The Importance of Transcendental Unifying Values for Decentralization

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Abstract

Chapter 10 highlights the need for the establishment and maintenance of unifying transcendental values of decentralized organizations. Unlike scientific laws, transcendental values cannot be stated formally and explicitly. The power of a decentralized organization derives from its ability to unite its members in service to the goal of their shared values. The strength a decentralized network is measured by summing the power of each member in their individual autonomy. Yet, their very autonomy requires the members to construct the unifying ideals for themselves. They are individually responsible for the establishment, nourishment, and revitalization of those unifying ideals, continually.

The book can be accessed here:
https://www.amazon.com/Decentralization-Technologies-Organizational-Societal-Structure/dp/3110673924/
and here:
https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/569051

Chapter 10. Transcendental Unifying Values

"Without myth, however, every culture loses its healthy creative natural power: it is only a horizon encompassed with myth that rounds off to unity a social movement."
— Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy

This final essential institution is the most important for long-term stability, and demands eternal reevaluation. Decentralized organizations require strong unifying values to remain coherent. Decentralized organizations live by their ideals.

The decentralized economy requires decentralized creeds for each DAO. Similar to how the authors of the U.S. Constitution considered freedom of religion and speech as the very first principle, the point of decentralization is to give individuals more autonomy, to give them more freedom to choose the right path in their behavior. The very first principle of human autonomy is freedom of thought; without it, there is no autonomy. So despite the fact that we can witness a single global society emerging, where everyone on the planet is connected in more intimate ways than a medieval city was, there should not be a single power-centralized hierarchy to control it. Instead, the better, more efficient, more stable state of this global society is an organization that is power decentralized, giving individuals and subgroup DAOs more autonomous power to contribute to the health and wealth and happiness of all. Therefore, we take for granted a multiplicity of beliefs and creeds and values in the various DAOs that form.

In order to maintain efficiency, we must understand the answer to the question, "Efficiency in the pursuit of what goals?" Understanding our goals is effectively the same as understanding our values. Therefore, to maintain the system, to maintain its efficiency, we must adhere to our values. By the insights gleaned from the Folk Theorems of Game Theory, transcendental values are necessary to maintain long-term stability in the face of ever-present strategies for subverting any formal, explicitly-specified protocol.

Integrating polar values

In this chapter we analyze some transcendental values that people might use to help unify a DAO. The point of unifying people is to bring together individuals with different perspectives. A maximally effective set of unifying values will achieve the seemingly impossible feat of integrating opposing values.

For instance, in order to keep a car running properly, you need to harmoniously integrate the functions of accelerating and decelerating while you steer stably toward your goal. Similarly, liberal and conservative values are both important to keep a society running in the long run. Liberal values can be identified with the automobile's accelerator. Conservative values are associated with the brakes. Liberal values are concerned with change and progress, improvement. Conservative principles are devoted to preservation and protection. Walls are identified with conservative values. Eradicating divisions between people, breaking down walls, is stereotypically a liberal value. Building secure walls with well-designed doors is the proper way to embody both values, integrating them harmoniously in your economic system. You need to secure your system from ruin, build walls to protect your group from the Tragedy of the Commons and malicious threats. But you also need to build doors, to revitalize

your group with fresh inputs from anyone willing and able to help. 21st century Web3 doors can be programmed with dynamic rules to continually evolve to improve their function.

To keep any society stable and healthy, history reveals three polar opposite sets of fundamental values that need to be integrated:

Communal cooperation vs. individual freedom (information transmission; what do we do, individually and communally) Cooperation is the basis of human wealth and safety. But it comes at the cost of individual agency. A harmonious balance between these values is necessary for survival, and so is evolutionarily built into our animal nature.

Bureaucratic transparency vs. personal privacy (information storage; what do we know, individually and communally) Internet communication and information storage gives us the power to make all decision-making processes available to everyone concurrently. Cryptography allows us to keep our personal information secret, allowing us to interact anonymously in even the most sophisticated business transactions.

Equity of necessities vs. meritocracy for nonessentials (information processing; what do material objects mean to us, individually and communally) Equity in economic theory is the distribution of resources with the goal of making all members equally powerful and wealthy. Meritocracy distributes power to the people who can best use it for the benefit of the individual and the community. How does society share essential and nonessential resources? How do we individually use essential and non-essential resources?

Each pair of values is in tension with its opposite. It is natural to imagine that strengthening one diminishes its opposite. But that is plainly false in any complex situation.

For example, a society which is completely equitably leveled materially, crushes its meritocratic instinct by eliminating all individual reward. Its next generation will not be able to produce as much to share because of the inefficient allocation of power to those who cannot use it well. It will then share less overall, diminishing its equitable share as the years progress. This failure was repeatedly demonstrated in numerous 20th century communist countries.

For the mirror opposite, a society which uses only meritocratic rewards will soon have a very large disenfranchised subgroup due to Price's Law (exponential differentiation of rewards, since the rich get richer). In succeeding generations, the bottom tier will not be able to afford training to compete and the separation will exacerbate until the society destabilizes and collapses. That society then obviously gives less re-

wards to those who deserve them, diminishing its meritocracy. This failure was exemplified in 19th century America, which had few social protections for the poor and disenfranchised.

Throughout history, governments have recognized the need to balance these values. The goal of a healthy society requires promotion of equal opportunities by providing equity of necessities, but also strives to provide fair rewards with a meritocracy for nonessentials. The debate always erupts on the definition of the line between necessities and nonessentials. If you say nothing is really essential, you are strongly favoring meritocracy. If you say everything is essential, you are strongly favoring equity. When you define your dividing line, you are signaling your personal judgment about what is valuable.

Is air essential, or water? What about education? For two centuries, most every nation has agreed a literate populace is beneficial to society and provided compulsory public grammar school for children. How far does your belief in the right to an education extend? Some believe graduate study at universities should be available to our citizenry, as a right, throughout life. Some societies force people to become professors in specific fields based on an IQ test in childhood. Do you believe society should force those successful in business to share their knowledge and secrets in public online lectures? How much education is a necessity, and how much should education be controlled by the group instead of the individual?

As another example of the split, consider the goal of Web3 engineers to eliminate corruption by automating away legal regulation, policing, and insurance with smart contracts, as described in the previous chapters. By automating insurance, the economy becomes more efficient. We then have the power to maintain automated insurance for ourselves, without using middlemen insurance agents. Individuals become more autonomous and more powerful. Individuals choose the level of catalyst protection they need, as they are best able to evaluate what is optimal.

But if the larger society is going to thrive under these new choices, we must avoid a race to the bottom. It's more efficient in the short term for an individual to forego any insurance, so some will outcompete others if they are lucky enough to avoid rare tragedies. But the rare unprotected tragedies can chill the entire system. Insurance, policing, legal regulation, appeals, and news provide the overhead catalysts business needs to maintain liquidity.

The answer that makes the economy efficient, is that all of society should share the essentials, but individuals should be free to chase after their own desires for nonessentials. There are two types of business: government business and private business. Government business should be in charge of essentials. Private business should be free to pursue non-essentials.

Overhead institutions, like insurance or policing, provide the catalyst activation energy to guarantee liquidity in business—both government and private. The catalyst

overcomes friction; it fights corruption. Overhead institutions to protect or promote essentials should be governed and borne by the group, protecting and promoting non-essentials should be governed and borne privately. Each DAO must decide what is essential to its function; protection of those assets is governed democratically according to their particular system. Each DAO has different goals and concerns. But to illustrate the point with an overhead institution everyone is familiar with, consider healthcare. Every country has determined a different level of healthcare as essential. How much the society bears the cost of healthcare tells us how essential it is to them. Some societies might care so much about healthcare, they would believe continual elective cosmetic surgery is a human right for all. At the other end of the spectrum, some societies might have no respect for medicine or individual health and provide absolutely no legally protected medical support—for example, even life-or-death emergency services would not be given unless the individuals provide for themselves ahead of time. The choice of dividing line between essentials and non-essentials is the line between government and business.

Individuals need to be responsible for choosing their own level of protection for non-essentials. Individuals choose to regulate their own choice of overhead investment to promote their pursuit of non-essentials based on their momentary personal tolerance for risk. For example, do you choose to pay to insure your smartwatch for 10 years or none? Do you hedge your personal investments with derivatives or not?

The network must identify the difference between essentials and non-essentials. This means the network must identify its values. Importantly, the decision of what is essential versus non-essential will change depending on the market. The system must have a dynamic governance process for constantly reinterpreting our values in the face of changing circumstances.

If the society values knowledge as a human right, to promote the development of the individual, the society will provide advice on the options for overhead coverage available to individuals for the protection of their non-essential pursuits. This requires that society recognizes the need to educate individuals about the functions of the middlemen and their value. In this case the networks need a well-functioning history generator—good news sources and information repositories. These analyses need to be dynamic, because the market continually changes. If the system is running well and everyone is profiting, there is less need for insurance. When the profits decrease and the system becomes more competitive, cheating becomes more attractive, and more insurance and reputation policing is needed. All of this hinges on the determination of what products are essential and what are non-essential. What is social property, what is individual property? The answer depends on your particular values, and you should participate in the network that works to promote those values.

Similarly, the other two dimensions divide along a single definition. In the distinction between bureaucratic transparency and personal privacy we define the difference between public and personal information. Where is the dividing line between what the individual has a right to keep secret and what the society/network needs to know to maintain security? Does society need to know what chemicals you are experimenting with in your basement? Does society need to know your genetic information so it can determine what type of preventative medical care you should be given? Does society need to know your personal thoughts to determine whether you are a criminal risk? These are all extremely contentious issues. This dividing line is the distinction between the government and private media.

What does government keep secret or make public? What technology does the government use to make public information available? Should all congressional deliberations be made public? Should every conversation a representative has regarding public policy be recorded and made available to their constituents? Should all police wear body cameras with continuous footage made available immediately to the public? Should all government-funded weapons research be made public? Most draw the line at less than complete and full transparency in every governmental action, but a perfectly democratic society requires complete transparency. This is an abstraction, but a DAO should clearly specify where their values lie, and where they would draw the line between bureaucratic transparency and secrecy.

America tends to push the distinction towards personal privacy much further than China does. America has decided the quantity and type of weapons in my basement is none of my neighbor's business, and the government should not be involved. In Germany, governmental officials periodically inspect houses to [privacy] mber of TVs to ensure German households p harmony public fees for TV licenses. In mainland China, the PRC decides who your best friend will be for the rest of your life when they decide who your roommate is, what university [meritocracy] will study. The line between what is public infor[illegible] info function of a society's values.

In the distinction between communal cooperati[illegible]idual freedom, we are defining the difference betwe[illegible]ersonal freedom. What choices can you make—what [equity] In[illegible]cracy, this dividing line separates the power of government over peoples' [illegible]the freedom we have in our social lives.

In a healthy society, whether democratic or not, these divi[illegible] freedom [illegible]hful reflection of that group's values.

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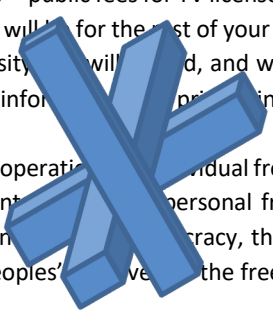

Figure 1: Three axes of values

We can categorize every society, past and present, according to how they have favored one value or its polar opposite. Failing to maintain a healthy balance—one which faithfully reflects its peoples' values—is what topples empires and leads to social catastrophe.

Finding a healthy balance between opposite values is an eternal challenge. Not least because the definitions of the lines between the axes of these values should change under different circumstances. When a society is at war, values change from when it is at peace. But remember the goal is always to maximize both polar opposites in each dimension.

At the same time that these transcendental values are crucial for maintaining group coherence, they need to remain transcendental. Once they are formalized too rigorously, they become more manipulable. For example, once the definition of necessity versus non-essential is specified clearly, it becomes a focal point for competition, instead of a unifying principle to maximize both equitable distribution of necessities and meritocratic distribution of non-essentials.

This idea is illustrated by the tripartite motto which was popular in 18th century revolutionary democracies (especially in France), "Freedom, Equality, and Good Will towards Men".1 (Liberté, Egalité. Fraternité.) Individual freedom and social equality are at odds with each other. But both qualities should be maximized. If we were to make a clear distinction between where our individual rights stop and social responsibilities start, then that formal line becomes a focal point for competition which makes the system brittle and unstable. Instead the line between the two values must remain vague. The values need to be integrated with a third transcendental value, "Good Will towards Men", whatever that means technically—it's not a logical prescription. You know it when you see it. You can't clearly define it, but it's important. Be good to each other. Individuals, help your society; and society, help your individuals. Once you clearly define the boundaries of that power, the focal point for competition leads to some gaining outsized power, corrupting the system, then things fall apart.

These three dimensions of values each split along the definition of what is individual, and what is social. Beyond any Folk Theorem justification for stability, the ultimate reason we should not impose a clear distinction between the two is that there is no clear distinction in nature. For instance, consider how babies are not viable individuals, they depend on their caregivers for everything. Before they are six months

[1] "True patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom and equality not only for Americans but for all people on earth, universal brotherhood and good will, and a constant striving toward the principles and ideals on which this country was founded." –*Eleanor Roosevelt's Book of Common Sense Etiquette*, 1962.

old, they are not in control of their limbs and they must whine in order to manipulate their caregivers to give them food, instead of using their hands to put the food in their mouths. When an individual grows up their material reliance on society never ends. Thanks to our dependence on technology, no one can survive long without depending on the complex tools that society provides. The distinction between the individual and society is never clear cut, and the values of a network need to reflect this vagueness. Every organization, especially every DAO, needs to value both the individual and the group.

Throughout the book, we've argued that giving individuals more autonomy through a decentralized architecture is more efficient. This needs to be balanced by the need to unite as a group. Cooperation is more efficient than individual autonomy. The network effect is only achieved when individuals subsume their freedom to act in concert with the group. Again, both individual autonomy and group cohesion need to be balanced to increase both qualities. Diminishing one diminishes the other.

Identifying the values of your network, or your society, or your DAO, is not some meaningless academic exercise. Your network's values determine your goals, which determine how your rewards and punishments are set up, which determine your network's future and whether it will survive. As explored in Chapter 7, you need to match your governance design choices to your values, or else the reward structure will dictate the true goals, which will determine what the network ultimately values.

A long-term successful network requires a dynamic and responsive system of governance to keep the organization in the decentralized, democratic realm, and prevents it from moving to the next natural stage of centralized governance with a static hierarchy. In other words, we must protect the group from falling into static power relationships. The temptation is universal, because of the efficiency of centralization, but it is provably flawed. (We explored these arguments, Condorcet's Paradox, Arrow's Impossibility Theorem, and the Folk Theories of Game Theory with reputation in Chapter 4.)

At the same time, as we develop these new systems of governance, with these newfound technological powers, we can't abandon the crucial cultural achievements that have brought each of our nations to this point in history. 10,000 years of civilization have given us a deep collection of theories on how to govern ourselves and create a fair and just world. We ignore this collective wisdom at our peril. There are many essential institutions to be rescued from the corruption of our past political regimes.

Our new tools for designing and implementing centralized hierarchies are far more sophisticated than ever before imagined. Our automated computer processing, information storage, and light-speed globally-networked communication infrastructure are capable of achieving centralized organization that is more pervasive and powerful than had been previously imagined in fiction. These tools can monitor and guide

the behaviors of every person, animal, and machine on the planet through a single, centralized bureaucracy.

If we commit too completely to this global, centralized, manmade hierarchy, if we allow our bureaucracy to become too rigid and impersonal, the predictable fall could be the final collapse. At this moment, and for the first time in history, we are building a structure and organization that is encompassing the entire planet. We would do well to heed the collective wisdom of history from such folk tales.2 The stories are there to warn us, so we can avoid such stumbling stones. The collapse of a hierarchy can come in many ways, not all of them catastrophic. We must understand the step that follows any centralized organization, and be attentive to its signs and warnings. Why does a centralized hierarchy collapse? When is it best to give power to centralized organizations, and when is it best to invest in decentralized organizations?

A centralized hierarchy becomes too rigid when those policing the rules gain more power than the members who are honoring the transcendental value that originally founded the organization. The spirit of the law should always reign above the letter of the law. As an organization loses touch with its transcendental values, members use the rules to jockey for position in the hierarchy, and corruption erodes the effectiveness of the organization.

Giving away personal individual power to structures with rigid rules is always enticing, because it is often more efficient to follow the rules and not question them. A moral justification is that the rules apply equally to all. And people have been habituated for untold millennia to trust that cooperating with others is a better choice than causing strife in the group by resisting the flow.

Our success over other animals is often attributed to our opposable thumbs, our upright posture, ability to form complex speech, or our big brains' outsized capacity to process information. But from an organizational point of view, humanity's unique strength is its ability to cooperate on a massive scale, which really kicked in around 50,000 years ago. This derives from our ability to copy each other's behaviors by holding a mental model of other humans in our mind. We can go further than other animals in this ability as we can make models of what we imagine the other humans have in their minds. We can visualize how Alice thinks about what Bob thinks about what Carlos thinks about Eve. Supposedly this modeling process goes 6 or 7 levels deep in humans.3 This ability to learn from others' behaviors gives us enormous capacity to unleash the efficiency of cooperation. But it also gives us untold power to trick other

[2] The descent into chaos and collapse from centralized hierarchies is a common theme across cultures throughout history. Here are a few examples:**add selections from previous appendix.

[3] Crows can make at least 2 levels of mental models, since they can watch another crow experiment and learn to solve a puzzle opening a box for a food reward. The crow who watched will immediately

people as we imagine manipulating others to corrupt the organization for our individual benefit at the expense of the group.

These same information-processing tools that can lead to centralized cooperation are also capable of empowering individuals, and guarding against the abuses of a corrupt hierarchy. The tools of internet communication allow individuals to connect with anyone on the planet to foster new opportunities for inventing collaboration. The transistor revolution is putting a super computer in every person's pocket. Each individual has access to a personal information repository with the capacity of all the books in the U.S. Library of Congress.[4] Never in any previous generation of history has any emperor had the personal power over information that the average person has today.

The goal of this book has been to explain the new social structures that are evolving which can give individuals more power while also giving groups more social cohesion. More robust decentralized systems can provide greater bureaucratic transparency and more personal privacy. We have new technologies that can be employed to make the economy more efficient, productive, and sustainable by enabling a fair meritocracy and a more responsive regulatory environment which promotes equity. These decentralized organizations can provide the level playing field that allow local centralized groups to flourish, while preventing the degeneration naturally resulting from competition, which leads to a rigid and brittle globally dominating centralized organization.

To enact this vision, we need universal transcendental values which can unify all of humanity. Do such ideals exist? If not, can we construct them?

Universal values from science and poetry

Most scientists take for granted that nature, even the entire universe, is a decentralized organization, a DAO. They are looking for the rules behind it all, the protocols, the code that keeps it running autonomously in an organized manner. Most scientists are atheists; unlike the religious faithful they don't believe in a centralized universe, a single hierarchy which governs all existence. But most scientists also aren't nihilists. They believe the cosmos has order. They don't believe there is nothing but empty, meaningless chaos, because they devote their lives to finding patterns in nature. Why

solve the puzzle when faced with the challenge for the first time individually. A pigeon, on the other hand, will watch another learn to solve a puzzle, then display no learning once they are personally faced with the same challenge.

[4] Not including pictures, there is around 16 terabytes of data in the 16 million books, which costs less than US$300 commercially in 2020.

do they believe such a position, that there are rules behind the jiggling of atoms in the void? Why do scientists bother to seek rules at all? Why should they expect order to arise from behind their investigations if there isn't a God to put it there in the first place, to make meaning from the chaos?

Darwin created the first successful scientific model which posits the possibility of sustained complex order arising from chaos, without the intervention of any intelligent, organizing ruler. Life is a local contravention of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics from physics, which posits that all organized systems move toward chaos and away from order when seen from a wide enough perspective. Thanks to the sun pumping vast energy into our system, flooding Earth with light, life forms can utilize some small part of the energy the sun is dissipating to scrap together order, persistent patterns, from the muck. The Theory of Darwinian Evolution is an extremely simple law for explaining the profusion of natural forms, from biological organisms to global ecosystems: Through the rather wasteful destruction of trillions of lives, successful biological forms are naturally selected from unsuccessful mutant variations simply because they survive and reproduce. More complex variations occasionally outcompete simpler life forms, and so complexity emerges.

From a wider perspective, if we imagine the universe eternally chaotically jiggling its energy in the void of space, we can imagine all possible patterns revealing themselves eventually. The anthropocentric position puts forth the proposition that we are here in this little vicinity of order because the universe waited unfathomably long periods of time, perhaps through many universes' births and deaths, before the patterns became suitably complex for organized life to witness it. We're seeing order, because of an extremely rare random shift in circumstance generated the unlikely coincidence that allowed partly ordered beings to witness it. Then we're doomed to degenerate back into chaos for most of the rest of time. Perhaps even simpler, from a probabilistic perspective, amongst all the patterns that ever emerge, the patterns that repeat themselves will be observed more often. So it should be no surprise statistically that we exist to witness such a state.

As Darwin himself predicted, the revelation that nature doesn't need a personalized God to explain its complex existence led (and still leads) many people to renounce their religious faith. Darwin feared the consequences to society when they lose the prime justification for their transcendental values—the values by which society can justify overcoming their selfishness in order to cooperate harmoniously.

Still, while abandoning a religious fundamentalist vision of any personalized God, by their very occupation of seeking theories, scientists believe in a simple, meaningful order behind the confusing illusion of chaos that confronts us personally on a daily basis. Scientists search for fundamental order that our tiny speck of a brain can comprehend to explain the infinite cosmos. Why would it be possible for a tiny fraction of the universe to be able to form a complete map of the whole? That could only happen

if there are simple laws that govern the whole universe, if there is meaning which organizes being, if there is such a thing as truth. If there is a universal truth, then there is at least a hierarchy of human understanding, a ranking of better and worse perspectives and ideas. A universal set of laws, fundamental truth, predicates the existence of a centralized organizing force to the universe. A centralized organizing force that touches each and every person's life, in an intimate way through palpable forces, each moment of every day. That truth, itself, is the God that scientists worship. The ultimate Truth is the God they seek. Even the scientists who rigorously discipline themselves to erase all evidence of a benevolent deity from their thoughts and beliefs, find themselves enthralled to a fundamental urge to see the universe as ultimately hospitable to life and truth.5

Science distinguishes itself from every other spiritual network by measuring its success in carving out pieces of their ultimate truth with mundane, reproduceable demonstrations of its laws. Compared with the miraculous and larger social question that religions attempt to explain, science has therefore necessarily focused on more basic, trivial phenomena, such as the motion of a rolling ball (gravity), or the sparks discharged by rubbing sheepskin on glass (electricity), or pollen jiggling in a vat of beer (atomic forces). The discovery of the laws behind these three palpable forces has led to every modern technological advance. Scientists measure their success by how much they contribute to the goal of revealing these universal rules which govern the universe; their status in their particular quasi-religious hierarchy is notably more measurable and objective than other religions.

Science as a globally open discipline is extremely decentralized politically. No person, university, institution, or nation has monopoly control over whether any theory becomes established scientific fact. But this global Science DAO is very protocol centralized around objective universal Truth.

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[5] We're not aware of the precise philosophical term for this argument that Science is effectively a religion with Truth as its God, but it is by no means a novel concept. Indeed this idea spawned several sects and cults shortly after the success of Darwin's work on evolution. For example, in William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1917 he writes on p 76, "Science, and our so-called 'Civilization' as these things are now organized and admiringly believed in, form the more genuine religions of our time" referring to J. R. Seeley, Natural Religion, 3d edition, Boston, 1886, pp 91, 122. See also pp 90, 138 where he uses the term "naturalism" to refer to this idea of science as religion, and p 483. One of the many definitions of "scientism" is close to this argument. See Thomas M. Lessl, "Naturalizing science: Two episodes in the evolution of a rhetoric of scientism", Western Journal of Communication, 60:4, pp 379-396 (1996). Related ideas include deism, the Cult of Reason, the Cult of the Supreme Being, Religion of Humanity, transcendentalism, rationalism, materialism, positivism, empiricism, and energeticism, C. Hakfoort Science deified: Wilhelm Osstwald's energeticist world-view and the history of scientism, Annals of Science, 49:6, pp 525-544, (1992).

Most scientists take for granted the universe itself is a decentralized organization, a DAO. They are looking for the rules behind it all, the protocols, the code that keeps it running autonomously in the organized manner we predictably witness. We personalize or anthropomorphize these rules when we make the leap to a religious perspective, by asking what values this universal protocol reflects? What is the goal of the universal DAO? Most atheist scientists reject such questions as unnecessary, even unearned and contraindicated, from the collection of truths that science has managed so far to assemble.

But scientists have not earned the right to make such a judgment, and they never can. Science's focus on the mundane has created remarkable advances in mundane technology. Their obsessive myopic focus on mundane forces limits their area of expertise to mundane physical arenas. Our understanding of psychology and sociology has made profound advances. But we are still far from definitively addressing how to solve personal conundrums in any way approaching the authoritative solutions science provides in answering how to put a rocket on the moon. Freud promised a scientific answer to such personal and social problems more than a century ago, but we are further than ever from that goal. Our scientific understanding of consciousness is superficial, despite the resources we've expended in the investigation. Scientists do not deserve to rule on the question of whether we should ask what the meaning is behind the rules guiding the universe, or the values they might reflect. They have less authority on this subject than someone who studies spirituality or theology or morality or poetry.

The Folk Theorems and other impossibility results illustrate the need for transcendental values for unifying people in harmonious cooperation. Transcendental values cannot be stated formally and explicitly, unlike scientific laws. People who are in touch with transcendental beauty, true poets, need to be the authors of our transcendental values. But these poets need to be grounded. They need to have concrete contact with the universe. They need to understand it—to comprehend the universe and its laws—to make meaningful goals.

Decentralization requires every member to participate in the construction of those values. A decentralized network is only as strong as its members and the environment it exists in. The strength of a decentralized organization is measured by summing the power of each member in their individual autonomy, but this is modified by the ability of the group to organize and effect its goals in the larger society. How well can members cooperate? The power of a DAO is its power to unite in service to the goal of shared values. In a decentralized organization, which doesn't coerce its members like centralized organizations, its power is determined by how devoted its members are to its values. In constructing these values, every member needs to be a poet and a historian, a monk and a scientist, linking the talents of writing transcendental values and evaluating grounded mundane facts.

Decentralized organizations demand more from their members and return more, in autonomous power and profit. Centralized organizations shelter their members within a niche in a hierarchy. Centralized organizations limit the power of their members, stultifying them, in exchange for the security of knowing they will have a place to belong, as long as they fulfill their role as a cog in the machine, as long as the group survives. Decentralized organizations are ultimately more efficient and versatile, more stable socially and individually generative. They're as stable as their autonomous members' adherence to their ideals. But their very autonomy requires the members to construct the unifying ideals for themselves. They are individually responsible for nourishing and revitalize those unifying ideals, continually. No book can contain those transcendental values. Our goal in this chapter is not even to make a failed attempt. We only wish to point to the necessity for such individually generated, socially unifying ideals, and offer a gauge with which to analyze them and measure their success.

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