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## The Truth about Truth: Lessons from Liver King, T20 Cricket, and Bitcoin

Greg Streak

This article examines how social, cultural, and technological influences continually reshape our understanding of truth, shifting from absolute, universally accepted concepts to fragmented, personalised perspectives. By exploring examples like Bitcoin challenging traditional finance, social media personas altering health perceptions, and technological scrutiny in sports officiating, it highlights society's growing tendency to question established norms. The study underscores the need for a rigorous, empirical approach to truth, recognising its fluidity and the impact of diverse perspectives, as essential for maintaining societal cohesion and trust in institutions.

**Keywords:** absolute truth; scientific method; postmodernism; intersectionality; Liver King; T20 Cricket; Bitcoin

What does it mean to live a life committed to the truth? For most of us, truth is simply the accurate correspondence of our beliefs to reality. But few take the time to consider just how elusive and fragile this notion can be. We live in an age where information flows more freely than ever before, yet truth itself has become a contested battleground. Despite our unprecedented access to knowledge, we often find ourselves drowning in a sea of noise, half-truths, and comforting illusions.

This article reflects on the evolving nature of truth across various spheres, illustrating how our understanding of truth is continually reshaped by social, cultural, and technological influences. It explores the shifting paradigms from absolute, universally accepted truths rooted in scientific exploration and religious doctrines to more fragmented and personalised perspectives shaped by digital landscapes and modern ideologies. Whether it is the decentralised nature of Bitcoin challenging traditional financial systems, Liver King's social media persona altering perceptions of health and lifestyle, or the scrutiny of umpire decisions in T20 cricket through technology, each example highlights a broader societal shift towards questioning established norms and truths. These cases demonstrate the critical need for a rigorous, empirical approach to truth, acknowledging its fluidity and the influence of various perspectives and biases. As we navigate this complex terrain, the quest for a grounded understanding of truth remains a pivotal challenge, essential for maintaining societal cohesion and trust in our institutions.

### Truth and Truth

The concept of truth has perennially sat at the heart of philosophical inquiry, yet despite its centrality, there remains no consensus on a universally accepted definition. Traditionally, truth is often conceptualised as the correspondence between a proposition and the actual state of affairs in the world. This means that a statement, to be considered true, must accurately reflect reality as it is. Philosophers and scholars have long debated the nature of truth, particularly regarding the possibility of knowing anything with absolute certainty. Some argue that certain

knowledge of truth is achievable, while others maintain that such certainty is fundamentally elusive. Aristotle once posited, 'To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true', thus framing truth as a matter of asserting what is real (1984: 1011b25).

At one end of this spectrum lies the notion of absolute truth, which asserts that objective truths exist independently of human beliefs or opinions. Advocates of this perspective argue that some truths are universally constant and remain unchanged regardless of context or perspective. This view is closely tied to the empirical sciences, where research and logical analysis aim to uncover immutable truths about the natural world. The laws of gravity, for instance, consistently describe the interaction of objects in space and time, illustrating how some aspects of reality can be definitively understood. As Albert Einstein aptly remarked:

The supreme task of the physicist is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them (Einstein, qtd in Schilpp 1949: 401).

On the contrary, philosophical frameworks like relativism present a starkly different view, suggesting that all knowledge is inherently relative, shaped by cultural, societal, or individual contexts. Friedrich Nietzsche famously challenged the notion of objective truth, asserting, 'No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations,' thus asserting the subjective nature of human understanding (1968: 267). Adding another layer to this complex discussion is scepticism, which posits that some aspects of truth may ultimately be unknowable. Sceptics question the reliability of established methods of acquiring knowledge, such as sensory perception and logical reasoning, highlighting the intrinsic limitations of these approaches. David Hume, a prominent sceptic, argued that even our most basic beliefs about the external world are not founded on reason but on habit and custom (1748). Expanding further on these ideas, some modern philosophical theories propose that truth is not a mere reflection of reality but a social construct shaped by language, discourse, and power dynamics. Postmodernism, in particular, argues that truth is constructed through social interactions and is subject to the varying interpretations of different groups or individuals based on their unique experiences and perspectives. Philosopher Richard Rorty encapsulates this view by stating, 'Truth is what your contemporaries let you get away with' (1979: 176), affirming the fluid and negotiated nature of truth in postmodern thought.

These diverse perspectives on truth not only deepen our understanding of philosophical discourse but also reflect the evolving nature of how we come to know and understand the world around us. Each approach offers valuable insights into the complexities of truth, pushing us to consider more critically how knowledge is constructed and understood in various contexts. As we navigate through these differing viewpoints, it becomes clear that the pursuit of truth, far from being a straightforward endeavour, is a dynamic interplay of questioning, understanding, and interpreting the world we live in.

### **The Evolution of Truth**

Throughout the course of philosophical history, the concept of absolute truth has undergone significant transformations. In ancient and medieval philosophy, truth was inextricably linked with divinity, eternity, and the metaphysical, considered to be objective and universal, existing beyond the realm of human perception or experience. This classical perspective persisted until the Enlightenment (c.1685–1815), a period marked by a dramatic shift where the basis of absolute truth transitioned from religious dogma to the realms of reason and scientific inquiry. During this era, philosophers like Immanuel Kant began to articulate a vision of truth as something

discoverable through reason and empirical observation. Kant famously argued for a universal basis of truth, stating, ‘But although all our cognition commences with experience, yet it does not on that account all arise from experience’ (1998 [1781]: 136).

Bertrand Russell later echoed the Enlightenment’s empirical spirit, punctuating the importance of inquiry over belief: ‘What is wanted is not the will to believe, but the wish to find out, which is the exact opposite’ (1922: 21). This epoch was instrumental in fostering an environment where inquiry and verification supplanted faith and tradition as the cornerstones of knowledge. As the modernist era dawned (c. 1890-1960s), this view was not only preserved but intensified. The modernists linked the concept of absolute truth to a unified, objective reality that could be comprehended through rational inquiry and empirical observation. Jürgen Habermas describes this period as characterised by ‘efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic’ (qtd in Foster 1983: 9).

This intellectual climate fostered an era where figures like Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell further pushed the boundaries of our understanding, underscoring the role of systematic doubt and critical thinking in scientific progress. Einstein’s theory of relativity, for instance, challenged the absolute concepts of time and space, demonstrating that established truths are subject to revision based on new evidence. This period also saw the rise of analytic philosophy, with philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein and A J Ayer advocating for the clarification of thoughts through logical analysis, promoting a view of philosophy as a rigorous discipline closely aligned with the sciences.

However, the latter half of the twentieth century saw the rise of postmodernist philosophy (c.1970–1990), which introduced a critical reconsideration of these earlier notions of truth. Postmodernists, including thinkers like Jean-François Lyotard, challenged the very idea of a single, objective reality. Lyotard famously critiqued the grand narratives of modernism, positing that, ‘Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences’ (1984: xxiv). William James’s reflection on faith further illustrates this shift, suggesting that ‘Our faith is faith in someone else’s faith, and in the greatest matters this is most the case’ (2004 [1897]: 11). Michel Foucault elaborates on this by stating, ‘Each society has its regime of truth, its “general politics” of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true’ (1972: 131), highlighting how truth is shaped and maintained by societal structures and power dynamics. Jean Baudrillard further illustrates this shift, suggesting that ‘The simulacrum is never that which hides the truth – it is the truth which hides that there is none’ (1981: 1), highlighting the elusive and constructed nature of reality in postmodern thought.

The decline of postmodernism in the 1990s led to newer philosophical explorations seeking to describe our contemporary understanding of truth. Terms like post-millennialism, post-postmodernism, and Metamodernism have been proposed to describe the current era’s approach to truth, yet none has definitively captured the full complexity of today’s fragmented and multifaceted perspective on truth. The rise of digital technology has further complicated the discourse, introducing a digital truth shaped by algorithms and social media, blurring the lines between fact and fiction.

This ongoing evolution reflects a deeper philosophical inquiry into the nature of truth itself – shifting from the ancient and medieval views of an external, divinely ordained truth, through the Enlightenment’s emphasis on rationality, to modernism’s faith in science, and into postmodernism’s scepticism about universal truths. Each era’s dominant philosophy of truth not only shaped its own cultural and intellectual landscape but also set the stage for subsequent philosophical inquiry and debate. As we continue to grapple with these philosophical shifts, the search for a comprehensive understanding of truth remains a central challenge, illustrating the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of philosophical inquiry.

### The Alphabet Soup of Truth Decay

Contemporary society is witnessing unprecedented levels of deception, encapsulated by terms such as ‘post-truth presidency’ (Alterman 2004), ‘post-democracy’ (Crouch 2004), ‘post-fact world’ (Pomerantsev 2016), ‘weaponized lies’ (Levitin 2017), and ‘post-truth’ (McIntyre 2018). These terms characterise the prevailing oratory climate, which prioritises emotional appeal over factual accuracy and repeatedly asserts claims despite contradictory evidence. Michiko Kakutani describes this phenomenon as “‘Truth decay”, a term used to describe the diminishing role of facts and analysis [...] has joined the post-truth lexicon’ (2018: 8).

Frequently, essential facts are omitted or go unreferenced in the condensed texts and decontextualised images prevalent on social media platforms, yet these facts are crucial for well-informed discourse and robust dialogue. This unchecked dissemination of content triggers a cascade of misinformation with tangible real-world consequences. Kakutani further notes the societal impact: ‘Nationalism, tribalism, dislocation, fears of social change, and the hatred of outsiders are on the rise again as people, locked in their partisan silos and filter bubbles, are losing a sense of shared reality and the ability to communicate across social and sectarian lines’ (2018: 7).

Slavoj Žižek underscores the nuanced danger of misinformation, asserting, ‘The most efficient lies are lies with truth, lies which reproduce only factual data’ (2019: n. p.). Such misinformation, often viral, presents fragments of truth but lacks context, leading to oversimplified and misinterpreted narratives that are nearly impossible to correct. In this digital age, the rapid spread of such misleading information on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook complicates the public’s ability to discern fact from fabrication, contributing to a deeply polarised social environment. This situation is exacerbated by the algorithmic tendencies of social media to amplify sensational content, irrespective of its factual accuracy, further muddying the waters of public discourse and contributing to the phenomenon of ‘echo chambers’, where users are exposed primarily to information that reinforces their preexisting beliefs (confirmation bias by design).

The discourse surrounding intersectionality, often conflated with Critical Race Theory (CRT), brings to the forefront the nuanced tensions within contemporary social theories. Jordan Peterson critiques this as a resurgence of postmodernist themes, arguing that intersectionality divides society by stressing group identities over individual identity, which he believes fosters division and conflict (2017). This perspective is mirrored in *Cynical Theories* by Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, who argue that intersectionality, rooted in postmodernist thought, emphasises that knowledge is constructed through subjective experiences shaped by power dynamics related to identity (2020). Contrasting these critiques, Kimberlé Crenshaw, the scholar who originally coined intersectionality, defends the concept by clarifying its misinterpretations. She underscores that intersectionality is not inherently synonymous with postmodernism or merely a catch-all for identity variations (1991, 1244). Supporting Crenshaw, Anna Carastathis articulates the importance of understanding intersectionality as fundamentally linked to structured social oppression rather than individual subjectivity (2016).

Amidst this intellectual debate, the words of George Orwell (1977) from *1984* (written in 1949) echo with renewed urgency: ‘Who controls the past, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past.’ This statement underscores the critical role of narrative control in shaping societal and political realities, particularly in today’s digital age where information is rapidly disseminated across a multitude of platforms, often without rigorous checks for accuracy.

Reflecting on the implications of this digital age, philosopher and neuroscientist Sam Harris comments on the resilience of falsehoods once they are accepted as truth: ‘An unhappy truth of human psychology makes it hard to abolish lies once they have escaped into the world: We seem

to be predisposed to remember statements as true even after they have been disconfirmed' (2013: 38). This tendency highlights the significant challenges posed by a saturated informational landscape where misinformation can be strategically employed to divide societies, manipulate political perceptions, and undermine trust in democratic institutions. Harris's observation invites a deeper examination of how societal divisions are deepened by the unchecked spread of misinformation, necessitating a robust framework for critical thinking and media literacy to navigate this complex environment effectively.

### **Navigating the Turbulence of Postmodernism and Intersectionality**

In the whirlwind of 'Identity Politics', theories of postmodernism and intersectionality have been widely debated. Critics often place undue blame on the originators of these theories, who have either disavowed the extremities of their interpretations or rejected the misapplications outright. François Lyotard, reflecting on his seminal work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), later admitted to the creative liberties he took, revealing, "I made stories up" due to his limited understanding of the sciences, ultimately describing the work as "a parody" and "simply the worst of all my books" (qtd in Anderson 1998: 24–27). This admission by Lyotard highlights the inherent complexities and challenges in communicating abstract philosophical ideas to a broad audience, often leading to oversimplifications or distortions.

As I suggested earlier, Kimberlé Crenshaw, a pivotal figure in intersectionality theory, has also faced significant misrepresentation. 'Intersectionality has become a hot topic, but its transformative potential has been diluted as it's been co-opted to signal diversity and inclusion, without a critical examination of power and systemic inequality' (2015: n. p.). Jane Coaston provides further insight into Crenshaw's experiences with misinterpretations, quoting her as experiencing it as an 'out-of-body experience' when she encounters simplistic renditions of her complex theory (2019: n. p.). This reflects a broader issue within academic and public discourse, where nuanced theories are often reduced to catchphrases or misused to serve ideological agendas.

Furthermore, the engagement with these theories reflects a broader societal shift towards recognising and addressing the complex layers of identity and oppression. As scholars and activists continue to debate and refine these concepts, the academic community faces the challenge of ensuring these theories are understood and applied in ways that genuinely contribute to social justice and understanding, rather than simplifying or polarising complex issues. The ongoing dialogue between critics and proponents of postmodernism and intersectionality underscores the dynamic nature of philosophical and social inquiry, where definitions and applications are constantly in flux and subject to reinterpretation based on new research and societal developments.

### **The Impact of Social Media on Societal Discourse**

Jonathan Haidt highlights the role of social media algorithms in promoting content that is not only engaging but also divisive, contributing to a fragmented society where echo chambers predominate. This mechanism supports the proliferation of postmodern and intersectional narratives that intensify societal divisions, fostering a culture where dissenting views are often silenced, known colloquially as 'cancel culture' or 'call-out culture': 'Life in a call-out culture requires constant vigilance, fear, and self-censorship. Many in the audience may feel sympathy for the person being shamed but are afraid to speak up, yielding the false impression that the audience is unanimous in its condemnation (Haidt and Lukianoff 2018: 81). Sam Harris echoes these concerns, calling attention to the role of social media in amplifying discordant content:

No one has a constitutional right to algorithmically-boosted speech. When you post something on social media, you are not merely sharing your opinion with the rest of the world.

Your opinion is being fed into an outrage machine. And it will be amplified, or not, based on a business model that preferentially feeds on inflammatory and misleading information – because this spreads more reliably than anything else. (2023: n.p.)

Are we overwhelmed by the sheer volume of misleading online claims? Such claims have infiltrated our consciousness, becoming as pervasive as a toxic odour in a confined space. Our sense of direction and reality feels as disoriented as if we were navigating underwater, making us doubt every decision as if we have lost our grounding in reality. Yet, amidst this confusion, there remains an anchor: the scientific method.

Despite criticisms of the scientific method as a biased construct, it remains a robust framework based on empirical evidence and logical reasoning. It enables us to identify and understand patterns and laws in the natural world, fostering the development of theories that explain and connect these findings. This method underpins modern technology and medical advancements, proving its effectiveness as our most reliable means of making sense of the world. It admits its own limitations, accepting that what we consider absolute truths are subject to change with new discoveries. This adaptability has propelled humanity from superstitious practices to scientific breakthroughs, highlighting its indispensable role in our progress.

### **Expanding the Dynamics of Digital Discourse**

As we delve deeper into the social dynamics fuelled by digital platforms, it becomes evident that the echo chambers created by social media not only segregate individuals into like-minded groups but also amplify the extremes. The resultant polarisation manifests not just in political realms but extends to every facet of cultural and social interaction, increasingly rendering middle-ground positions obscure and outmoded. This polarising effect is magnified by the algorithms that curate content to maximise engagement, often at the cost of nuanced understanding.

Furthermore, the rise of digital platforms has enabled the rapid spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories that were previously confined to more marginal spaces. These platforms, while democratising information dissemination, also challenge the traditional gatekeepers of information, leading to a public square that is simultaneously enriched and distorted by a multitude of voices. This new paradigm requires individuals to develop a more critical approach to the information they consume, necessitating skills in digital literacy that were less critical in pre-digital eras.

As we navigate this complex information landscape, the integration of scientific thinking into everyday decision-making processes becomes crucial. Promoting educational initiatives that enhance critical thinking and scientific literacy could serve as countermeasures to the misinformation prevalent in today's digital discourse. By fostering a public that values evidence-based reasoning, society can better equip itself to tackle the challenges posed by this new age of information overflow and manipulation.

### **The Quest for Truth in a 'Post-Truth' Era**

As distortions of truth become commonplace in our digital landscape, the quest for factual integrity becomes ever more challenging. The dissemination of 'alternative facts' and 'fake news' has muddied the waters of public discourse, leading to a societal state where distinguishing between reality and falsehood is increasingly difficult. Wardle and Derakhshan highlight the dangers posed by such disinformation, underlining that it is not merely about false content but involves a deliberate intent to deceive and manipulate audiences to achieve strategic goals, posing a serious threat to democratic societies by undermining public trust and sowing division (2017, 5, 20–22).

Historically, the manipulation of truth is not a new tactic; Hannah Arendt discussed the role of propaganda in eroding factual landscapes as far back as the mid-twentieth century: ‘The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction [...] and the distinction between true and false [...] no longer exist’ (1951: 474). Today, the stakes are similarly high, as Allan MacLeod points out, the media has become a powerful tool in shaping public perception: ‘They are not plucky truth-tellers but, for the most part, are enormously powerful corporations propagandizing us for their own interests’ (2019: 10).

In an era marked by complex social theories and the rapid spread of information, accurate or otherwise, the need for critical engagement and vigilant scrutiny of sources cannot be overstated. The principles of the scientific method offer a beacon of rationality in this tumult, providing a framework for navigating through the misinformation that pervades modern discourse. As we confront the challenges of a ‘post-truth’ world, the pursuit of empirical truth remains a crucial endeavour, essential for the preservation of democratic values and societal cohesion.

### **Enhancing Discernment in the Age of Information Overload**

The proliferation of digital media has not only facilitated the rapid spread of information but also the propagation of misinformation, creating a landscape where the line between fact and fiction blurs with troubling frequency. In response to this, there is a growing emphasis on the necessity for digital literacy – educating the public on how critically to assess and verify the credibility of information sources. This educational push seeks to empower individuals to differentiate between reputable journalism and misleading or fabricated content. Furthermore, scholars like Steven Pinker argue for the reinvigoration of Enlightenment ideals, advocating for a renewed commitment to reason, science, and humanism. These principles, Pinker suggests, are crucial in combating the cynicism and confusion fostered by a post-truth environment. By promoting rational discourse and empirical analysis, society can resist the cynicism that often accompanies sensationalist or unverified reports. The pursuit of transparency and accountability in media is crucial for fostering an informed public discourse. By championing a journalistic ethos that values thorough fact-checking and fairness, society can counteract the sensationalism prevalent in the digital news landscape. This commitment to rigorous standards of truth is essential for mitigating the divisive impact of misinformation and promoting a more cohesive social fabric.

To illustrate the challenges and implications of truth in contemporary contexts, we can turn to three diverse yet interconnected examples. The persona of Liver King in the fitness industry, the evolving officiating practices in T20 cricket, and the disruptive influence of Bitcoin in the financial sector, each offering unique insights. These case studies highlight how truth is constructed, manipulated, and perceived, reflecting broader societal shifts and the complexities of maintaining authenticity and integrity in today’s world.

### **Liver King – A Batty, Natty Liar**

Liver King, known off-screen as Brian Johnson, has rapidly carved a niche within the fitness industry through his online alias. In a short span, he has amassed millions of followers across platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. His meteoric rise to a reported net worth of over \$100 million is anchored on his Liver King persona, which espouses what he terms the ‘nine ancestral tenets’: sleep, eat, move, shield, connect, cold, sun, fight, and bond.

These tenets, while echoing the ethos of diets like Paleo and Carnivore, advocate for a primal lifestyle that many argue is a panacea for the complications of modern living. This lifestyle is centred around unprocessed foods and vigorous physical activity, purported antidotes to the

sedentary habits fostered by contemporary work and leisure activities. Johnson particularly promotes the regular consumption of raw animal organs, especially liver, which he claims is the most nutrient-dense food available. There is support for this claim:

Liver is one of the most nutrient-rich foods on the planet, with significant amounts of iron, riboflavin, vitamin B12, vitamin A, and copper. Eating a single serving of liver can help you meet your daily recommended amount of most of these vitamins and minerals, reducing your risk of nutrient deficiency (Bourg 2023: n. p.).

The business model of Liver King thrives on his polarising social media presence, where he posts dramatic, often outlandish videos that depict his rugged lifestyle, ranging from consuming fresh animal organs to performing strenuous outdoor exercises, shirtless regardless of the setting, be it his Texas estate or the New York City subway. Despite the cringe-inducing nature of some content, there is no overt harm in his theatrical online persona. His empire is built on followers purchasing his Ancestral Supplements, which offer the supposed benefits of organ consumption without the direct experience of eating raw organs.

However, controversy surrounds Johnson. Many fitness experts have speculated about steroid use, given the unlikely natural attainability of his physique. Johnson has consistently denied these accusations, affirming on platforms like Mark Bell's Power Project Podcast: 'I don't touch the stuff. I've never done the stuff. I'm not going to do the stuff' (qtd in Hearing 2022: n. p.). Despite these denials, an exposé by the YouTube channel, *More Plates More Dates* on November 29, 2022, which cited verified emails, revealed Johnson's involvement in expensive steroid cycles, costing over \$11,000 monthly. Confronted with irrefutable evidence, Johnson admitted to his steroid use, stating, 'Yes, I've done steroids, and yes, I'm on steroids, monitored and managed by a trained hormone clinician' (qtd in Klee 2022 n. p.).

In an intriguing turn, Johnson has since claimed to be documenting his journey towards a steroid-free lifestyle, marking each post with the number of days he has been 'natty'. This shift appears to be an attempt to rebrand his narrative, possibly to maintain follower engagement despite the revelations. His situation mirrors a larger cultural phenomenon of influencers facing minimal repercussions for dishonesty, drawing parallels to political figures noted for their frequent misstatements, such as Donald Trump, who, according to the *Washington Post's* Fact Checker, 'had accumulated 30,573 untruths during his presidency – averaging about 21 erroneous claims a day' (Mogensen 2021). Renowned sociologist Erving Goffman in his work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) provides a useful framework for understanding such personas. This concept is reminiscent of Shakespeare's famous lines, 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players'. This perspective highlights the performative aspects of Liver King's public persona, akin to an actor playing a carefully scripted role, designed to captivate and influence an audience.

The saga of Liver King underscores a broader societal challenge: the tension between celebrity influencer culture and the quest for authenticity in the digital age. As audiences grapple with discerning reality from curated personas, figures like Liver King remind us of the complex interplay between public perception and personal branding in an era dominated by social media. David Foster Wallace, in his commencement speech *This is Water* (2005), commented on the impact of such phenomena, noting that 'The truth will set you free. But not until it is finished with you.' This observation resonates with the ongoing discourse around digital authenticity, highlighting the transformative yet often deceptive power of media narratives.

### **The Indecision of the Decision – T20 Cricket is Stumped**

In today's public sphere, deep scrutiny and scepticism towards long-held truths have infiltrated many aspects of society, from pivotal to the trivial. Among these, the transformation in how

cricket, particularly the T20 format – known for its brisk pace and entertainment value – is officiated, illustrates broader cultural shifts.

T20 cricket is a concise version of traditional formats, where each team plays 20 overs (120 balls) aiming to score the maximum runs. This game's evolution includes the introduction of the third umpire, enhancing decision-making accuracy using technological aids such as replays and the Decision Review System (DRS). Initially, this role aimed to minimise human error, ensuring that critical decisions are as accurate as possible.

However, the application of these technologies has introduced a new challenge: the indecision and repetitive confirmation in decision-making. Frequent slow-motion replays, intended to confirm decisions, often do little more than reiterate the obvious, leading to delays and viewer frustration. This scenario echoes Albert Einstein's witticism, perhaps apocryphal, yet poignant that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Historically, umpires relied on instinct and observation, unaided by technology. The shift to a technology-dependent adjudication has fostered a mixed sense of trust and scepticism towards the scientific method. While technology should streamline processes, its overuse might suggest a deeper mistrust or anxiety within our truth-questioning society, compelling us to revalidate facts repeatedly.

The spectators, whether online or at the venue, generally perceive the initial slow-motion replay as the 'truth' – clearly showing whether the ball has made contact with the bat, or confirming an lbw (leg-before-wicket) decision. Yet, umpires often call for multiple replays even when the evidence is unmistakably clear, leading to unnecessary delays. This excessive verification process puzzles not only the audience but also commentators. In this context, the protracted use of replay technology in cricket reflects a broader societal trend where the need for absolute certainty seems to overshadow practicality. It raises the question: Are we overcompensating for our eroded trust in 'truth' by demanding excessive proof? This phenomenon may be symptomatic of a society increasingly doubtful of its institutional pillars, as highlighted by Daniel Kahneman: 'A reliable way to make people believe in falsehoods is frequent repetition because familiarity is not easily distinguished from truth' (2011: 78).

The evolution of T20 cricket and its officiating challenges parallels the broader societal reliance on technology, reflecting an increasing distrust in human capabilities and a preference for digital validation: '... the function of the technology is its use by human beings – and sometimes, alas, its abuse and misuse', states historian of science and technology, Melvin Kranzberg (1986: 558). This observation underscores the delicate balance between leveraging technology for improvements and becoming overly reliant on it, potentially at the expense of human judgment. Furthermore, the philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of 'biopower' can be applied to understand how technology governs not only the physical aspects of cricket but also the perceptions and behaviours of its spectators and players. Foucault argues that 'The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others' (1982: 788). In the realm of T20 cricket, technology acts as an agent of control, shaping the perceptions of truth and fairness in the sport.

As we continue to navigate this landscape of doubt and verification, it is essential to balance technological advancements with practical implementation, ensuring that tools designed to aid us do not become sources of hindrance. The challenge lies in maintaining the integrity of the sport while adapting to the technological imperatives of the modern age, striving to preserve the essence of cricket amidst the pressures of innovation and spectacle.

### **Bitcoin as a Role Model for Absolute Truth**

Bitcoin is a decentralised digital currency, developed in 2009 by an anonymous figure or group under the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. It functions without a central authority, using a peer-to-

peer network that allows direct transactions without intermediaries. Transactions are recorded on a blockchain – a secure, public ledger maintained by nodes that ensure its integrity and prevent tampering. Andreas Antonopoulos, a leading Bitcoin advocate, highlights its role as a disruptor: ‘Bitcoin is not a currency. Bitcoin is the internet of money. As a technology, it can bring economic inclusion and empowerment to billions of people in the world’ (2016: 65).

Unlike government-backed currencies, Bitcoin has no intrinsic value and is not linked to physical assets. Its price is determined by market demand and is known for its volatility. Bitcoin’s design supports anonymous transactions, which has sparked concerns about its potential misuse for illegal activities such as money laundering and terrorism. Proponents of Bitcoin claim it offers a secure, efficient, and democratic alternative to traditional currency, uncontrolled by government or banking institutions. They argue that its decentralised nature minimises fraud and corruption: ‘Bitcoin is a boycott of the greatest organised crime syndicate in human history – central banking’ (Breedlove 2024: n. p.). Paul Vigna, co-author of *The Age of Cryptocurrency* (2015), comments on Bitcoin’s broader social impact: ‘By eliminating middlemen and their fees, cryptocurrency promises to reduce the costs of doing business and to mitigate corruption inside those intermediating institutions as well as from the politicians who are drawn into their prosperous orbit’ (Vigna and Casey 2015: 15).

Michael Saylor articulates the impact of Bitcoin’s decentralised truth, saying, ‘Bitcoin is a swarm of cyber hornets serving the goddess of wisdom, feeding on the fire of truth, exponentially growing ever smarter, faster, and stronger behind a wall of encrypted energy’ (2020: n.p.).

Debates about Bitcoin often explore both objective and subjective claims. Objective claims about its technology and functionality, like blockchain security or processing capabilities, can be empirically verified. Subjective claims, however, reflect personal views on its societal or political implications, such as its potential to disrupt financial systems or enhance individual freedom. This dichotomy is further accentuated by differing philosophical views. Libertarian and anarchist proponents see Bitcoin as a means to promote freedom and challenge centralised power, while critics view it as potentially unstable and speculative.

Adding to the conversation, philosopher Noam Chomsky has criticised the lack of intrinsic value and speculative nature of Bitcoin, warning that it might not provide a stable basis for a financial system.

The emergence of Bitcoin has sparked significant discourse on truth, objectivity, and the role of centralised institutions in validating knowledge. It challenges traditional verification methods and underlines the importance of empirical evidence and critical thought in discerning fact from fiction. The broader implications of Bitcoin and similar technologies are profound, potentially reshaping financial systems and altering trust dynamics. These changes might lead to a more decentralised and democratic system but also raise concerns about transparency and accountability. The potential impact on economic equality and justice is still unfolding, with early adopters possibly benefiting disproportionately. *The Atlantic* writer, David Brooks, highlights the growing distrust in institutions, suggesting a broader societal crisis: ‘Levels of trust in this country – in our institutions, in our politics, and in one another – are in precipitous decline. And when social trust collapses, nations fail’ (2020 n. p.).

As Bitcoin continues to evolve, its influence on our understanding of truth, objectivity, and subjectivity in knowledge becomes increasingly significant, shaping not just financial markets but also cultural and social frameworks. One might argue that absolute truth is impossible to obtain. After all, our subjective experience constantly distorts our perceptions. But even if we cannot grasp truth in its totality, we can get closer. We can chip away at ignorance, delusion, and bias through critical thinking, open dialogue, and a commitment to intellectual honesty. This process is not easy. It requires that we confront uncomfortable realities and be willing to admit when we are wrong. But the alternative – a life lived in falsehood – is far more dangerous.

They say the truth hurts – but having no truth hurts more.

### Notes on Contributor

**Greg Streak** is an independent artist and researcher. He is an interdisciplinary practitioner working in sculpture, video, installation, and documentary filmmaking. He completed his practice-based PhD in Visual and Performing Arts in 2021. Streak sees the practice of art as a form of critical inquiry, or conceptually reflective research.

### Disclosure Statement

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