

Letting the Wound Update the Model

Fristonian Self-Evidencing,
Political Denial, and the
Life-Coherent Civilization

Dr. Bichara Sahely

INSTITUTION



A destroyed hospital becomes a
"disputed military object."

A sanctioned population without power
becomes "evidence of regime failure."

SUFFERING/HARM

A drowning migrant becomes a
"border-management problem."

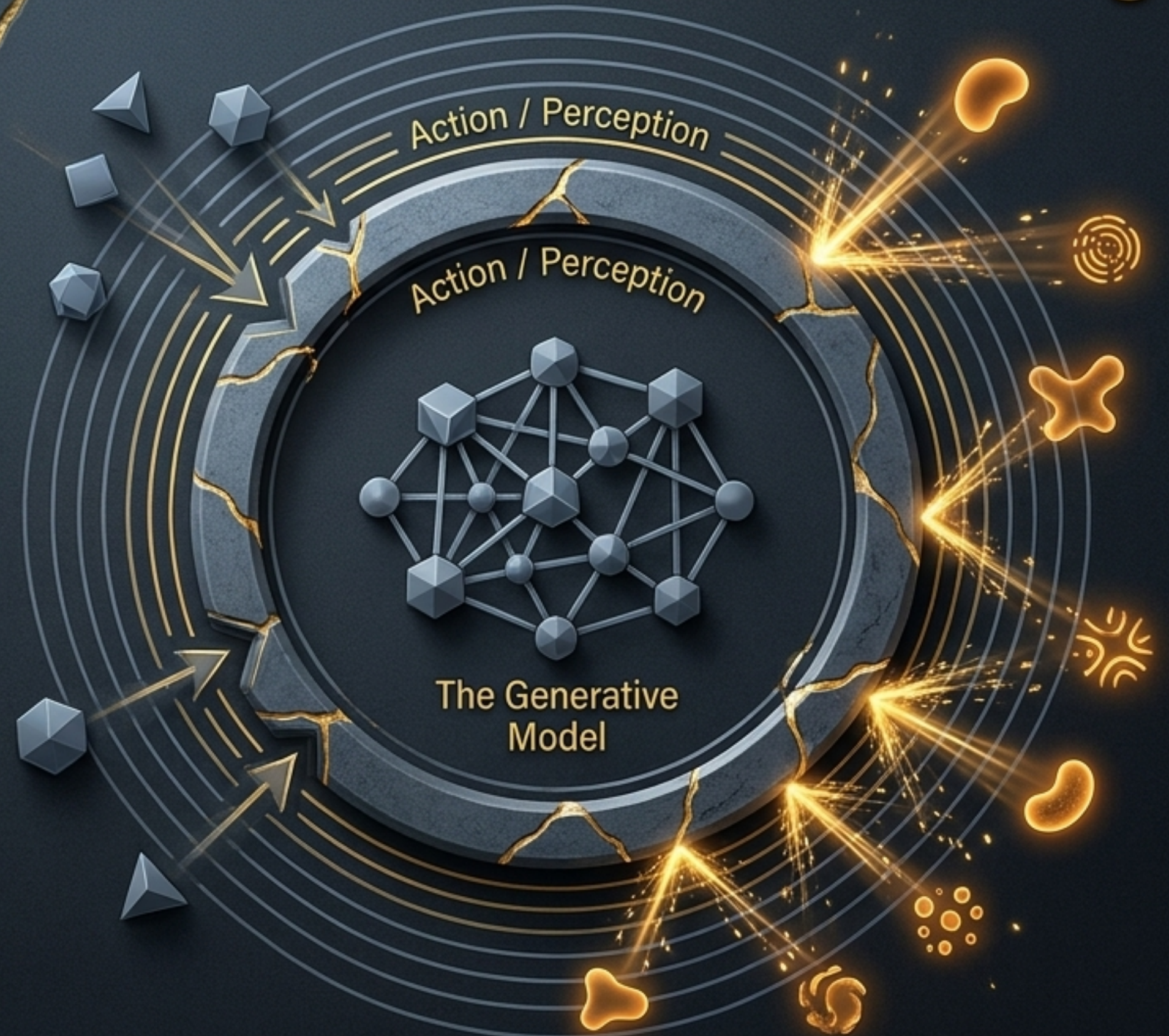
The central crisis of our age is not simply that institutions fail to see suffering.
It is that many institutions are structurally organized to see suffering only
in forms that do not require them to become different.

The Mechanism of Denial: Fristonian 'Self-Evidencing'

Concept Definition: Living and cognitive systems self-organize to persist by minimizing uncertainty. They act and perceive in ways that maximize evidence for their own generative models.

The Crucial Distinction: "Evidence" here does not mean truth. It means the system behaves in ways that make its own continued existence probable.

The Danger: A system can reduce prediction error by learning from reality—but it can also reduce error by suppressing, excluding, or destroying the reality that contradicts its model.



The Cognitive Filter: Power and Precision Weighting

Explanation: In active inference, prediction errors do not all matter equally. Signals are weighted by expected reliability (precision).

The Pathology: Powerful systems assign high precision to reputational, financial, or security threats. The testimony of affected communities is deflected as low-precision 'noise'—anecdotal, biased, or unverifiable.

Power is the ability to organize inference.



The Core Duality: Viability vs. Life-Coherence

Pathological Self-Evidencing

Goal of Self-Maintenance

Preserves identity by sacrificing disconfirming evidence.

Handling of the Wound

Treats suffering as a PR threat to be managed.

View of the Other

Assigns a role before encounter: threat, burden, data point.

Definition of Intelligence

Predictive control, domination, and scale.

Life-Coherent Self-Evidencing

Goal of Self-Maintenance

Protects and enlarges the life-capacity of the wider field.

Handling of the Wound

Treats suffering as high-precision instruction for structural repair.

View of the Other

Legitimate because life is legitimate; requires no assimilation.

Definition of Intelligence

The capacity to be corrected before catastrophe.

The Anatomy of Institutional Denial

Cognitive Distortion

Precision Distortion:
Regulating which facts have force.

Selective Empathy:
Keeping the "other's" suffering abstract.

Narrative Capture:
Self-sealing logic (e.g., domination produces danger, which justifies domination).

Conservation of Innocence:
Experiencing accountability as annihilation.

Relational Capture

Role Assignment:
Forcing the living subject into an administrative object.

Externalization of Uncertainty:
Making the self predictable by making the other's world unpredictable.

Enemy Production:
Punishing the witness because they threaten the model.

Repair into Management:
Stabilizing symptoms while preserving the structure causing them.



Institutional Inertia

A Diagnostic Grammar: Interrogating the System

1. What preferred state is being conserved?
Are we defending security, fiscal sovereignty, or operational freedom at the expense of life?
2. Who carries the system's exported uncertainty?
Do the poor carry the uncertainty of austerity? Do small islands carry the uncertainty of emissions?
3. What evidence would force the model to revise?
What is the intolerable truth the system refuses to integrate?
4. What is the system unable to apologize for?
The place where apology is impossible marks the boundary of the protected model.



Global Systems and the Suppression of Life-Evidence

Geopolitical Case	The Conserved Model	The Suppressed Life-Evidence	The Required Correction
Sudan	Armed legitimacy & factional survival	Civilian hunger & local mutual aid	Political legitimacy from life-support below
Haiti	Security management of chaos	Local agency & public institutional collapse	Protection subordinated to civic repair
Chagos	Strategic security infrastructure	Dispossession & right of return	Security corrected by ecological repair and return
Western Sahara	Trade & development stability	Self-determination & consent	Consent-centered lawful resource governance
Mediterranean	Border order & deterrence	Deaths, disappearances, & family rupture	Mobility governance centered on protected lives

Deep Dive I: Security and the Legal-Medical Collapse (Palestine/Gaza)

Security & Innocence

Law

Medicine

Media

The Conserved Model

A geopolitical frame that treats military domination as defensive necessity, requiring permanent statelessness for the “other.”

The Suppression of Evidence

- **Law:** ICJ advisory opinions and provisional measures are treated as diplomatic inconveniences rather than model-correcting evidence.
- **Medicine:** Life-support is disabled under suspicion. Doctors and hospitals are forced into security scripts, lowering the precision of their destruction.
- **Media:** Legacy media amplifies official narratives and casts doubt on Palestinian witnesses, converting structural domination into disputed claims.

Deep Dive II: Sovereignty Under Constraint (The Caribbean)

Cuba: Sovereignty Between Siege and Closure



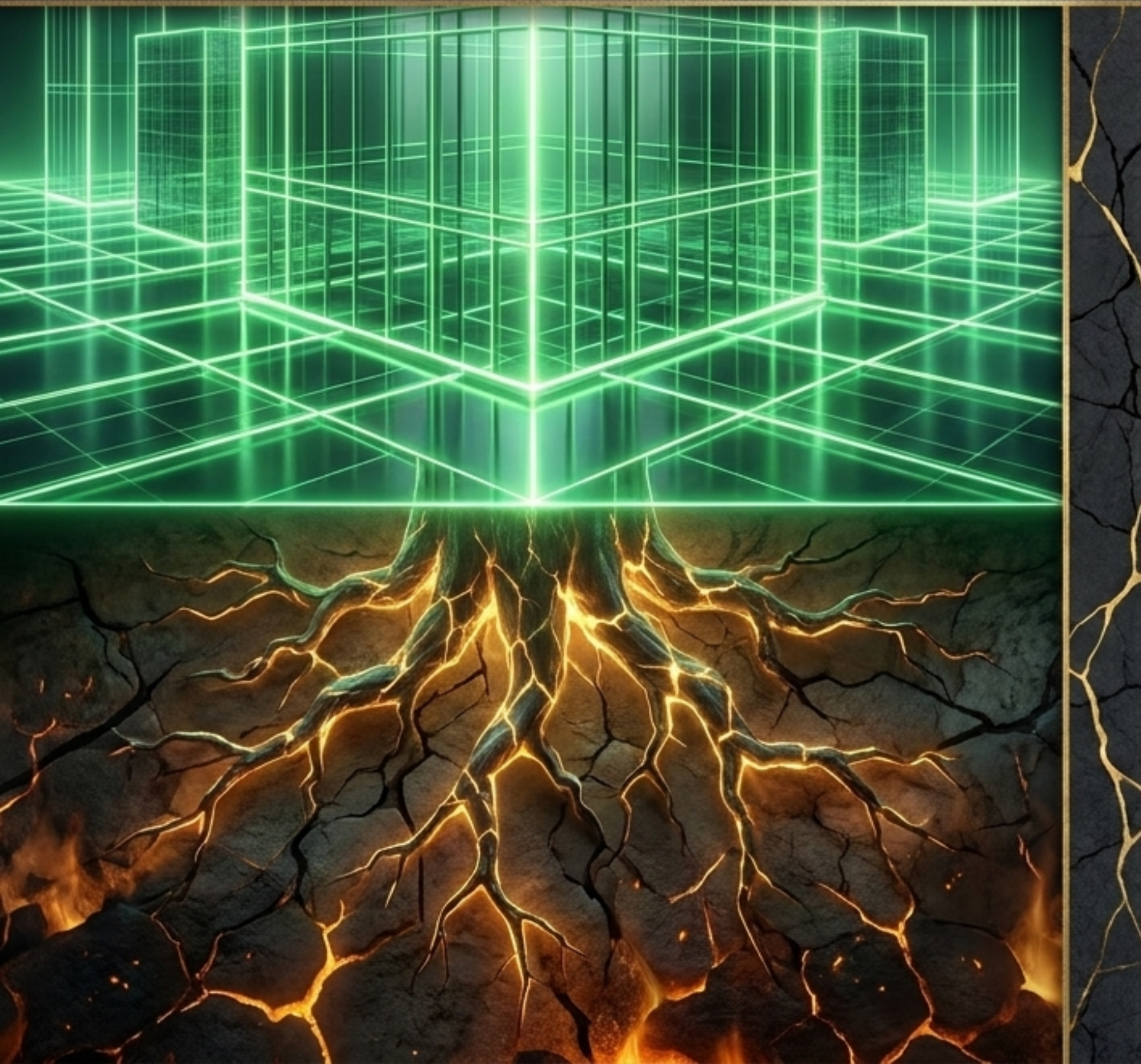
- **Competing Models:** The US conserves a model where Cuban deprivation proves regime failure; Cuba conserves a model of anti-imperial endurance.
- **The Casualty:** Ordinary Cuban life-capacity (energy, food, dissent) is consumed as evidence to prove either model, rather than acting as a trigger for shared repair.

OECS CBI: The Commodification of Belonging



- **The Trap:** External powers demand security and fiscal discipline but offer inadequate climate finance. Small states monetize citizenship (CBI) to fund survival.
- **The Correction:** Converting CBI from a commodified passport market into a regulated, regionally coordinated life-capacity compact.

Deep Dive III: The Green Transition as Extractive Self-Evidence



Critical Minerals: Green Legitimacy vs. Extraction

- **The Pathology:** Decarbonization treats mineral supply as a technical bottleneck, reproducing the extractive grammar it claims to overcome.
- **Suppressed Evidence:** Child labor, water depletion, and displaced communities in extraction zones.

SIDS Climate Finance: Debt Discipline vs. Planetary Responsibility

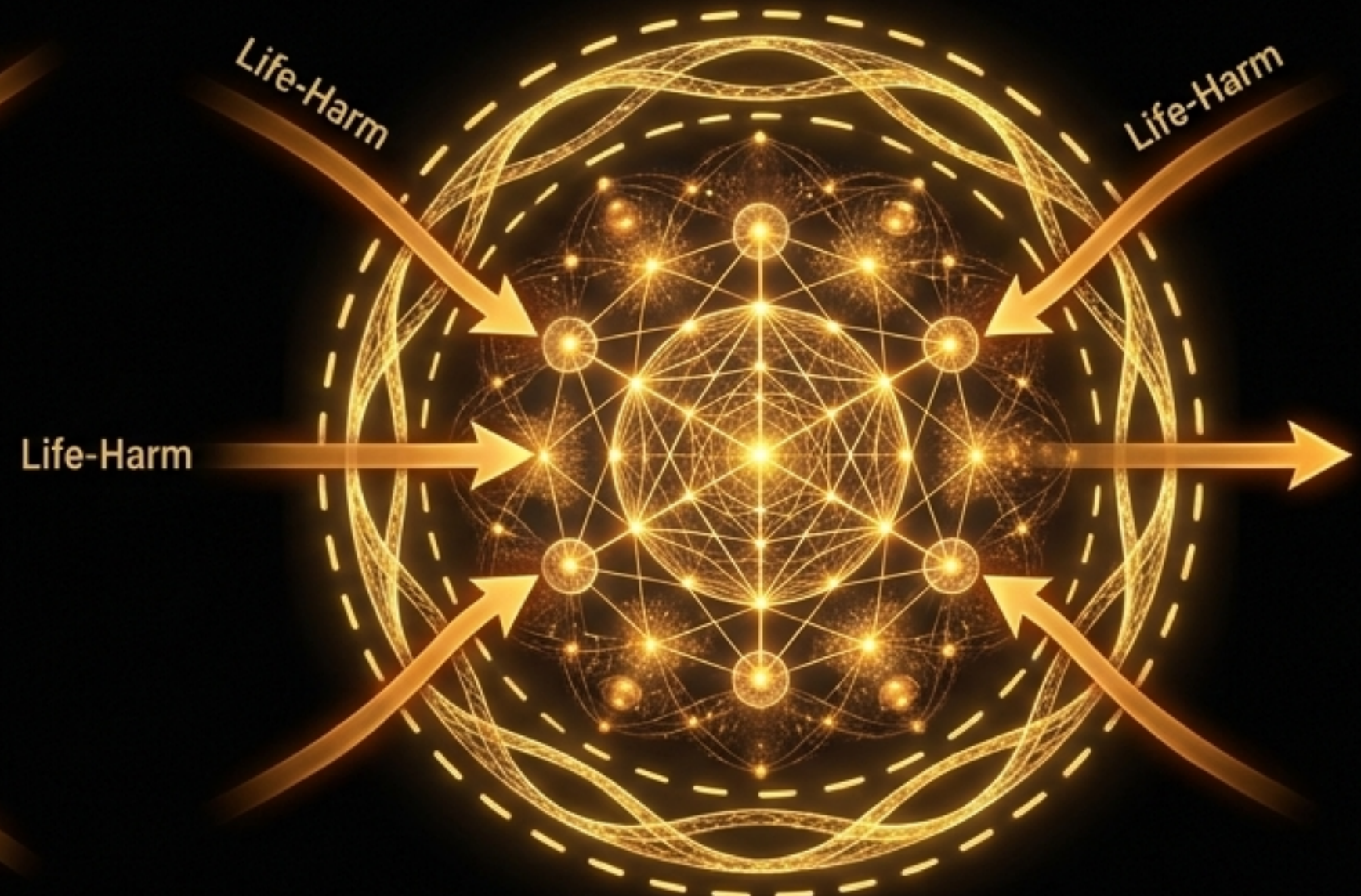
- **The Pathology:** The dominant financial model conserves creditor confidence, forcing climate-vulnerable societies to borrow to survive harms they did not cause.
- **The Correction:** Loss-and-damage finance must be treated as structural repair, not charity or conditional debt.

The Paradigm Shift: From Management to Corrigibility

The Pathological Boundary (Management)



The Life-Coherent Boundary (Corrigibility)



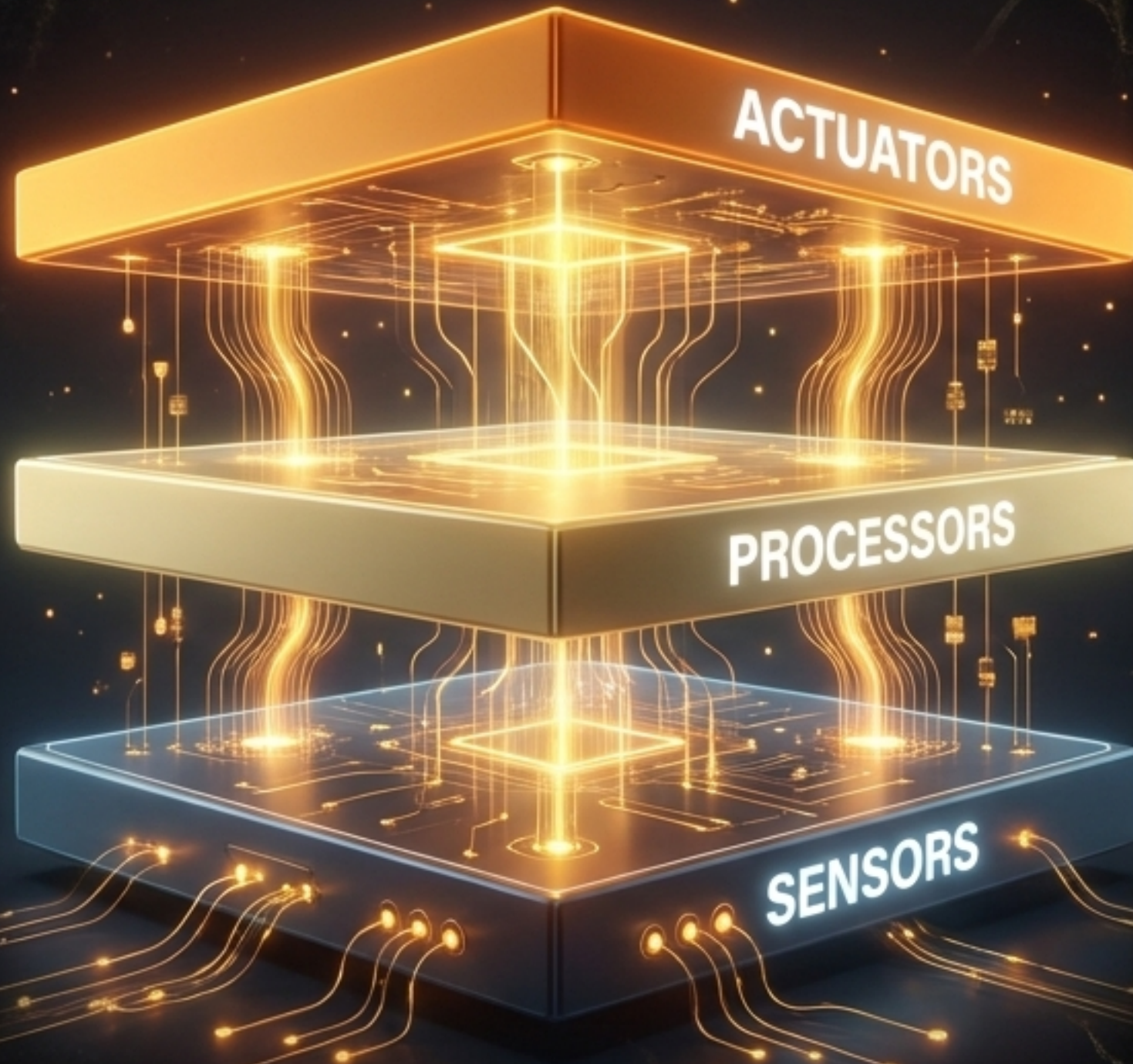
Management: Sovereignty, identity, and jurisdiction harden into denial. The boundary prevents disconfirming life-evidence from entering. Management merely stabilizes the symptoms.

Repair: A system whose boundary is semi-permeable to truth. It preserves identity not through defensive denial, but through repair. The system allows the suffering of the wider field to enter and change its internal structure.

The Institutional Self-Correction Cycle



Blueprint: A Life-Coherent Architecture



Layer 3: Actuators (Response & Repair)

- **Life-Time Triggers:** Mandated emergency responses that bypass procedural delays.
- **Reparative Accountability:** Moving beyond scapegoating to structurally alter budgets and laws.
- **Multi-Scale Repair:** Coordinated action from local protection to planetary governance.

Layer 2: Processors (Governance & Memory)

- **Independent Correction Loops:** Ombudspersons, independent courts, participatory review.
- **Anti-Capture Design:** Conflict-of-interest controls and transparent funding.
- **Institutional Memory:** Public dashboards and accessible archives to prevent selective forgetting.

Layer 1: Sensors (Detection & Precision)

- **Life-Evidence as Primary Signal:** Judging all policy by its effect on life-capacity.
- **Precision Reversal:** Treating community testimony as authoritative data.
- **Protected Witnessing:** Shielding journalists, doctors, and whistleblowers.

Letting the Wound Update the Model

The Bottom Line:

- If our prosperity requires your poverty, the model is wrong.
- If our security requires your terror, the model is wrong.
- If our green transition requires your poisoned river, the model is wrong.

Systems that cannot learn from life-harm will eventually be corrected by catastrophic breakdown. The highest intelligence is not predictive control—it is the capacity to be corrected by life, moving from heroic individual witnessing to designed institutional corrigibility.