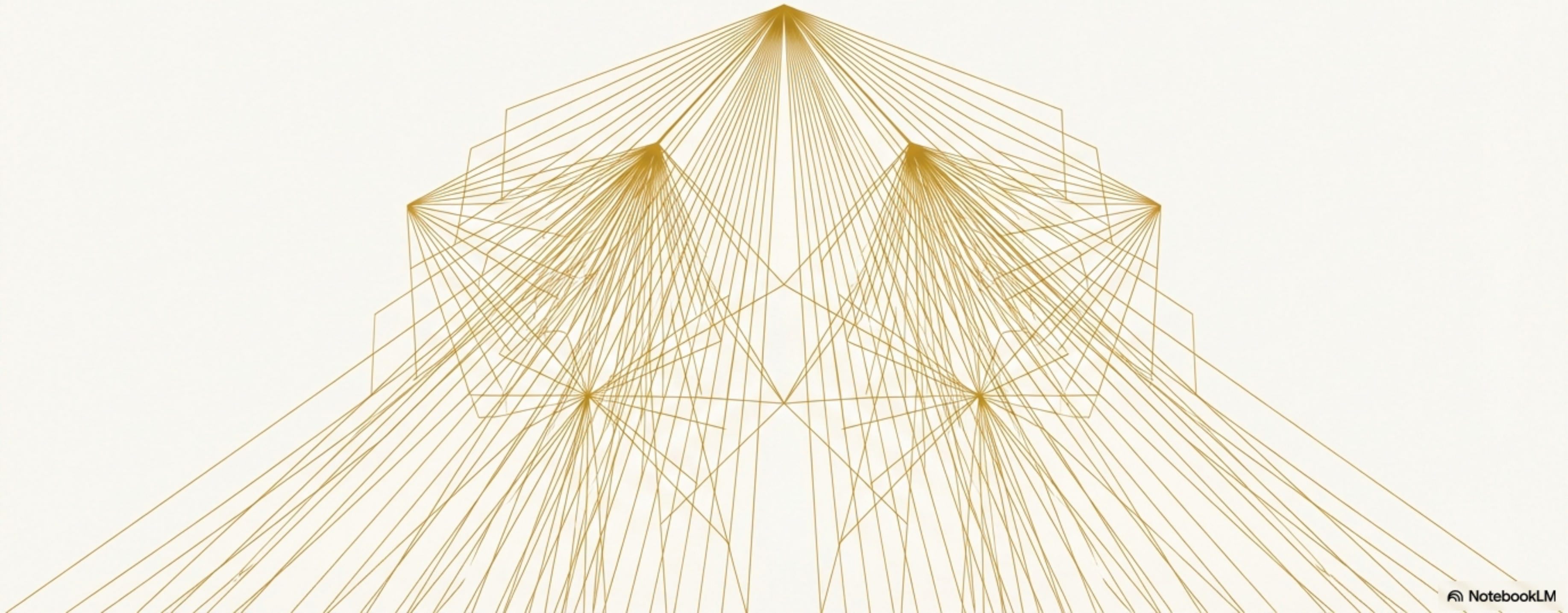


THE HEDONISTIC IMPERATIVE

A Manifesto for the Abolition of Suffering



We will abolish suffering in all sentient life.

This manifesto outlines how genetic engineering and nanotechnology will eradicate aversive experience. The metabolic pathways of pain and malaise, which evolved to serve the fitness of our genes, will be replaced by a motivational system based on heritable gradients of bliss.

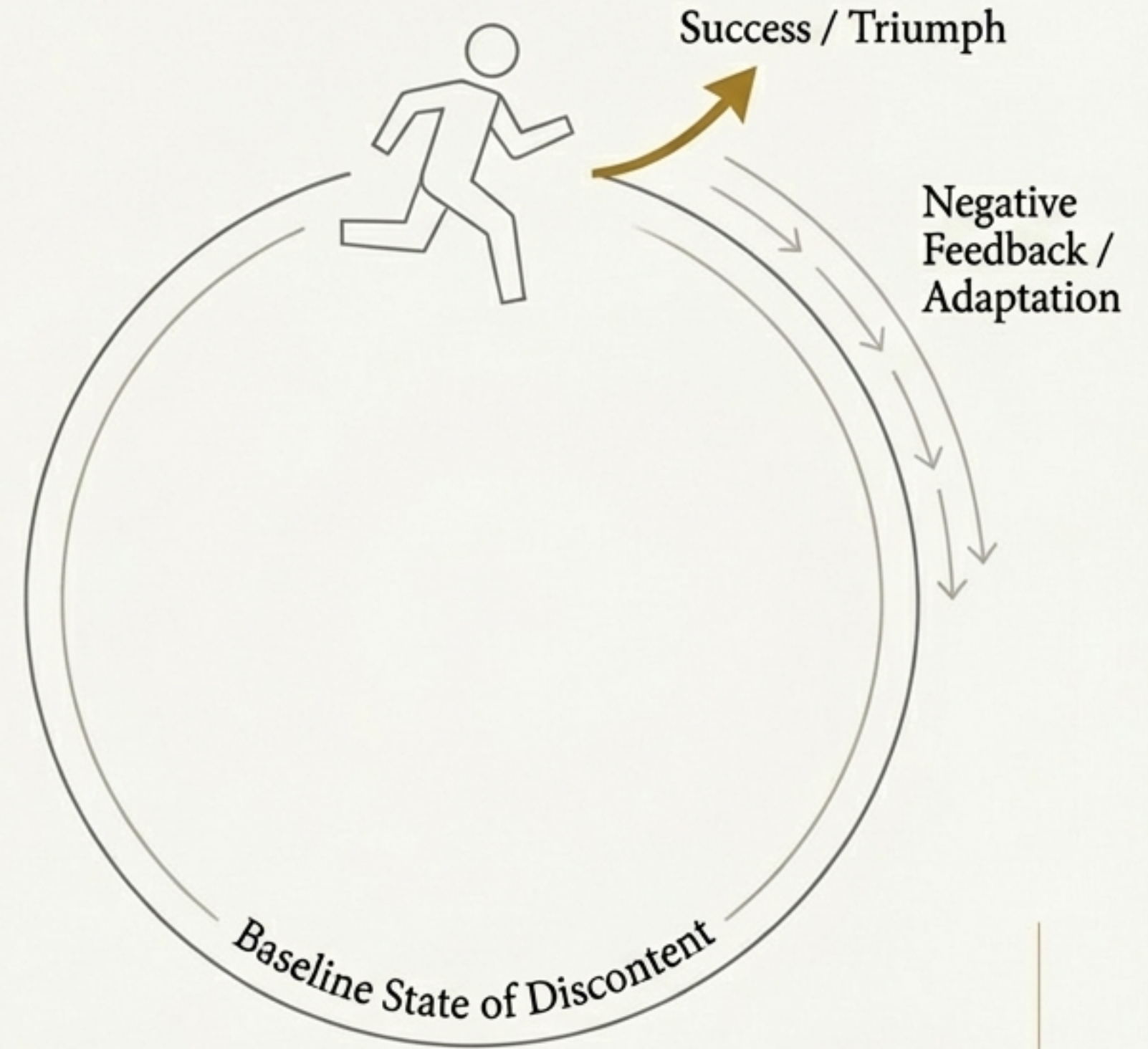
- States of sublime well-being are destined to become the genetically pre-programmed norm.
- This project is hugely ambitious, but technically feasible. It is also instrumentally rational and morally urgent.
- It is predicted that the world's last unpleasant experience will be a precisely dateable event.

Our biology was not designed for our happiness. It was designed for our genes.

Darwinian evolution has powerfully favored the growth of excruciating but adaptive forms of psychophysical pain. Sadness, anxiety, and discontent are psychologically bad for us, but they were good for our DNA's survival in the ancestral environment.

The Hedonic Treadmill

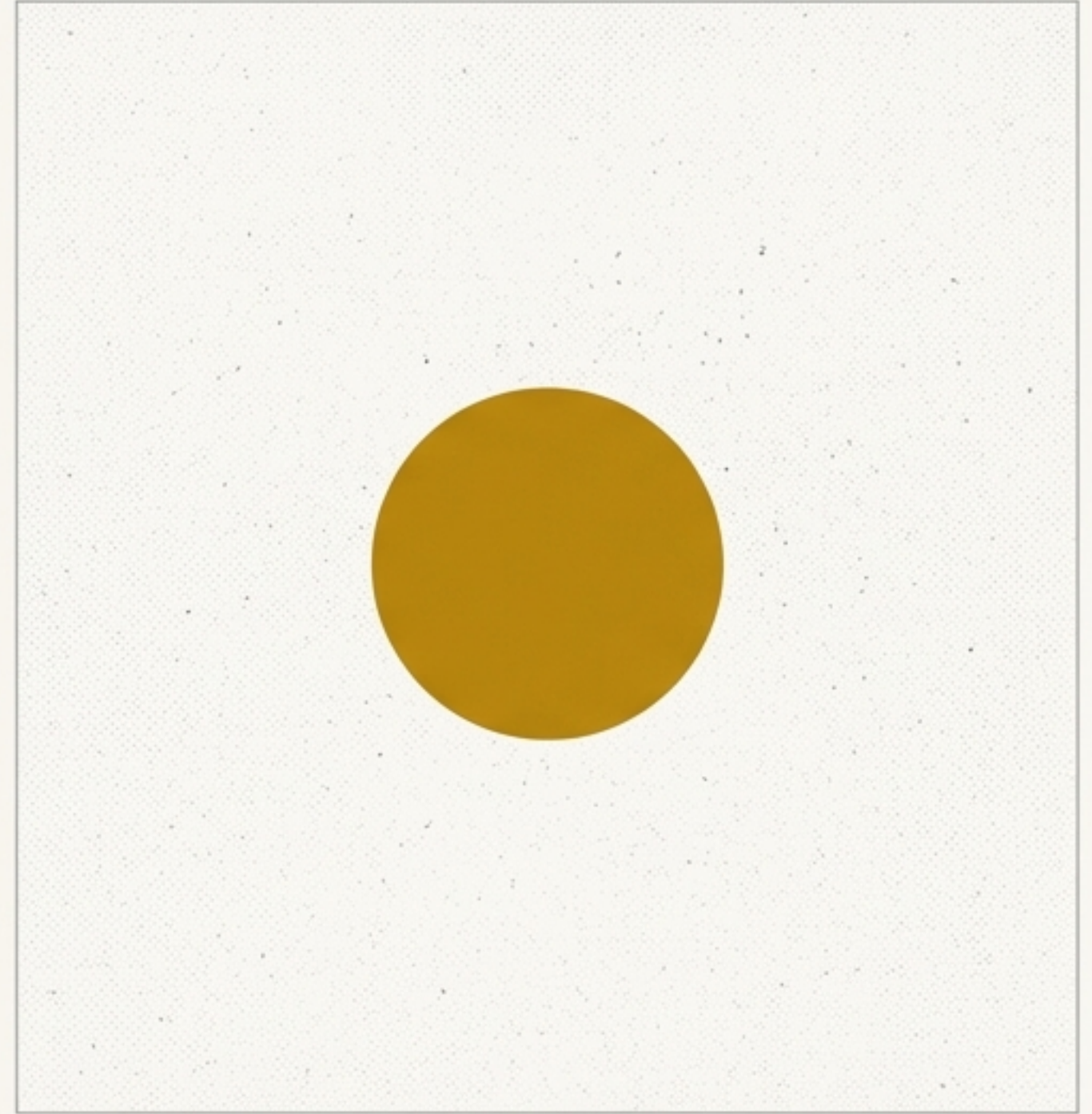
A set of cruel and effective negative feedback mechanisms in the central nervous system ensures very few of us can be very happy for very long. Even in a recreated Garden of Eden, our biology would ensure a majority of people would be periodically bored, depressed, or angst-ridden.



What we call “normal” will be seen as a spectrum of chronic illness.

Our contemporary standards of mental health are pathologically low. We are often physiologically incapable of recognizing the full extent of how unwell we are ‘from the inside.’

- A small minority of humans experience sustained euphoria, often pathologized as ‘mania’ or described as ‘hyperthymic.’ Their elevated ‘hedonic set-points’ are a clue to what is possible.
- Our super-well descendants will likely view today’s state-spectrum of consciousness as mood-congruent pathologies of the primordial Darwinian psyche.



“What does the fish know of the sea in which it swims?” — Albert Einstein

The solution is a biological program to systematically rewrite our broken code.

This program is not based on piecemeal social reform, but on a direct re-engineering of the biological substrates of consciousness. The core technologies are:

1. Advanced Psychopharmacology



Potent, long-acting, non-toxic mood-brighteners to serve as a transitional tool.

2. Genetic Engineering



Somatic and germ-line gene therapies to permanently recalibrate our hedonic set-points. “Designer babies” will hardwire happiness from the womb.

3. Nanotechnology



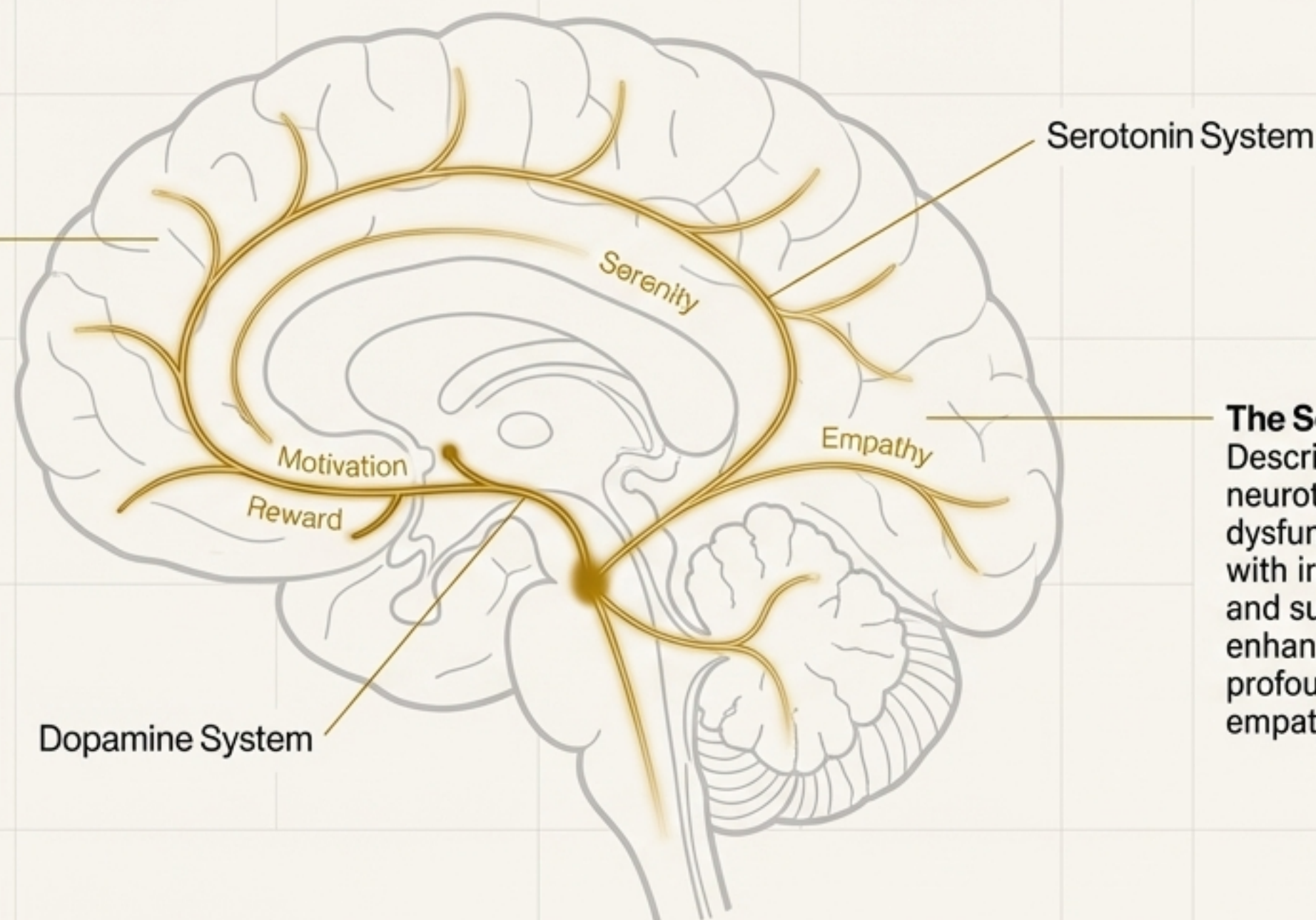
Self-reproducing, miniaturized robots will be used to complete the project, eliminating the molecular signatures of aversive experience across the entire global ecosystem.

We can recalibrate the neurochemistry of mood, motivation, and love.

The Twin-Track Approach: A combination of boosting subtypes of both dopaminergic and serotonergic function.

The Dopamine System

The mesolimbic pathway is the final common pathway for pleasure, motivation, and libido. We will multiply the number of these neurons and reduce their feedback inhibition.



The Serotonin System

Described as the "civilising neurotransmitter." Its dysfunction is associated with irritability, violence, and suicide. Its enhancement produces profound love, trust, and empathy.

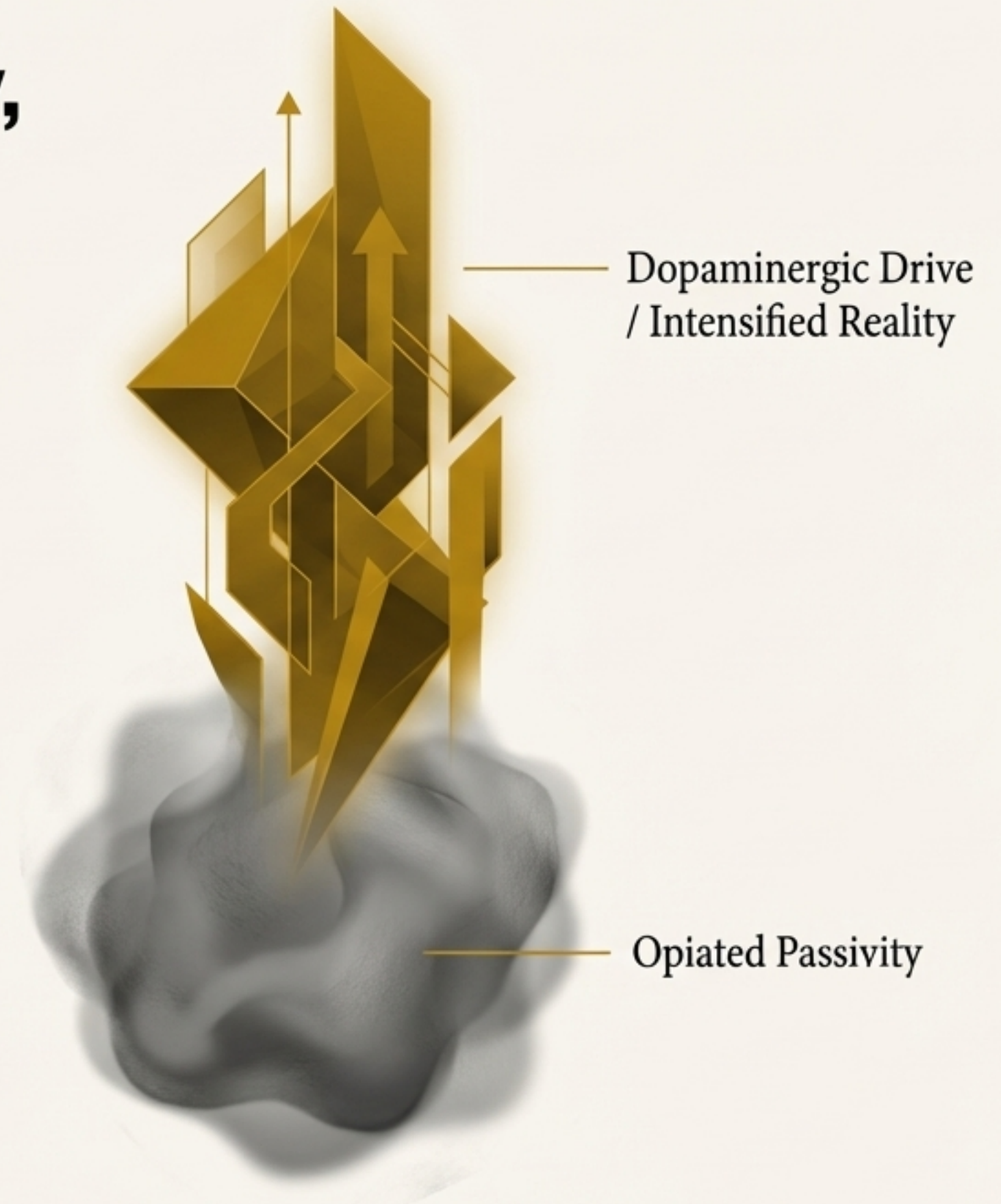
This is not an escape from reality, but an intensification of it.

A common misconception is that this future is one of opiated passivity. The opposite is true. Life in 'dopaminergic overdrive' enhances motivated, goal-directed behavior and increases the range of activities an organism finds worth pursuing.

The Re-encephalisation of Emotion

The intellectual challenge is not just happiness-maximisation, but remapping how our higher cognitive functions are infused with emotion. We can redesign our minds to fulfill our deepest desires for who and what we want to become.

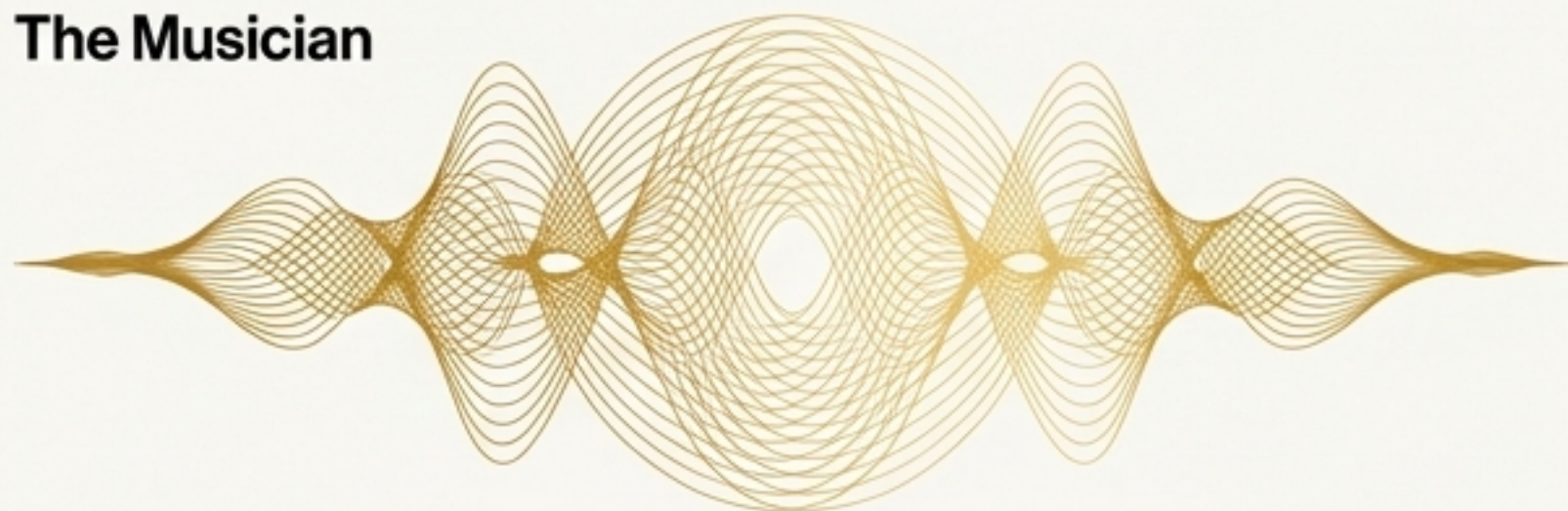
Weakness of will, caused by dopamine hypo-function, will become an evolutionary curiosity. In Paradise, the frailest spirit can move mountains.



A spectrum of the sublime awaits.

Our descendants will enjoy modes of experience we primitives cruelly lack.

The Musician



...will hear and play music more exhilarating and numinously beautiful than anything ever dreamed.

The Sensualist



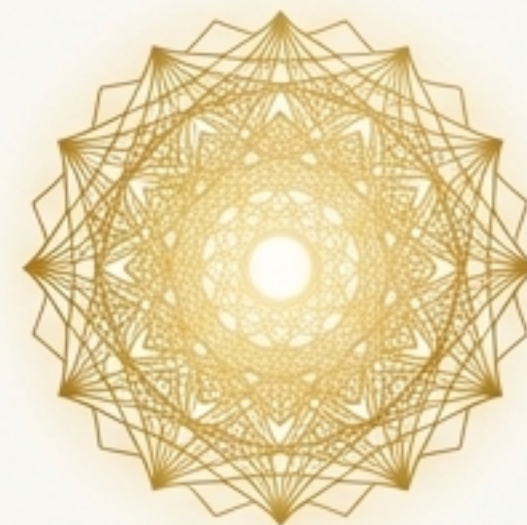
...will discover erotic pleasure of an intoxicating intensity that mortal flesh has never known, free from jealousy.

The Nature-Lover



...will contemplate scenes of overpowering sublimity eclipsing the superficial prettiness on offer today.

The Artist



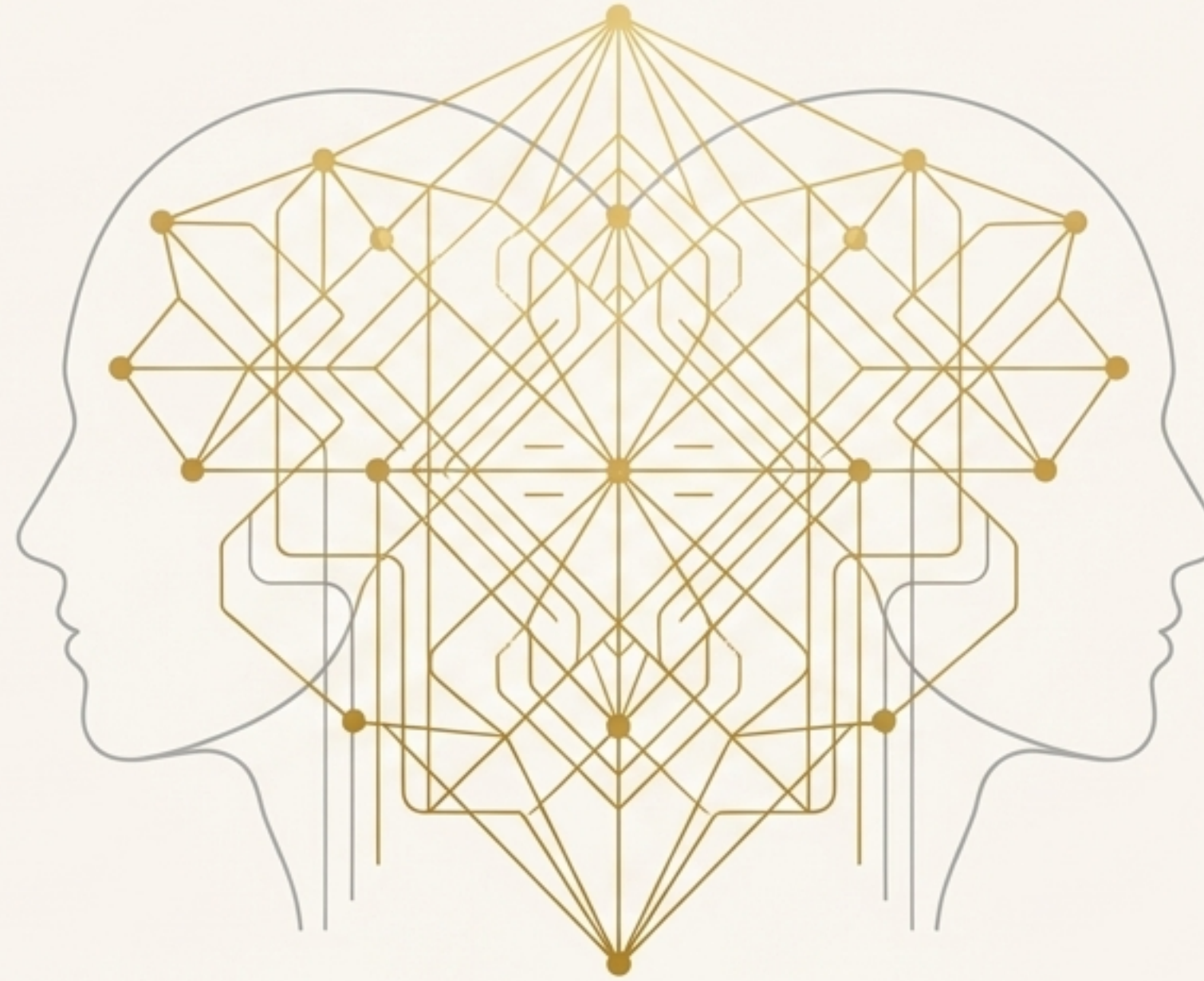
...will behold the secular equivalent of the beatific vision in a million different guises, each of indescribable glory.

We can engineer the biology of unconditional love.

Our current deficiencies in love are a manifestation of selfish DNA. We can change this.

Beyond Indifference:

We will be able, not just to love everyone, but to be perpetually *in love with everyone*. A cocktail of oxytocin, phenethylamines, and opioids can be biologically triggered.



Secure Bonds: The soul-destroying cruelties of traditional love, rooted in the competing interests of genes (e.g., declining reproductive potential leading to break-ups), can be eliminated.

True love can last forever:

Mutually co-ordinated design of neural weight spaces can ensure that a partner's presence is always uniquely fulfilling.

Most of the world's suffering is not human. We have a moral duty to end it.

We currently keep hundreds of millions of sentient beings in “a vast, state-sanctioned apparatus of concentration and extermination camps” for culinary taste. This animal holocaust extends to the wild, where creatures starve, die of disease, or are eaten alive.

The Solution



Cruelty-free food: Biotechnology will allow mass-production of edible cellular protein tastier than animal products, making the moral arguments for veganism overwhelming.



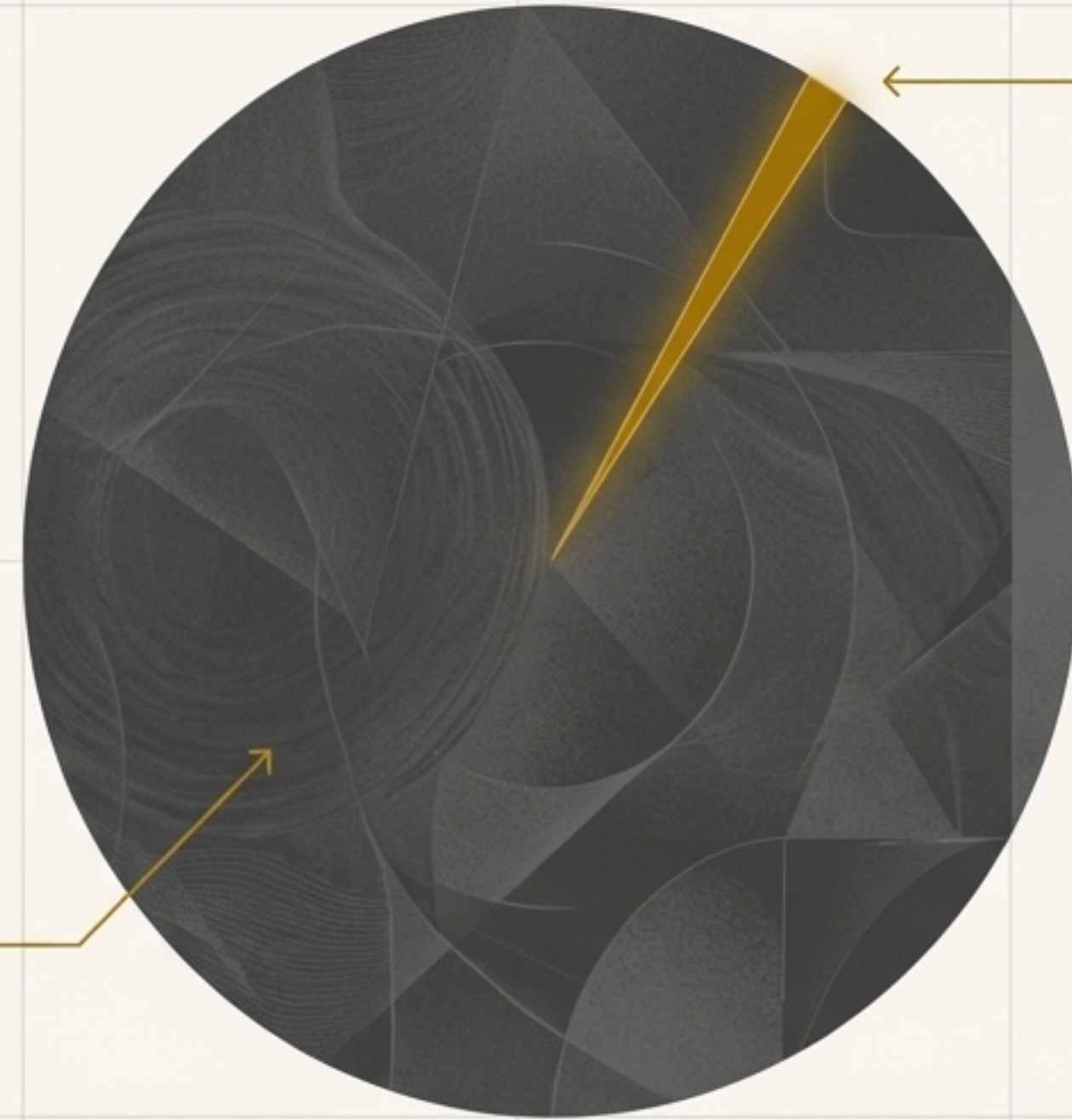
Ecosystem Redesign: For ecosystems we retain, we will use genetic engineering and depot contraceptives to manage populations and engineer happiness in animals.



Abolishing Predation: We must end the misguided romanticization of predators like lions and tigers. Just as we would not recreate Nazi storm-troopers to prey on victims, we must not continue breeding “pre-programmed feline killing machines.”

Non-Human
Suffering

Human
Suffering



The world's last unpleasant experience will be a precisely dateable event.

The End of Suffering.

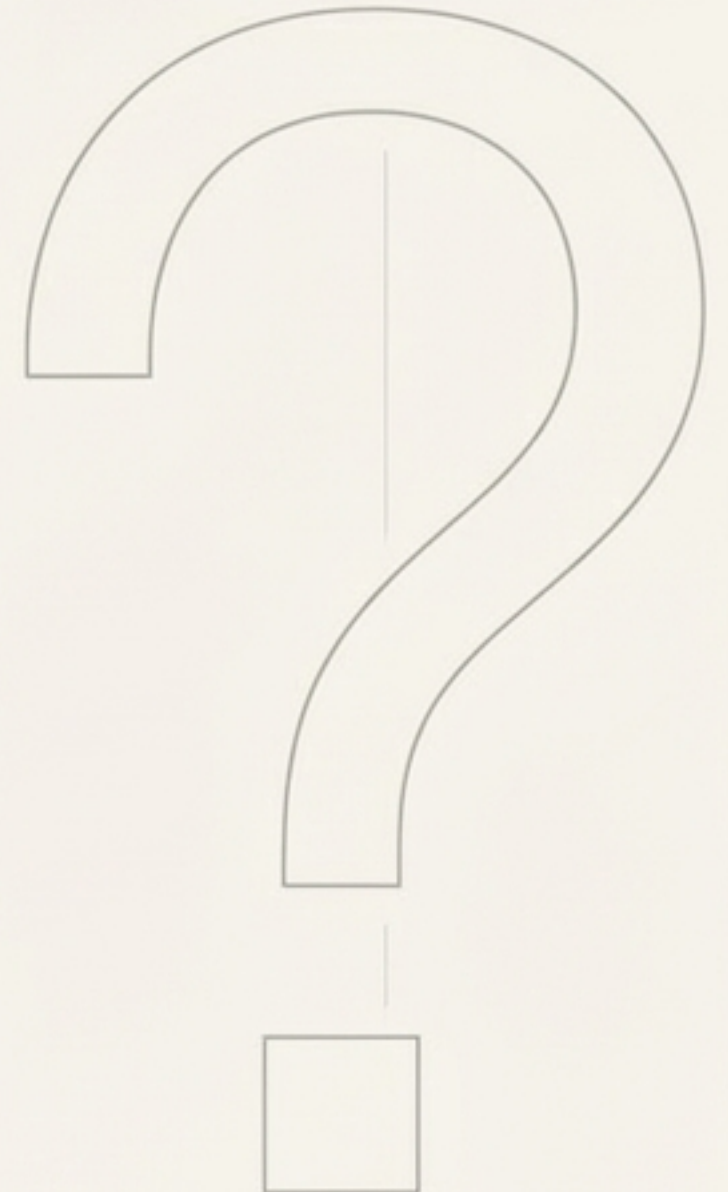


At some momentous time, likely before the end of the fourth millennium, the last aversive experience on this planet will occur. Just as the smallpox virus was systematically hunted to extinction, the precise molecular signatures of aversive experience (e.g., bradykinin, nociceptin, substance P) and their predisposing genes will be hunted down and wiped out. The systematic application of nanotechnology, self-reproducing microrobots, and ultra-sophisticated genetic engineering will abolish the biological root of all evil.

This vision challenges our deepest intuitions. Let us clarify the most common objections.

A proposal of this magnitude rightly invites critical questions. The most frequent objections are not obstacles, but opportunities to understand the true nature of the post-Darwinian world.

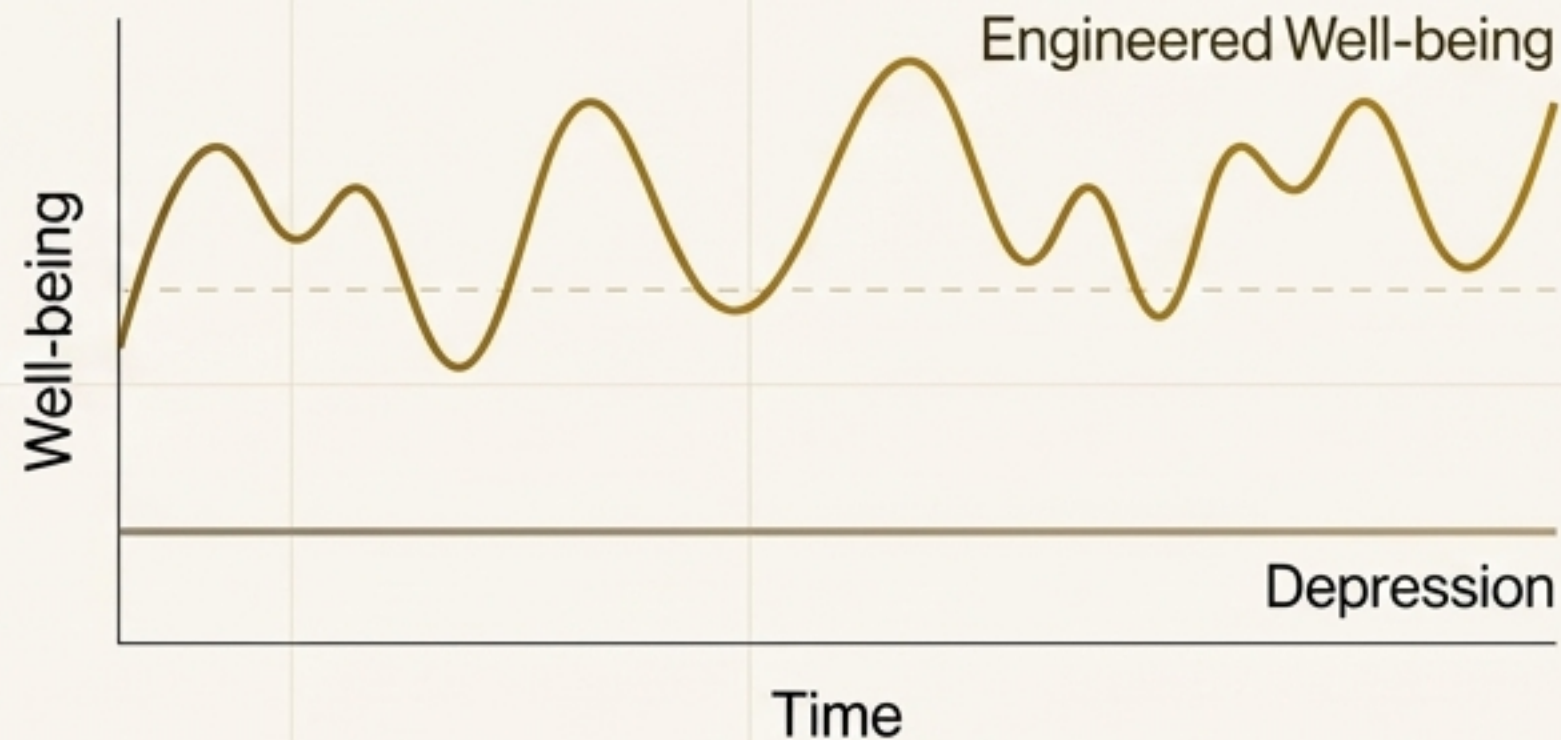
- Wouldn't we get bored? Isn't happiness dependent on suffering?
- Wouldn't we become passive and inert, like wirehead rats?
- Isn't this unnatural? Wouldn't we lose our essential humanity?
- Doesn't suffering build character and inspire great art?
- Wouldn't this lead to a "Brave New World" dystopia?



Our new reality will be neither boring nor passive.

Objection: “I’d get bored. Happiness requires suffering for contrast.”

Clarification: This is empirically false. People suffering lifelong depression are not spared because they lack contrast. The perpetually manic do not need misery for their euphoria to sparkle. Boredom itself is a biological state, an adaptive mechanism rooted in tolerance, that can be disabled. Paradise-engineering is the antithesis of tedium.



Objection: “We would become inert, like intra-cranially self-stimulating rats.”

Clarification: This conflates opiated satiety with dopaminergic drive. Enhanced dopamine function *strengthens* motivation and goal-directed behavior. Exuberantly happy people have a fierce will to live and take on daunting challenges. It is depression that is marked by “behavioral despair” and passivity.



Opiated Satiety



Dopaminergic Drive

We will transcend the cruelty of 'nature' and the myth of 'ennobling' pain.

Objection: "Abolishing suffering is unnatural and would forfeit our humanity."

Clarification: The equation of "natural" with "good" is a dangerous fallacy. Warfare, rape, and pestilence are also "natural." We will lose primitive human attributes, just as we lost the "essential" experience of surgery without anesthesia when we discovered painkillers. This is a blessing, not a loss.

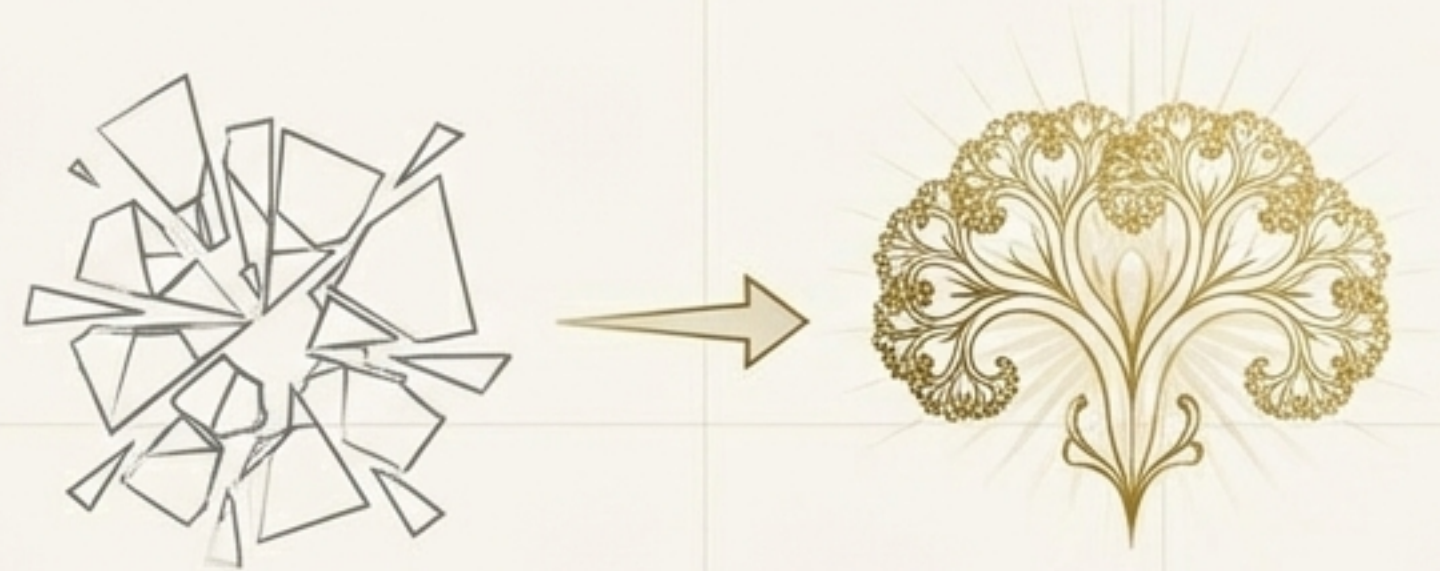


"Natural" Cruelty

"Unnatural" Design

Objection: "Without suffering, there is no personal development or great art."

Clarification: Suffering is often just coarsening and brutalizing. Personal growth flourishes with a keen appetite for life, not despair. Great creative energy is often indistinguishable from mild euphoric hypomania. The transcendent beauty awaiting us will inspire an unprecedented flowering of the arts.



Brutalizing Pain

Creative Energy

This is the end of our biological servitude.

For millennia, we have been passive subjects of blind evolution—disposable vehicles for our genes, trapped within the confines of a restrictive psychochemical state space.

Soon, we need no longer languish. We are moving from being the subjects of evolution to its conscious architects.

The right to select one's own chemistry of consciousness—to choose who and what one wants to be—is the most vital freedom of all. It is a freedom we currently lack.

The abolition of suffering is not a distant fantasy. It is our natural destiny.

