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High-Tech Jainism

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High-Tech Jainism

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All projects of secular and religious
utopianism have foundered
on the rock of human nature.

Claim:

Intelligent agents will shortly be able to pre-select their own hedonic range: its upper and lower bounds, and hedonic set-points.

Why does suffering exist at all?

If we use biotechnology to eradicate the molecular signature of experience below "hedonic zero", then on some fairly modest assumptions, phenomenal suffering becomes *physically impossible*.

Distinguish between *functional role*
and
raw feels.

The Reproductive Revolution

The nature of selection pressure is transformed when rational agents pre-select and customise the genomes of their future children *in anticipation of* the likely behavioural and psychological effects.

Imagine you can use pre-implantation genetic screening to choose, approximately, the hedonic set-point of your future child.

What default hedonic tone would you pick?

-10

0

10



The World Health Organisation
definition of health:

"a state of complete physical,
mental and social well-being and not
merely the absence of disease or
infirmity."

But what about existing humans?

Rapid Genome Self-Editing

The CRISPR gene-editing revolution heralds an era when rapid self-editing of your own genome can become the norm.

Why not maximise happiness?

For reasons we don't understand, the pain-pleasure axis seemingly discloses the world's inbuilt metric of (dis)value.

Two Advantages of Hedonic Recalibration

1. Real World Bliss
2. Preserve What You Value

Advantage 1

Real World Bliss

Gritty reality or an escapist fantasy world of self-delusion?

Messy real world or Experience Machine?

Authenticity versus life on soma?

The Red Pill or the Blue Pill?

Advantage 1

Real World Bliss

Take the purple pill, Neo.

Advantage 2

Preserve What You Value

Compatible with multiple conflicting value systems.

Advantage 2

Preserve What You Value

Combining hedonic enhancement *with* recalibration allows us to preserve whatever values, preferences and relationships we hold dear.

Who Benefits?

Historically, the blessings of consumer capitalism have been enjoyed mainly by a privileged elite, slowly percolating socially downwards.

Information-based technologies are different.

Who Benefits?

The nature of information-based services is such that their price trends effectively to zero.

Genomic rewrites will be cost-effective both ethically and financially.

The Rise of Full-Spectrum Superintelligence

Is a happy world an intellectually
stagnant world?

The Plight of the Cognitively Humble

- Billions of nonhuman animals suffer and die in factory farms and slaughterhouses each year.
- Their sapience and sentience is comparable to human infants and toddlers.

But...

Over the next few decades, mass-manufactured in vitro meat promises to replace the barbarities of factory farming.

The Plight of the Cognitively Humble

Technology can accelerate the transition from harming to helping free-living sentient beings.

The Plight of the Cognitively Humble

Humans already “play God”...

Will we be callous or benevolent deities?

Suffering and Existential Risk

The existence of suffering in a world of weapons of mass destruction presents profound global and existential catastrophic risks.

How many suicidal depressives would take the world down with them if the apocalyptic technology were to hand?

Paradise Engineering

Imagine we encounter an advanced 'Triple S' civilisation (superintelligence, superlongevity, superhappiness), whose inhabitants are animated by gradients of bliss.

Should we try to convince them to re-introduce suffering?

Paradise Engineering

But the advanced civilisation has made one ethically catastrophic mistake.

Its inhabitants have embraced the hedonistic imperative too avidly and turned inwards too soon.

Paradise Engineering

Responsible stewardship
of our Hubble volume?

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Further reading:
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