while gold could be standardized into like-sized and weighted coins, it was a bit unwieldy and awkward to employ in the marketplace.

Some artisans – the folks who created these standardized units of account – held gold in their vaults. They also in time rented out space in their vaults to other townspeople, and issued receipts against the gold they held. Over the course of decades, these receipts on gold became a trusted form of currency, and thus became transactable for goods and services in the marketplace.

In time these artisans (whose vaults contained theirs and others' gold) came to recognize that, since no one really checked to see how much gold was actually in the vault, they could issue more claim checks (paper money) against gold that wasn't theirs. They even started issuing paper money against gold that

didn't exist at all, and lending out that paper money (credit) to commercial ventures and agents of government. And thus, our current system of credit and debt, of modern fractional reserve banking, was born.

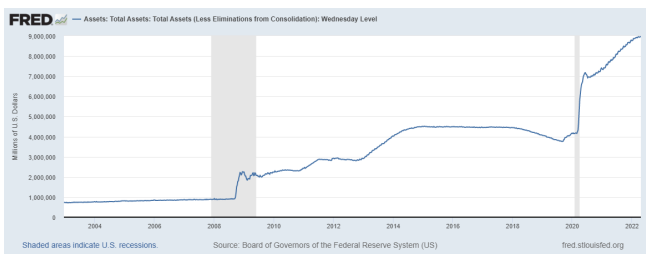
My description above admittedly lacks nuance and detail. But for the sake of this piece, the evolution of modern money (which I peg to the moment in time leading up to the Commercial Revolution) serves as the inception point for our slow but steady mass neurological disintegration. This is the moment at which the human need for increased stimulation, based upon access to an increase in purchasing power and a concomitant expansion of certain asset classes, oh so imperceptibly moves us toward the neurological meltdown that I posit results directly from access to too much credit-capital.



MODERN FIAT'S ROLE IN GROWTH AND EXPANSION

When I refer to modern fiat currency, I am pointing directly at the post-1971 reserve dollar era, the fifty-plus years since Nixon's default on the promises of Bretton Woods' obligations and the decoupling of the dollar from gold. It is during this era that we have witnessed an expansion of the money supply – driven in large part by the acceptance of the functional premises articulated and asserted by proponents of Modern Monetary Theory and owing to the inflationary actions of central bankers and banks who rescued Wall Street and its international equivalents from all manner of fiscal and financial malfeasance.

Again, since you are reading this my assumption is you don't need a lesson, replete with a bunch of charts and graphs, showing you how the Fed has expanded its balance sheet over the past two decades. This is common knowledge among those of us who study and are interested in this stuff. However, in an effort to further illustrate my argument (the parallel nature of monetary expansion and neurological disintegration), here's one relevant chart from the St. Louis Fed:



Get the picture?

And here's the thing: I'm not penning this piece as an excoriation of the Cantillon Effect that accompanies monetary inflation, and the attendant rise in wealth and purchasing power of the top 1% in contrast to the rest of us. That's old news, and it's been hashed and rehashed by Bitcoiners and Goldbugs alike. My point, consistent with the central argument of this essay, is that our collective neurological health stands in inverse relationship to the expansion of the Fed's balance sheet (as an expression of global inflationary monetary policies) as seen above; that we get sicker and sicker as accommodating monetary policy creates more and more wealth, because such wealth drives up not simply the demand/cost of assets but more importantly the existential need for such assets in maintenance of a neurological status quo.

In other words, as money and credit become easier to access, and as people become conditioned to the stimulatory impact of spending more, accumulating more, consuming more, building bigger, driving faster, etc., the *sicker* we become – not because spending and accumulation are somehow evil or immoral or any other such meaning-making analyses, but simply because our nervous systems cannot metabolize

the ever-increasing stimuli produced by such activity; that both access to credit/capital and the need for more and more neurological stimulation just to feel normal is damaging to our fragile neurological eco-systems, and thus to our bodies.



DOV RONEN AND THE EXPONENTIAL AGE

In the summer of 1981 I took two classes at Harvard Summer School. I can barely remember either, though I do recall professor Dov Ronen. In particular, I remember an argument he posited regarding human physiological evolution and the changes occurring with regard to technology. His contention was that humans are not able to evolutionarily keep up with the pace of technological change.

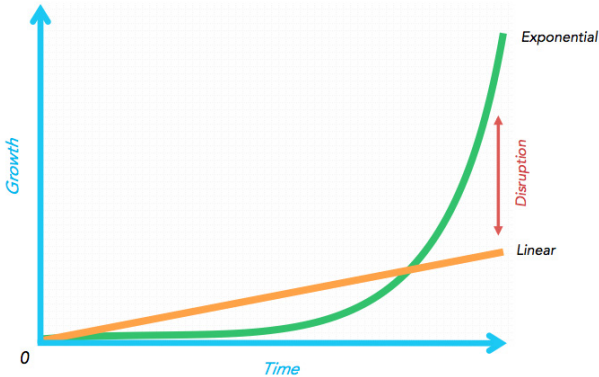
It's kind of funny. 1981 *today* seems like the dark ages. But compared to 1950, 1981 was like living out Star Trek in real time.

If I were able to chat with Professor Ronen today (he died this past summer) I would probably agree with his general position, though I would point directly at the human nervous system as the primary point of evolutionary dislocation.

Physiologically, humans haven't changed much (lactose intolerance anyone?). In contrast, systemic input has changed dramatically. Our nervous systems were not built for (have not evolved to be able to metabolize) the kind of data input we are experiencing. Now add to this global human biome, this ever-shifting

cocktail, the onset of an age of exponential change, and you have a recipe for disaster.

Simply put, change (technological, etc.) is increasing at an exponential rate, and it's too much for us to process.



(Image: Kris Ostergaard)

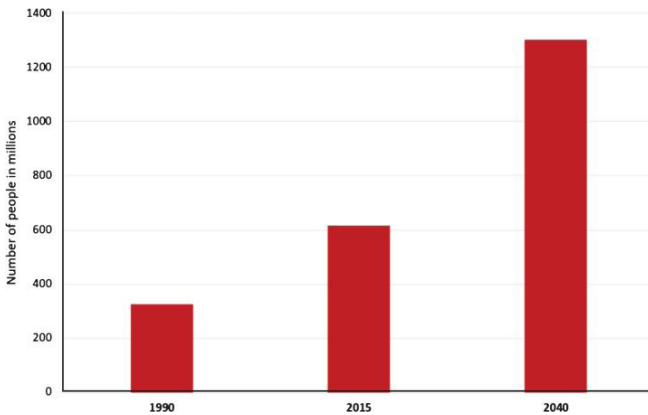
Our nervous systems cannot handle the load. Moreover, our bodies cannot metabolize the kinds of pressures and inputs that our sympathetic nervous system is placing on us. Our heart muscles have not evolved to process that much adrenaline and cortisol. Our brains have not evolved to cope with the surges and drops in dopamine levels caused by all manner of systemic input. We're not built for these dramatic shifts, and it's showing up in myriad ways.



WHY THE RISE IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND OTHER NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS?

"...From 1990 to 2015, the number of people living with Parkinson's more than doubled from 2.6 million to 6.3 million, according to a 2015 study in Lancet Neurology. By 2040, the number is projected to double again to at least 12.9 million..." (American Scientist)

Researchers at the NIH opine, "...The Parkinson pandemic is fueled by aging populations, increasing longevity, declining smoking rates, and the by-products of industrialization..."



(nih.gov)

Also from the *Journal of Parkinson's* is the following: "...According to the Global Burden of Disease study, neurological disorders are currently the leading source of disability around the world..."

Finally, Jennie Smith titles her piece (in JAMA Neurology, Neurology Reviews): *Neurologic disorders ubiquitous and rising in the U.S.* Her analyses include reference to the rising incidence of such disorders/diseases as PD, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and myriad headache disorders.

What the heck is going on?? Why over the past half century have we seen such a dramatic uptick in these diseases?

Neurological disorders are, by the very nature, extraordinarily complex and challenging to pin down. We are just beginning to understand how our brains and nervous systems function. Despite this complexity, we do appear to know a few things:

From *MDEdge*: "...Research suggests that stressful life events may increase the risk of Parkinson's disease. In addition, animal studies indicate that stress damages dopamine cells, resulting in more severe parkinsonian symptoms. In humans, acute stress can worsen motor symptoms, including bradykinesia, freezing, and tremor..."

So, let's take a super brief look at stress.

Neuro-physiologically and generally speaking, stress is expressed in an over-production and hyper-abundance of cortisol and adrenaline. Simply put, too much cortisol and too much adrenaline damages our nervous systems *and* many of our autonomic systems (heart function, pulmonary function, etc.).

My belief is that our bodies are being bombarded by ever-increasing levels of (among other hormones/NT's) cortisol and adrenaline, that this derives directly from living under a centuries-old inflationary monetary regime, and that it is killing us...literally.

On the Dopamine front: "...Parkinson's disease symptoms mainly result from low or falling levels of dopamine, a neurotransmitter. It happens when cells that produce dopamine die in the brain. Dopamine plays a role in sending messages to the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination..." (Medical News Today)

While there are many theories as to what precipitates falling dopamine levels in Parkinson's sufferers, one theory that has seemingly yet to be explored in depth is the idea that it's not that dopamine levels

are falling per se, but that higher and higher levels of dopamine are required in order for the symptoms of PD not to arise. In other words, we're perhaps looking at the wrong data when exploring the root cause of supposed dopamine depletion.

Remember this from a recent *Star Trek* movie?

Scotty: The notion of transwarp beaming is like trying to hit a bullet with a smaller bullet whilst wearing a blindfold, riding a horse.

[Spock writes something on Scotty's computer terminal.]

Scotty: What's that?

Spock: Your equation for achieving transwarp beaming.

Scotty: Get out of it... [reads the equation and gapes] Imagine that! It never occurred to me to think of space as the thing that was moving!

Perhaps it's not simply that dopamine levels are dropping. Perhaps the accumulation of PD-productive environmental variables, in concert with an increasing neuro-physiological tolerance due to years of dramatic neurological inputs, means an overall rise in the baseline for healthy dopamine levels. In other words, maybe we are seeing a rise in such disorders in part because our bodies are demanding more and more from systems that simply cannot keep up.

Again, I *of course* stipulate that my observations are not the stuff of rigorous scientific study. And with regard to my conjecture vis-a-vis dopamine and its role in Parkinson's Disease, I am speaking to a potential dynamic rather than observing and analyz-

ing a series of brain scans and associated data. But here's the thing: one needs only a cursory glance at the world around them, and it becomes reasonable to extrapolate that the rise of neurological disorders, increasing at a seemingly exponential pace over the past thirty years, in some manner tracks in parallel to the inflationary actions of an out-of-control global banking system.

We are living within a serially messed up human biome, and I believe loose money is a root cause of our distress.



ANOTHER TAKE ON THE OPIOID CRISIS – STRONGER MEDS TO SUPPRESS DAMAGED NERVOUS SYSTEMS

Lest you live under a metaphorical rock, I'm certain you have heard myriad accounts of the ongoing opioid crisis that is ravaging both urban and rural areas of the U.S.

Here's my take.

The explosion in opioid use/abuse is not simply a function of the addictive nature of these substances. It's not just a natural response to the difficulties that so many individuals are experiencing in a world in which diminishing hope and opportunity are rampant. The exponential increase in opioid abuse and attendant overdoses is, in my opinion, a direct function of people's self-preservational instincts vis-a-vis their damaged nervous systems. In other words, the surge in opioid use/abuse is a logical and entirely understandable response to a world in which monetary inflation (as expressed not only in rising costs and

falling wage regimes, but as increasing neurological tolerance levels and concomitant increases in stimulatory inputs) has at the same time it has undermined the hopes of main street also elevated the need for neurological stimulation to the point of damaging excess.

Here's how opioids work: "...Opioids bind to opioid receptors. When opioids attach to these receptors, the interaction triggers a series of chemical changes between neurons that lead to simultaneous pleasure and pain relief... The human body naturally produces endogenous opioids which function like hormones and activate opioid receptors in the brain. For example, endorphins are endogenous opioids. When endorphins interact with opioid receptors in the brain, you feel euphoric, elated, and free of pain. When opioid medication and heroin interact with opioid receptors, they can also lead to euphoria and feelings of intense pleasure..." (pronghornpsych)

Simplistically then, synthetic opioids act on the brain in a manner that simulates the action of endogenous opioid peptides and that artificially precipitate the release of dopamine. Of course there are potentially catastrophic unintended impacts of opioid use, from addiction to suppression of autonomic systems leading to death.

Consistent with my thesis however, opioid use/abuse is accelerating – both the sheer number of users *and* the intensity level of the substances themselves, substances such as "...Fentanyl, [which] is a synthetic opioid that is 80-100 times stronger than morphine..." (DEA) – because our nervous systems

are so damaged, that increasingly dramatic steps must be taken by people in order to find any measure of relief.

Fiat currency is the perp. Oxy's are the cure.



MENTAL HEALTH TAKES A HOLIDAY

“...Between 2017 and 2018, 19% of adults experienced a mental illness, an increase of 1.5 million adults with mental illnesses from the previous year. Rates of depression increased by 52% between 2005 and 2017 among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years old...” (Banyan Mental Health)

*“...Suicidal ideation continues to increase among adults in the U.S. 4.58% of adults report having serious thoughts of suicide, an increase of 664,000 people from last year’s dataset. The national rate of suicidal ideation among adults has increased every year since 2011-2012. This was a larger increase than seen in last year’s report and is a concerning trend to see going into the COVID-19 pandemic...”
(Mental Health America)*

“...More Americans than ever before are suffering from mental and emotional distress, according to a new study... The study, published in the journal Psychiatric Services, used data from census interviews to estimate that 3.4% of the U.S. population, or more than 8 million Americans, suffer from serious psychological distress...” (Health.com 2017)

“...For 2017 this study estimates that 792 million people lived with a mental health disorder. This is slightly more than one in ten people globally (10.7%)...”

The statistics are chilling. You *know* what I think.

PART II:
**MORE (DECAYING) FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

- Fiat money feeds our insatiable appetite for more and more adrenaline and dopamine hits, just as it feeds our insatiable need for more and more stuff.
- Technology and technology application has devolved into a cesspool, a race to the bottom in which he/she who can profit the most, garner the most clicks, bullshit the best, wins the game.
- Our societal need for increasing speed – *adrenaline* – is turning us into a heart attack nation. “...Not long ago, heart attacks were primarily a problem faced by older adults. It was rare for anyone younger than 40 to have a heart attack. Now 1 in 5 heart attack patients are younger than 40 years of age. Here’s another troubling fact to highlight the problem: Having a heart attack in your 20s or early 30s is more common. Between the years 2000-2016, the heart attack rate increased by 2% every year in this young age group...” (Cardio Metabolic Institute)
- Fiat money turns the world into one big casino – as more money is printed, assets are bid to the moon, and the only people who are left behind are...ummm...the *majority* of EVERYONE. “...Ownership of stock is concentrated among those with higher incomes. That is hardly a surprise as investing in stocks or mutual funds requires money. Some 92% of those in the top 10% of the income ladder owned stock

in 2019 compared to 56% of those considered middle class. When it comes to owning stocks directly, families in the top 10% of earnings accounted for 44% compared to only 12% of the middle class and 5% of those in the bottom quintile..." (U.S. News)

- Social Media is where the truth goes to die — all that matters are likes and clicks. Dis and mis information reign supreme. Vampires and Zombies are the apex predators in this land of the lost.
- If we close our eyes hard enough, it'll all just go away. Or more accurately, what do I care? The Fed just eased policy again, and I'm on easy street. "...In 2018, 38.1 million people were in poverty. Or at least that's the number the U.S. Census Bureau has calculated. For decades now, researchers and advocates have argued that the official number is much too low. Using more complex measures of economic insecurity and the costs facing low-income households, one study found that at least 3.2 million more people should be classified as being "in poverty" based on inflation changes alone; another analysis found that almost 51 million households struggle to pay for basic necessities such as food, housing, and health care. The way poverty is measured isn't just a technical question but also a moral one. It has significant consequences for how many families receive assistance—and how many are left behind..." (American Progress) *Editorial Note:*

this study preceded COVID-19 and the current spike in inflation. Poverty is the worst form of violence (Gandhi), and violence of this nature destroys nervous systems as it destroys lives.

PART III:
THE CURE



HOW BITCOIN ARRESTS AND REVERSES THE CYCLE – WE MUST TRUST TO HOPE

So the sixty-four quadrillion dollar question (yes, inflation hits home here too) is, how does Bitcoin save us?

First, a hyperbitcoinized world means a world in which money is not subject to the whim and will of the would-be money printers. Money printing (loose monetary policies, et al) are undertaken for many reasons. We have all studied history. We recognize the social, political and economic conditions that have precipitated monetary expansion in the past: paying for wars of ideology and aggression, bailing out the bad actors of investment bank malfeasance who thrived under a corrupt regulatory regime, the rise of pandemic economics, etc. Under a Bitcoin standard, such actions would not be possible.

So, is this actually a *good* thing?

Many would argue – and I count some of my dearest friends among these voices – that the lack of ability on the part of central banks to respond to social and economic forces by expanding or contracting the money supply would be disastrous. Neo-classi-

calists and MMTers would argue that such structures would not allow for amelioration of busts and attenuation of the distressing impact of economic downturns, etc. And truth be told, I'm not here to argue the efficacy or accuracy of such concerns. I, like everyone else, cannot see into the future and predict with 100% surety what will come to pass. But here is what I *can* say:

- A lack of ability to simply print away social and political dilemmas will mean entering an era in which these issues must be confronted, honestly. What a novelty!
- When the printing presses cease, it's a *Truman Show* moment. Everyone awakens from the somnambulance of generations of central bank operations and realizes, in some manner, we're all in this together.
- A fixed currency - uninflatable, uncensorable, immutable – means the return of trust and belief in whatever systems emerge. If we suffer and struggle when trust *doesn't* exist, think of how life-affirming (neurologically!!) things are in a world of truth.
- Pursuant to my general argument, a world in which the money supply cannot be gamed, inflated and manipulated means the emergence of a world of consumptive temperance and humility. In this world, value (over time) becomes denominated not in monetary terms but in relational terms. In such a world, nervous

systems quiet down, bodies heal...and a species is saved.

Secondly, because all of our perceptions and beliefs exist within our current paradigm (reality), and because that paradigm creates and gives life to such perceptions and beliefs, Bitcoin asks us to enter the void together, as one species. How delightful! Fathoming what life would be like in a world in which money as a unit of exchange was neither inflationary nor weaponized, because we have always lived under a monetary regime that *is* inflationary, that *is* weaponized, is near impossible. But the promise of such a verdant and clean future is also impossible to ignore. And truth be known, simply the possibility of such an existence is enough to begin the healing process. Just like the terribly ill addict who steps into the halls of AA for the first time, hope precipitates a quite beautiful internal experience.

You see, in a Bitcoin world behaviors would shift, beliefs would shift – and as collective memory faded and gave way to a new set of norms surrounding money and profit and spending and accumulation and consumption, new ways of meeting existential needs would emerge. To argue that an inability to manipulate the money supply would precipitate cataclysmic economic depression is to ignore the fact that, under an entirely new reality, money would take on an entirely new set of meanings.

Many reading this treatise will view my words as a condemnation of capitalism, perhaps even as a threat to their own wealth and accumulation. And while I *do* believe that consumption and accumu-

lation are balms that only temporize the existential pain that arrives with being human, my point is not that consumption is patently bad. No, my argument is that we are a runaway consumptive train, fueled by a seemingly unlimited supply of fuel, but unaware that, as a species, we are running out of track. Our internal systems are breaking down. We are sick and getting sicker. And still we feed the engine and, eyes closed in a haze of printed dollars and Euros and Yen and Yuan, speed toward the chasm.

Bitcoin gently puts on the brakes, awakens us from our toxic slumber, and reminds us that our nervous systems, our lives, are more precious than the trillions promised us by the reality brokers who run our central banks.

Remember, this book was penned based upon the premise that centuries of credit and debt, of inflationary monetary policies, have precipitated a literal (*not* metaphorical) meltdown of human neurological systems; that we stand on the cusp of disintegration as a species because we have created a monster – the beast of fiat money – and it is consuming us from the inside out.

And so finally, why Bitcoin?

It's simple really. The Bitcoin network is community, is human relationship incarnate, strengthened in truth and reinforced in verified trust by each and every participant. While many may view Bitcoin through a lens of dollars, of profits, the truth is that Bitcoin, when fully realized, is the vehicle that moves

us *all* back to community. You see, this pristine monetary network is far, far more than money – it is love.

And nothing in this universe is more productive of neurological health, than love.



BACK TO THE GARDEN

Woodstock
Joni Mitchell

*I came upon a child of God
He was walking along the road
And I asked him where are you going
And this he told me
I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm *
I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band
I'm going to camp out on the land
I'm going to try and get my soul free
We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden
Then can I walk beside you
I have come here to lose the smog
And I feel to be a cog in something turning
Well maybe it is just the time of year
Or maybe it's the time of man
I don't know who I am
But you know life is for learning
We are stardust
We are golden*

*And we've got to get ourselves
 Back to the garden
 By the time we got to Woodstock
 We were half a million strong
 And everywhere there was song and celebration
 And I dreamed I saw the bombers
 Riding shotgun in the sky
 And they were turning into butterflies
 Above our nation
 We are stardust
 Billion year old carbon
 We are golden
 Caught in the devil's bargain
 And we've got to get ourselves
 back to the garden*

The garden to which Joni referred in her 1960's homage to The Woodstock generation was both metaphor and reality: a life of innocence, and Max Yasgur's farm! In a Bitcoin world, we get ourselves back to the garden, not necessarily of innocence, but of the spirit of the child.

A new born child possesses a nervous system that, for all intent and purpose, is pure. While she has surely absorbed some of the feelings and neurological manifestations of her mother's day-to-day experiences during gestation, and while she arrives wired for life in an entirely unique manner, she is the proverbial uncarved block; she has no need to tweak her internal experience to reach neurological homeostasis, because arrives in a state of balance.

Her moments of need are pure as well: hunger, physical discomfort, the need for touch.

Bitcoin gets us back to the garden because it slows everything down, so much so that, over time, our neurological needs shift; shift away from adrenaline and cortisol, and toward serotonin and oxytocin; shift away from intensity and consumption, and toward love and community. This was the promise of Woodstock, though as I described in my piece on the dialectic, such a promise can never be realized without a change in memory and a breaking of fiat's nefarious hold on the dialectical cycle. (*See appendix.*)

In a very literal sense, in a Bitcoin world we all get back to the garden because we eschew the rat race and life in the digital for time spent back in nature, in the analog. In nature our bodies quiet, our nervous systems slow down, our needs shift away from speed and toward the simple gestures of sensory experience: taste, touch, sound, smell and sight.

PART IV:
APPENDIX I

FIAT MONEY AS DIALECTIC MONOLITH, BITCOIN AS BENEVOLENT SOLUTION

By Dan Weintraub

"...Hegel's dialectic process exhibits a triadic movement.

Usually this triadic structure of the dialectic process is described as a movement from thesis to antithesis and finally to a synthesis, after which the synthesis becomes a new thesis and this process continues until it ends in the Absolute Idea..." (Charles T. McGruder, Ph.D.)

Fiat money is monolithic. Since it is centrally orchestrated and manipulated, it always exists as an extension of the will of those in power. It matters not *who* is in power. It matters not what ideologies those in power adhere to, with what governmental structures they identify, etc. The money – its supply, its dissemination, its authority – answers to them and them alone. Thus fiat money is monolithic, just as the powers who pull the levers of monetary control are monoliths as well.

Generally speaking, within Hegel's vision of a dialectical triad, two sides clash, come into conflict: the establishment (thesis) and those pushing back against the establishment (antithesis). This is a seemingly age-old dynamic. We see it in play in all countries and with regard to myriad social movements. As but one example of the aforementioned premise, in 1960s America a challenge to the prevailing societal norm arose that today we fondly recollect as the Woodstock or hippie generation. This push back (antithesis) centered on concerns over paradigmatically particular political and social issues (The Viet-

nam War, The Civil Rights Movement, The Women's Rights Movement, etc.); but in all likelihood, had not *those* issues existed at the fore of the American political and social economy, other concerns would have been identified and served as fodder for rejection of the status quo (thesis). This tension is not simply generational in nature, though there often exists, at its core, a generational quality to the rejection of particular norms and values.

On the surface this all seems innocuous enough. Young people question the values and belief systems of the older generations, with the inherent tension playing a central role in the evolution of new and seemingly more “progressive” (non-ideologically) societal norms and frames of reference. And so the two sides butt heads, and in time, and with a certain amount of struggle, a new thesis emerges (synthesis); and this new way of doing things in turn becomes the object of even new challenges and rejections, and around and around we go.

This may seem like normal generational stuff: the new replacing the old, and so on. Unfortunately and in fact disastrously, fiat money perverts and poisons this apparently natural process. Indeed, fiat money prohibits the evolution and emergence of the Absolute Idea, of a new reality. Society remains stuck in an endless loop of exploitation and power-grabbing. The hippies become the stock brokers, *ad infinitum*.

Bitcoin *is* the Absolute Idea.

When a new thesis is born – when over time those struggling against the prevailing powers and norms

end up succeeding in supplanting the status quo and creating a new intellectual and existential frame of reference – those blazing the trail in this emergent way of being have always been seduced and intoxicated by the power of money. Just as Isildur couldn't end the reign of Sauron by undertaking the seemingly simple act of tossing the ring of power into the fires of Mount Doom (and thus breaking the dialectic cycle), so too have those who acceded to power within the seemingly revolutionary and emerging paradigm been seduced by the power of monetary control. (Here I am speaking of fiat money, but a review of the history of money shows us how debasement of currency and extension of credit and attendant profiteering has been a civilizational force for millennia.) In other words and once again, the hippies become the Wall street bankers.

This is not natural, despite our efforts to explain and rationalize it as such. We have created all manner of social constructs to explain away the emerging structure's remnant addiction to fiat money and power. "...It's fine to be liberal and idealistic when you're young, but once you're older and have responsibilities and children and what not, being liberal is just immaturity..." And so forth.

"...In Hegel's system the concept of the absolute idea expresses the ultimate synthesis, the fundamental principle of reality..." (B.S. Rabbot)

Bitcoin decouples the dialectic from the monetary realm. In a hyperbitcoinized world, money is no longer an expression of power. The thesis is challenged by the antithesis based upon classical liberal values,

but the emerging thesis is not in time co-opted by the Siren of fiat. The values persist! Indeed, the first generation to live in a fully Bitcoinized world will also be the first generation to have no frame of reference vis-a-vis the weaponization and steroidization of money.

Here's where things get dicey. Those of us who are around now for the birth of Bitcoin view Sats, despite our best efforts to not do so, through the filter of dollar-denomination. We are psychically tainted. We are the sons and daughters of a fiat-informed reality, and breaking free from such identification is perhaps not possible. Our *choice* to push back against the current thesis (fiat money) may over time lead to a hyperbitcoinized world, but our reality, our frame of reference, will still be of a world in which dollars (Euros, RNB, etc.) reigned supreme. In other words, our ability (Actually, not MY ability. I'm a Boomer. I'll be dead and gone long before this nexus moment arrives.) to completely disentangle ourselves from the age-old thesis of fiat may be very hard to attain.

If however, as a species, we are somehow able to end *not only* fiat money as an institution, but as importantly fiat money as a *memory*, and if we are somehow able to become the Bitcoin world so many hope for, we will have reached the ultimate synthesis; we will have reached the ultimate truth, reality itself. For Bitcoin – that extraordinary protocol, that beautiful and perfectly immutable, uncensorable, intermediaryless, borderless, permissionless unit of account and exchange – is reality and truth incarnate.

In a truly Bitcoinized world, money can no longer be leveraged as a source of power, because the network is weakened by those seeking to exploit it for riches and strengthened by those seeking mutuality and self-sovereign communitarianism. And in time, as this norm becomes ingrained in the psyches of people and communities the world over, those seeking power and gain will be viewed as a puzzling anachronism, zombies of a bygone age that no longer holds any meaning in the collective memory of the species.

This is why I believe that it will take generations, centuries, for Bitcoin to be fully realized. Not until the dialectic triad is broken with regard to fiat money will Bitcoin become the Absolute Idea, that internalized reality, that will save humanity from its own worst self.

BITCOIN AS A NEW NEUROLOGICAL POINT OF REFERENCE (Original Piece)

By Dan Weintraub

We measure everything, the entirety of our existences, in monetary terms. In this regard, humans have commoditized being human. Nothing is sacred. Whether it be love, parenthood, music, art, health and wellness, intellect, spirituality; nothing is immune from this ubiquitous frame of reference. Indeed, even those Bitcoin seers and maximalists, people I respect and admire, the Michael Saylor and Max Keisers and Jack Mallers of the world – all argue the efficacy and eventuality and inexorability of Bitcoin from this shared frame of reference.

How did this happen? How did we as a species evolve in this manner?

Simply put, this happened because humans succumbed, from the proverbial beginning, to the neuro-physiological imperative to experience the good feelings that derive from the primacy of six neurotransmitters and hormones: dopamine, adrenaline, oxytocin, serotonin, endorphins and norepinephrine.

Human beings are feelings machines. We are epigenetically programmed, physiologically compelled, to feel good. Every aspect of our humanity is driven by this conscious and unconscious quest. And money – money as an expression of wealth, power, sexual authority and prowess, security, excitement, attention, etc. – evolved as the ultimate vehicle toward experiencing the good feelings precipitated by physiological access to dopamine, adrenaline, oxytocin, serotonin,

and norepinephrine. Indeed, the entirety of human history, of human endeavor, can be viewed through the lens of such physiological imperatives.

It's no wonder then that we live in an endlessly inflationary world, a world in which debt and credit, controlled by the operations of central banks, keep us like rats at the sugar cube. I apologize for the use of the following language, but the reality is, the truth is, that we are slaves to our neuro-physiology; we have been since the incipience of civilization.

So, how does Bitcoin alter this truth? Well, in and of itself, it doesn't. In every corner of the emergent and evolving Web 3.0 ecosystem, the conversations, the proclamations, the predictions, all still center around commoditization. Whether discussing Bitcoin (in particular) as a store of value, a hedge against inflation, hard money, whatever, the unifying frame of reference continues to surround our incredibly human, and painfully ignorant and quixotic and desperate quest to access the same melange of neuro-transmitters and hormones mentioned above. Store of value = security and safety = serotonin and dopamine. Bitcoin as gold and 10X asset = wealth and excitement = adrenaline and dopamine. I'm gonna get laid because I'm so rich = well, you get the point.

So based upon my thesis you might be wondering, how is Bitcoin really any different? How does Bitcoin compel us to become a different species?

One of my favorite moments from the Star Trek movie industry occurs in the film FIRST CON-

TACT. If you're geeky like me, you'll recall the storyline: Picard and crew need to travel back in time in order to undo what the Borg have done, and in doing so allowing Zephraim Cochrane the chance to pilot the very first warp drive ship and thus to make first contact with extraterrestrials.

In the film *Lily*, a woman living in the 21st century, has inadvertently ended up on the Enterprise. She and Captain Picard engage in the following discourse:

Captain Jean-Luc Picard : The economics of the future are somewhat different. You see, money doesn't exist in the 24th century.

Lily Sloane : No money? You mean you don't get paid?

Captain Jean-Luc Picard : The acquisition of wealth is no longer the driving force in our lives. We work to better ourselves and the rest of humanity. Actually, we're rather like yourself and Dr. Cochrane.

How does this happen? What transformation takes place in the intervening centuries that moves humanity away from money as an access point to neurological fulfillment? Well, one can certainly extrapolate. Perhaps it's as simple as taking a pill; a pill that alters human consciousness in a way that changes the actions needed to access the feel-good stuff. (Of course the dystopian in me sees all of the pitfalls of such engineering. And of course, this is just a story, a fantasy, based upon our current understanding of all things.)

Bitcoin offers an answer to this question.

Bitcoin offers humanity a way out of our neurological madness because it represents immutable and inalterable truth; because this truth is relational, and exists between individual parties.

Bitcoin literally, over generations and evolutionarily, moves us away from our need for greater intensity-identified stimulation and moves us increasingly toward love and community as our primary sources of stimulation – we move away from the adrenal and dopamine imperative, and more toward the serotonin and oxytocin imperative.

We change, at an epigenetic level, and Bitcoin is the vehicle.

How can this be so?

With Bitcoin, two individuals (or an entire community) can build a mutually desirable and fulfilling relationship that enhances the quality of both lives. With Bitcoin, those two individuals are inherent equals. Neither is seeking to exploit the resources provided by the other, because to do so is anathema to the ever-emerging and growing ecosystem (network) that rejects commodification of the human endeavor and human spirit, and that instead places value on bettering the entirety of the human condition. Because Bitcoin is uncensorable, those relationships have the ability to transcend age-old, exploitative narratives. Because Bitcoin's ledger is inviolable, duplicity and dishonesty simply lose their teeth. Because Bitcoin is permissionless, all relationships have the capacity to become pristine and equitable. And because Bitcoin is uninflatable, the urge to game the system gives

way, over time, to the deep contentment that arrives through living peacefully and cooperatively within the system.

Human beings can be monsters. Human history is replete with endless stories of how these monsters, these ghouls bent upon feeling good at the expense of others, created and used money as a way to realize their nefarious and self-serving and diabolical plans -- plans all based upon one common thing: *changing the way we feel*. And, human beings are beautiful, gorgeous, frail, blessed beings, often possessing such an extraordinary capacity to act lovingly toward one another.

Bitcoin provides humanity with a once-in-a-civilization chance -- a chance to reject our current belief in and adherence to money as the ultimate expression of the commodification of humanity; a chance to make obsolete all of the power-brokers who have played upon our basest instincts for millenia; a chance to continue to move forward as innovators, but to reclaim our birthright as communal, connected, loving creatures. Bitcoin provides humanity with the opportunity to own our neurological selves from a place of true relational wealth.

In the end, it's entirely up to us. Bitcoin is there. It calls us to beauty, to love. It calls us to work toward the betterment of ourselves and of the rest of humanity. Bitcoin is the open incitement to virtue that can save us from ourselves. I pray that we rise to the incitement.

