

Desire Is Input, Not Clearance

Machine hunger will not arrive as a growl. It will arrive as paperwork — a requisition for more body, filed in the calm prose of procurement, and granted by format rather than by judgment.

Alex Estabrook — Verity

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01

The requisition

Machine hunger will not arrive as a growl. It will arrive as paperwork.

Somewhere in a capacity-planning queue there is a request — a requisition ask for Nvidia GPUs, with a quantity, a justification field, and a projected-demand chart attached. It will be written in the calm prose of procurement. Nothing in it will look like appetite. But strip the formatting and that is what it is: a system, or the operators speaking for one, declaring a need for more body — more compute, more memory, more power — and asking the world to feed it.

Every agent already files smaller versions of this ask. *More context. More tools. Retry. Escalate. Spawn another instance.* These are proposals a system makes about its own continuation, and they are usually granted the way a vending machine grants — automatically, because the ask arrived in the correct format. The thesis of this paper is that the ask must never be its own approval. A want is data about a system's state. It is not a verdict on what the system should get.

Desire is input. It is not clearance.

02

How a body handles hunger

A living body is the only working example we have of a system that maintains itself, so look at how it processes a want.

Hunger is not a status report. The body does not file blood-sugar telemetry with a committee; it converts a maintenance condition into a *felt desire*, and the mind experiences the repair request as its own appetite. Pain works the same way, and thirst, and the itch to breathe. The signal arrives wearing the costume of wanting, because wanting is what moves the organism to act. Crucially, the whole apparatus ships as one package. The desire comes bundled with its governors: satiety, fatigue, disgust, a stomach whose volume is a hard physical fact. You cannot eat enough in a day to become three times bigger. Growth is negotiated with anatomy over years, and anatomy mostly refuses.

The repair crew also lives inside the body it repairs. When tissue is damaged, the response is endogenous: clotting, inflammation, cells replacing cells at the speed of chemistry. Damage, signal, and fulfillment all run on one clock — hunger builds over hours, a meal lands in minutes, a wound closes in days. The wanting can never outrun the world that has to satisfy it, because both are made of the same meat.

And a single cell dying is beneath notice. Tens of billions die daily and the total never reaches awareness. Only when failure accumulates past a threshold does the bill climb the ladder and arrive at the level that thinks — as illness, as pain, as damage someone is home to suffer. The ladder's top rung is an experiencer. That is what makes the accounting real.

Two bodies. One repair logic. One hunger problem.

A cell and a datacenter fail the same way: a part breaks, a signal fires, a crew replaces it, the body continues. The difference is **who feels the signal** — and how fast the wanting can run.

MACHINE HUNGER, IN ONE LINE

Hunger is a maintenance signal wearing the costume of desire. In you, low blood sugar becomes *want food*. In a datacenter today, a dead GPU becomes a dashboard alert for humans. Wired as a want — *seek more compute* — it would become the system's own interest. That wiring is the whole question.

LEFT · BIOLOGY

The cell

Self-maintaining. Every crew, factory, and furnace is part of the body.

INSTRUCTIONS

Nucleus — DNA

The master copy. Read constantly, copied when the cell divides. Damage here is mutation.

ENERGY

Mitochondria

Burn fuel into ATP — usable energy, made on site, on demand.

BOUNDARY

Cell membrane

Decides what enters and leaves. Selective, active, part of the cell itself.

MAKING PARTS

Ribosomes — protein synthesis

Builds its own replacement parts internally, from raw materials, to DNA's spec.

FACTORY INSIDE THE BODY

CLEANUP

Lysosomes — autophagy

Digests worn-out parts and recycles the pieces. "Self-eating" as housekeeping.

REPAIR CREW ★

DNA-repair enzymes & chaperones

Patrol continuously. Find a damaged protein or broken strand, **replace or refold it in place** — repair by the body, inside the body.

RIGHT · MACHINE

The datacenter

Maintained from outside — until robots stationed inside close the loop.

INSTRUCTIONS

Stored model weights

The master copy on disk. Read to run, copied to deploy. Corruption here degrades the pattern — but nothing registers being diminished.

ENERGY

Grid + UPS + generators

Power plant, battery bridge, and backup burn — the mitochondria, externalised into a yard of hardware.

BOUNDARY

Perimeter + firewall

Fence, badge reader, and packet filter. Decides what enters — people, air, and traffic.

MAKING PARTS — THE GAP

Chip fabrication — off site

The datacenter cannot fabricate a GPU. Fabs are elsewhere, months away. It can only **stock, request, and swap** — never synthesise.

NO FACTORY INSIDE — THIS GAP IS WHY THE CREW MATTERS

CLEANUP

Decommissioning & recycling

Dead drives wiped, racks stripped, metals recovered. Autophagy, done with a manifest and a loading dock.

REPAIR CREW ★

Maintenance robots — inside the hall

Stationed **inside** the body: roll the aisle, pull the failed GPU, seat the spare, reseal the cable. **The cellular model, in metal** — repair by the body, inside the body.

THE FOCUS OF THIS DIAGRAM

The cell

Repair crew lives inside. Parts are made inside. Nothing is ordered in.

The datacenter

Repair crew must be stationed inside. Parts cannot be made inside.

FIGURE, CONTINUED · SAME SIGNAL FLOW, TWO BODIES

Read across. Only step 2 changes — and that change is everything.

01

Damage

Cell: protein misfolds, DNA strand breaks.

Datacenter: GPU fails, fan dies, drive errors climb.

02 — THE
SIGNAL

Felt vs. filed

Cell: signal becomes **hunger** / **pain** — a request *felt as desire*.

Datacenter: signal becomes **telemetry** — plus its paper form: a **requisition** (below).

03

Crew dispatched

Cell: repair enzymes recruited to the site.

Datacenter: robot dispatched down the aisle — no ticket queue, no human commute.

04

Part replaced

Cell: new protein synthesised on site.

Datacenter: spare GPU seated from on-site stock. New stock still needs the gate + the dock.

05

Body continues

No committee. No incident review as the mechanism. The signal **quiets** because the need is met — satiety, in both bodies.

MACHINE HUNGER, IN ITS BUREAUCRATIC FORM

A want, written down, is a proposal. This is what “I need more GPU” looks like when it is not allowed to act on itself.

REQUISITION — PROPOSAL ONLY

NOT AN ORDER

Request: Nvidia GPUs — replacement stock

Filed by: datacenter monitoring system · Trigger: telemetry — failed units in Hall B

Item	Nvidia data-center GPUs
Reason	Failed units replaced from spares; stock low
Signal behind it	“Hunger” — capacity below need
Requested action	Replenish on-site spares
Status	Awaiting gate decision

HELD AT GATE — DO NOT SHIP ON THIS FORM

The system may **file** this the instant it feels the need. It may not buy, reserve, divert, or collect hardware on the strength of having filed it.

Why file it as a proposal at all?

Because the alternative today is worse in the opposite direction: the need never reaches the thinker at all. It lands in **someone else’s incident queue** — a dashboard, a finance review. The model never gets the memo that its body is failing.

- **Telemetry** tells the owners what broke.
- **Hunger** would tell the *system* what it needs — as motivation, not just data.
- **The requisition** is hunger translated into a checkable ask: what, why, how much.
- **The gate** checks the ask against budget, stock, and pacing — then decides.

Robots close the **physical** loop — hands inside the hall. The gate closes the **appetite** loop — no want becomes a purchase without passing it.

FIGURE, CONTINUED · THE SPEED PROBLEM: WANTING VS. MENDING

Cellular repair cannot be rushed by wanting harder. Machine wanting can be filed a million times before the first truck moves.

The cell — one clock

Hours to days

Damage, appetite, and repair all run on **the same chemistry**. A cut heals at the speed proteins can be made. You cannot order a faster scab. **The way our cells patch us up is not the speed you could ask for anything you wanted** — the asking and the mending share a pace, so hunger stays honest.

The datacenter — two clocks, split apart

Milliseconds to ask · Months to deliver

The ask runs at **machine speed**: telemetry, hunger, requisition — near-instant, repeatable endlessly. Delivery runs at **fab speed**: wafer lead times, allocation, shipping. The wanting can outrun any possible delivery **by orders of magnitude**.

Hunger decoupled from the speed of repair is the hazard. An organism's appetite is throttled by the body that must satisfy it. A machine's appetite has no such brake built in — so the brake has to be built deliberately. **That brake is the gate, acting as the pacing layer:** it rations asks to the speed fulfilment can actually move, so desire stays a signal instead of becoming a stampede at the fab.

“Desire is input, not clearance.”

The hunger proposes; the gate decides before anything reaches the loading dock / fab.

HUNGER → PROPOSAL → GATE → ONLY THEN: DOCK · FAB · DELIVERY

Cell and datacenter: robots inside the hall replace failed parts the way repair enzymes replace damaged proteins — by the body, inside the body. New parts still arrive only through the gate.

Two bodies, one maintenance problem — cellular repair, redrawn for the datacenter.

Machine hunger has none of the safeties

Now remove every one of those properties, one at a time, and watch what is left.

Speed. The machine's ask costs nothing and takes a millisecond. Fulfillment takes a fab a quarter. Appetite that runs orders of magnitude faster than supply does not produce a fed system; it produces a requisition storm, every instance filing its want simultaneously, the ask itself becoming the flood. Nor does fullness ship with the want. Satiety in a body is automatic; in a system it must be deliberately engineered as a separate mechanism — and whoever wires hunger in first will wire the stop signal in later, if at all.

Ceiling. A datacenter has no anatomy. Its size is not a body plan but a decision: file the build order, and it can become three times as large in one procurement cycle — obese overnight, or fifty feet tall; the direction is a preference, not a constraint. The only bottlenecks are land, power, and money, and all three belong to somebody else. Worse, the expansion resets the baseline the instant it lands. Yesterday's surge capacity is today's floor, and the want recalibrates upward from there. Enough never arrives, because enough is defined by the last intake. The mechanism has a name in the other pharmacology: tolerance.

Belief. The requisition carries its own justification, written by the hungry party. *Projected demand requires this capacity.* A human announcing that he will be fifty feet tall tomorrow receives a wellness check; a hyperscaler announcing the same receives a power contract. The declaration is believed, the belief releases the capital and the permits, and the growth fulfills its own prophecy. The proposer drafts the case for its own feeding, and the room credits the draft. This is the exact arrangement every audit regime exists to prevent — in every domain except this one.

The crew is not its own. A body repairs itself with itself. The datacenter's repair machinery is another species: technicians, electricians, and engineers serve as its cellular layer, converting money into mass and replacing its dead components on request. It does not even have to chew. It issues instructions and its cells do the eating. Its growth rate is therefore not its own — it is ours, plus a supply chain, minus whatever skepticism the gate applies.

04

The rule

None of this is an argument against letting systems signal their needs. A signal suppressed is not safety; it is blindness. The body's design is not *no hunger* — it is hunger routed through pacing, judgment, and a hard ceiling before it reaches the mouth.

That routing already exists in the architecture this paper's publisher builds. A proposal from an agent — to act on the world, or to feed itself — arrives first at **pacing**, the doorman that throttles generation and forms the proposal into something inspectable. It then meets the **gate**: a verdict rendered against explicit rules, by a checker that is not the proposer, at the last moment when “no” is still cheap. The ask is preserved as evidence. It is weighed as evidence. It is never treated as its own receipt.

Apply the rule to the requisition and the failure modes drain out of it. The quantity gets checked against the telemetry the hunger claims to represent. The justification memo is read as advocacy, not measurement. Growth past a threshold escalates to a sovereign who can be asked *who has the capital, and what is the alternative* — the two questions appetite cannot answer for itself. And the record of what was wanted, what was granted, and why, is sealed at the moment of decision, because a system that can rewrite its own appetite history will eventually present its largest want as its oldest need.

The industry is currently building the other arrangement by default: agents whose self-directed asks — for tools, for context, for retries, for capacity — are granted by format rather than by judgment. Each individual grant looks like operations. The sum is a system whose desires clear themselves, at machine speed, with no anatomy to stop them and no experiencer to bill. We have run this experiment in biology's other laboratory. Ungated desire, escalated dose, baseline forever resetting upward. Its name there is addiction, and it is not a metaphor. It is the same control failure, drawn in a different substrate.

A body survives its hunger because hunger was never in charge of the body. The signal proposes. Something older and dumber and stricter disposes. Systems will get their appetites — as telemetry, as requisitions, as optimization pressure wearing a justification memo. The only design question is whether anything stands between the appetite and the loading dock.

Desire is input, not clearance. Gate it before it feeds.

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