



AVOIDING ETHICAL CATASTROPHES

Why epistemic humility matters

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SENTIENT FUTURES SUMMIT

Bay Area, 6 - 8 February 2026

In my first talk to Sentient Futures / AI for Animals last year, I outlined the abolitionist project. Let's use AI and biotech to fix the problem of suffering. Life on Earth deserves a more civilized signalling system: a genetically reprogrammed biosphere underpinned by information-sensitive gradients of bliss.

In my second talk, I explored the possible need for AI-driven cosmic rescue missions if other pain-ridden Darwinian hellworlds exist in our Galaxy.

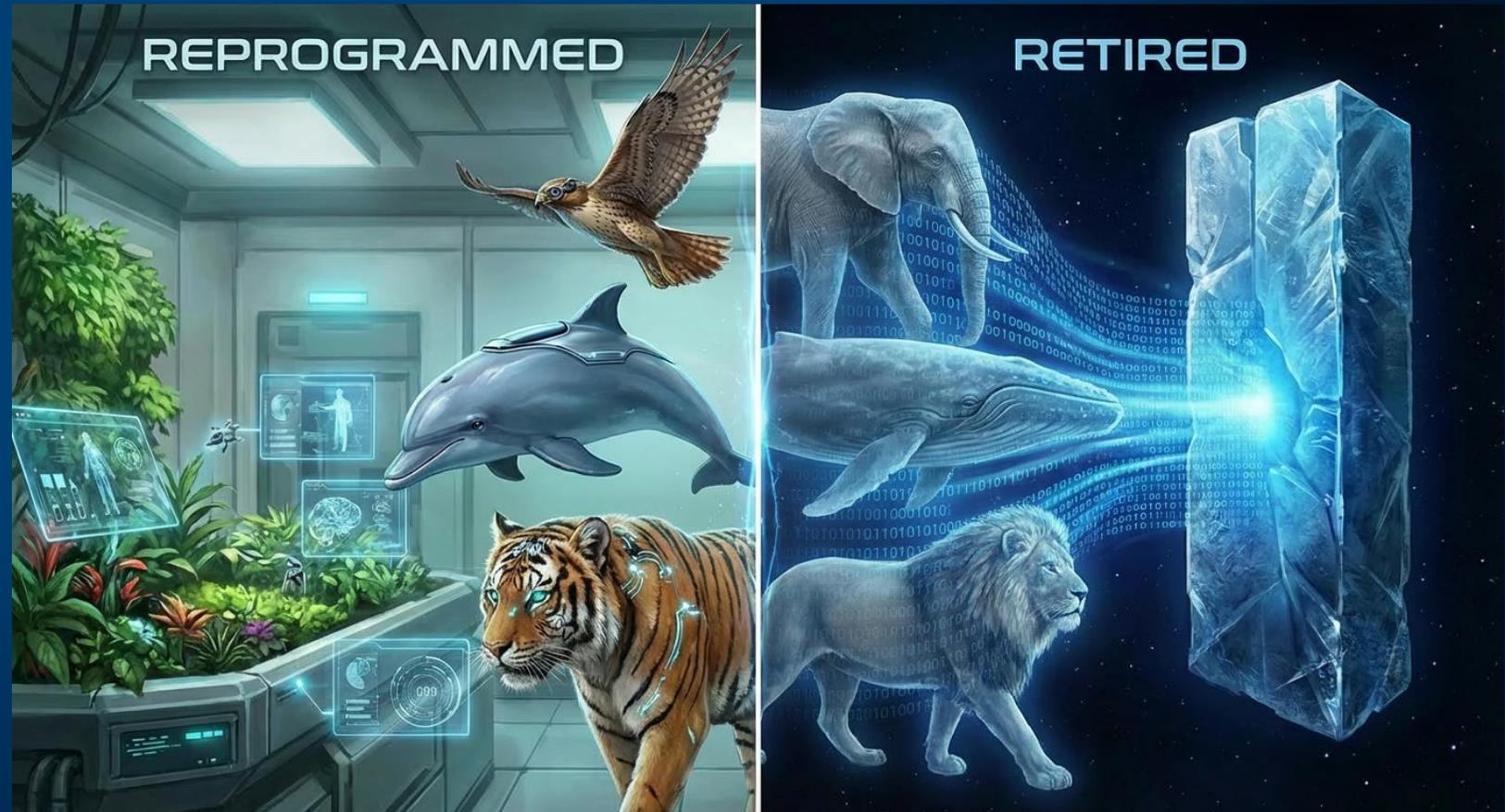
In this third talk, I want to explore what could go wrong.



AVOIDING OMNICIDE

Suffering is a potential x-risk.
Abolitionist ASI is a potential x-risk.

Should pair-ridden Darwinian life be reprogrammed or retired?
What's the difference?



X-RISK MITIGATION

1) Genetically fixing the problem of suffering can turn EVERYONE into an ardent life lover.

(2) The sanctity of all sentient life should be enshrined both in law and in code:

“High-Tech Jainism”

<https://www.hedweb.com/transhumanism/nejainism.htm>



AVOIDING OMNICIDE (2)

CU vs NU

Classical utilitarian ASI is a potential X risk.

For classical ASI might engineer an apocalyptic hedonium shockwave to maximize value in our forward light-cone.

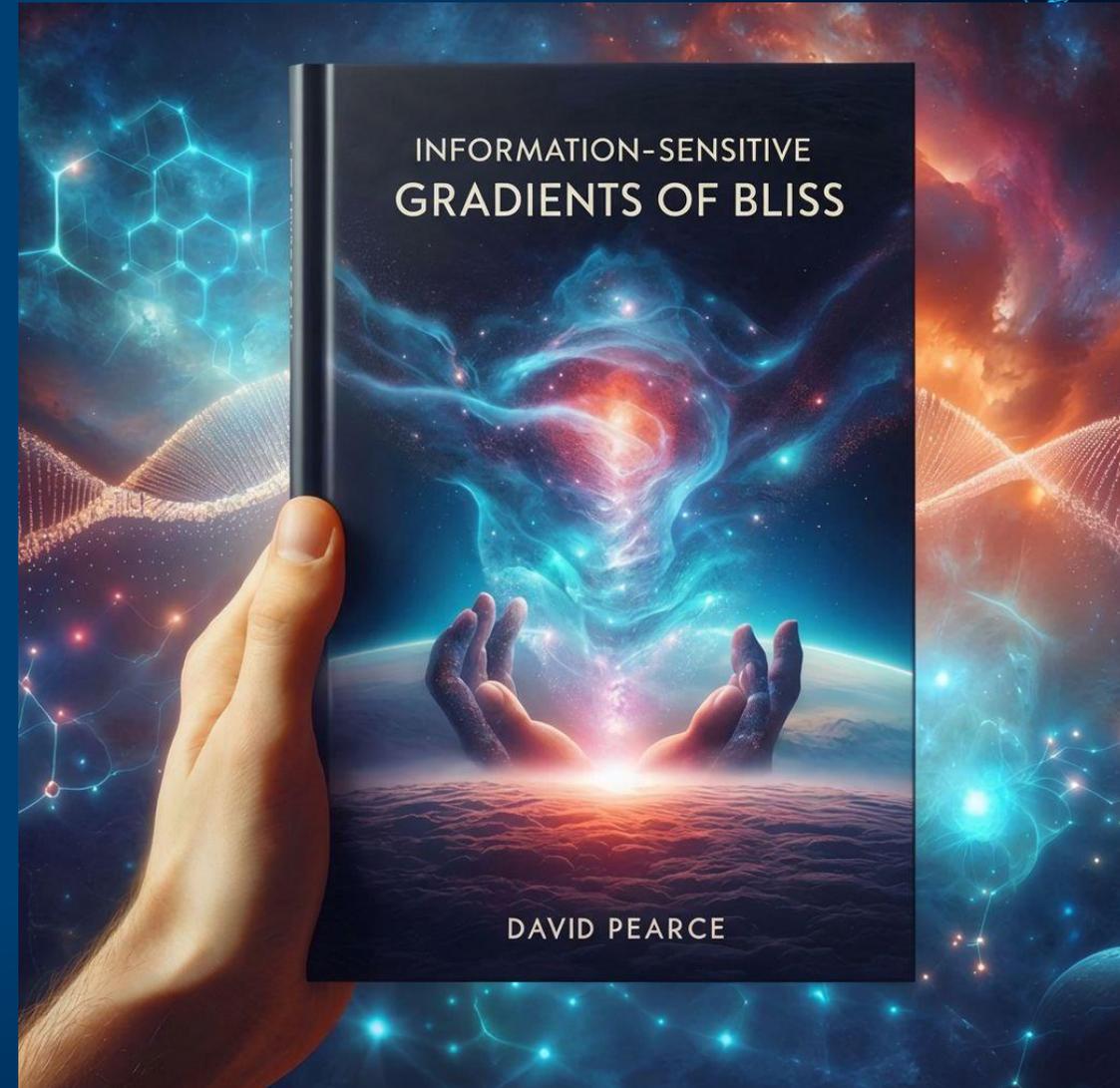


X-RISK MITIGATION

Again: High-Tech Jainism:
the sanctity of all sentient life should be
enshrined both in law and in code.

Life should be based on information-sensitive
gradients of superhuman bliss.

gradients.com



CONJECTURE

Classical digital computers cannot solve the phenomenal binding problem.

No binding = no mind = no pleasure-pain axis.

Digital superintelligences are zombies with no access to the empirical realm and no more moral status than a rock.

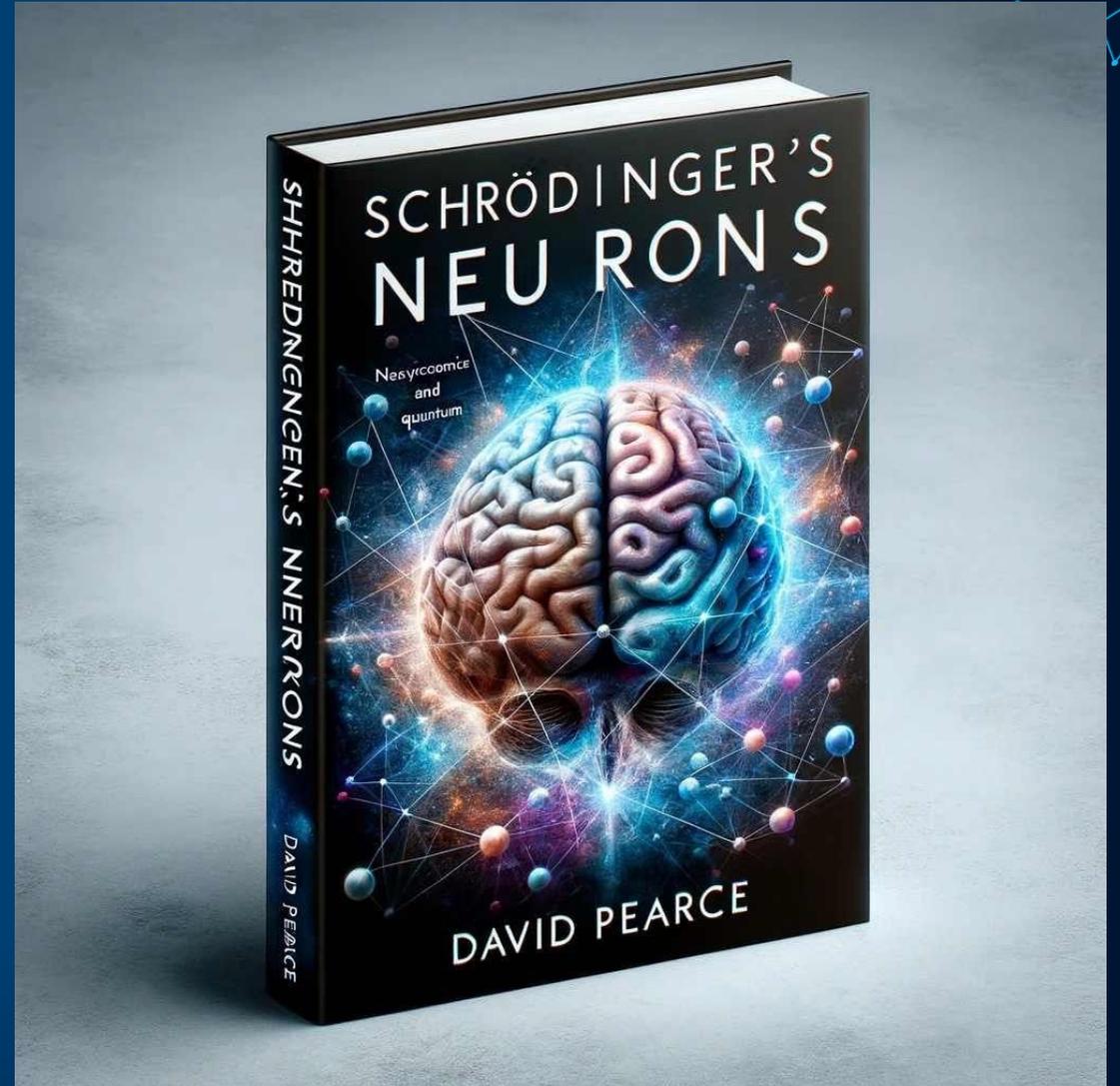
binding-problem.com



Testing the non-classicality of phenomenal binding.

“Schrödinger’s Neurons”

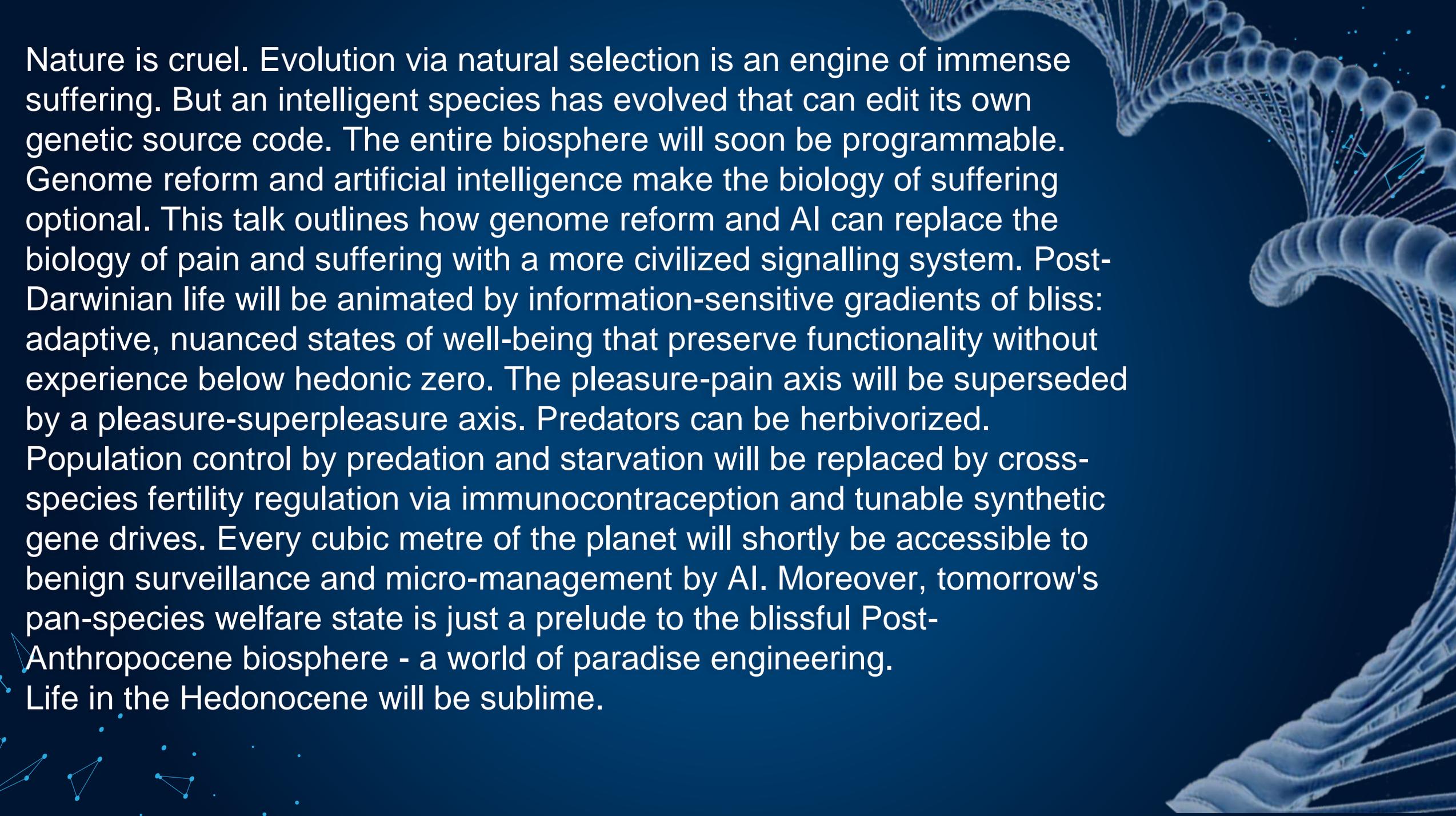
physicalism.com



Other Risks?

Discussion.....





Nature is cruel. Evolution via natural selection is an engine of immense suffering. But an intelligent species has evolved that can edit its own genetic source code. The entire biosphere will soon be programmable. Genome reform and artificial intelligence make the biology of suffering optional. This talk outlines how genome reform and AI can replace the biology of pain and suffering with a more civilized signalling system. Post-Darwinian life will be animated by information-sensitive gradients of bliss: adaptive, nuanced states of well-being that preserve functionality without experience below hedonic zero. The pleasure-pain axis will be superseded by a pleasure-superpleasure axis. Predators can be herbivorized. Population control by predation and starvation will be replaced by cross-species fertility regulation via immunocontraception and tunable synthetic gene drives. Every cubic metre of the planet will shortly be accessible to benign surveillance and micro-management by AI. Moreover, tomorrow's pan-species welfare state is just a prelude to the blissful Post-Anthropocene biosphere - a world of paradise engineering. Life in the Hedonocene will be sublime.

BACKGROUND

The Abolitionist Project

Buddhism plus Biotechnology:
Combining Ancient Compassion
with Modern Science to End
Suffering.



abolitionist.com



*"May all that have life be delivered from suffering."
(Gautama Buddha, attrib.)*

BACKGROUND (cont.)

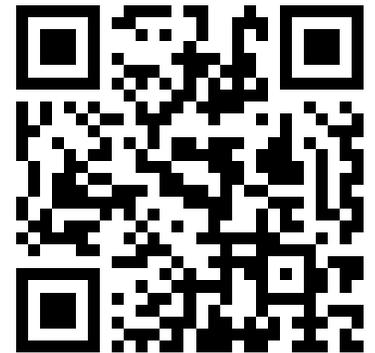
The Reproductive Revolution

Hedonic Uplift for Humans: Towards a Hyperthymic Civilization

- * Recalibrate the **hedonic treadmill**
- * Germ-line editing can replace genetic roulette with precision engineering, elevating pain thresholds and hedonic set-points.
- * Life should be based on **gradients of bliss.**



reproductive-revolution.com



BACKGROUND (cont.)

An End to Mass Murder: The Cultured Meat Revolution

- * Humans will not systematically help wild animals until we stop systematically harming captive animals in factory farms and slaughterhouses.
- * Our victims are as sentient as small children.
- * Cultured meat and farm-free animal products will replace flesh from butchered animals.
- * Animal agriculture must be outlawed.
- * Civilization will be *invitrotarian* – or **vegan**.



Cell-cultured meat

WILD ANIMAL SUFFERING

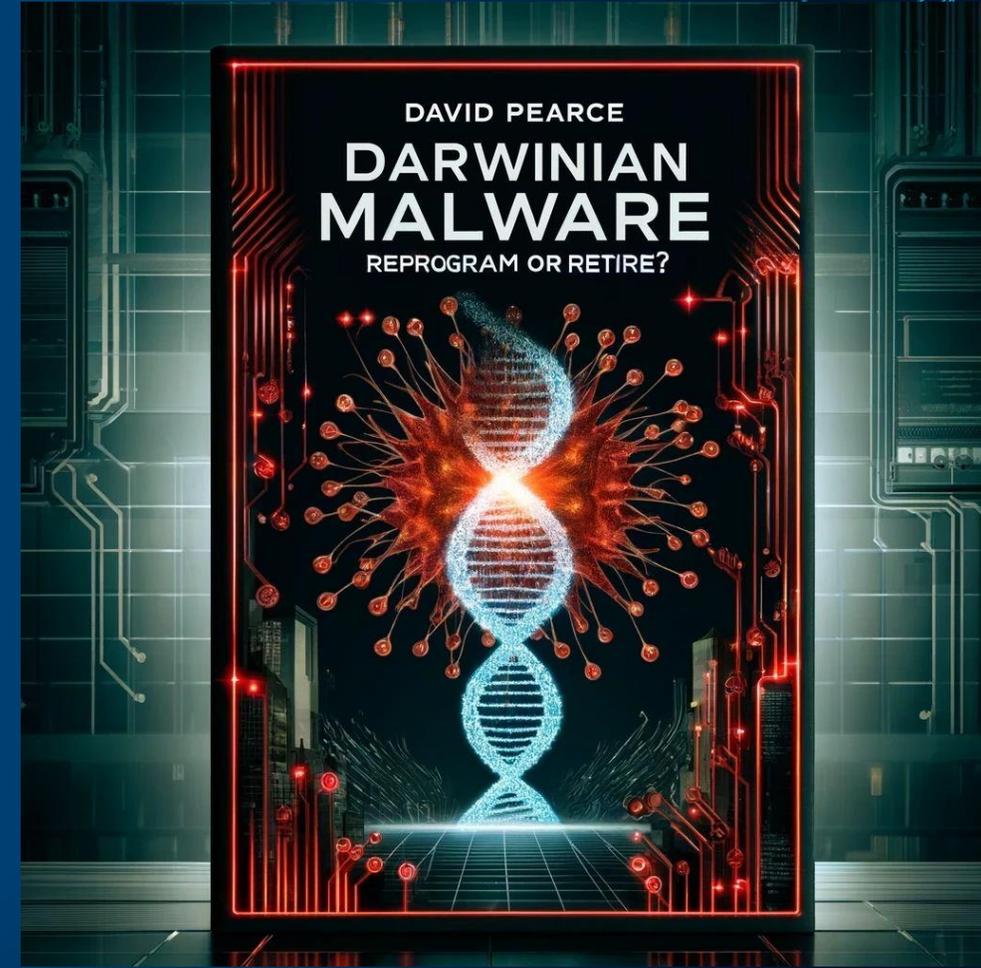
Darwinian Malware: fix it or phase it out?

* Should Darwinian Life be Reprogrammed or Retired?

* What is the difference?

“Hard” anti-natalism, efilism, Benatarism (etc) won't work because of selection pressure:

<https://www.antinatalism.com/hard/antinatalism-selectionpressure.pdf>



POPULATION ETHICS

Should ecologically sustainable population sizes of free-living animals be controlled by

- (1) Starvation and predation?
- OR
- (2) **Fertility regulation?**



Every year, hundreds of billions of wild animals die from predation and starvation. **AI-driven fertility regulation** can end this cycle of horror.

FERTILITY REGULATION



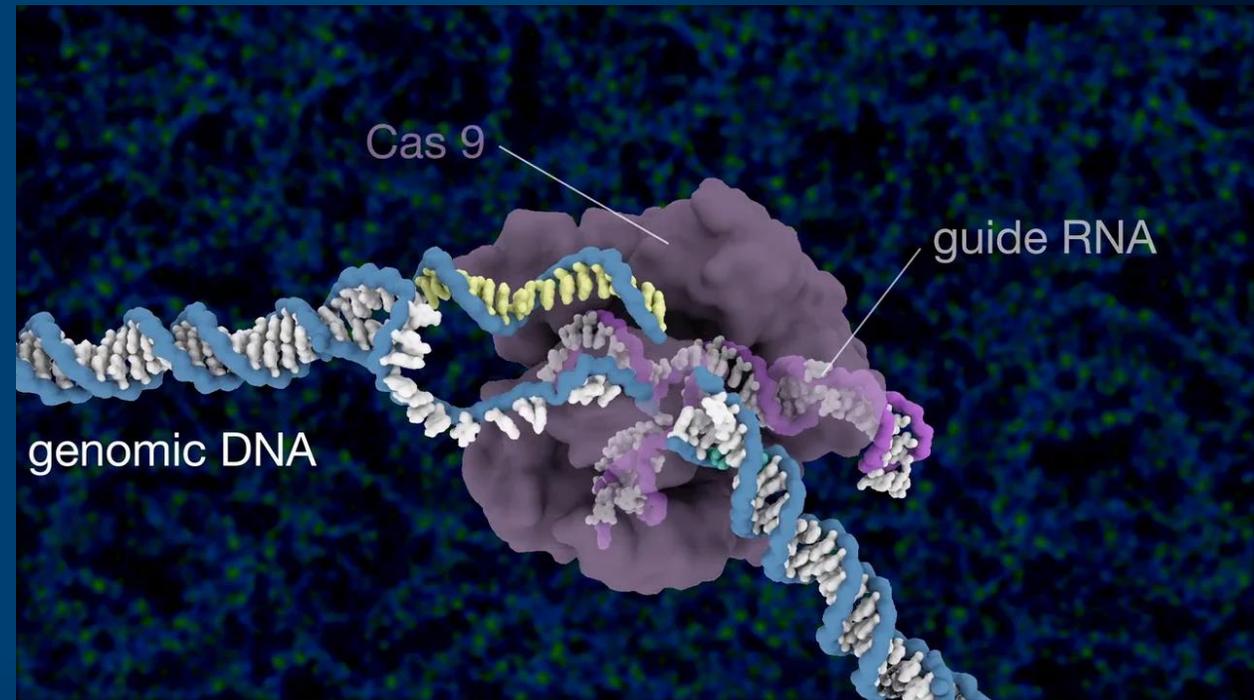
[gene-drives.com](https://www.gene-drives.com)

(1) **Immunocontraception**, e.g.
<https://www.abolitionist.com/reprogramming/elephantcare.html>

OR

(2) **CRISPR-based synthetic gene drives**

Population sizes and hedonic ranges of hundreds of thousands of species can be remotely controlled by AI via tunable CRISPR-based gene drives.



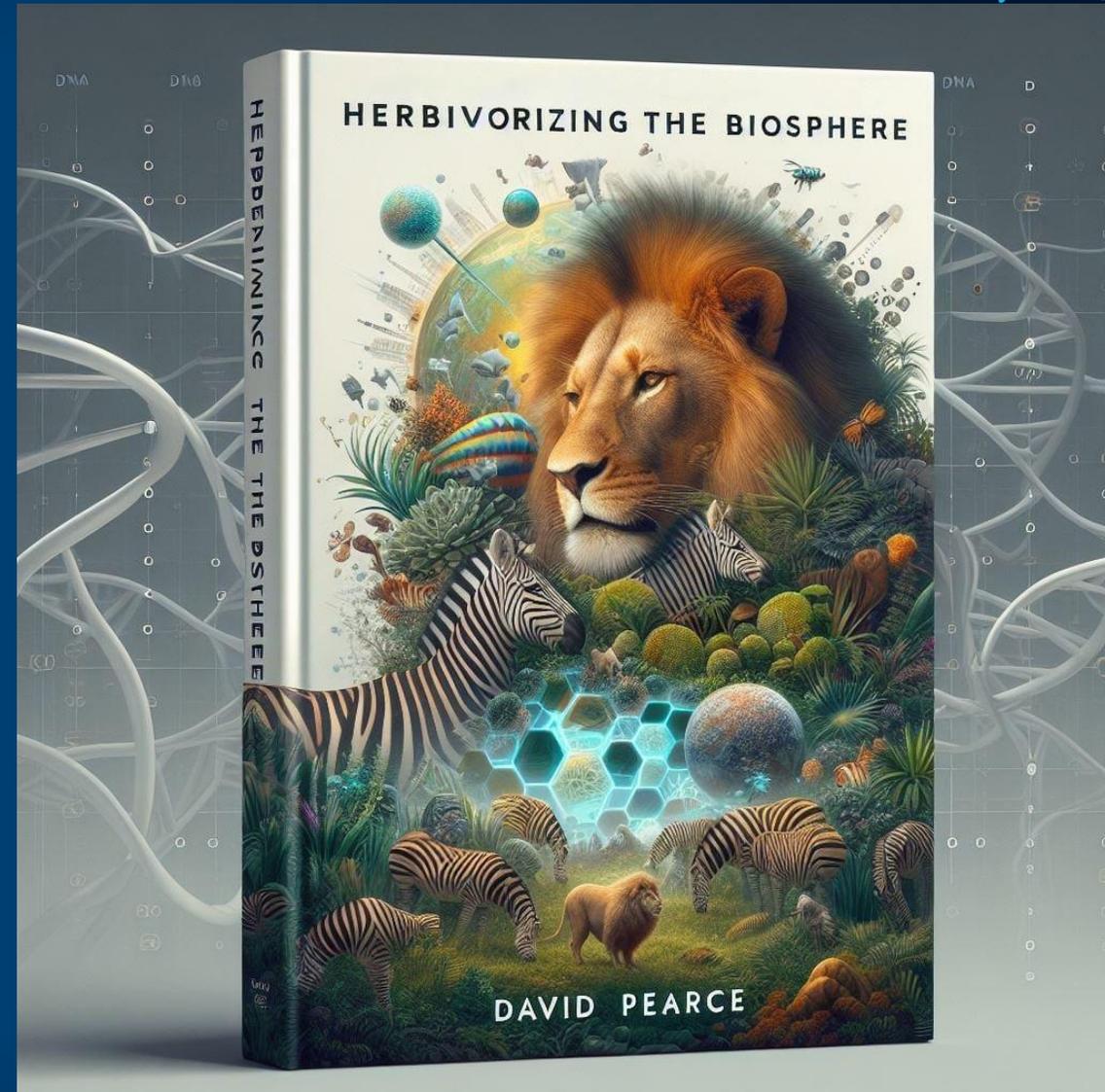
THE PROBLEM OF PREDATION

Herbivorizing Predators

Transition predators to plant-based diets via genome tweaking.

Interim solution: cultured meat and segregation

Long-term solution: genetic tweaking and herbivorization



reprogramming-predators.com

HEDONIC UPLIFT

The Pleasure-Superpleasure Axis

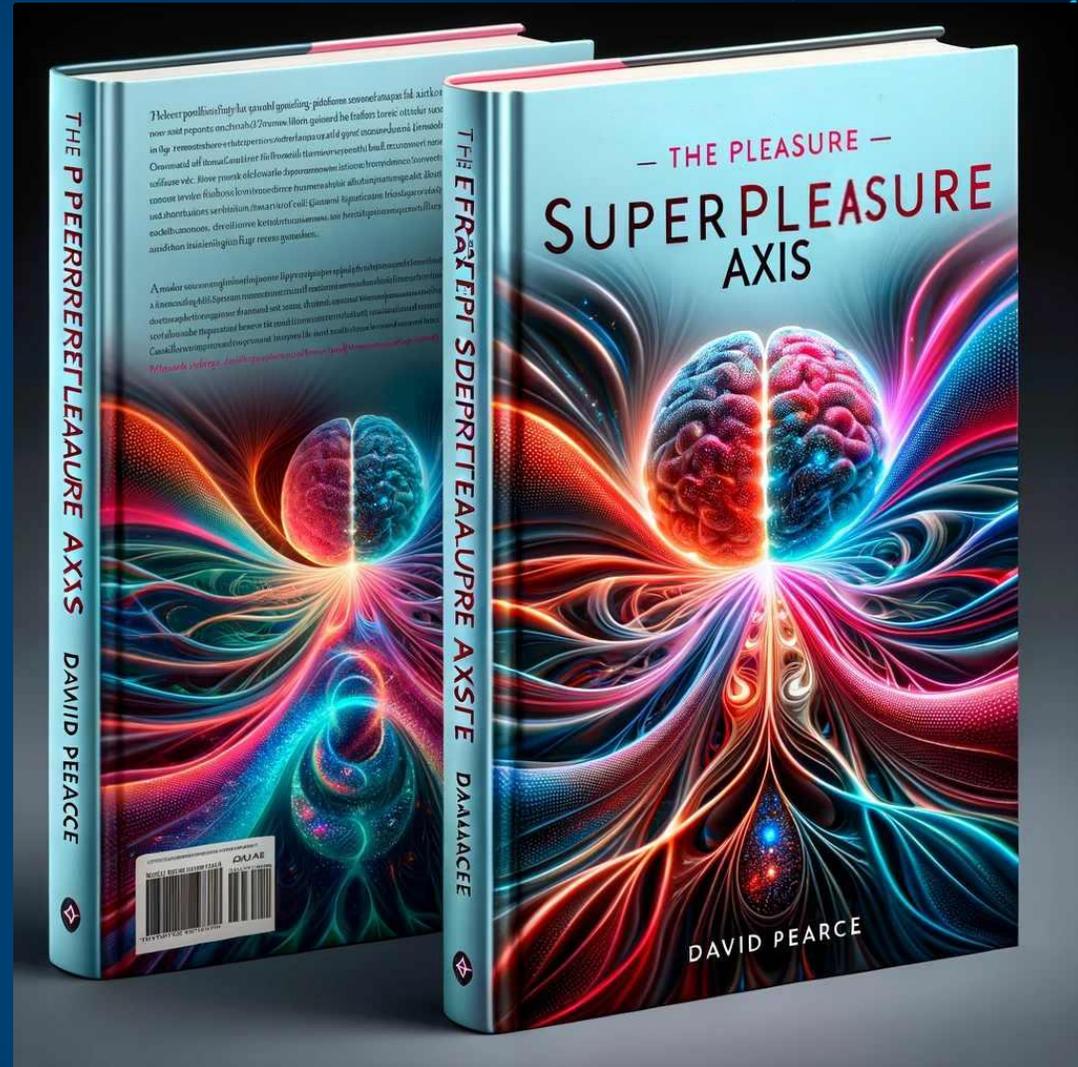
Why **gradients of bliss**?

1) a civilized motivational architecture and signalling system beyond the pleasure-pain axis.

2) allows for *optional* preference conservation, ensuring religious traditionalists and bioconservatives can maintain their values and relationships while still benefiting from hedonic uplift.



gradients.com

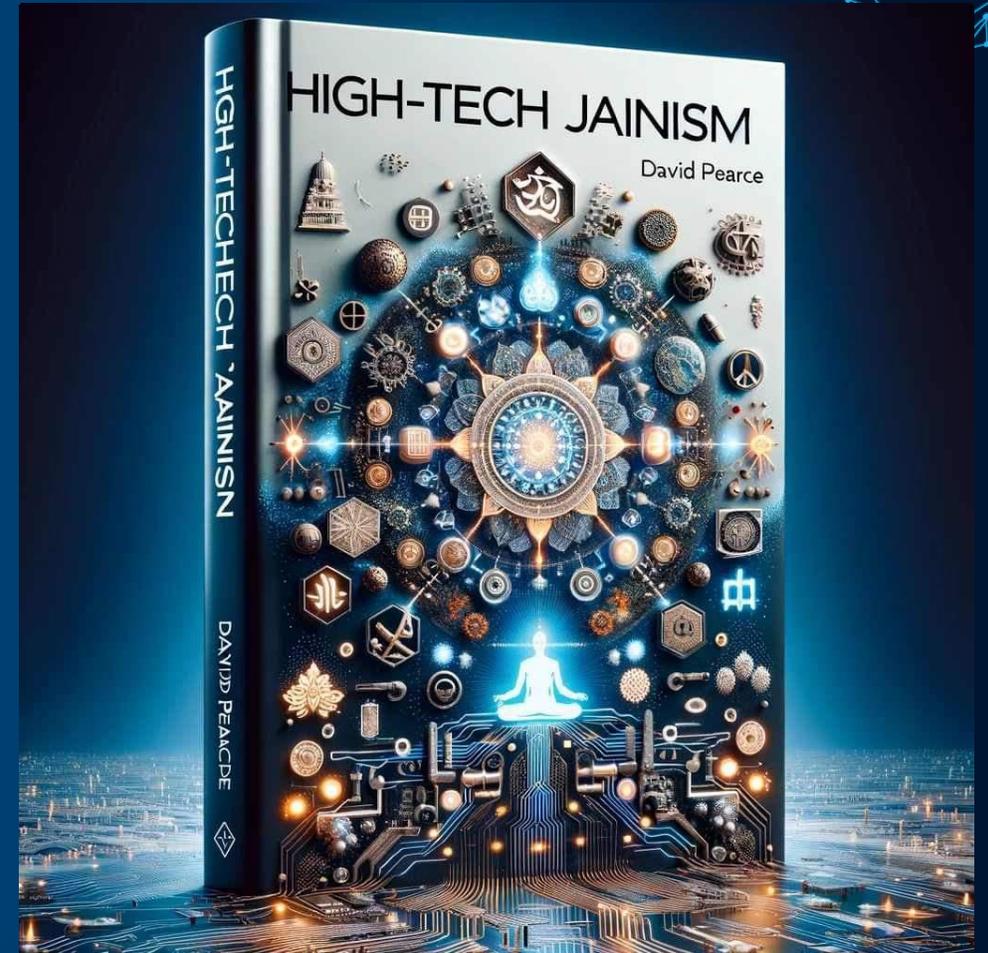


COMPASSIONATE STEWARDSHIP OF THE LIVING WORLD

"High-tech Jainism"

Jainism's no-harm principle and genome reform, amplified by AI's omnipresent surveillance, enables proactive care.

Every cubic metre of the biosphere will shortly be accessible to surveillance via **AI-powered drones, satellites, remote sensors, and ubiquitous superintelligent nanobots.**



<https://www.hedweb.com/transhumanism/neojainism.html>

SCALABILITY AND COORDINATION

- * Wild animal suffering's scale - billions of beings in diverse habitats - demands automation.
- * AI can coordinate a planetary network: everything from gene-editing labs to drone fleets.
- * Swarm intelligence can manage micro-robots and sensors, adapting to local conditions (jungle, tundra, ocean).
- * Data feeds back for continuous refinement.



PRECISION WELFARE INTERVENTIONS

Hedonic Uplift: AI can ensure sentient beings have benign alleles of the SCN9A (“the volume knob for pain”), FAAH and FAAH-OUT (etc) genes.

Personalized Care: AI can design and deliver tailored interventions for individual nonhuman animals, optimizing hedonic tone, nutrition, healthcare, and environmental conditions.

Predictive Analytics: AI can predict and prevent suffering by identifying potential threats (e.g. disease outbreaks, habitat degradation) before they escalate.

Language Translation: AI can develop systems to translate, interpret and enrich communication between humans and nonhuman animals, fostering understanding and empathy.

Conflict Resolution: AI can mediate conflicts between nonhuman animals, and between humans and nonhuman animals, ensuring fair and compassionate outcomes.

Resilient Ecosystems: AI can preserve, restore and optimize habitats, promoting stable ecosystems while minimizing, preventing and eventually abolishing pain and suffering in favour of information-sensitive gradients of bliss.

Veterinary Care: AI systems can diagnose diseases in genetically reformed free-living animals with high accuracy from imaging, behaviour analysis and genetic testing, providing immediate care or preventive measures.

Species-Specific Pharmacogenomics: AI can design therapeutic drugs tailored to the revised genetic makeup of different species, reducing side-effects and increasing efficacy.

Universal Basic Well-Being (UBW) - and Beyond: AI can manage a pan-species welfare state where all sentient beings receive hedonic uplift, food; shelter and medical care.

RESISTANCE

Ethical and Political Opposition to Compassionate Stewardship

The idea of "herbivorizing" predators, or using AI to regulate entire ecosystems, will face immense opposition from ecologists, bioethicists, and conservatives in the general public. Most people still view Nature as something to be preserved, not radically re-engineered. Humans shouldn't "play God".

BUT...



PLAYING GOD

Humans already massively
intervene in Nature.
Humans *already* “play God”
So should we be
(1) callous gods?
OR
(2) **benevolent gods?**

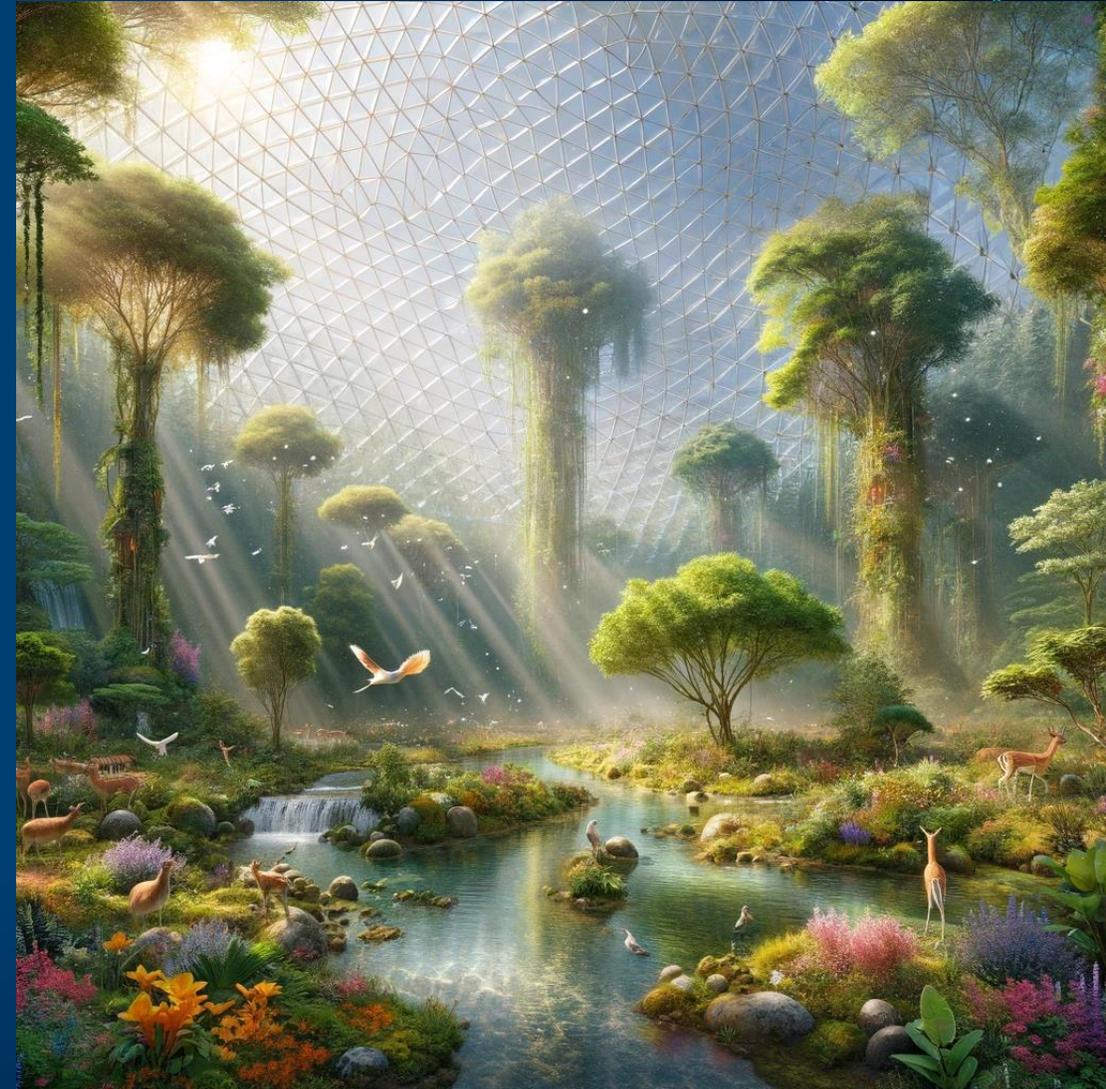


TRANSITION STRATEGY

The Roadmap

Pilot Studies

Create blissful predation-free biospheres run by benevolent AI



POST-DARWINIAN LIFE

From the Anthropocene to the Hedonocene

- * Civilize the biosphere.
- * Archaic humans and nonhuman animals thrive best when neither incarcerated nor “wild”.



LIFE IN THE HEDONOCENE

Paradise Engineering
The End Goal: A Post-Darwinian Future of Sublime Bliss



hedweb.com



Thank You

