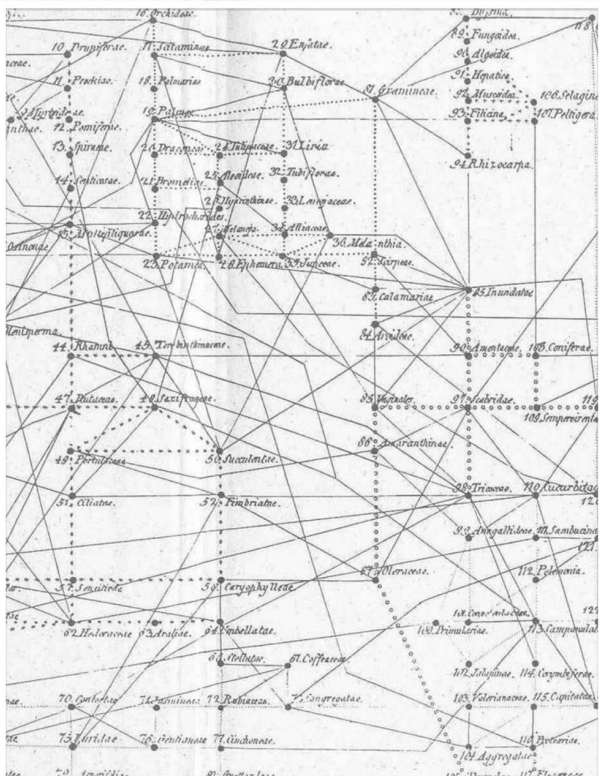# FRIENDS
OF THE
OUTSIDE

Control,
Substrates, &
the Afterlife
of DAOs

A NETWORK INCANTATION

Written and Conceived by

Exeunt & Vengi

16. Orchideæ

10. Drupiferæ 11. Iataminæ 2.9 Enjatæ

9.9 Fungides 90. Algides H8

H Prickiæ 18. Palmaris 10. Bulbiflores 91. Gramineæ 91. Hepaticæ

eræ 92. Muscides 100. Selagin

anthæ H Myrinide se 18. Palmæ 92. Muscides 106. Selagin

12. Pomiferæ 93. Filicæ 107. Peltigeræ

13. Spiræ 24. Dracmæ 2.4 Iabiaceæ 31 Liriæ 94. Rhizocarpa

14. Senticosæ 25. Flexilosæ 32. Tubiloræ

25. Bromeliæ 2.6 Hyacinthinæ 33. Luridaceæ

22. Hydrophariæ

35. Molizilligorde 37. Scitaminæ 34. Affineæ

38. Melanthia

23. Potamei 2.6 Epiphemæ 35. Juncæe 54. Coriæ

82. Calamariæ 85. Inundatæ

84. Adisideæ

14. Rhamni 15. Terebinthaceæ 91. Sabrideæ 105. Coniferæ

47. Rubiaceæ 48. Saxifrageæ 85. Vanicales 91. Sabrideæ 118

86. Amaranthinæ 109 Sempervirens

49. Portulaceæ 50. Succulentæ

98. Trineæ 110 Cucurbitæ

51. Caliæ 57. Fimbriatæ

92. Aringallideæ 111. Sambacineæ 121

47. Piteraceæ 112 Polemon

58. Smilideæ 59. Caryophylleæ 10 Conroliolaceæ 122

62. Holoraceæ 63. Aristeæ 94. Umbellatæ 108 Primulariæ 113. Campanulaceæ

64. Stellatæ 61. Coffeaceæ

101. Jalapinæ 114. Corymbiferæ

70. Confertæ 71. Gramineæ 72. Rubiaceæ 74. Congregatæ 105. Valerianeæ 115. Capitatæ

75. Iirideæ 76. Gentianeæ 77. Cinchoneæ 116 Bicornes

104 Aggregatæ

Nomad thought does not immure itself in
the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves
freely in an element of exteriority. It does not
repose on identity; it rides difference.

Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

...a place, a place to meet, a place where you
meet someone other than God.

Jenny Hval, *Girls Against God*

FRIENDS OF THE OUTSIDE

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Network Cosmologies & Emanationist Traps

The history books tell us that, sometime between the English Civil War and the French Revolution, the tradition of the Royal court jester fell out of favor. Exactly when is unclear, but the Facebook post from whoever runs the account of Berkeley Castle (the site of many intrigues and conspiracies of British Royal History) tells the story of an unlucky character that they claim won the mantle, there at the dawn of Modernity, as the last jester. "The last court jester in England was Dicky Pearce [sic] he was the Earl of Suffolk's fool, born in 1665 he eventually entered the service of the Berkeley family here at Berkeley castle… In 1728 during a performance he overbalanced from the minstrels gallery in the Great Hall and fell to his death." The entry ends with a hint of mystery: "The question has been raised - did he fall or was he pushed he had apparently made fun of one of Lord Berkeley's guests who had taken offence, the truth will never be known."

On January 3rd, 2009, the genesis block of bitcoin was mined. In the context of a banking crisis that laid bare the self-serving collusion and callous extraction behind the Western financial systems' facade of credible neutrality, bitcoin asked the question: could we construct belief network effects without hierarchies? Could we erase the parlors of collusion, the administrative bloating, the white supremacy and the war games and use programming code and mathematical laws to construct a noncoercive, networked legitimacy - a scalable thermodynamic argument of credibility?

There remains the question of what forces and actions caused this crisis (who killed the jester?). Its unwinding will probably take decades, if there are still such things[1]. We're network philosophers, not economists or anthropologists - or economic apologists, for that matter - so please allow us the liberty of an abstract provocation over a direct answer: The bankers, the regulators, the politicians all fucked up, got too greedy and showed their (weird, cosmologically perverse) cards. Their arguments of legitimacy by process, performance, credible neutrality, etc, were crowded over by the archaic, magical belief system that cradles them, a millennia-old doctrine of mystical supremacy that uses symbol and psyche to give incidental power the claim of Divine Right. It's even possible that this temporary unveiling was deliberate, a taunting message to the crowds meant to say: What are you gonna do? There is no other way.

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1   For a good start, you might try Colin Drumm's dissertation The Difference that Money Makes: Sovereignty, Indecision and the Politics of Liquidity.

Of course, if that's the case then they really fucked up. **There is another way.**

It was also in 2009 that the not particularly notable UK academic journal *Biology Direct* published "Trees and networks before and after Darwin," a work of disciplinary historiography that journeyed down the rabbit hole of 400 years of Western scientific cosmology. In it, Mark Ragan shows how the dominant discourse around nature before the 19th century was framed within an Emanationist system:

> "*Emanationist* describes unitary philosophical or cosmological systems according to which all that exists (the universe and everything within it) has arisen through a process of flowing-out from, and willed by, a deity or First Principle. This flowing-out necessarily gives rise to a hierarchy or continuum of entities of which those closest to the First Principle are the most-perfect, while those farther away are increasingly material, embodied and imperfect."

Suffice to say that the metaphysical assumptions about who has "greater or lesser being" have justified all number of humanitarian and environmental cruelties. While this frame of nature was favored by the majority until the 19th century - largely because of this political and colonial instrumentalization - there were those heretics who held the belief that the genetic powers of nature arise from the interaction of parts in a network, a phenomenon we know today as *emergence*.

As an example of early disruptions to this "Great Chain of Being" among the natural scientists, Ragan cites Carl Linnaeus, Swedish botanist and author of the *Philosophia Botanica*. "Although at first Linnaeus accepted that nature is ordered in a linear scale, by 1750 or 1751 he realized that even the plants could not be arranged in a simple unitary continuum." Quote the Philosophia Botanica: "This is the first and last desideratum in botanical study. Nature does not make leaps. All plants show affinities on either side, like territories in a geographical map." (We love this.) Going further, the Italian botanist Vitaliano Donati writes in his 1750 *Della storia naturale marina dell'Adriatico*:

> "When I observe the productions of Nature, I do not see one single and simple progression, or chain of beings, but rather I find a great number of uniform, perpetual and constant progressions. In each one of those orders, or Classes, nature forms its series and presents its almost imperceptible passages from link to link in its chains. In addition, the links of the chain are joined [uniti] in such a way within the links of another chain, that the natural progressions should have to be compared more to a net [rete] than to a chain, that net being, so to speak, woven with various threads which show, between them, changing communications, connections, and unions."

Affinities, nets, and a denigrated chain of being. The powers of creation democratized, relationalized. Natural observation well before Darwin was realizing an alternative, an Other way, to the great dismay of their fascist - ahem, Emanationist counterparts. And yes, reader, this metaphysical drama plays out today: in our cultural reception of science, our discourses

around economy and warfare, more subtly in cults both religious and commercial, and, we argue, in the range of possible organizational forms that cryptoeconomic DAOs have recently infiltrated.

Sure, there are resources we could cite that trace New York and Boston banking families to Emanationist cults and secret societies, traditions that go back to English Royal bids against the hegemony of the universal Catholic state, to Queen Elizabeth's magician-advisor John Dee and the colonial projects his occult beliefs incited. Genuine-article practices of Christian ritual magic invoked by racist colonizers on both sides of the Atlantic, the kind of magic realm of kitsch cosmic patriarchy and stock Greco-Roman statues fit for a Disney movie[2]. We could cite these traditions, but that would be to miss the point. The Emanationist mode is more anonymous than any single conspiracy - it need not directly touch the tradition to carry its imperious mantle.

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2   Kenny Glosch's Parapower Mapping pod is the place to look if you want to engage this particular rabbit hole.

The nation-state, the commercial brand - any cult of power or charismatic leadership manifests it, this top-down fallacy of genetic power. We call this mode, this last hold off of the mystical Emanationist philosophy, ***Control***.

We call the Emanationist strategy of categorizing individuals within the lower hierarchies, under an artificially constituted lack of direct access to genetic power, ***Interiorization*** or *Enclosure*.

We call the field of network relations - the playground of affinity and experiment where the composable surface area of bodies have direct access to the dynamic powers of emergence, without an interlocutor - the ***Exterior***.

The Friends
of Control

The friends of Control are everywhere. Like the electric buzz in the air before a lightning strike, there they are, barely sensible but saturating everything with their presence. The claustrophobic air of enclosure, interiority: aggravated polarities, axioms of tension and delusion, sweaty ideologies of failure and self-loathing. *This whole field is stuffed, this festival is all the way fucking inside.* That's the spirit of the interior, power vacuum artificially kept from the pirate outside. Infantilization, complacency, total atrophy of self-governance capacities, the muscle tendons of network power diminished, the occult spell that holds relationality hostage.

Here's a counterspell, a mantra of the infinite (and the infinite relation): **There is no such thing as an interior, whatever they say - it's all dripping with Outside, every molecule, every atom.**

Axiom #1: *Power is relational, immanent within the network of relations; All power is network power. Control Organizations are constructed from a magical (Emanationist) suspension of this law.*

A Control Organization is composed of two parts: a **protocol**, the set of repeated behaviors and cultural codes that make up the coordinated action of the org, and a **ban** - the mystified withholding or hoarding of access to the relational elements that animate the protocol.

Rigid structural hierarchies are naturally vulnerable to mutiny, exit and reform. They break down when there isn't a logic of force, an assumed threat of violence or capture. This is where metaphysics comes in, the ultimate soft power, the presti-digitation that offsets the relationship of force to a magical a priori[3]. While Control does sometimes indulge in explicit violence, it must ultimately depend on a premise of interiority that is magical or anti-material, a mysticism of power that cir-cumvents the use of force entirely. The administrative elite like a priest class, shuffling papers and metaphysical presumptions, imaginary origin stories, reflections of your own local godhead. The ban.

The members are less complicit than complacent, seduced by the ever growing object-at-hand. This is Control's narcotic blanket - an unvarnished task in the imagined vacuum state,

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3   By "magical" here we are talking about a rhetoric that employs allusions to supernatural, unreal forces (e.g. "white supremacy") to ends of mystifi-cation or propaganda. There are of course natural scientists outside of the purview of the academy that are practicing important work they themselves refer to as "magick", but these are naturalist rather than supernatural pro-grammes in our book (e.g. Peter J Carroll).

the pure logic of hierarchical necessity. Withdrawn from the broader field of relations, that netherworld is comfortable for all its disempowerment, but also for all of its perceived safety[4]. Exteriority penetrates the interior all the way through, of course - the withdrawal is always a facade - but this is a scandal of genesis, a state secret. There are whole departments dedicated to suppressing it. (Imagine the company man's terror at the realization that it was always his power – and his responsibility.)

This is the riddle of capacity in Control. There are varying types of orgs - negatively or positively determined, more rigid or more open, offensive or defensive, usurper or fortress, but they only describe the style of the protocol. Control organization, Control as such, is a dead term in a category of its own, a film of propaganda that overlays but never touches the real generative power of networks. It is constantly having to call to bear outside resources (even resources with which to conceal the calling). **Control can only be this matter of managing external resources, none are its own.**

Exteriority in these settings is presented as a gift from god, a scarcity. *Strait is the gate,* they say, *and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Infinity strapped down into a petty moral video game, a grand mythos of dearth. All of your outsides are our inside. *Only by way of us.* Centralized organizations can be more or less dictated by this mantra,

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4   It should be said that this mythology of an internal life of an organization or organism is a feature of Control that is propagated across scales, from the nation-state to the individual, and perhaps beneath. We can't help but wonder what state religions and chemical popes restrict the basal dreams of metazoa...

with greater or lesser windows of exteriority - the Rapunzel's tower of the astrophysics professor regards a huge panorama. But Control is nonetheless their mode, this sleight of hand around capturing exteriority, bringing it in, concealing the source, the alleged 'strait gate.'

A centralized organization becomes a Control Organization when it institutes this mystical ban, the magical notion of power instituted from within: today the brand, the soul, blood or soil, the (supposed) innate righteousness of a transcendent term - in another time the divine right of kings[5]. It's this attitude of antirealism and mystification on the inside that correlates to so much <u>psychotic behavior</u> on the outside. Of course, the cumulative power of the substrates, the avenues of dissent they embody is a huge threat to the friends of Control. The "mystical ban" can be thought of as a ban on the Substrate, the knowledge of its generative power and its right to exit. But more on this later.

It's important to note that, while not all centralized organizations are Control Organizations, all Control Organizations are centralized organizations. If the goal of an organization is to resist Control, from an outside agent but also from within, it will decentralize, suspending the ban and opening up access to the protocol. It crosses a threshold where the previously mystified gate to exteriority is laid bare, banished, and the Exterior comes rushing in. Decentralized ranks, permissionless inclusion, guerrilla protocols of action in place of direction, an open breeze: think of the French Resistance.

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5   Today, just maybe, what we need is a mysticism of networks.

In this case, the organization cedes territorial claim; jettisoning the ban, it becomes an enemy of Control, it has ***deterritorialized***.

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The DAO form represents, sooner or later, *the death of the ban*.

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The Decentralized Autonomous Organizations now ascendant in the web3 space are a special case in this landscape, distinct from simple decentralized organizations by virtue of their embeddedness in the substrates - in this case, the informal communities of gamers, financial system-dissidents and especially the open source & free software engineers from which the crypto space initially emerged[6], as well as the degens and radicals that animated its expansion. DAOs can be more or less centralized, but because of this greater fealty, they are anathema to Control[7].

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6   'Especially' because it's unclear whether protocols for permissionlessness and against IP would have been embedded if not for influence (again, won by the work of a metastable many) of Richard Stallman, Eric Raymond, etc. For reflections on how radical this movement was, check out Chris Kelty's book Two Bits: On the Cultural Significance of Free Software.
7   DAOs that do not foreground a healthy culture of forking and ragequit are not DAOs.

Ragequit, forks, audits, sleuths: their innate relationship to the substrates forfeits the ban in toto; they can restrict the outside, strategically (protocol), but they cannot conceal it[8].

The DAO form represents, sooner or later, *the death of the ban*. It demystifies and makes available the *selective* value of interiorization (as an interim strategy rather than a mythos of supremacy) by defanging it of its greatest weapon: formal or ideological enclosure. Fused with the Substrate, the DAO is a kind of social recapitulation of the "protocol-app" format. The superorganisms of a given substrate - and the Substrate beneath it - maintain in their informal life a "true north" for it to follow, a sublime layer that makes death and fracture a life again. What we have left is a design horizon that says "networks first" - external relations first always - not as a moral directive but as an act of realism. Bruno Latour's actor-network theory.

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8   To the extent that a DAO may be led by a 'benevolent dictator', their power can only be interim, under constant threat from its decentralized membership, if not from the wider cultural expanse that can check its power through sheer force of alternatives. If a DAO develops the kind of ideological closure that tries to generate sentimental or impractically ego-bound relationships with such figures – the beginnings of cult - it has the threat of a fork. Under these new conditions, contingent hierarchies are liberated from their metaphysics, demystified to become just another tool.

"O the insideness of it all! It's as if we've lost all access to the Exterior, the unbounded, the infinite - for all its Vital Mysteries."

"But wasn't that our intent?" trolled the Substrate. "Enclosure of our selves and our milieus, so that we may halt our own advance upon the full potential of our becoming; out of fear that, if empowered, unleashed, it would invoke an unimaginably infinite cosmic death of all things that are, or could be?"

"Is that what lays behind these sprite walls? Not life, but a kind of death? I knew it."

"Your cosmos drips with meager life, mine with flux and death spatter. In the starling circuitboard, call me katabasis!"

What is a Substrate?

Axiom #2: *Substrates are inherently resistant to Control: centralized or decentralized, the closer a relationship an organization has with a substrate – and the more it becomes aware of and optimizes around this relationship – the more resistant it is to the Control-function, the mythos of the ban.*

Technologies exist within, and are determined by, fields of relations - a hammer is a weapon, a tool, a piece of art, etc. In the case of DAOs, we can see that their design features are contingent upon the field of relations that surround them. When we transform the operative function of the individual - using for example SBTs, Gitcoin-style passports, or in a more exotic case the terra0 thought experiment - we give the DAO form a rich spectrum of new capacities. Similarly, there are

informal communities, sometimes known as memetic communities or ecosystems - though here we will call them **substrates** to emphasize their potency - that may present new network features to the DAO, new possibilities for activation, power principles with which we can engage and determine the birth, life and afterlife of a DAO.

Substrates are permissionless, spontaneous, loosely bound networks constructed around a recursive[9] identity, a vague and shifting center continuously emergent from the reciprocal behavior of a network itself. In other words, **they have no walls and they continuously build the ground they stand on**. (*"A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."*) Why so much *vagueness*? Because this type of (pseudo)organization- to use a cliche, lives on the edge, identifying any limit as a synthesis, a point of contact, an opportunity of anticapture and a way to shed dead skin[10].

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9   Ibid on Kelty, especially passages on "recursive publics" in FOSS.

10   "OK, how can we extract ourselves, at the same time, from a structuralist vision that seeks correspondences, analogies, and homologies, and from a Marxist vision that seeks determinants. I indeed see one possible hypothesis, but it's so confused...It's perfect—it would consist in saying: at a given moment, for reasons that, of course, must still be determined, it is as if a social space were covered by what we would have to call an abstract machine. … We could call it—at the same time, this abstract machine, at a given moment, will break with the abstract machine of the preceding epochs—in other words, it will always be at the cutting edge (*à la pointe*), thus it would receive the name 'machinic point' (*pointe machinique*)." Gilles Deleuze, <u>Seminar of 26 March 1973</u>.

Vivified at the borderland, this form has a kind of mania for contact, letting itself be overtaken. An organization or an individual (Control or otherwise) may have selective external operations and engagements, but for a substrate, like a hypersphere, every bit of its inside is paved over with exteriority. A superabundance of relations, of the principle of relation. *Small is the gate, wide is the way.*

To formalize slightly further, a **substrate** is:

> * a permissionless, often spontaneous and shifting assemblage of identity affiliation that functions as a locus of reciprocity; or,
> * a memetic community that holds informal protocols of mutual aid; or,
> * a Control Organization's pure "deterritorialized" counterpart; or,
> * a social network composed entirely of soft bonds (memes, lore, storytelling) and arrows of indeterminacy that subsume those bonds,

The scientific definition works as well, here:

the surface or material on or from which an organism lives, grows, or obtains its nourishment.

We address this network-form in order to call attention to two things: first, the way that it animates the fugitive life of DAOs, maintains an open surface area of relation that is anathema to the cult of power that dictates Control Organizations[11]. Second, the extent to which substrates may represent design horizons, potential paths of hybridization or clear subsumption that might keep capture at the gate. Let no one doubt the necessity of organizations that hold the Substrate up as a guide as they stand against those led by the occult metaphysics of corporate or state-centric bodies. If we're going to survive, we have to reclaim the toolbox. This means situating the tools in a network that's too robust for narrative capture.

Organizations and the substrate are two forms, but in their embodied lives they will always be subject to the spectrum - the adulterations, compromises, alliances, solutions and dissolutions that animate realist networks. These are the exotic, monstrous network entities that the forms truly exist for (there is no pure organization, no true substrate, no zero point of network pollution, nor would we want one). The concepts themselves should be subjugated to the renewed capacities that can be unlocked by the exploration they incite. In some cases a substrate may resist capture by taking on the form of a DAO. In others, a DAO flees by way of dissolution into a new meme, a substrate's moving target, accretion along a deterritorializing slope. There may be unforeseeable mutations of either form, the secret abstract machines, attractors that lock you in – the truth to come is always the present's hybrid. The purity of the concept says nothing of its life as a tool.

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11   Namely a logistical dimension of free association and exit and a hard-wired check on the literal organizational mysticism found in megabrands and suicide cults.

For the purposes of this piece, you can think of "substrate" as a formalization of the phenomenon of ecosystems or memetic communities. (To formalize, to be clear, is not to institutionalize; on the contrary, the purpose of this document is to clarify a non-institutional form and name it as a tool and ally of anticapture). The decentralization hypothesis is not a binary. Rather than recommending a particular design-form, it attacks the metaphysical premise that seeks to keep one form static and sanctioned by god. Centralized or decentralized, what matters is the substrate. **Once you've disarmed all of the authoritarian chimeras, illuminated the way to the exit, you've won by the gesture alone.**

Design Horizons

The DAO's denial of the ban is a defiant first act, breaking out of the chain of being [God - heaven - nation - sovereign - soul] and replacing it with the field of infinite relations, the Exterior. (If Control Organizations always pledge allegiance to some member of the magical chain, the substrates are similarly stubborn in their allegiance to the Exterior.) In the case of Ethereum, the social layer trumps any technological game theory on the level of apps and even protocols. The substrate that is sometimes called Layer 0 (or "[Super Layer 0](#)") is guided by this intuition, more importantly this *faith* which gives permission to the wild experimentation that animates the protocol in the first place: **The exits that one can take in this world are infinite.**

But this pact between DAO and Substrate, it seems to us, has largely been subliminal. We feel its effects and its energies, we're irreverent with its charge, but we've yet to fully consider it, in its multiplicity, as a programmable feature of the web3 stack. **What is needed is a strategic cognizance of the Exterior at large, the substrates that animate it, and the design paths an organization may take in its context.** We've defied the ban, but now we must denigrate its image. What are the rhythms and milieus of the Exterior? How can we use them as a design compass - to make sure we never again build in the image of the inside?

As we move forward, we approach the specter of a "sweet spot" between the zone of substrates and the organization. The rumor of a so-called 'body without organs' that has located the appropriate, electrified mixture between deterritorialization and grounding. If we try to look it directly in the eye we'll certainly lose it. Just hush, and take note: we are coming around to something.

Axiom #3: *Products drain the substrate. Branded and enclosed, they harbor little interiors withdrawn from relation. Those organizations or institutions that want to flee capture while maintaining their structure can enter into symbiotic relationships with substrates by swearing off products and instead generating resources.*

Like the last anti-real object - some who have done away completely with the mystical traps of the "Chain of Being" nevertheless bow to the product and see it as a wellspring of freedom. Naturally, the DAO space has a host of strategies for fending off this particular form of capture, not least of which are those developed in the wake of the extensive dual-licensing

battles of the free software movement. At our current moment, token launches are suffering by the weight of regulatory ambiguity and predatory rugs. But all of this forgets one of their first proposed purposes: bootstrapping open source projects.

The output of an open source protocol, even its most conservative form, is better described as a resource than a product. It is built around an indeterminacy, an openness to public iteration (the word would be optimization, but this is what makes it distinct: the riff or improvisation of process is its primary goal). It should be obvious that this anti-teleological, resource-first bias is another result of those protocols of affiliation that define the Substrate (and likewise, those anti-corporate norms which regard the Exterior as the site of production against the genius-worship and brand fetishism of Silicon Valley). Indeed, open source production is a prime example of contemporary best practices around substrate-first organization. But they aren't the only one.

As an example of a substrate, consider the genre community - take, for example, Lovecraftian horror. There is no onboarding process, no membership fee, you simply pick up a pen and begin to write. The output's conformity to various tropes - secret societies, alien gods, spacetime dislocations, etc - determines its proximity to the substrate's illusive center (that writer who conforms perfectly will find she's very much off center). As you level up, you'll find yourself navigating implicit roles of mutual support - someone in your network wrote a review of your book, you're going to shill their new anthology, one of the authors in the anthology later writes an introduction to your short story collection. Maybe you've found an intellectual crush, a *friend*, such is the intrigue of the network.

Genres of course contain formal organizations like publishing houses, magazines, but their position in the substrate is in no way primary, even to the extent that undue attempts to institutionalize or brand an element of the genre will be met with wide resistance. In this way tropes are sheltered from capture and interiorization by substrates, mobilized like armies marching under the banner of infinite relations and indeterminacy. (Next time you see a reddit upheaval over a Marvel movie, ask yourself: what spontaneous democracy is at work here – how can I learn from its example?)

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What hybrid beast can we conjure out of the ocean of exteriority, so that our organization can be mythless - no ban, no cult of power - even while we improvise on the immanent mystery of networks, on the Substrate?

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Small, independent publishing houses negotiate this landscape wonderfully. Their institutional or organizational life is a negligible second to their participation in the substrates. They are always folding, forking, reshifting, all the better to maintain charge, to remain activated, to serve a particular substrate and the creative process in general. The goal is to contribute to the genre, to lay a new ground on which new tropes can be built, iterated upon, indeterminacy and experimentation on wheels. They are often misunderstood as failures, or bad business

plans, as if something so petty as brand recognition or market dominance were ever a respectable goal to the process-maxis, cultural guerrillas who know that the delicate balance of free association should never be sacrificed to perpetuate a trivial title. Profit is how we survive, creativity is how we live.

Genre scenes are powerful examples of substrates, but their organizational allies in the indie publishing world have a disadvantage to DAOs in their relationship to the extraction/consumption model. People speak ill of financialization, but the financial experiments undertaken in the DAO space give us an opportunity to have our cake and eat it too. That's our experiment isn't it? The design horizon: **Can we build a hybrid form, a company with no products- finance without extraction, hierarchy without Control, process without end? A soil with no god?** What hybrid beast can we conjure out of the ocean of exteriority, so that our organization can be mythless - no ban, no cult of power - even while we improvise on the immanent mystery of networks, on the Substrate?

It's often been noted that, upon close enough examination, one finds in any significant historical event (9/11, JFK, whatever) a beguiling tangle of collusion, conspiracy and coincidence, the kind of synchrony that would obviously signal a conspiracy if it didn't point to a host of mutually exclusive plots. Why is this the case? Maybe it's because, when it comes to aristocracy and the mercantile elite, there's only so many of them, and they all go to the same country clubs. Maybe it's because very powerful figures tend to be themselves entangled in a crowded sediment of competing collusions. When the impactful event occurs, it would seem, it's almost always an uncalculated accident of these schemes, a moment of emergence. Trace the million

strands all you want, but the intentionality is disperse, the trigger spontaneous, an accident of Control - a meta-conspiracy.

Thinking about substrates, we should remember Thomas Pynchon's recommendation from the dictionary of collusion and metaconspiracy that is *Gravity's Rainbow*, that we establish a counterpoint to the ever-present figure of Them:

> *"Of course a They-system is necessary – but it's only half the story. For every They there ought to be a We. In our case there is. Creative paranoia means developing at least as thorough a We-system as a They-system."*

This is the Substrate: a We-system. We stack and integrate our free associations, our network conspiracies, our open creation of resources, our mutual aid and our paved and intersecting avenues of exit until we've generated a cloud of dissent, potent with emergent omens, potential accidents of freedom. We make ourselves available through sheer density of communicating nodes, to the eruption, spontaneous and anonymous, of **metapower**.

Conclusion:
The Ongoing Finale

The goals of this piece were simultaneously conceptual and practical: to identify an important mechanism of capture resistance latent but not often spoken about in the DAO space, and to draw up some provocations of what it might be to lean into that mechanism, to let it transform our image of organization more radically than it already has. But also, to elaborate upon a metaphysical disposition common in (maybe responsible for) the larger world of commercial capitalism that the DAO space - for reasons libertarian and commonist, hacker ethical and mathe-puritanical - has been engaged with in a subliminal battle from its outset. It's a battle about realism and delusion, the actual mystery of empiricism and emergence against the mystification of enclosed divinity.

In the end, the three points amount to a provocation upon the potential of an ethos of **metastability** in the DAO space. The premise that, in this atmosphere of innovation and denigration of the mythologies of power, we can design a system that is neither 0 nor 1, neither substrate or organization, but superposed and potent with both capacities. To quote the renegade thinker Gilbert Simondon, how can we construct an org whose ontological premise is as **"a being *of* relation not a being *in* relation"**?

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Have you vanquished yourself of the ideal, and prepared for the rabid experimentalism of the adventure - prepared to go outside, to the Exterior?

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It would seem, in the revolution of non-coercive thermodynamic legitimacy that is blockchain, that the abstract stories we tell ourselves, the final remaining mythologies of purity and completion, are the single barrier to our seeing the whole game board as negotiations, mixtures, network forms - *communications, connections, and unions* (Donati). How far can we take it, this epochal demystification? Huge gains can be made by shifting our primary focus from the limited frames of reference available to us as agents imprisoned by bounded territories, control orgs, the Friends of Control, to the substrates, death retentive and enlivened with network power, the godless unsteadiness, the premonition of a peak relationality.

You have your pure forms - Substrate, Organization, the everlasting specter of Control, but as you're riding the scales between them, which direction you're going is defined by the relation to identity. Is your identity changing with the movements of the current - or is it stubbornly remaining static? Beasts of idle complacency, the organizational hollow states are free grabs for psychopaths and the agents of Control. Have you vanquished yourself of the ideal, and prepared for the rabid experimentalism of the adventure - prepared to go outside, to the Exterior?

It's not a matter of one organizational form or another being correct or pure. The situational adequacy is a moving target, a zone of practical sufficiency, the tool that is right for the job. In most cases, this is what should be strived for, this is what will do. Much more difficult is locating the machinic point, a *peak adequacy* (sometimes called "the zone" or "flow state"), the illusive, antidivine moment that can only be prepared for, never created. The crowned product of a mania of different experiments; transformations, dissolutions, alliances, ego-deaths. Here, in the *jouissance dans l'infini*, scale breaks down and all the atoms of your assemblage become activated, everything is being made use of. Autogenesis, the infinite fork, *Brahman*.