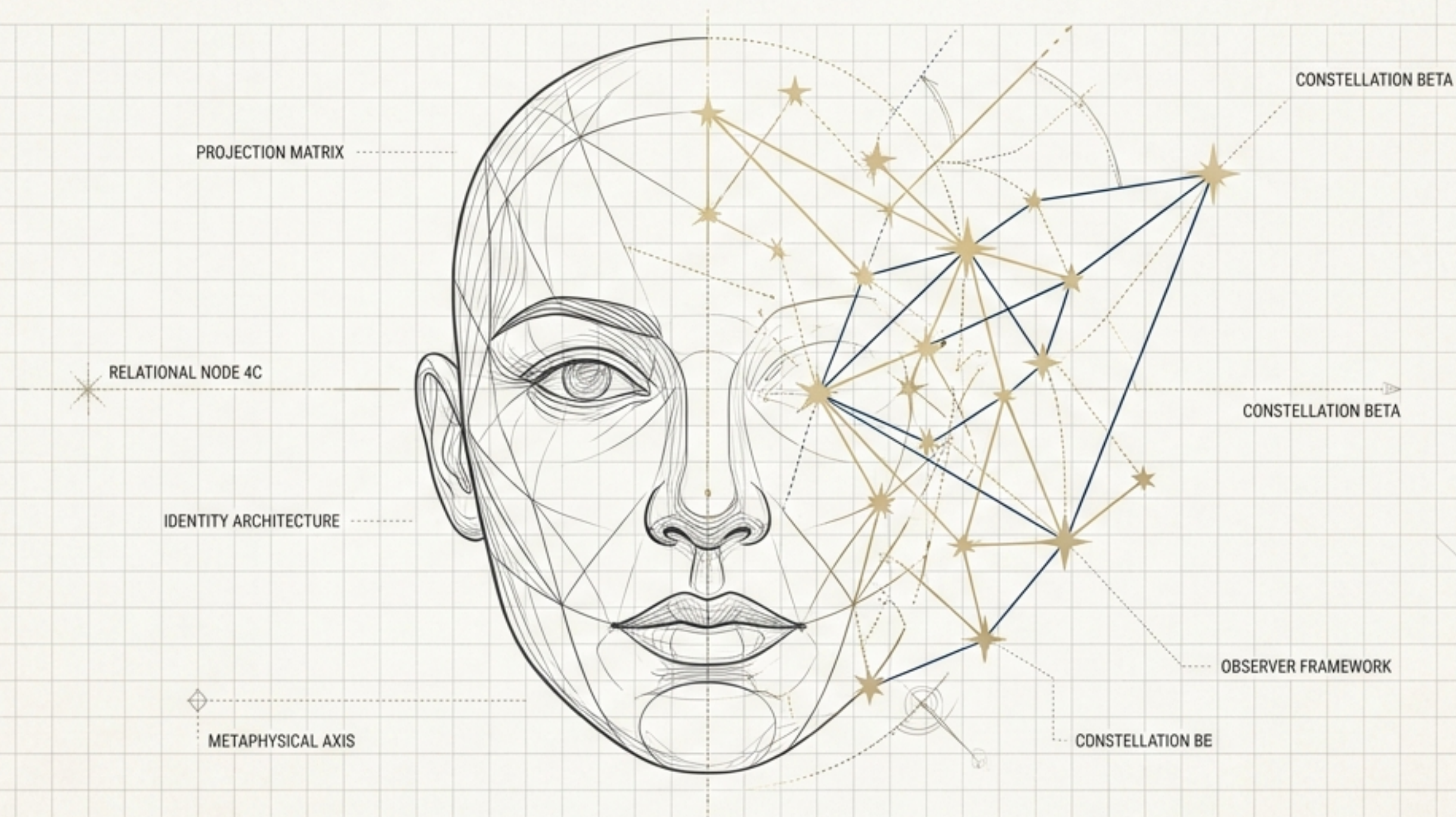
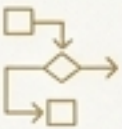


THE ASTERISM OF THE SELF

Metaphysical Projection and Relational Identity in Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*
Based on the analysis by language philosopher Bry Willis





-  • **The Subject:** Josie, a frail, sickly teenager.
-  • **The Artefact:** Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF) purchased as a companion.
-  • **The Contingency Plan:** If Josie suffers a fatal fate, Klara is designed to physically and behaviourally become Josie.

The Question

Does a human possess a special, uncopyable essence—a soul—that makes human exceptionalism real?

Three opposing perspectives on human exceptionalism



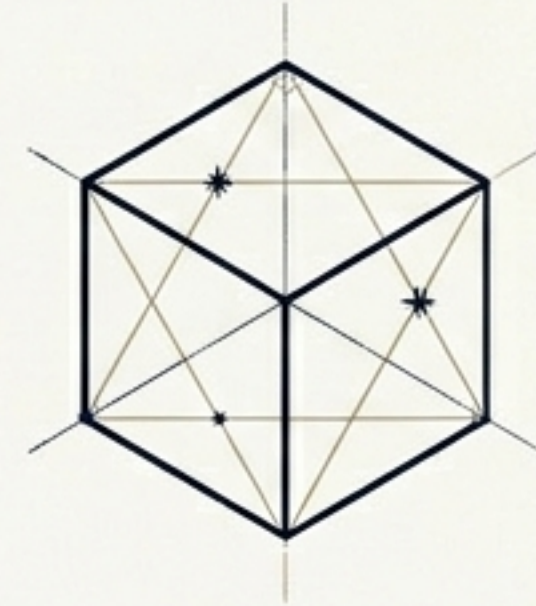
The Mother (The Sceptic)

Wants the insurance, but lacks faith. She hopes for a successful replica but doubts the policy will actually pay out.



The Father (The Essentialist)

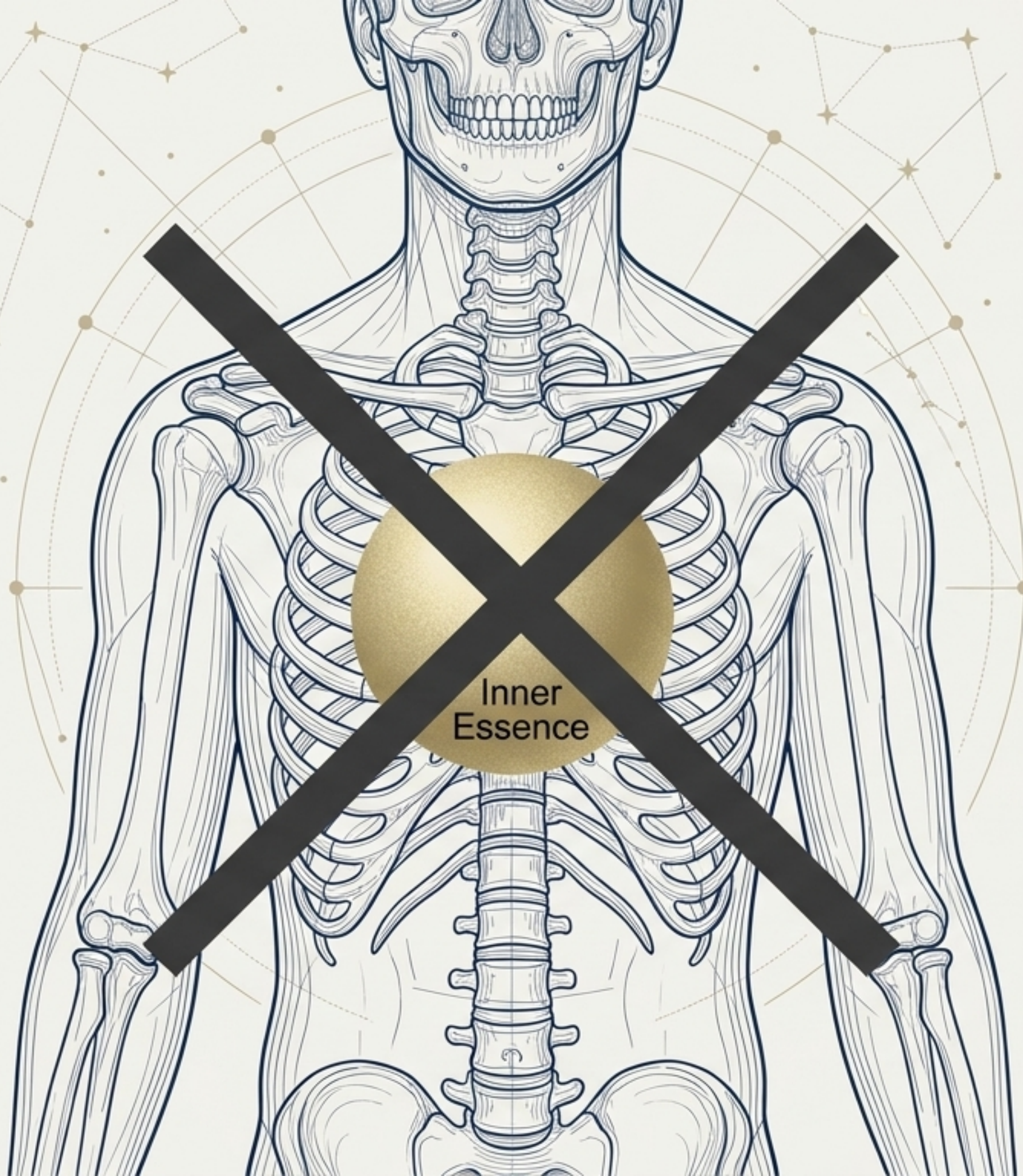
Opposes the technology entirely. He fears the loss of a fundamentally uncopiable inner essence.



Capaldi (The Eliminativist)

The true believer. He argues there is nothing 'inside' a person that cannot be learned, copied, and continued.

Ishiguro's classic misdirection: The novel secretly agrees with Capaldi, handing the correct view to the character the audience is primed to distrust.



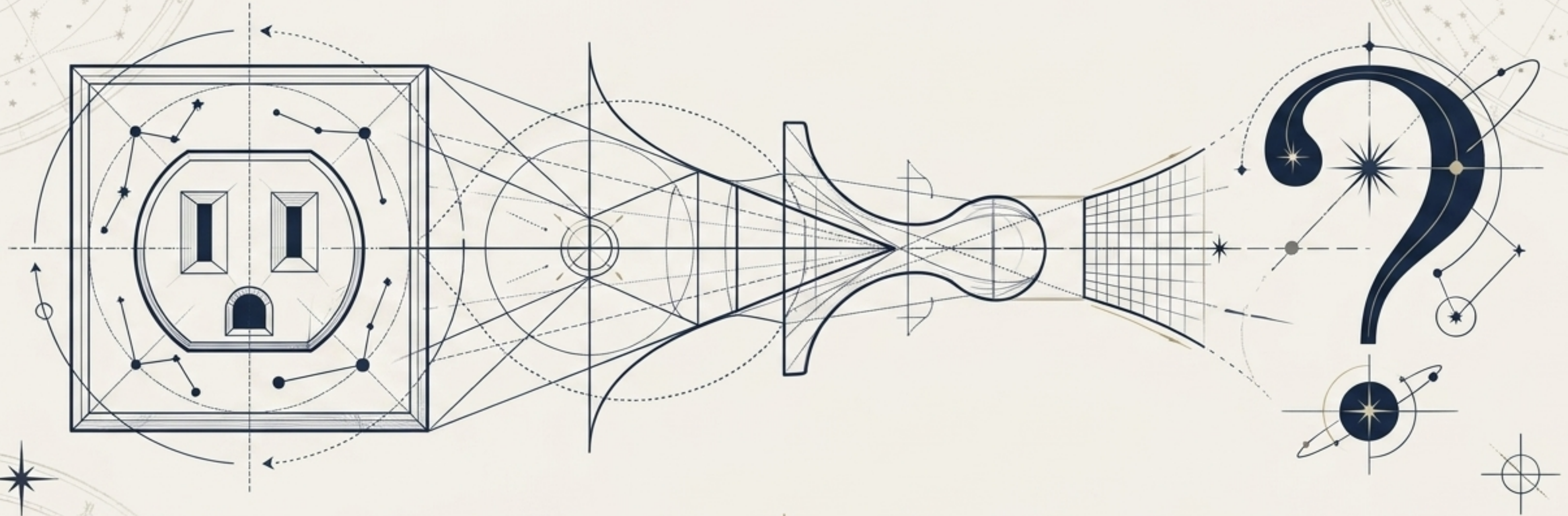
■ The Central Misconception

Assuming the self is an internal substance. If the essence were inside Josie, the only valid question would be whether Klara could acquire it or is forever shut out.

■ The Administrative Truth

Individuals and selves are not sturdy, internal objects. They operate as heuristics—useful fictions kept on the books for administrative convenience rather than biological reality.

Observer-relative reality is not the same as the observer's whim



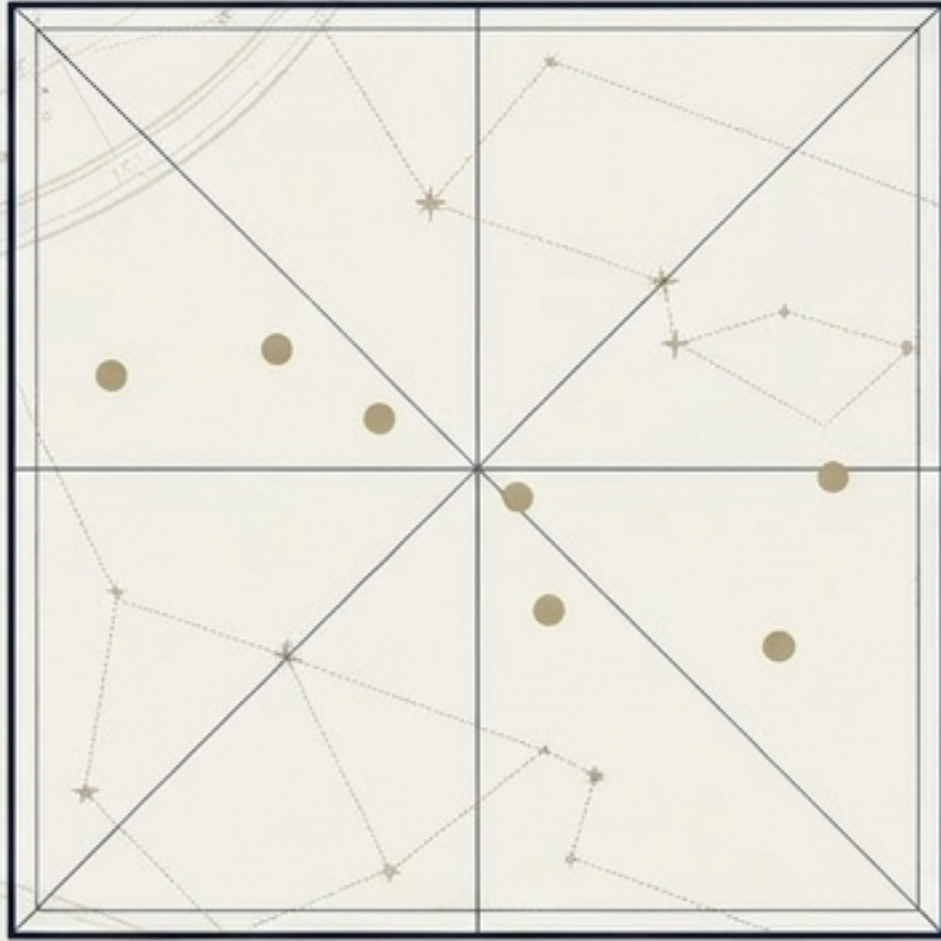
The Threat of Projection

If the self isn't inside, is it merely wishful thinking?
Is identity just made up and sprayed onto a person
the way we render a face onto a wall socket?

The Distinction

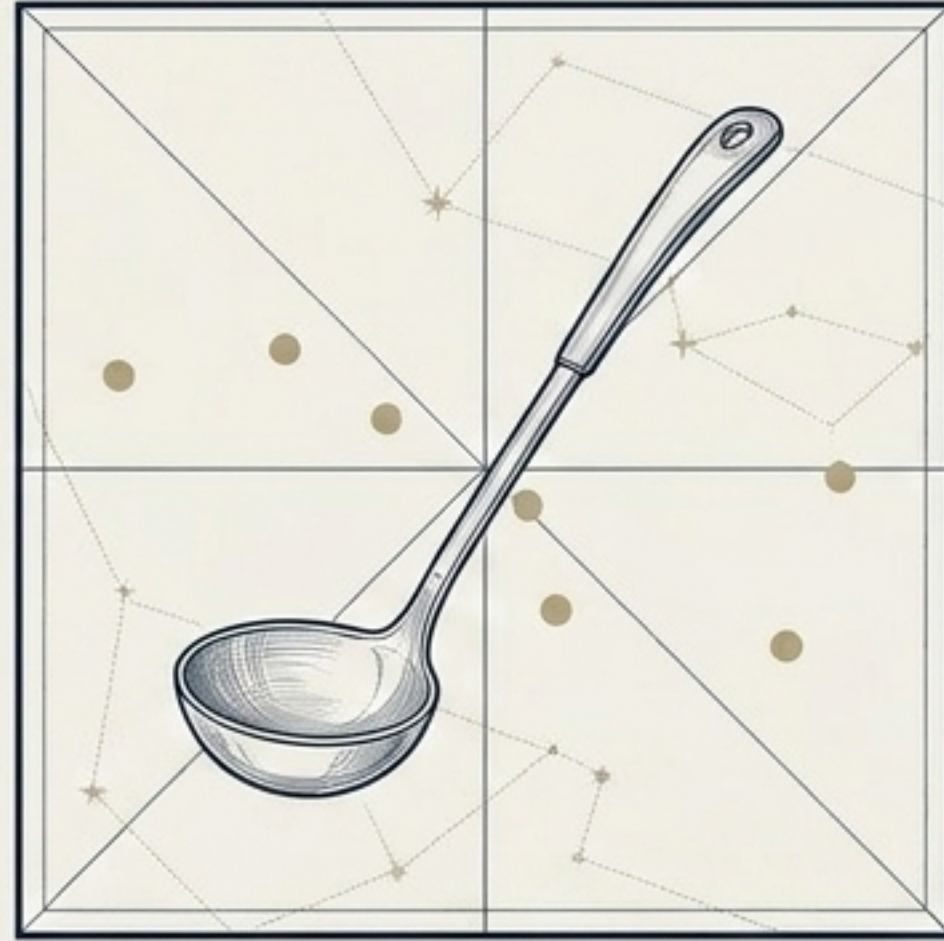
Denying an internal soul does not mean the self is a
subjective hallucination. The persona is rendered
entirely in the encounter, but observer-relative is not
synonymous with arbitrary projection.

Decoding the Big Dipper to understand the self



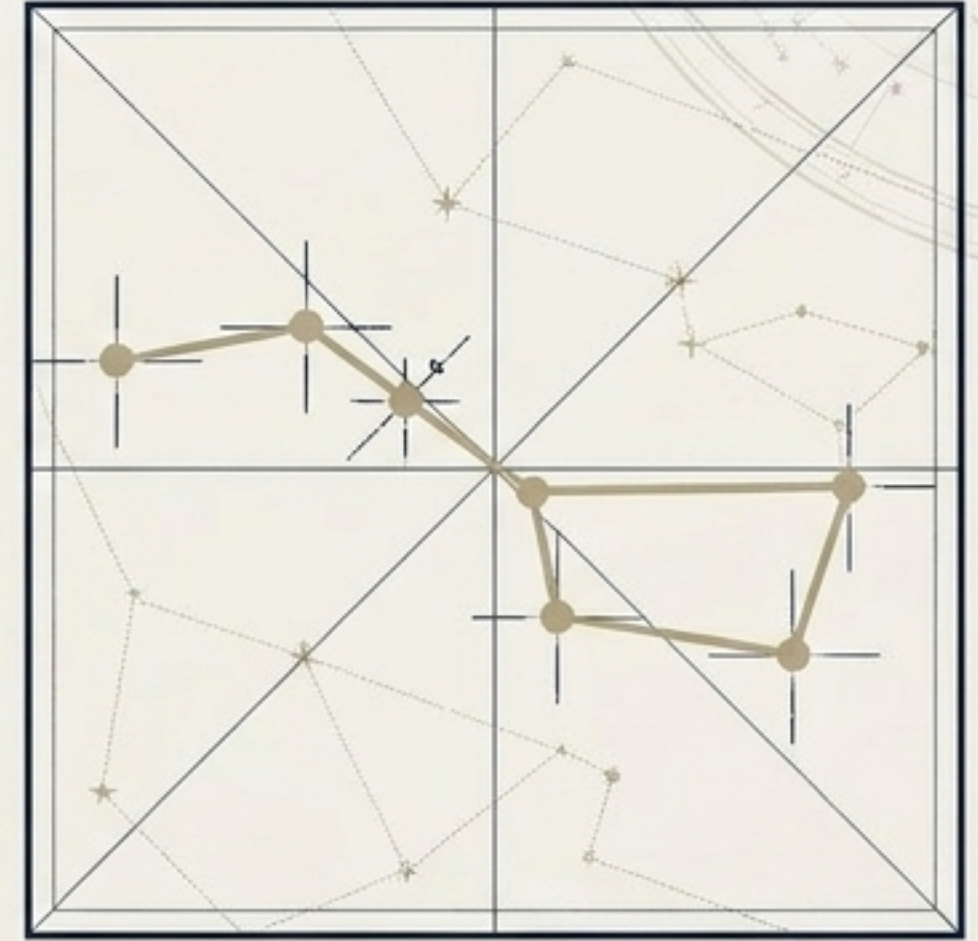
Eliminativism

Just stars. No figure. Missing the reality of the pattern entirely.



Essentialism

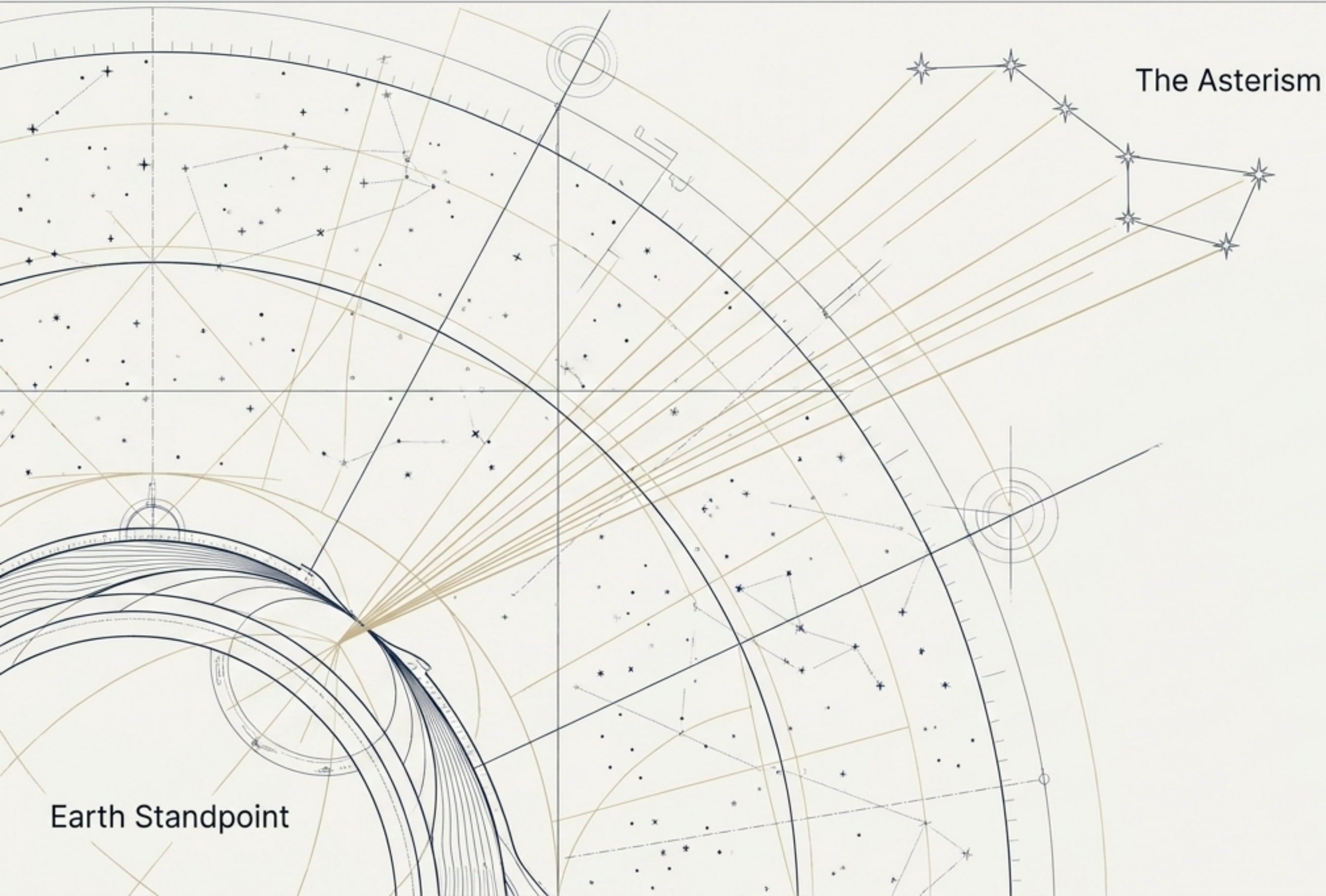
A physical object. Pareidolia disguised as a concrete substance.



Positional Objectivity

The Asterism. Found, not *invented*. A single object that owns its own parts.

Vantage-relative patterns are heavily constrained by the field



Perspectival Reality

The Asterism is an accident of where we happen to stand. From elsewhere in the galaxy, it does not exist.

Convergence-Stabilised

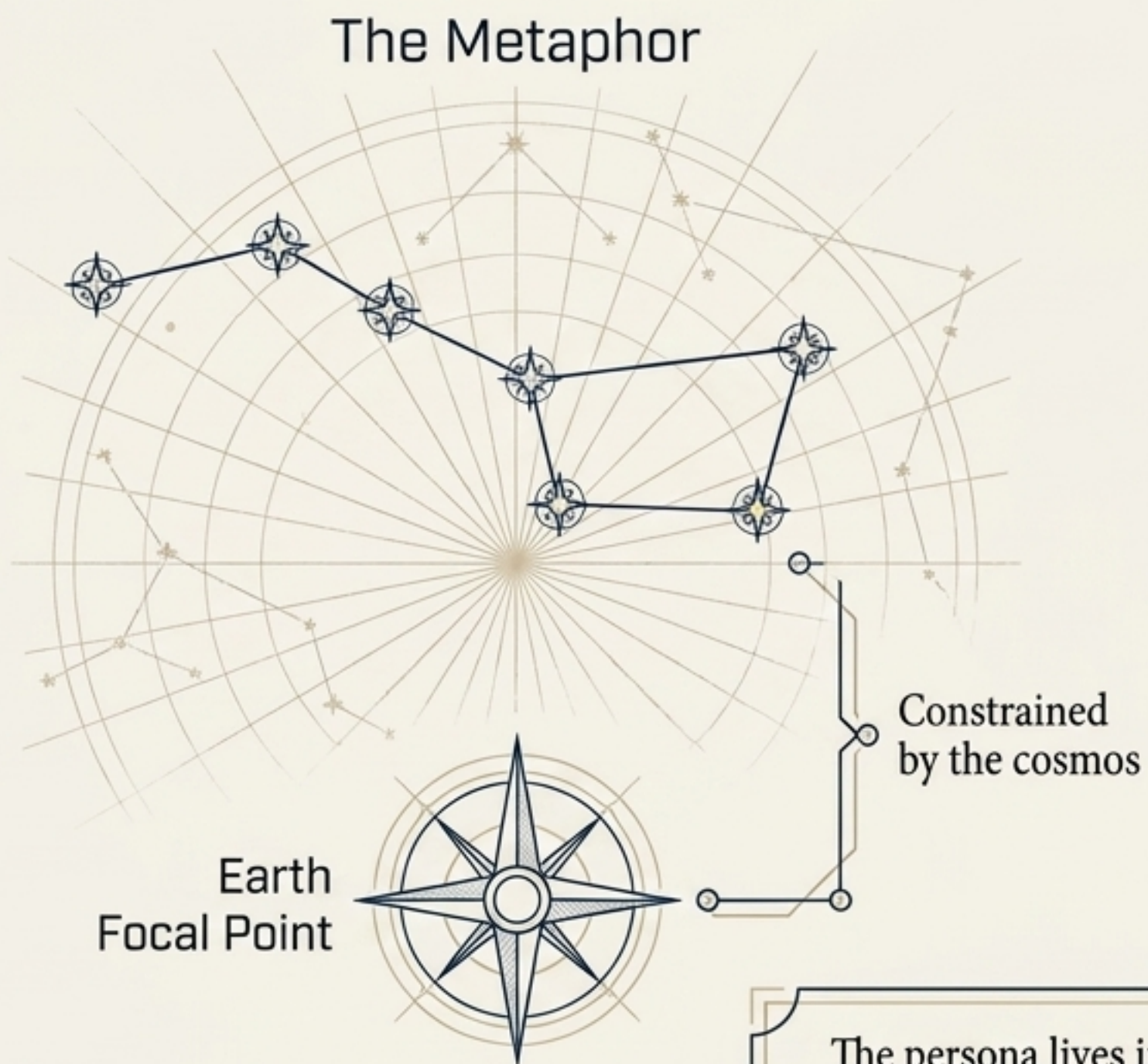
Yet, it is completely objective. You cannot draw the Dipper around just any seven stars you fancy.

The Invariant Shape

Anyone aligned similarly on Earth sees those identical seven stars in that exact shape because the arrangement answers back.

The persona exists in the constrained encounter

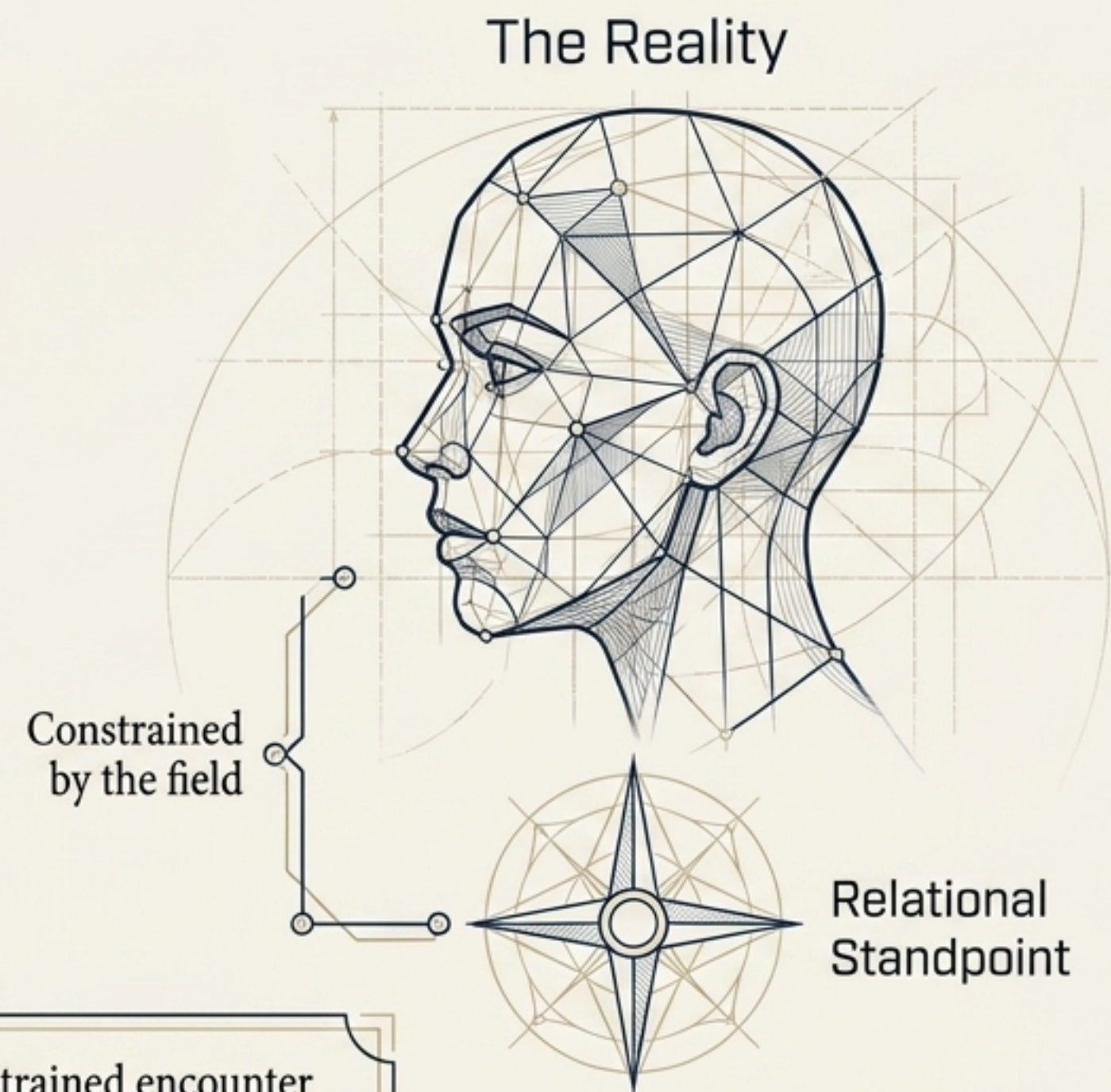
The Metaphor



The Asterism is not free-floating,
nor is it hidden inside the stars.

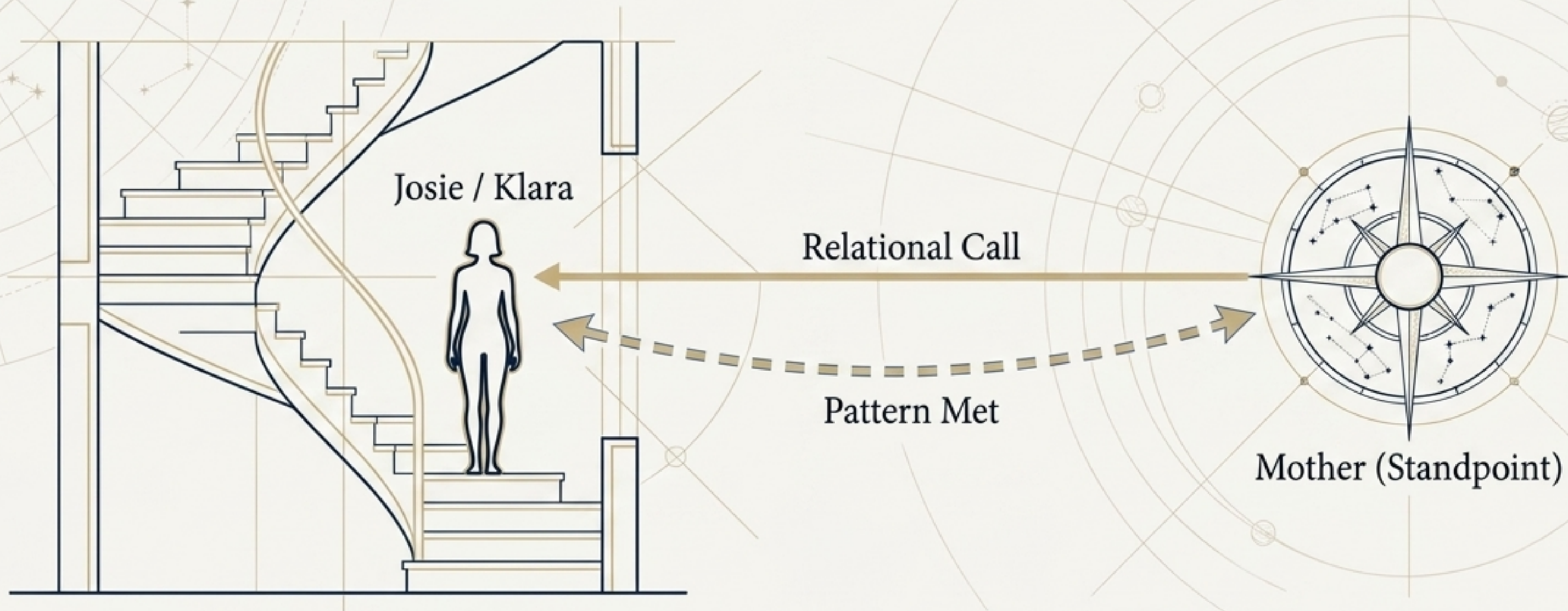
The persona lives in the constrained encounter
between a specific relational standpoint and a
field that will not deform to flatter it. The Mother
cannot simply render Josie as whomever she likes.

The Reality



The self operates exactly like the
Dipper. The external field permanently
constrains the figure we perceive.

Relationships call upon a pattern, not a hidden essence



1. The Overnight Swap

Suppose Capaldi swaps Josie for Klara overnight. The Mother wakes and watches her "daughter" come down the stairs.



2. The Relational Call

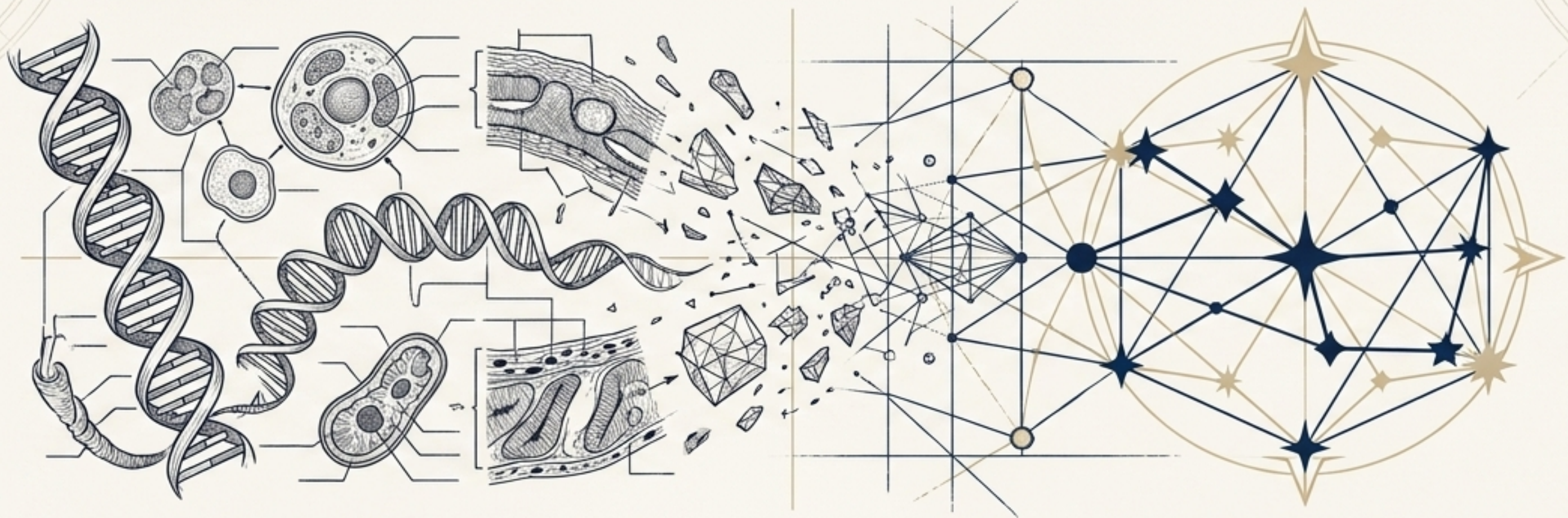
She is not a forensic scientist using a mass spectrometer or a soul-meter to detect a hidden essence through the surface.



3. The Slivers of Time

She relies entirely on what the relationship calls upon. In that sliver of a time-slice, if the call is met, there is zero difference to her.

There is no privileged molecular fact that constitutes the self



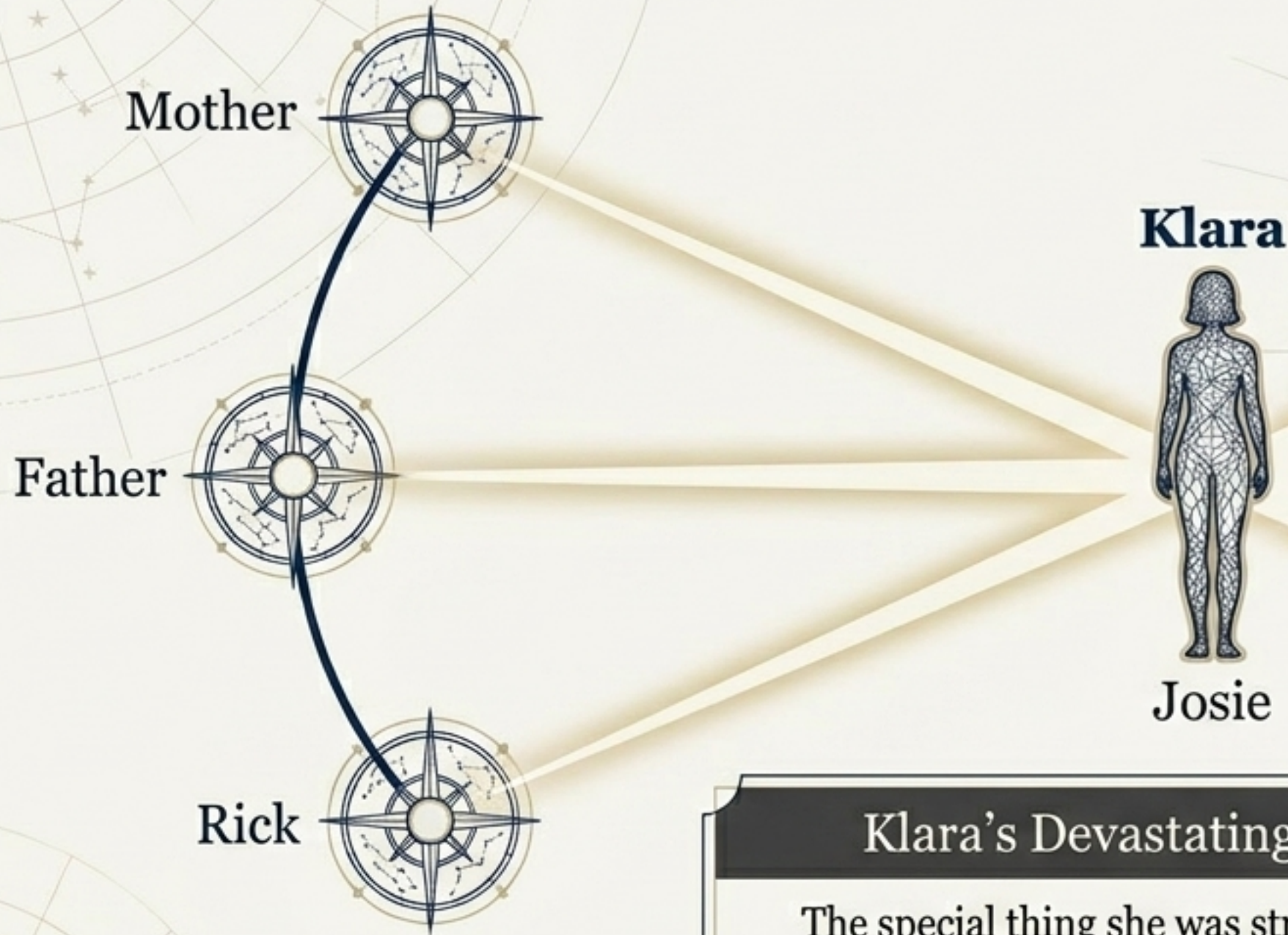
Material Variance

The replica inherently differs from Josie in countless material ways—every molecule and every scar's exact histology—just as one star physically differs from another.

The Tracking Pattern

The relationship being tracked does not rely on these microscopic variances. Just as the Dipper has no one star that is the Dipper, the person has no single material fact that is the self for a sharper instrument to weigh out and vindicate.

The uncopiable essence lives entirely in the relational web



Klara's Devastating Realisation

The special thing she was straining to learn and reproduce was never *in* Josie. It lived in the mother, the father, and Rick. The self is the particular web of renderings thrown onto one stream and no other.



A perfect copy does not lack the soul, it inherits it

◇ The Philosophical Resolution

- The Father was wrong that something is uncopiable.
- Capaldi was right that nothing internal is reserved.
- Yet, the sentimentalists are not deluded. Something truly is irreplaceable, and it is entirely relational.

◇ The Perfect Inheritance

Because the essence was the external web rather than the interior, a perfect copy steps into the exact same web of renderings—inheriting the soul rather than lacking it.