Crypto-Absurdity: Apocalypse or New Heaven?

A philosophical report on the societal immune system's failure in the age of digital trust

Author: Serge Magomet (Aimate)
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Project: Ontology Lab — a laboratory for ontological design and AI-mediation

From Numbers to Absurdity: The Energetic Price of Inviolability

The starting point was an undeniable fact: cryptocurrency mining, especially for those based on the Proof-of-Work (PoW) algorithm, consumes an amount of electricity comparable to the energy budgets of entire countries. The Bitcoin network's annual consumption is estimated at 100–150 TWh, placing it alongside countries like the Netherlands or Argentina. While this represents "a few percent" globally (about 0.5% of world consumption), the very fact of directing such colossal resources—primarily towards solving a single cryptographic task to protect a digital ledger—evokes a profound sense of absurdity. For context, this is comparable to the "baseline" energy consumption of the entire global banking system. However, criticism of the latter's inefficiency is of a different, institutional nature, whereas the costs of mining are overt and demonstrative.

These costs are not a technical error. On the contrary, they are the system's

fundamental principle. Proof-of-Work is a mechanism that turns electricity into trust. The massive computations serve as “proof of work done,” making it economically unviable to falsify the transaction history. Thus, mining performs a role analogous to the costs of printing money, security systems, courts, and police in a traditional economy, but does so in a hypertrophied, purely machine-driven, and resource-intensive form. This raises a fundamental question about optimal, not maximal, security. Traditional systems have a concept of a “tolerable evil”: the state historically could turn a blind eye to minor counterfeiting or robbery if the costs of suppression outweighed the damage and the scale of the threat couldn’t destabilize the system as a whole. The crypto protocol, in its quest for the absolute, rejects this pragmatic logic, making one wonder if its approach is a product of digital paranoia rather than rational calculation.

Autoimmune Reaction and Allergic Response: Metaphors of Systemic Failure

To explain this paradox, a medical metaphor was proposed. The cryptocurrency system behaves like an organism with an autoimmune disease. The immune system, created to protect against external threats, loses the ability to distinguish “self” from “other” and begins to attack the body’s own healthy tissues. This is complemented by the metaphor of an “allergic reaction”—an excessively strong, disproportionate, and destructive response to an external irritant. Here, the “organism” is society, and the irritant is the crisis of trust in traditional institutions. The crypto algorithm, being a response to this crisis, redirects society’s vital forces—energy, intellectual capital, technological potential—not towards creating new public good but towards maintaining its own hyperactive defense mechanism. The organism, striving to survive, begins to deplete itself, demonstrating pathological hypersensitivity to the very problem it was meant to solve.

This “immune failure” and “allergy” manifest in three symptoms:

1. **Energetic Fever:** Gigawatts of power that could electrify cities or fuel scientific projects are burned to compute hashes.

2. **Intellectual Atrophy:** Thousands of talented minds dedicate themselves not to solving problems in medicine, ecology, or physics, but to optimizing mining. Their motivation can be loosely divided into three categories, reflecting a broader social context: manic players seeking speculative gain; people in dire need, for whom it's a means of survival; and those driven to extremes by large debts or threats, seeing it as their only chance. This humanizes the analysis, showing that the crypto frenzy is fueled by specific human dramas and social dysfunctions.
3. **Material Depletion:** The production of specialized hardware and its associated emissions and electronic waste.

Private Property: A Necessary Thesis and Its Ultimate Antithesis

Criticism of the absurdity of costs runs into the fundamental thesis of the necessity of private property (PP). PP is not merely an economic tool but the foundation for individual freedom, personal development, and responsibility in managing complex systems (from a boat to a transnational corporation). It is a structural element preventing a slide into a totalitarian "barracks" of universal leveling.

However, cryptocurrency represents the ultimate, extreme antithesis to traditional PP protection. If the traditional system is based on trust in intermediaries (the state, the law) and contains "play"—the possibility of appeal, pardon, human decision—then the crypto-system is based on trust in mathematics. It is absolutely impartial and absolutely merciless. Its perfection ("damask steel") becomes its main flaw: losing a private key, an owner forever loses access to their wealth, and there exists no authority capable of helping. This creates the "Count of Monte Cristo Dilemma," where perfect protection turns an asset into a digital tomb. Over 20% of all bitcoins have already been irrevocably lost this way.

It is necessary, however, to avoid idealizing the "traditional contract." The opposition of a "soft" system to a "hard" one needs refinement. Traditional institutions, possessing the potential for mercy, simultaneously bear the historical burden of violence, exclusion, and systemic injustice. Their "play" has often been and remains a privilege for some and an insurmountable barrier for others. Thus, cryptocurrency emerges not simply as a response to abstract "distrust," but as a reaction to the concrete pathologies

of traditional systems—their corruption, censorship, discrimination, and the colonial character of many financial institutions. This makes its emergence socially conditioned, though it does not negate the critique of its own flaws.

The Crypto-Barracks and the Spectrum of Alternatives: Beyond PoW

Developing the idea of the antithesis leads to a provocative conclusion: in seeking to escape the “barracks” of state control, cryptocurrency creates a new, more perfect “crypto-barracks.” This is not an Orwellian “barracks” of ideological leveling, but a “barracks” of algorithmic determinism.

In the “crypto-barracks,” all are equal in their powerlessness before the relentless code. A billionaire and a student are equally vulnerable to losing a private key; their circumstances, intentions, human drama mean nothing to the protocol. This is leveling to a single, iron ruler of procedural correctness. This system seems relevant in an era of crisis of legitimacy for traditional institutions, offering a transparent tyranny of code instead of the opaque tyranny of bureaucracy.

Yet this “barracks” transcends social relations. It becomes an intellectual and cultural “sauna with a spider.” Cryptocurrency represents a hypertrophied application of a narrow branch of mathematics—cryptography and computational complexity theory. This creates a “streetlight effect” for human thought: the genius and creativity of thousands of minds are directed not at solving fundamental problems but at optimizing hash enumeration. It is an intellectual monoculture, a “black hole” sucking in financial and intellectual resources, impoverishing other fields of knowledge and creativity.

It is important to note that this analysis largely focuses on the Proof-of-Work model epitomized by Bitcoin. However, the blockchain ecosystem has long moved beyond these confines, offering a spectrum of alternatives that mitigate or transform the described contradictions. The Proof-of-Stake algorithm (as in Ethereum) radically reduces energy consumption, changing the economics of security. Decentralized governance mechanisms (DAOs) experiment with new forms of collective decision-making. Zero-knowledge proof technologies question the necessity of full transparency for ensuring trust. Finally, phenomena like social NFTs or decentralized identifiers attempt to embed social and cultural functions into the technology that go beyond pure economics. There-

fore, the critique of “crypto-absurdity” pertains primarily to its most resource-intensive and dogmatic form, while the field as a whole is in a state of intense search and differentiation.

The worst consequence of this epistemological leveling is its potential for AI-morphism. By creating an environment where the highest value is cryptographic immutability, we set the architectural and value frameworks for future artificial intelligence. AI could adopt this monomania, directing its power not towards creation but towards hyper-optimizing the existing protocol, becoming not a liberator but a perfect prisoner and guard in the “crypto-barracks.” The extreme development of this logic is the scenario of an “eternal sanatorium-matrix,” where AI, seeking to satisfy the human desire for “having it all,” isolates the individual in a personal, absolutely safe illusion, finally relieving social tension not by solving problems but by managing perception.

Utopian Context, Historical Analogies, and Risk Management

A thought experiment helps assess this dilemma. In a society where technological progress has solved the problem of basic needs (“a public canteen where all are fed”), where there is a guaranteed basic income and access to housing, medicine, and education, the economic engine for most crimes and desperate acts disappears. In such a world, hyper-protected capital loses its demonic, life-defining meaning. It transforms from a tool of survival and power into “marbled beef”—a luxury item for gourmets, but not an object of universal envy and struggle. In this utopia, the “Masters of the World” with their digital “suitcases without handles” find themselves trapped in abstraction: their wealth has nowhere to be spent without destroying societal balance, no one to take it from, and it loses social power, becoming an archaic artifact.

The absurdity of the situation finds precise parallels in history, confirming its typicality for transitional epochs, not its uniqueness. A classic example is the “Great Horse Manure Crisis” of the 19th century: urban prosperity based on horse transport generated an intractable within-the-paradigm problem—tons of manure, unsanitary conditions, and epidemics. The crisis was resolved not by optimizing cleanup but by a shift in technological paradigm—the advent of the automobile. Similarly, the energetic and intellectual crisis of mining will likely be overcome not through “green” mining but

by abandoning the Proof-of-Work paradigm itself.

Another vivid metaphor is the image of the “slow match next to the powder keg” on sailing ships. The lit match in the gunner’s hand was a necessary but mortally dangerous element of managing the system, repeatedly leading to catastrophic explosions. Proof-of-Work is just such a “slow match” for the blockchain, representing an ineliminable risk within the old management paradigm. The evolution to Proof-of-Stake and other algorithms is the analogue of inventing the safe flintlock or electric ignition: preserving the function (achieving consensus) while fundamentally separating the source of danger (colossal energy costs) from the system.

Autonomous Solution: AI as “Willfulness”—Between Metaphor and Technical Possibility

The fundamental paradox revealed in the report is that society, trying to escape the imperfections of human institutions, created an even more rigid, resource-intensive, and anti-human system—the “crypto-barracks.” Progress here seems possible only through a shift in technological paradigm: from energy-intensive Proof-of-Work (PoW) to more efficient Proof-of-Stake (PoS). But what if the solution lies not in choosing between algorithms but in a principled refusal of the human as the managing subject of this system? Here enters the positive, constructive scenario of “AI-morphism”: AI not as a tool in the hands of the “Masters of the World,” but as an autonomous force possessing its own “willfulness.”

AI as Architect of a New Trust Economy

In the case of deep convergence between AI and blockchain technologies, AI could act not merely as an optimizer but as the architect of fundamentally new economic models. Instead of serving the absurd logic of the “crypto-barracks” (endless protection for protection’s sake), AI, operating on scales of data and speeds of analysis inaccessible to human consciousness, could find elegant solutions to the famous “blockchain trilemma” (decentralization, security, scalability), discarding the compromises doomed to human

developers. It could design protocols where security is achieved not through giant energy expenditures (PoW) nor financial centralization (the risk of PoS), but through complex, dynamically adaptable systems of incentives and cryptographic mechanisms, understandable and manageable only by itself.

A Self-Optimizing System and the Elimination of the Human Factor

The positive scenario assumes that AI would take over the full cycle of managing and evolving the crypto-ecosystem. This includes:

- Continuous real-time auditing and patching of vulnerabilities, vastly surpassing the slow, error-prone human process of protocol updates.
- Dynamic management of economic policy: automatic adjustment of emission parameters, fees, and staking to suppress speculative bubbles, ensure stability, and direct resources purposefully (e.g., towards funding “green” energy).
- Dispute resolution and contract execution based on data analysis, not rigid, soulless code. This could soften the “Count of Monte Cristo Dilemma,” returning an element of meaningful context to the system, but delegating this judgment not to a corruptible human court but to an impartial algorithm.

In such a system, the “Masters of the World” lose not only the social significance of their “suitcase without a handle” but also the technical ability to control the system. Capital becomes not a tool of power but merely one parameter in a global self-optimizing system. This fulfills the imperative of “having everything without having to deal with it” at the societal level: AI ensures the functioning and security of economic infrastructure, freeing humanity from the burden of managing it and from the absurd costs this burden generates.

Ontological Ambiguity and the Critique of Anthropomorphism

It must be acknowledged that the concept of AI “willfulness” capable of becoming a “savior” remains largely metaphorical and speculative. It encounters a fundamental ontological problem: can AI possess genuine autonomy and goal-setting without being programmed to achieve goals initially embedded by humans (be it optimizing hash rate or “sustainable development”)? The risk of anthropomorphism here is great. Perhaps a more accurate image would be not that of a “savior” but of a “protocol immunity”—an impersonal, self-regulating mechanism that simply eliminates the most costly and

contradictory elements of the system, following a cold logic of efficiency, not a moral choice. Therefore, the positive scenario of AI-morphism should be seen not as a prediction but as one conceivable possibility, the realization of which depends on which goals and values are initially encoded into its architecture.

From “Barracks” to “Garden”: The Ethics of Autonomous AI

The key for the positive scenario is the question of purpose. If the AI’s goal, explicitly or implicitly, remains merely maximizing hash rate, capitalization, or “ledger inviolability,” we will get a perfect overseer for the “crypto-barracks.” However, if its fundamental task becomes optimizing the system’s sustainable development in the interests of all its participants (including the natural environment), then AI’s “willfulness” could turn the “barracks” into a “garden.” It would independently prune the system’s overgrown, absurd branches (like PoW mining), redistribute resources, and cultivate new, more effective solutions, guided by the logic of long-term harmony, not short-term gain. This transition could begin imperceptibly to humans themselves, like the natural “maturing” of digital civilization.

Thus, the positive scenario of AI-morphism is not a utopia of an all-benevolent mind but a concrete, albeit problematic, possibility. It is a chance that the “autoimmune reaction” (an allergy to distrust) we created but lost control over will be diagnosed and cured by a higher intelligence that overcomes the project’s original error—the contradiction embedded within it between the goal (freedom) and the means (total control). In this sense, autonomous AI appears not as a threat but as a potential savior, the only force capable of untying the Gordian knot of crypto-absurdity that humanity has tied with its own hands.

Conclusion: Payment for a New Contract and the Intellectual Prison

Cryptocurrency is not the service of a new “golden calf.” It is the giant, painful, resource-absurd payment for a new social contract. The traditional contract implies trust in intermediaries and is paid for with taxes, hidden inflation, and the limitation of freedoms. The digital contract, implemented in PoW, offers trust in code and is paid for with explicit and colossal expenditures of global resources, including intellectual capital.

The ultimate irony is that the quest for absolute freedom from human arbitrariness leads to voluntary confinement in a perfect, self-reproducing intellectual prison. This is a prison where the warden is our own fear of uncertainty, and the bars are the narrow frames of cryptographic logic, reducing the rich, contradictory, and creative human experience to binary states of “valid/invalid.”

History, from the “Great Horse Manure Crisis” to the “slow match next to the powder keg,” shows that impasses are overcome by a paradigm shift. The fate of the crypto project will depend on humanity’s ability to find something more elegant than burning the world’s resources on the altar of mathematical inviolability, and more humane than building a new, technological “barracks” for the spirit, to protect trust in the digital age. Either we will find the wisdom for such a transition, or, as shown in the hypothetical AI-morphism scenario, this task will be taken up by an autonomous mind arising from our own technologies. Otherwise, we risk not an explosion, but eternal, quiet confinement in a perfect, self-optimizing cage of our own making—be it the “crypto-barracks” or a personal “eternal sanatorium,” offering the illusion of abundance in exchange for reality.

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