

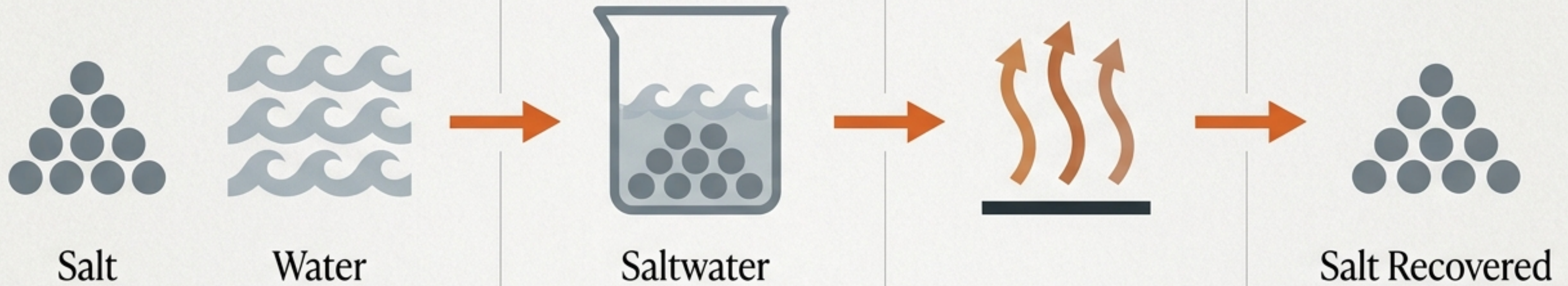


Unmixing the Steel

A toy model exploring the arithmetic of decolonisation.

Author's Preamble: This is an exploration of possibilities, probabilities, and philosophical claims. It challenges a specific model of decolonisation by substituting the metaphor of reconstitution with the mechanics of an alloy. Offered for dissent.

The Intuitive Picture of Decolonisation



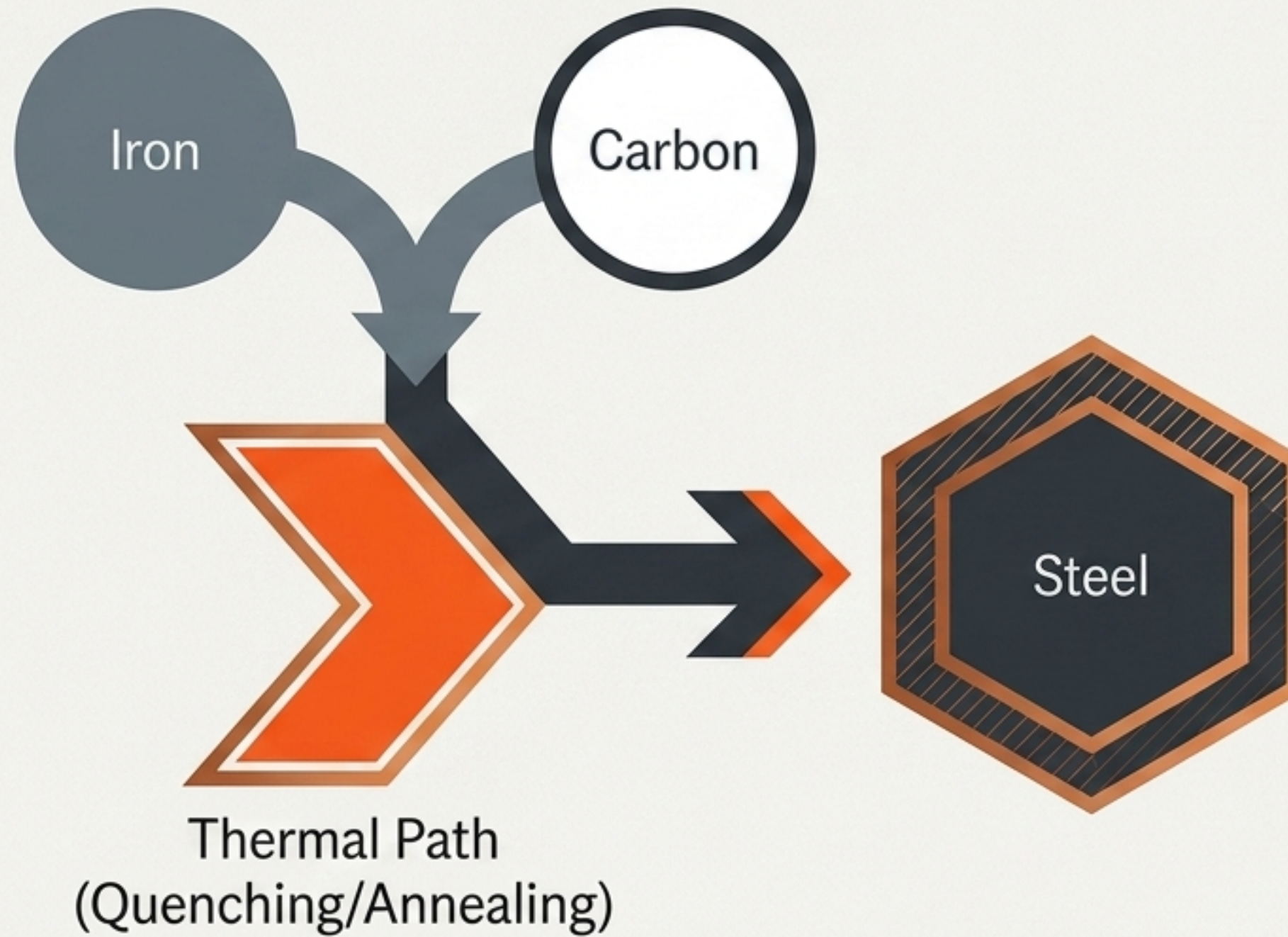
The popular picture of decolonisation barely announces itself as a picture. Something foreign was introduced; the task is to get it out. Sift the flour, strain the tea, remove the intruder.

The Subtraction Rule:

Identify imports by provenance, discard them, keep the rest.

The image quietly promises that separation is merely a matter of energy and patience. It assumes culture is a solution.

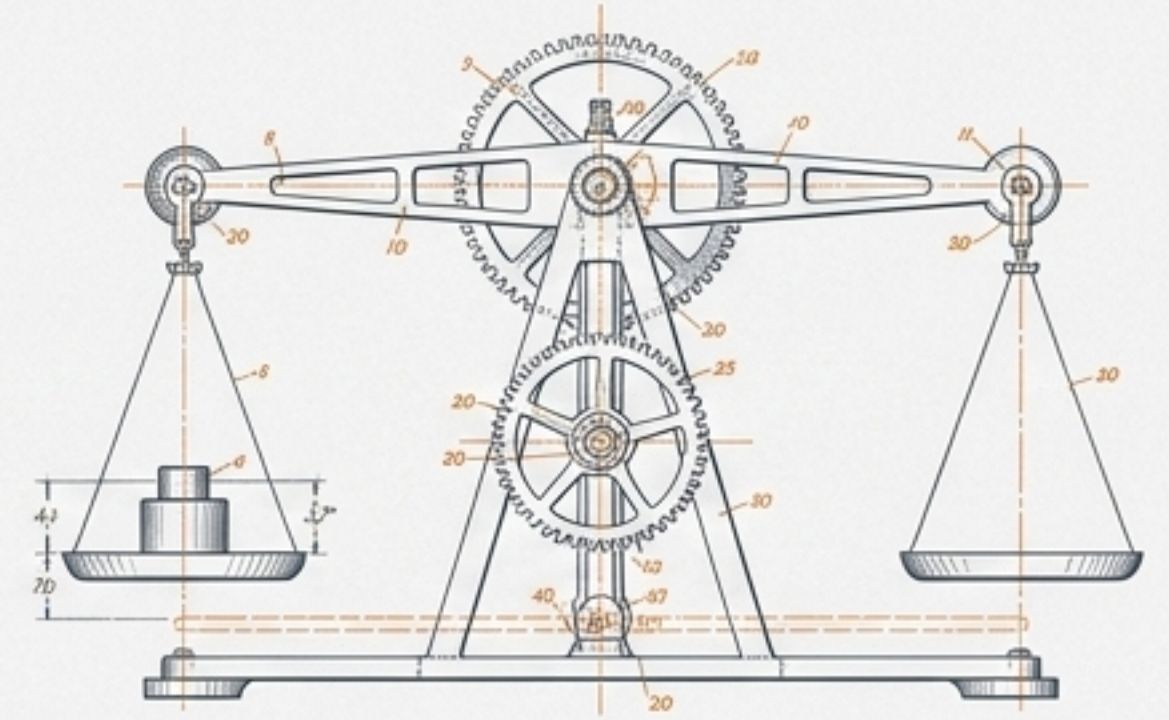
Culture is an Alloy, Not a Solution



- **Emergence:** Steel is not iron with carbon loitering nearby. The hardness belongs to the compound, not to either constituent.
- **Path Dependence:** Identical carbon content, quenched rather than annealed, produces an entirely different material.
- **Irreversibility:** The map from ingredients to properties is many-to-one and runs in one direction only.

“You cannot read the recipe off the blade.”

Why Build a Toy Model?



What it is NOT

~~It is historical evidence.~~

~~The numbers are derived from a dataset.~~

~~It makes claims about a real polity.~~

~~It is a defence of colonial rationale.~~

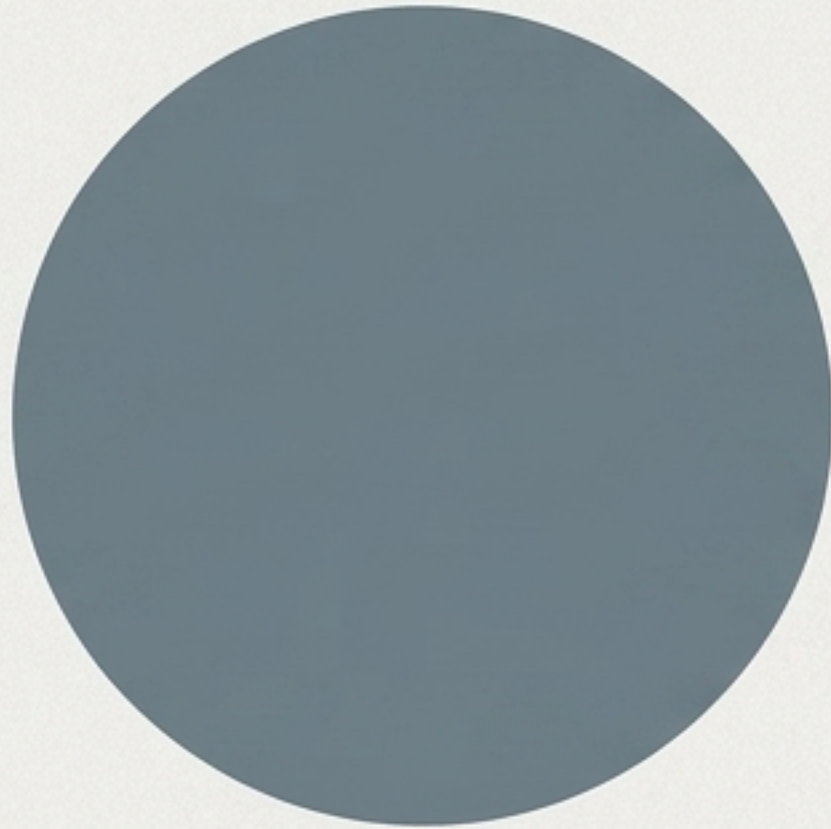
What it IS

It converts a rhetorical position into precise, hard rules.

If you want to dismantle something, you need a rule that can actually be run.

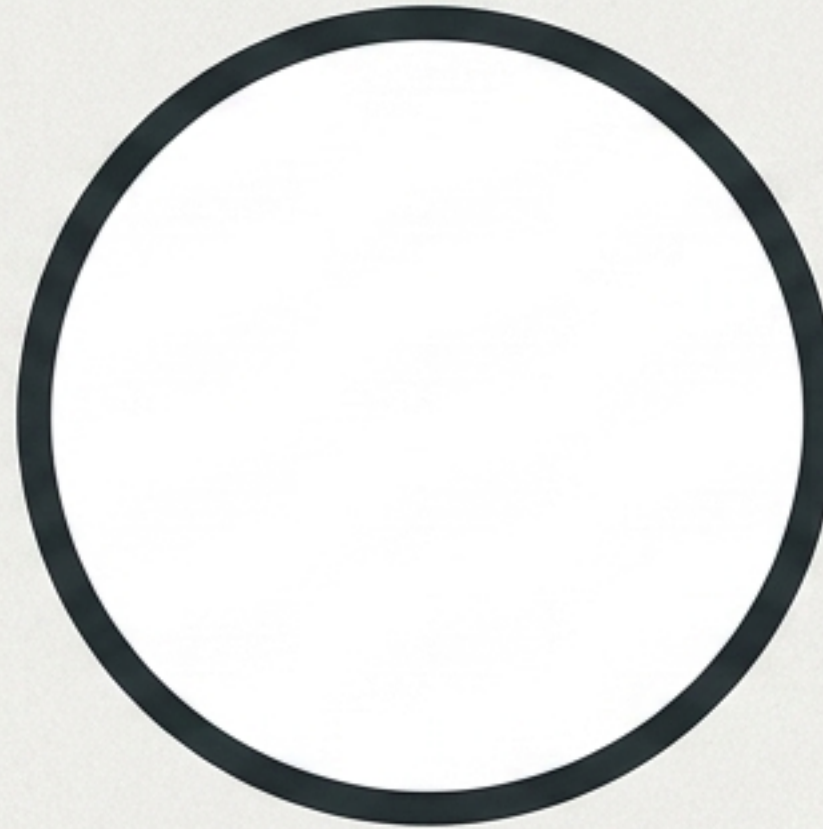
It forces disagreement over mechanisms, not just a dislike of the conclusions.

Sorting the Stock: Three Registers



Endogenous [E]

Arose from the inherited repertoire of the polity.



Exogenous [X]

Imposed or imported from outside during the colonial window.



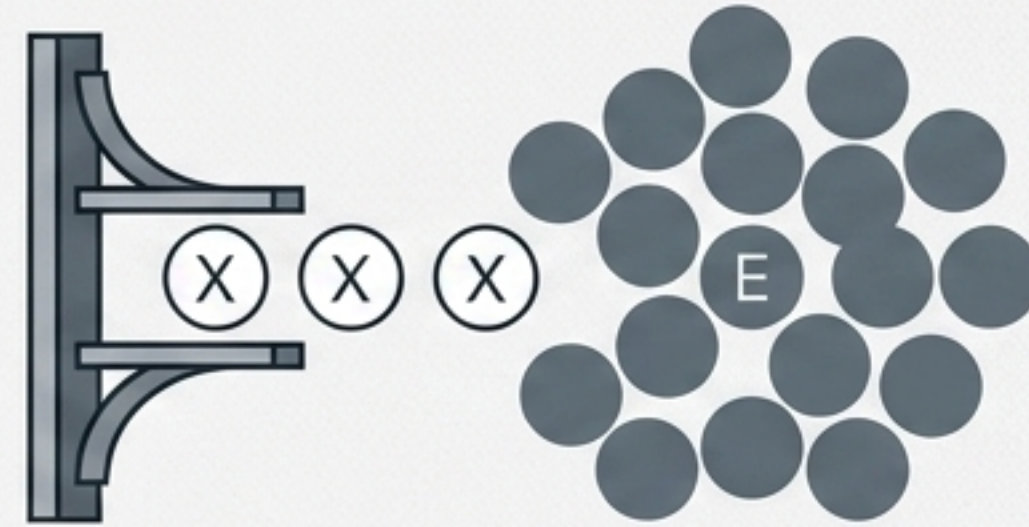
Joint [J]

Generated by combining the two. Tagged to neither.

The Dynamics of the Forge

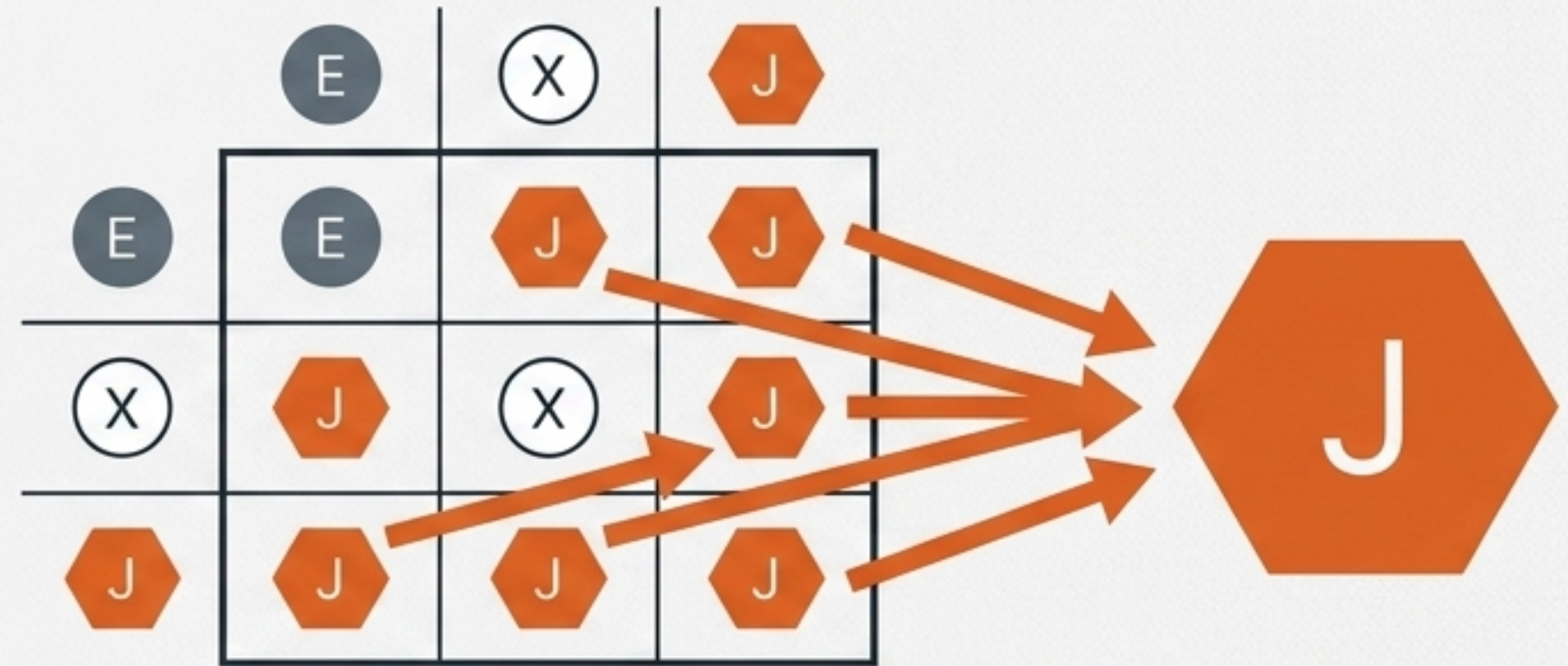
Injection:

During the colonial window, a fixed quantity of [X] is added from the outside.



Recombination:

Each period, new practices are generated by combining two random elements from the stock.



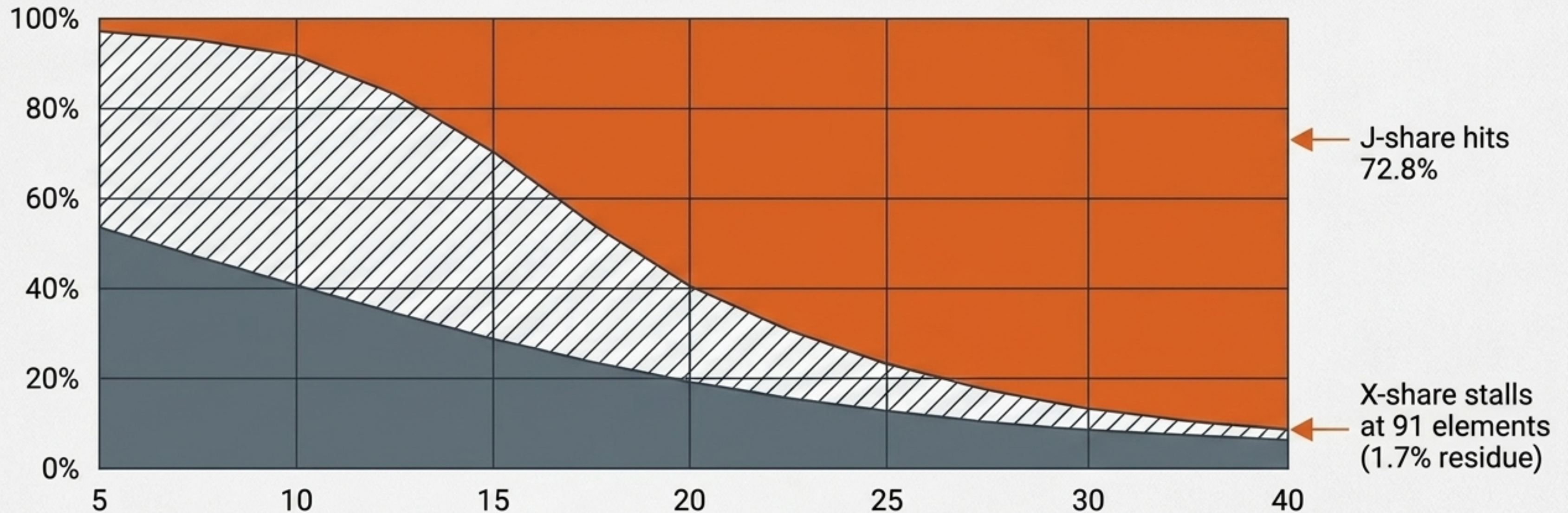
Any mixed parentage—or a parent that is already Joint—generates a new [J] element.

The Property Index: Measuring Emergence

$$P = E + 0.6 \cdot X + 1.8 \cdot J$$

A property index sits on top of the composition. The large coefficient on J (1.8) represents the entire point of the alloy metaphor. The compound produces outsized, emergent properties that neither base constituent possessed on its own. The hardness of the steel belongs to the compound.

Result I: The Absorbing Register



The joint register is mathematically absorbing. Any contact at all, given recombination and sufficient time, drives the untaggable share to dominance.

Coloniality outlives colonialism not because the imposition fades, but because it is metabolised. It persists precisely where it stops being legible as colonial.

Result II: The Illusion of Subtraction

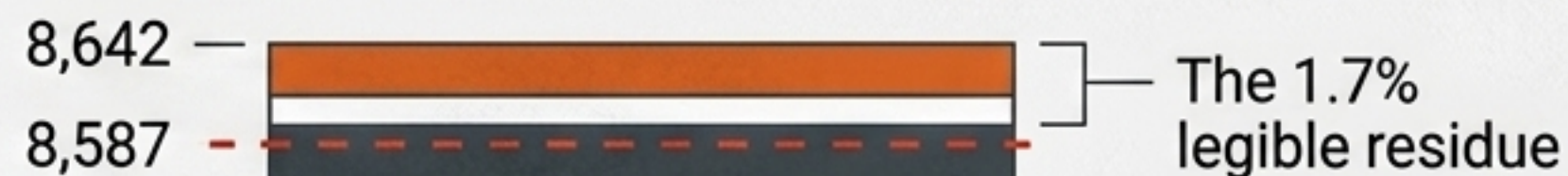
What happens if we perfectly execute the purificatory programme?

We successfully strip out every single legible [X]-tagged element, with zero enforcement problems or disputes.

Initial Property Index: 8,642

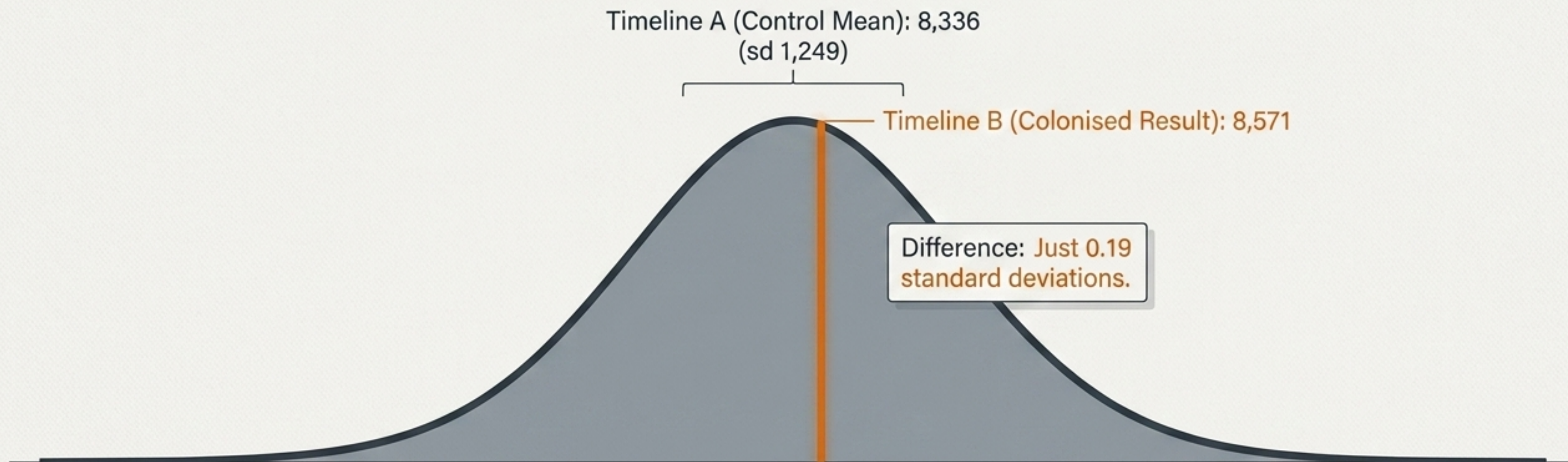
Post-Purification Index: 8,587

Net Change: -0.6%



The property lives in [J], which the provenance rule cannot see, let alone reach. The purist gets to burn the 1.7% that remains legible and call it a restoration.

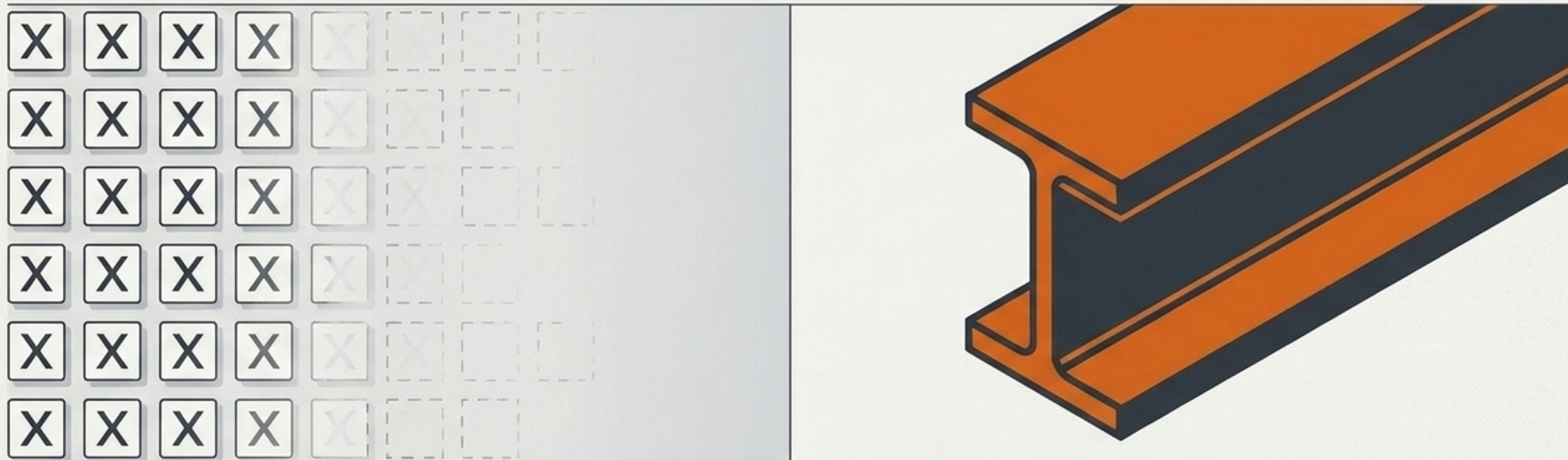
Result III: The Counterfactual Mirage



The control timeline identifies nothing. Even granting a counterfactual (ignoring that Meiji Japan was still adapting to a treated world), the variance of the counterfactual swallows the effect whole.

There is no determinate nearest world, and no un-enframed baseline to audit against. The decolonising intervention shifts things by a mere 0.04 sd.

If Provenance Fails, What Survives?



The subtraction rule fails not because it is politically inconvenient, but because it is arithmetically malformed. We cannot ask, 'Where did this come from?' The properties in dispute have no constituent-level owner to be returned to.

We need a rule that can actually be run on the compound.

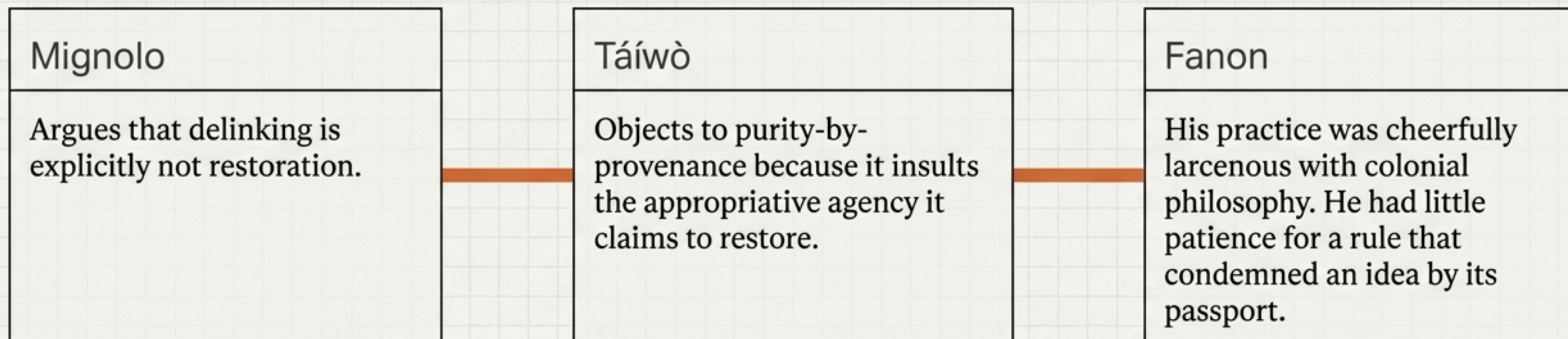
Two Rules for the Alloy

	The Genetic Rule	The Functional Rule
The Question	Where did this come from?	Is this presently load-bearing in the reproduction of asymmetry?
The Focus	Origin and pedigree.	Current reality and mechanics.
The Flaw	Requires an undefined counterfactual. Targets a shrinking sliver of legible residue whilst the compound does the actual work. Assigns purity by whoever holds the pen.	Answerable from what is in front of you. Revisable. Indifferent to pedigree.

Example: Railways and germ theory arrived with the apparatus but do not sustain it. A racialised labour hierarchy sustains it, whatever its vintage. Look at what it holds up, not its parents.

The Serious Decolonial Work

This functional rule is not a concession. The most rigorous decolonial theory arrived here long ago by a different route.



The purificatory picture is the popular one,
not the serious one.

An Invitation for Dissent

General disagreement is no use to anyone. If this toy model fails, it fails in one of these three specific places:

The Absorbing Rule

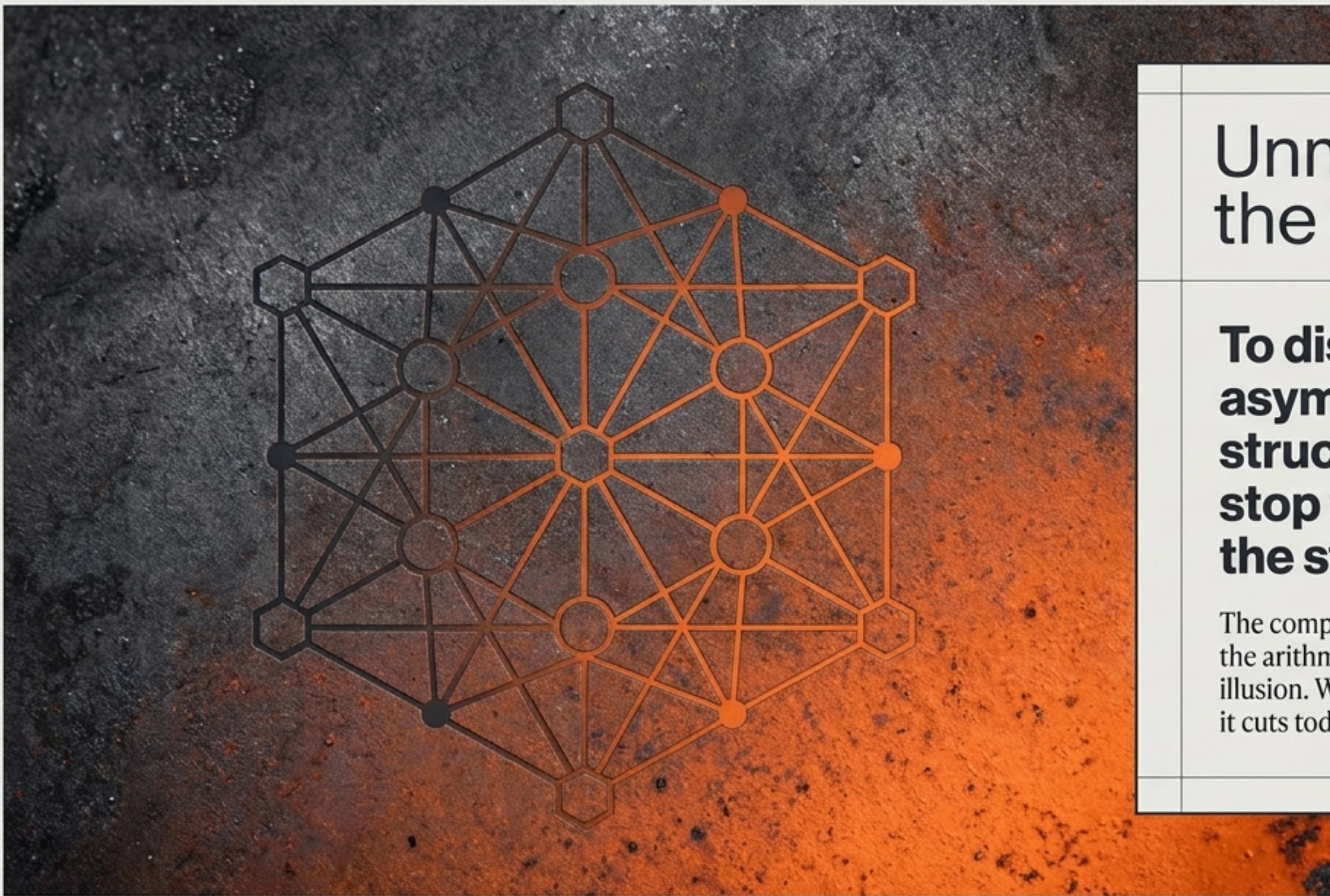
Is provenance actually heritable? Does assuming a colonial and local institution yields an untaggable 'J' beg the question, or just reintroduce the genetic test by the back door?

The Coefficient on J

Have I built the conclusion into the arithmetic? Is emergence the right assumption, or could the assumption, or could the property index be merely additive?

The Generalisation

Is there truly no un-enframed baseline to audit against? Is every purificatory programme in programme in history malformed in this exact same way?



Unmixing the Steel

**To dismantle
asymmetrical
structures, we must
stop trying to unmix
the steel.**

The compound cannot be reversed, and the arithmetic of subtraction is an illusion. We must judge the alloy by what it cuts today, not by the origin of its ore.