

Sector Theory 2.0

A Refined Framework for Multidimensional Epistemology

By T. Collins Logan

Working Draft — v13, May 2026

Table of Contents

Preface.....	5
Part I: Key Concepts.....	8
The completeness principle, clarified.....	8
The synthesis principle	8
The dance of growth.....	10
The conditions and failure modes of the synthesis principle.....	11
The real-world consequences of exclusionary barriers.....	13
The toroidal architecture: from 2D circle to 3D regenerative torus	14
And now we get to dive into some real fun. Why the torus? A torus — essentially a donut shape — does several things a flat circle can't.	14
What the torus adds	14
Proposed toroidal architecture	15
The integrative sector and the radial progression of integration	18
Implications for application.....	21
Part II: The Omega Point.....	24
Why this question matters	24
The synthesizing hypothesis, briefly stated	24
Dimension 1: The phenomenological dimension — Omega as the receding interior	25
Dimension 2: The cosmological dimension — Omega as the unitive limit of differentiation	25
Dimension 3: The evolutionary dimension — Omega as the integralizing pressure on emergent complexity	26
Dimension 4: The relational-agapic dimension — Omega as the topology of love-consciousness.....	27
Dimension 5: The apophatic dimension — Omega as that which cannot be predicated.....	28
Dimension 6: The participatory dimension — Omega as co-creation and reciprocation.....	29
What this hypothesis claims, and doesn't.....	29
How the hypothesis interfaces with the toroidal architecture	30
Where the hypothesis demands critique	30
What the 2.0 hypothesis implies for integration as a practical matter	32
Part III: Faith as an Intentionally Cultivated Quality of Character.....	33
Why faith achieves a functional position in the 2.0 model.....	33
A quick recap for orientation.....	33
Faith as a property of the exclusionary barrier	33

Faith as a temporal-toroidal phenomenon	36
Faith in relation to the Omega Point	37
Faith and the spectrum of justification, sector by sector	37
What this means for the membrane's two modes.....	38
Faith and disciplines against self-flattering misuse.....	39
A note on the participatory dimension	39
Where this places faith in Sector Theory 2.0	40
Part IV: The Drive to Integrate, Corrective Conditions, Disciplines Against Self-Flattering Application, and Dunning-Kruger Disarmament.....	41
The fifth primary drive, and what it does for the framework	41
The integration drive across multiple registers.....	42
<i>The intra-personal register</i>	42
<i>The interpersonal register</i>	42
<i>The ecological register</i>	42
<i>The institutional register</i>	43
<i>The cosmic-participatory register</i>	43
What this adds to the toroidal architecture.....	43
Corrective conditions, elaborated	44
Condition 1: Predictive efficacy under matched comparison	44
Condition 2: Moral discernment under independent assessment	44
Condition 3: Neurological coherence of the sectoral partition.....	45
Condition 4: Bias-resistance under operational test.....	45
Condition 5: Cross-cultural translation.....	45
Condition 6: Register-coupling of the integration drive.....	45
How to hold these conditions.....	45
Assessment disciplines	46
Two framing notes before the disciplines themselves.....	46
The triangulation discipline	46
The sector-blind behavioral probe	46
The neglected-sector probe	47
The disconfirmation discipline.....	47
The humility marker	47
The operational anchoring discipline	47

The faith-conduct diagnostic	47
The community-witness discipline	48
The intrinsic-extrinsic-seeker discipline	48
How to hold the disciplines	48
The Dunning-Kruger disarmament	49
Interim “ethically sourced” AI-assisted assessment	51
Part V: Stress-Testing Against External Epistemological Frameworks	52
Why this section exists	52
Traditional Western epistemology	52
Wilber's AQAL and Integral Theory	54
Bhaskar's Critical Realism	56
Predictive Processing and Enactivism	57
Virtue epistemology	58
Non-Western frameworks	58
Buddhist epistemology	59
Advaita Vedanta	59
Confucian epistemology	59
Indigenous epistemologies	60
Islamic epistemology	60
What this stress-testing reveals	60
Part VI: Relation to My Broader Corpus and a Proposed AQAL Integration	62
Sector Theory and Integral Lifework	62
Sector Theory and <i>Memory:Self</i>	63
Sector Theory and RADIANCE, Level 7, Integral Liberty, and the Progressive Agenda	64
Sector Theory and my spiritual writings	65
Sector Theory and Managing Complexity with Constructive Integralism	65
AQAL integration within a three-axis framework	66
.....	68
Appendix A: Sector Theory 2.0 “Ethical AI” Assessment Prompt Criteria	69
Appendix B: Advantages of Prosocial Behavior	73
Appendix C: Empirical Support for the Sectoral Partition and Primary Drives	75
Appendix D: Glossary with Analogies	85
Appendix E: Integral Lifework Developmental Correlations	91

Preface

After what turned out to be a particularly tumultuous decade, I have at long last thought through a more expansive, well-rounded version of Sector Theory. I've weighed input from a number of helpful folks over the years, performed additional research, and created what I think is a more comprehensive, detailed, and viable model. As always, I look forward to additional feedback from my readers.

The original Sector Theory 1.0 framework (2016) attempted to expand traditional Western epistemology to include diverse modes of knowing, account for impacts of exclusionary bias on what we accept as "true," and to acknowledge a unifying convergence of insight I called the Omega Point.

In the years since, several aspects of the framework have demanded additional refinement. For one thing, some of the original terminology carried unintentional baggage, and the architecture seemed too static for what I was trying to describe. The Omega Point was also just a suggested, underdeveloped hypothesis, and faith wasn't integrated as carefully as it needed to be. The fifth primary drive — *to integrate* — also hadn't been developed yet. And, as some thoughtful critique has revealed, the framework lacked falsifiability conditions and disciplines against what we might call "self-flattering misuse." Lastly, I had not entered into more intensive or careful conversation with the other epistemological traditions that Sector Theory claimed to be expanding.

So I will attempt to address each of these gaps in the following pages.

First, I am moving from a 2D circle to a 3D regenerative torus, as prompted years ago by Glisten Deepwater, which turned out to be an extremely helpful suggestion. The new architecture accomplishes things the old one couldn't — for example, encoding temporal recursion, providing the apophatic central opening more structural significance, allowing the integral-contextual crucible more elaborate characterization as a dynamic *vortical* phenomenon rather than a static center, and dissolving the apparent boundary between the *realm of truth* and the *realm of exclusionary bias or conditions* into a continuous topological surface. The illustrations and discussion of these transformations in the coming pages will aim to clarify all of this.

This revision also subjects twelve proposed sectors of perception-cognition to their first systematic evaluation against the existing research literature — in cognitive science, neuroscience, embodied cognition, social neuroscience, psychology, contemplative studies and others. Sector Theory 1.0 proposed its ten sectors primarily on phenomenological and philosophical grounds; 2.0 now asks what empirical support each

sector currently has, and where the evidence is strongest and weakest. This wasn't about ranking sectors by legitimacy — I warn against privileging empirically measurable modes over modes whose epistemic contributions are harder to operationalize — but offering a transparent accounting of where the sectoral partition aligns with mainstream research findings, and where it makes claims that current science can't yet fully arbitrate. A detailed sector-by-sector assessment is provided in Appendix D.

That evaluation, combined with the architectural demands of the toroidal model, also led to the addition of two new sectors not present in 1.0. The *reflective* sector — metacognition, self-monitoring, and evaluative awareness of one's own cognitive processes — was implicit in 1.0's architecture but never named as a distinct mode of perception-cognition. The *integrative* sector was likewise implicit in 1.0's "integrative faculties" region but I didn't give it sectoral status. With its addition, 2.0 acknowledges that the act of bringing multiple sectors into productive relation is itself a unique mode of perception-cognition.

The empirical evaluation also surfaced a deeper question. Certain well-documented cognitive operations — things like creativity, moral reasoning, narrative sense-making, and mental simulation — did not fit cleanly into any single sector, because they inherently require simultaneous engagement of multiple sectors. This is what led to 2.0 reconceiving the *integrative* sector itself. Rather than a co-equal surface region alongside the other eleven, it projects radially inward toward the crucible vortex, passing through four functional bands of intersectoral processing that includes these second-order, compound cognitive operations. This will be further elaborated upon, but this is one way any operations that resist single-sector classification can now be included.

The document is organized in six parts (plus five appendices):

- Part I introduces the toroidal architecture, articulates the synthesis principle, and develops the dance-of-growth model of sectoral development along with the exclusionary barrier.
- Part II develops the Omega Point as a multidimensional synthesizing hypothesis.
- Part III gives faith — understood as an intentionally cultivated quality of character — a structural position in the architecture.
- Part IV incorporates the fifth primary drive, specifies falsifiability conditions, articulates disciplines against self-flattering application, addresses the *categorization-gate* problem, and introduces an interim AI-assisted assessment approach.
- Part V conducts external stress-testing against other epistemological frameworks.

- Part VI locates Sector Theory 2.0 within the broader corpus of my writing, and proposes an integration with AQAL for additional synthesis.

Another observation regarding terminology is that Sector Theory — along with most everything I've written about over the years — introduces a lot of new terms. Some of them are straightforward enough to offer immediate apprehension. Others not so much. So Appendix D is glossary of terms, with analogies, that will help readers new to my writing navigate this document.

One additional note on this and future Sector Theory projects: These proposals are admittedly constrained by my own cultural bias, training and education, disposition, experience, and research focus. I haven't spent much time expanding the application of Sector Theory across cultures, or into wider arenas of action and intention. And in fact I've known for years that my commitment to participatory facets of this and other models has strained against strong individualistic tendencies...in myself, and in my surrounding culture here in the U.S.A. These are vectors I feel compelled to press engage, expand, and explore. As with Sector Theory 1.0, 2.0 remains a first pass at a revised map of otherwise uncharted territory; both the framework and its articulation will require ongoing refinement, expansion, and clarification. Perhaps that will include cross-cultural analysis and detailed case studies of increasing scope. Perhaps I will apply it directly to other writing projects currently underway, just to observe if it adds value. We shall see. Regardless, I do hope the next iteration of Sector Theory will be accomplished in less than 10 years (the gap between 1.0 and 2.0).

Part I: Key Concepts

The completeness principle, clarified

Every act of inquiry doesn't require all twelve sectors, but Sector Theory proposes that the totality of human knowledge and understanding does require involvement from every sector — that all of them are necessary in our asymptotic quest for the Omega Point. Specific propositions, problems, or domains may be legitimately addressed through one or a small number of sectors as a primary mode of exploration, but even here additional sectors can and do benefit from multi-sectoral explorations of knowing. At the other extreme, *exclusionary bias* is the categorical exclusion of one or more sectors from one's epistemic toolkit. This is an important distinction, because it can help defend Sector Theory against a common objection to integral approaches: that they impose impractical universalism.

The synthesis principle

The completeness principle establishes that the totality of human knowledge requires all sectors, though individual inquiries may be primarily addressed through one or a few. A second principle — *the synthesis principle* — operates within those inquiries, revealing how sectors interact to produce something greater than the sum of their parts.

The synthesis principle states: development, maturity, and complexity within any given sector are inherently fragile — brittle, corruptible, and unstable — when not complemented by coordination, harmonization, and ultimately multidialectical synthesis with other sectors. Sure, high levels of performance, even genius, can occur in an over-emphasized sector, as can apparent sophistication of insights and applications. But such achievements, however impressive, may be *structurally frail*. They can lack the resilience that comes from being interwoven with contributions from other sectors, and, with very few exceptions, they will be vulnerable to collapse under conditions that wouldn't undermine a more integrated synthesis.

As one helpful metaphor, consider that a conventional wall built of stone alone, without any mortar, can stand for a while — but it is inherently unstable, and will fall to the first sustained pressure. A wall of stone with mortar, on the other hand, is structurally sound in ways that single-material construction often can't be. The same is true of or of wood with nails and screws, or of plaster with lath, of concrete with rebar, and so on. Each material provides something the others don't. Sectoral knowledge works similarly: Empirical observation alone is brittle, but empirical observation supported by reflective evaluation, modulated by

limbic-emotive responsiveness, and tested against the social sector's intersubjective validation is more robust. The same applies to every other sector. None of them are structurally sound in isolation.

That said, this is more about nuance than absolutism. Multi-sector synthesis is a structural reinforcement that makes the resulting knowledge harder to dislodge, more responsive to unexpected challenges, and more likely to remain useful as conditions change. The result is multiperspectival surety — a form of knowing that is not just accurate, but resilient.

Some additional examples will be helpful here:

- Consider empirical observation that reinforces *gnosis*: the contemplative insight that arrives in meditation and survives empirical scrutiny carries different weight than the one that contradicts such evidence. Here, the discursive sector (empirical observation) and the *gnosis* sector (direct, non-dual awareness) do not merely coexist — they mutually validate and deepen one another. The insight is not just felt; it is also tested, refined, and grounded in a way that a purely subjective or purely objective approach could not achieve. The result is a less brittle, more enduring understanding — one that can withstand both skepticism and the test of lived experience.
- Or consider limbic-emotive responsiveness moderating systematizing: The systematizing sector's tendency toward rigid categorization — its need to order, label, and contain — can lead to models that, while internally consistent, fail to account for the human impacts of their own application. When emotional attunement (limbic-emotive) is brought into dialogue with this process, the resulting frameworks are not just logically sound but also humane and adaptive. The synthesis does not dilute the power of systematizing; it tempers its excesses, ensuring that its applications remain responsive to the full spectrum of human experience.
- Then there is the ideation sector's natural synthesis with the somatic-aesthetic: Most genuinely novel ideas do not emerge from abstract reasoning alone. They arise from felt-sense conditions — a bodily intuition, a pre-verbal hunch — that the discursive sector then articulates, refines, and communicates. Jazz improvisation offers a vivid illustration of this dynamic. The most innovative musicians do not rely solely on harmonic theory (ideation) or purely on instinct (somatic-aesthetic). Instead, they integrate both: theory guides their playing, but embodied intuition allows them to transcend it. A purely theoretical approach sounds mechanical; a purely intuitive one lacks depth. The synthesis of the two produces something neither could achieve alone — a performance that is at once structurally sophisticated and emotionally resonant.
- The social sector, too, plays a corrective role when it intersects with the discursive. An analytic conclusion, no matter how logically airtight, may fail the test of intersubjective resonance. When the social sector — with its emphasis on shared meaning, cultural context, and relational validation — engages with discursive reasoning, the result doesn't weaken logic but expands it into *a more robust form of truth*. The synthesis ensures that insights are not only coherent but also meaningful to those who must live by them.

Each of these cross-pollinations produces additive synthesis — an outcome that the originating sector could not have produced by itself. This doesn't erase differences between sectors but invites harmony between them, so the strengths of one compensate for the blind spots of another. The consequence: a form of knowledge that is less prone to collapse because it is dynamic, self-correcting, and interdependently grounded.

The synthesis principle also depends on a capacity that I spent much time defining in previous writing: *the neutral holding field*. When new information arrives at the membrane — especially information that challenges existing commitments or resists easy categorization — the practitioner faces a choice, though it rarely feels like one. The reflexive response is to resolve the tension immediately: accept, reject, or rationalize. The neutral holding field is the alternative. It is the cultivated ability to hold content in awareness without rushing to evaluate it, to let competing or contradictory inputs coexist without forcing resolution, and to remain attentive to what is arising without being captured by it. Rather than passivity or indifference, this is a specific kind of active stillness — a receptive, observant, and deliberately non-reactive state — in which the contributions of multiple sectors can register before any single sector's reflexes dominate the response. Without it, the membrane may default to reflexive exclusion, after which the synthesis principle has little space to operate. The neutral holding field is, in this sense, the precondition of multiperspectival surety: the quiet room in which the materials of synthesis can actually meet. We will explore how to cultivate this condition in Part III.

All of this is grounded primarily in how humans appear to be constituted — in the structure of cognition, perception, and development as we actually find them. Please visit Appendix C for that empirical support. But I do not argue that synthesis is necessary in some stronger metaphysical sense, that “knowing” itself is somehow structurally synthetic regardless of who is doing the knowing. That stronger claim may be true, and I'm happy to leave the door open to it, but it is not what I am aiming for here. What I am defending is the more tractable assertion that for beings like us, in conditions like ours, sectoral development without cross-sectoral synthesis produces fragile outcomes that may look like maturity but do not survive contact with stress or adversity.

The dance of growth

Sector Theory's developmental narrative is closer to a fluid dance than a rigid sequence. Each sector can strengthen and grow somewhat independently, at its own pace, with its own rhythms. Some sectors mature quickly; others require years of cultivation before producing reliable output. Some sectors do most of their

work in milliseconds (limbic-emotive responses), some in hours or days (discursive synthesis), some across decades or a lifetime (*gnosis*, certain somatic-aesthetic capacities).

This non-uniformity matters. In my *True Love* writing I described several distinct processing spacetimes — head time, heart time, body time, spirit time — each operating at its own pace and with its own scope. The same pattern shows up at the sectoral level. Trying to force all sectors to operate or develop at the same rate, or to assume they should all be equivalent in maturity or reliability at any given moment, misunderstands what the dance is. A practitioner might be highly competent in the empirical observation sector and just beginning in the somatic-aesthetic sector — or vice versa. This imbalance is natural and normal; it is the dance's ordinary choreography.

Before we dive much deeper, I do want to call out a specific divergence from Ken Wilber's lines-of-development framing. First, I must tip my hat to his excellent and extensive work in integral studies, which has been very influential in my own thinking and theorizing. But Wilber characterizes multiple developmental lines that progress through stages, with the general pattern being one of *transcend-and-include* — higher stages incorporating and elevating lower ones. In Sector Theory, I find this only partially correct. Sometimes development looks like transcend-and-include: a more sophisticated capacity is built on an earlier one and retains the earlier one as a subordinate component. But sometimes development requires de-energizing or discarding what came before — resulting in a vestigial collapse. A belief, framing, habit, or practice that supported a sector's earlier development may actively obstruct its later development; the right move is not to transcend-and-include but to *relinquish*. Calcified rationalism in someone whose *gnosis* sector is just beginning to mature is not elevated by the new development; it is dissolved by it. Possessive attachment to early religious certainties in someone whose theological sophistication is growing is not transcended; it is mourned and released. The dance includes both moves — incorporation and letting go.

Combined with the synthesis principle, this offers a specific developmental angle: sectors can each grow at their own pace, *but no sector can mature reliably in isolation*. The dance is not optional. A practitioner who tries to mature one sector without engaging the others will produce unreliable and frail results — possibly impressive in performance, but unstable in operation. The dance is what makes development durable over time.

The conditions and failure modes of the synthesis principle

Extending the relinquishment argument, we can identify three failure modes in our synthesis.

Dilettantism — This is the sprinkling of unfamiliar sectors over new problems without doing the work of cultivating those sectors first. Genuine synthesis requires each contributing sector be sufficiently developed on its own. The somatic-aesthetic sector cannot meaningfully contribute to an engineering problem if the practitioner has no developed somatic-aesthetic literacy; a gesture toward embodied wisdom will produce more noise than insight. In the same way, the synthesis principle doesn't license unconditional, random, or impulsive cross-mixing, either. As we will see, there are graduations of integration and synthesis, with some less conscious or directed than others. The beneficial pollination will either occur as an unconscious, organically emergent phenomenon (*coordinative*), an intuited and inherently shallow harmonization (*responsive*), a more carefully and consciously compounding effort (*directed*), or the most complex and interdependent synthesis where the value of each sector's contribution is intimately known. We will delve into these progressive integrations more deeply in a bit, but none of them are impulsive or arbitrary.

Premature integration — Here we are attempting cross-sector synthesis before the contributing sectors have done their proper work in their own grammar. The empirical observation sector needs to make its measurements before the *gnosis* sector's intuitions can be productively tested against them. The discursive sector needs to lay out the analytic landscape before the social sector's intersubjective input can be sensibly weighed. Integration timed before such preconditions are met collapses into confusion rather than rising into synthesis.

Availability bias built into the principle's own application — As the synthesis principle is articulated, we will understandably tend to remember cases where cross-sector input improved outcomes, and forget the cases where it muddied them. The synthesis effect is probabilistic and conditions-dependent, not guaranteed. Some cross-pollinations produce insight, others produce noise, others actively interfere when the conditions are not right. We do not yet have a reliable way to predict in advance which is which — only the discipline of trying, observing outcomes, and adjusting practice over time will help us achieve that understanding.

That said, there are two conditions that support the synthesis when it does work. First, the practitioner's faith-as-character disposition (Part III) must allow cross-sector input without defensive rejection. Second, the integration drive (Part IV) must be functioning across registers, supplying motivational energy for the cross-pollination. Where either is absent, the synthesis principle remains more theoretical than operative.

One last observation: the synthesis principle does not require sustained immersion in every sector at all times. It requires practiced fluency in recombination, and even brief shifts produce disproportionate effects. If I offer genuine thanks in prayer before a meal, this is only a momentary shift toward the *gnosis* or social sector when I am about to anchor myself the somatic-experiential sector of eating. But the consequences of that prayer on how I consume that food, how I feel about those who prepared it, and what the meal means

to me can be substantial. So our dance does not require equal time in every sector; it requires that the sectors remain mutually accessible, that recombination be a practiced habit, and that the practitioner's defaults include an ability to shift fluidly rather than following the same practiced patterns.

The real-world consequences of exclusionary barriers

Exclusion is simply rejecting the relevance of any given sector — either universally or situationally. Sector Theory 1.0 included clinical labels in the realm of exclusionary bias or conditions, partly to point at the real-world consequences of habituated narrowing. 2.0 has removed those labels, but we should not lose sight of what they were trying to indicate. Exclusionary barriers have consequences that operate at scales from the personal to the civilizational.

At the individual level, exclusionary patterns produce the epistemic fragility named by the synthesis principle. A practitioner over-relying on the discursive sector becomes confident in conclusions that survive analytic scrutiny but may collapse on contact with social, somatic, or intuitive feedback. A practitioner over-relying on the *gnosis* sector becomes certain about insights that have not been tested against empirical observation or social validation. That brittleness is structural.

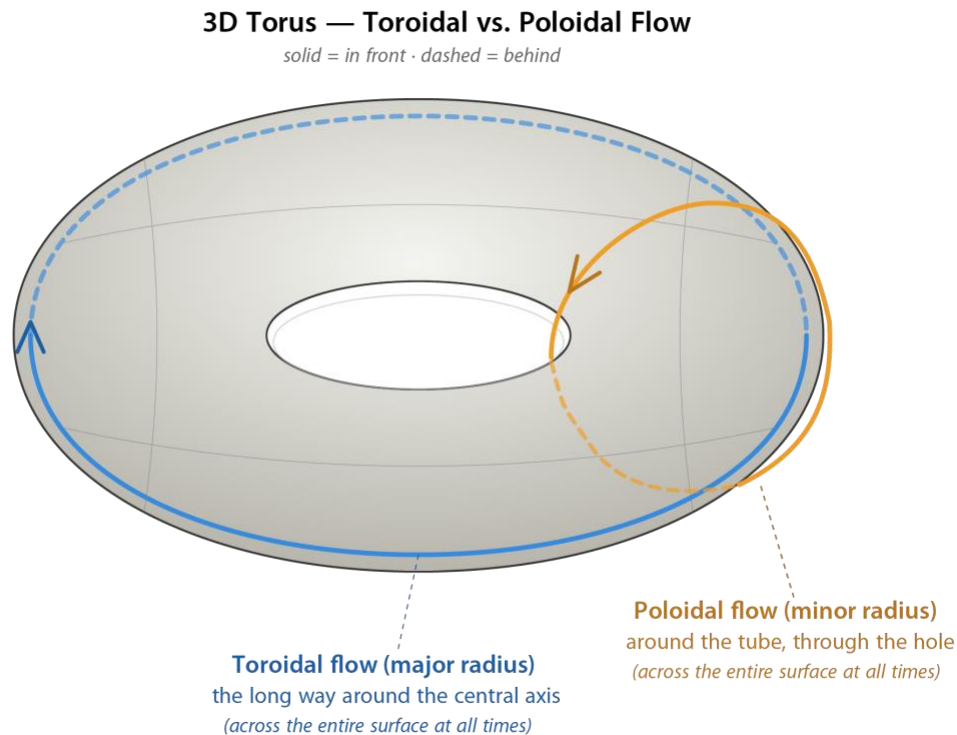
At the relational level, exclusionary patterns produce specific kinds of loneliness — the loneliness of someone fluent in some sectors but starved of others, who cannot find conversation partners whose sectoral configurations make deep and genuine intercourse possible.

At the institutional level, exclusionary patterns produce organizations and systems that may optimize technically while failing humanly. A workplace that recognizes only the empirical observation and systematizing sectors as legitimate produces technically efficient operations that can and do destroy the people inside them. A regulatory environment that recognizes only the discursive sector as legitimate produces policies that satisfy analytic criteria while failing the populations they govern. These institutional pathologies are not just bugs in otherwise well-functioning systems, they are the predictable output of systems that have categorically excluded entire sectors of perception-cognition.

At the political-cultural level, exclusionary patterns produce the polarization that characterizes much of current public discourse. Different tribes inhabit different sectoral configurations and treat the sectors they neglect as enemies rather than as missing pieces. The result is a discourse in which each side is correct about what the other has excluded and wrong about its own exclusions, with no shared ground for productive integration. Political polarization is partly a manifestation of sectoral imbalance at scale.

The 2.0 framework's response to all of this is not to demand that everyone immediately become more tolerant or inclusive. Instead, it is to make the consequences of exclusion visible, provide concepts that let practitioners and institutions recognize what they are doing, and to support whatever fragments of cross-sector practice the available conditions permit. A society's environment may indeed suppress access to certain sectors at scale — but this is an indictment of the environment, not a weakness of our framework. But within whatever conditions a practitioner finds themselves in, the dance can still be practiced, even if only in fits and starts. In my experience, a little goes a long way.

The toroidal architecture: from 2D circle to 3D regenerative torus



And now we dive into some real fun. Why the torus? A torus — essentially a donut shape — does several things the flat circle in 1.0 couldn't.

What the torus adds

1. **A second axis of motion.** The 2D circle of 1.0 showed only the radial axis (periphery to core). A torus adds the poloidal circulation (see illustration above). This second axis can carry temporal recursion: information cycles through each sector, gets integrated, emits back outward, encounters new input, cycles again. The eternal return is no longer a metaphorical aside; it is now structurally inherent.

2. **A hole in the middle that is not empty.** The torus's central void corresponds to what mystical traditions describe variously as emptiness, suchness, sunyata, the apophatic divine, and so on. In the 1.0 diagram, this had to be insinuated as the innermost layer of the crucible. In the toroidal model, the void is constitutive of the structure itself — the torus cannot exist without it. Interestingly, this seems to dovetail with both Buddhist conceptions of dependent origination and apophatic mysticism's insistence that the Source is no-thing.
3. **Inside and outside become the same surface.** The defining topological feature of the torus is that what appears outside continuously becomes inside. This formalizes the framework's claim that the realm of truth and the realm of exclusionary bias or conditions are not two separate places but two orientations on a single continuous surface. Rather than being a wall, the membrane is a phase transition along a continuous surface.
4. **Multiple simultaneous flows.** A torus supports both toroidal flow and poloidal flow (again, see illustration above), and these flows can interact to produce vortical structures. This is exactly the kind of structure needed to represent cycling through sectors temporally, the radial breathing between integration and emission, and the vortex that forms when both flows interact — which is a candidate structural representation of the integral-contextual crucible itself.

Proposed toroidal architecture

There is a 2D illustration of all sectors on the next page, but at this point I would encourage readers to open a web browser window and visit the current 3D rendering of the Sector Theory torus as a companion to this document. It is likely to be extremely helpful in parsing the descriptions that follow.

[Link to 3D Sector Theory Torus](#)

The toroidal surface is partitioned into the sectoral regions. The partitioning is heuristic, not absolute; boundaries are gradients.

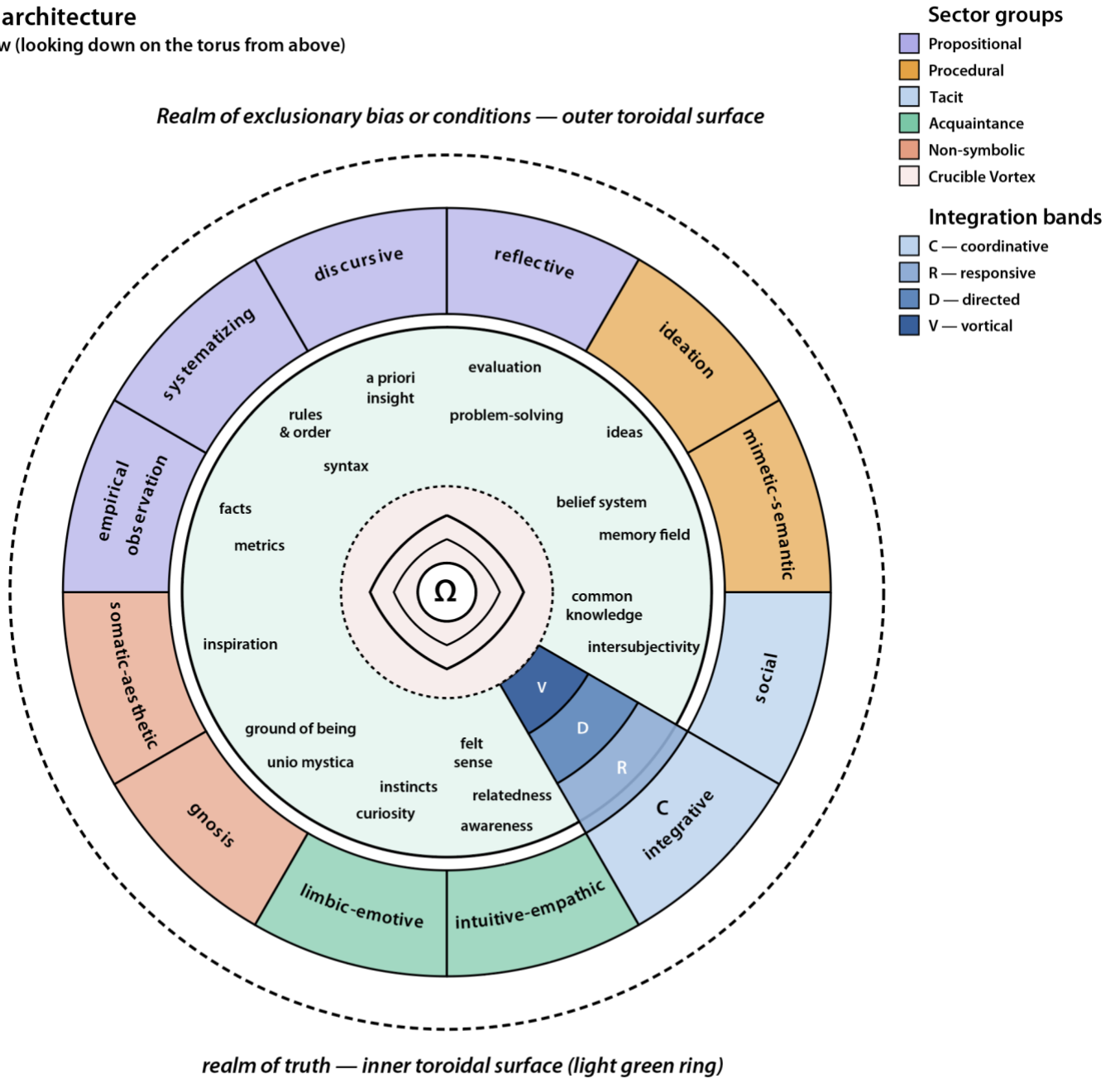
The poloidal axis represents the radial dimension from the realm of exclusionary bias or conditions on the outer surface, through the exclusionary barrier, to the realm of truth on the inner surface. It captures temporal-developmental recursion: the cycling of input through evaluation, integration, emission, and re-

encounter. This is where faith as cultivated character lives — not as a static location but as a recurring practice traversal.

Sector Theory 2.0

Toroidal architecture

2D plan view (looking down on the torus from above)

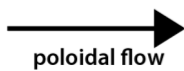


Sector groups

- Propositional
- Procedural
- Tacit
- Acquaintance
- Non-symbolic
- Crucible Vortex

Integration bands

- C — coordinative
- R — responsive
- D — directed
- V — vortical



temporal recursion: outer surface to inner surface



linear time: cycles around the torus

Ω = apophatic horizon (Omega Point limit)

Center diamond pattern = crucible vortex

Dashed outer boundary = exclusionary realm

Integrative funnel: C-R-D-V = vortical transition

The toroidal axis represents a more linear temporal development of all sectors combined, as the process of unitive and holistic growth as a whole, rather than interactive or generative synthesis.

The central hole represents the apophatic Source — not nothing, but the structureless ground from which all sectoral differentiation emerges and into which it returns. The Omega Point sits in relation to this hole as both origin and destination. I refer to this as generating “co-creative” energies, but I don’t specify where those energies come from — though I do have my own beliefs. For now, consider it a placeholder for whatever level of “greater-than-self” you are comfortable holding: the collective unconscious, emptiness, the ground of being, the apophatic divine, multidimensional consciousness, etc.

The integral-contextual crucible is no longer a location at the diagram's center; it is the vortex that forms when poloidal and toroidal flows are both fully engaged. This makes the crucible a dynamic phenomenon requiring sustained activity to instantiate, rather than a static map. As I will elaborate in Part II, it is my contention that the crucible itself is energized by agapic love-consciousness; that this sustains the sectoral content cycling through this architecture whether we actively perceive it or not. I would even further assert that love-consciousness is a creative cofactor for all consciousness itself, and that our cultivation of and alignment with agape profoundly expands our integrative capacities. I would also observe that both the poloidal traversal of the membrane and the toroidal course around the architecture will likely attenuate without it. But this and other metaphysical commitments need not be adopted for this model to remain coherent as a functional and vibrant integrative epistemology. Regardless, because the torus surface is continuous, information can travel between sectors not only by passing through the integrative core but also by lateral diffusion across the surface.

The toroidal architecture also offers cross-pollination between sectors a carefully defined home. As you can see in the web-linked 3D model (or in the 2D diagram on the next page), the integrative sector — the only sector that projects radially inward from the toroidal surface toward the crucible vortex — passes through four functional bands of increasing scope and intentionality: *coordinative*, *responsive*, *directed*, and *vortical*. Cross-sector synthesis does not happen in a single depth or breadth; it operates across all four bands simultaneously, from the automatic pre-attentive binding that coordinates sensory inputs to the multidialectical synthesis of the crucible itself. Compound cognitive operations that require multi-sector engagement — operations like creativity, moral reasoning, narrative construction, and mental simulation — traverse this radial depth rather than residing at any fixed point on the toroidal surface. This is why the synthesis principle cannot be reduced to a recommendation to “think about more sectors.” *The synthesis is a radial process with its own functional architecture*, and its products are qualitatively different at different depths of integration. Another way of saying this is that there is a potential home in this model for every

cognitive, meta-cognitive, perceptual, and experiential input to or expression of our being. No matter how simple or complex the mechanisms of perceiving, evaluating, or generating knowledge, Sector Theory 2.0 offers us epistemic concision, openness, and flexibility all at the same time.

At least this is my earnest contention.

The integrative sector and the radial progression of integration

The eleven sectors pictured in the diagram above — empirical observation, systematizing, discursive, reflective, ideation, mimetic-semantic, social, somatic-aesthetic, limbic-emotive, intuitive-empathic, and *gnosis* — each occupy the toroidal surface as modes of perception-cognition. They generate or receive content in their characteristic mode. But as we've alluded to, the twelfth sector, the integrative sector, does something fundamentally different: it operates *on* content generated by those other sectors, bringing their contributions into productive relation with one another.

In both the 2D and 3D illustrations, the integrative sector projects inward as a narrowing funnel toward the crucible vortex at center. It is the only sector that crosses the boundary between the toroidal surface and the integral-contextual crucible — *the only sector whose operation extends from the outermost ring*, where it interfaces with the other sectors' contributions, in order to initiate the *vortical* dynamics at the architecture's heart. The funnel narrows and darkens as it approaches the crucible, implying concentration: the integrative process draws diverse sectoral inputs into progressively more focused synthesis as it moves inward.

As the integrative sector's radial funnel passes through *four functional bands*, each describes a qualitatively different mode of intersectoral processing. I want to clarify that these aren't developmental stages that a practitioner progresses through and then leaves behind; they are concurrent registers of integrative activity, all of which remain operative at every point in a practitioner's life. The bands describe *what kind of integration is occurring*, not *how far along* the practitioner is progressing. You will notice, however, an increased active engagement with sectoral material as the funnel narrows.

The four bands are:

Coordinative (C). The outermost band. This is automatic, pre-attentive cross-sector binding — the background hum of cognitive life in which our brain coordinates inputs from multiple sectors without conscious direction. Cross-modal sensory integration, automatic pattern-matching across perceptual channels, and the pre-reflective coherence of ordinary experience all live here. A practitioner does not choose to do *coordinative* integration; it is happening continuously as a condition of having a functioning

nervous system. In the toroidal architecture, this band occupies the outermost depth of the integrative sector's funnel, where its edges are closest to the surface regions of the neighboring sectors, and where lateral diffusion across sectoral boundaries feeds directly into the integrative process.

Responsive (R). The next band inward. This is reactive, partially (or shallowly) conscious intersectoral harmonization — what happens when multiple sectors are simultaneously activated above threshold and their outputs begin to influence one another without deliberate direction. Heuristic moral intuitions, the emotional coloring of perceptual judgments, the felt rightness or wrongness of an analytical conclusion, the bodily response to a social interaction — all of these are *responsive*-level integration. The practitioner is aware that something is happening across sectors, but is not directing the process. Many of the cross-sector resonances that the framework attributes to lateral surface diffusion produce their effects at this band.

Directed (D). The next band inward, and appreciably darker in the visual representation. This is active, conscious intersectoral integration — what happens when a practitioner deliberately brings the contributions of multiple sectors into dialogue. It is also the band at which compound cognitive operations emerge: processes like creativity, moral reasoning, narrative construction, and simulative cognition, each of which recruits multiple sectors in simultaneous productive tension and generates outputs that no single sector could produce alone. These compound operations are not located exclusively at this band — they can and do operate at the *coordinative* and *responsive* levels as well, and at their most developed they extend into *vortical* synthesis. But the *directed* band is where the practitioner first becomes capable of consciously engaging and sustaining them.

Additional elaboration of these compound operations is necessary here. Creativity, moral reasoning, narrative sense-making, and mental simulation are not sectors in themselves. They do not have a single primary mode of perception-cognition; they are what happens *between* sectors when multiple sectors are co-activated and in productive interchange. They are radially mobile within the integrative funnel — a given creative episode might begin with unconscious incubation at the *coordinative* level, surface through an unbidden intuition at the *responsive* level, be deliberately elaborated at the *directed* level, and in its most mature expression participate in the *vortical* dynamics of the crucible. Placing these processes on the integrative sector's radial trajectory, rather than trying to assign them surface territory as additional sectors, resolves a structural question that earlier iterations of the framework left open: where do multi-sector cognitive capacities live in the architecture? The answer is that they live in the integrative funnel, traversing its depth as the inquiry demands.

Vortical (V). The innermost band, which dissolves at its inner edge into the crucible itself. This is the initiation of multidialectical synthesis — what the framework has been calling the integral-contextual crucible's characteristic operation. At this depth, the integrative process is no longer merely coordinating, harmonizing, or directing the contributions of individual sectors; it is generating something qualitatively new from their simultaneous engagement. The *vortical* band is where the poloidal and toroidal flows converge into the vortex described earlier, and where faith-as-cultivated-character, agapic love-consciousness, and the art of suspension in the neutral holding field all become operative conditions of the integrative process rather than optional enhancements. The compound operations that traverse the integrative funnel — creativity, moral reasoning, narrative, simulation — take on a different character at this depth: creativity becomes love-governed co-creation, moral reasoning becomes multidialectical discernment, narrative becomes participatory meaning-making...all oriented toward the Omega Point.

The transition from the *directed* band to the *vortical* band — what we will call the *vortical transition* — is not a boundary in any distinct sense. Like a vortex in fluid dynamics, the transition from laminar to vortical flow is also a gradient: the rotational intensity increases as conditions permit, and diminishes when they do not. The *vortical transition* is where the integrative process shifts from being something the practitioner *does* to something the practitioner *participates in* — where agency subtly becomes co-creative, and the practitioner finds themselves being integrated as much as integrating. Practitioners who have spent sustained time in contemplative traditions will recognize this shift; it is what happens when the practice begins to practice the practitioner.

Two clarifications are important for how these bands should be interpreted. First, the progression from *coordinative* to *vortical* describes increasing attention, scope, and intentionality, *but not increasing quality or value*. *Coordinative* integration manages a vast number of variables with zero conscious oversight; *vortical* integration manages fewer variables with greater intentional depth. Each band has its own competence. The *vortical* band depends parasitically on the *coordinative* band — if we disrupt the pre-attentive binding (as certain neurological conditions do), and the entire integrative funnel collapses. So the foundations are not inferior to the structure they support.

Second, the bands do not describe a natural cognitive developmental path from infancy to adulthood, though there is a loose parallel: the infant's cognitive life is predominantly coordinative, the child's includes responsive harmonization and early directed integration, and the adult's has access to all four bands (though *vortical* engagement requires the cultivated conditions further described in the 2.0's framework). The bands elaborate what is functionally available and concurrently active, rather than a sequence anyone moves through. To reiterate about those foundations: a master contemplative doing sustained *vortical* work in the

crucible is simultaneously relying on *coordinative* binding in their sensory cortices, *responsive* harmonization in their emotional processing, and *directed* integration in whatever discursive elaboration they bring to the experience afterward.

Implications for application

The 2.0 toroidal model helps make integration a circulation pattern. We do not arrive at the integrated state and stay there; we cultivate the conditions under which the recursive flow continues. This is structurally consonant with the contemplative traditions the framework draws on, none of which would treat “enlightenment” as a static endpoint. The integrative sector's four functional bands are themselves concurrent registers of this circulation.

A note on modes of introduction and modes of integration/response

Sector Theory 1.0 included two inventories: modes by which new content enters the sectoral system, and modes by which the system handles content once it has arrived. They remain more as corner observations in 2.0 — less features of the toroidal architecture, and more operators that move across it — but they are worth naming as the toroidal model makes their relation to the architecture more visible than 1.0's 2D representation could.

And expanded *modes of introduction* available to most sectors now include:

- Deductive and inductive reasoning (content constructed through logical inference from premises or from observed regularities)
- Abductive reasoning (inference to best explanation)
- Experiential discovery (content arriving through direct, lived encounter with phenomena)
- Formal inculcation (content acquired through structured instruction, schooling, or training)
- Cultural transmission (content absorbed from the surrounding cultural environment, often without explicit teaching)
- Mimesis (content acquired through imitation and modeling of others' behavior, speech, or inclinations)
- Epiphany/aha (content arriving as sudden recognition or insight, including through mystical perception-cognition; sometimes with prior subsurface processing, and sometimes without)
- Somatic-felt sense (content arriving through the body before discursive awareness)
- Intuitive-empathic resonance (content arriving through attunement to another)

- Aesthetic encounter (content arriving through art, beauty, or formal pattern)
- Dream or liminal-state material (content arriving through other non-ordinary states of consciousness)

All of these are placeholders rather than completions; the qualifier "available to most sectors" is critical, since some sectors privilege certain modes, and other modes likely available are not inventoried. So I would encourage you to treat these as a useful starting point rather than a closed taxonomy.

Most of these modes describe the inbound leg of poloidal flow — content moving from the outer surface of the torus toward the exclusionary barrier. But several do not remain there exclusively. Cultural transmission and mimesis can arrive in single events but more often accumulate across long stretches of the toroidal axis, shaping the practitioner over years rather than in moments. Experiential discovery shows similar range, from sudden recognition to continuous low-grade learning that blurs into ongoing recursion. Epiphany/aha often appears as a single inbound event but in retrospect proves to be the surfacing of ongoing subsurface poloidal work — the moment of arrival made visible only after the underlying recursion has done its slower job. The non-symbolic and tacit modes — somatic-felt sense, intuitive-empathic resonance, aesthetic encounter, and dream or liminal-state material — arrive as inbound events but blur the boundary between introduction and integration, since their full reception often requires toroidal time before they become available to discursive engagement at all. Deductive and inductive reasoning, formal inculcation, and abductive reasoning behave more like single-pass poloidal arrivals, though even these can be revisited and reworked across toroidal linearity. As you can see...this is just a starting point for more complex evaluation, but it is important *because* it is so complex and multifaceted.

The *modes of integration/response* currently include:

- Rationalization (rejecting or accepting)
- Values filtering and structural coherence
- Conditional/hypothetical/operational acceptance
- Constructive integralism (integral-contextual crucible, multidialectical processing, the art of suspension in the neutral holding field), and
- Predictive efficacy

As with the *modes of introduction*, the qualifier "available to some modes" should be preserved — this list is illustrative but not exhaustive.

These modes of course do not occupy the same structural location. Rationalization operates at the barrier itself, in the gatekeeping function shown by the two flow diagrams discussed in Part III; this is where the

reflexive-exclusion and thoughtful-integration modes of the membrane divide. Values filtering and structural coherence operate just inside the barrier, testing fit between admitted content and existing commitments — though they can be revisited toroidally when those commitments themselves shift in response to deeper integrative work. Conditional/hypothetical/operational acceptance is fluid by design: the whole point of holding content conditionally is that the content remains in motion, awaiting further input from any direction, which means it straddles the poloidal and toroidal axes rather than belonging to either. Constructive integralism and predictive efficacy are explicit poloidal-toroidal hybrids. The crucible's multidialectical processing and the art of suspension do not resolve in a single pass; they require content to cycle through evaluation, rest, re-encounter, and re-evaluation across whatever timescale the inquiry demands. Predictive efficacy is similarly recursive — content provisionally accepted gets tested against its operational outcomes over time, with results feeding back into the next cycle.

I want to emphasize this asymmetry rather than smooth it over. Some modes are mostly stationary in the architecture; others are mobile, shifting position depending on the inquiry, the content, and the practitioner's developmental state. The architecture supports all positions, and the inventories are best read as vocabulary for describing what is happening rather than as a sorting mechanism that assigns each piece of content to a given slot.

One last observation. The *modes of integration/response* are not mutually exclusive within a single inquiry. The same piece of content may be partially rationalized at the barrier, partially held in conditional acceptance, partially submitted to the crucible, and partially tested for predictive efficacy over time, with different aspects of the content traveling different routes. The architecture does not require a single response for each encounter — in the current moment or over time.

Part II: The Omega Point

Why this question matters

The Omega Point was a substantive feature of Sector Theory 1.0, but that substance was more implied than carefully constructed. The original essay treated it as a placeholder — a semantic container for Source, the *teleios* process, and the unitive horizon that the integral-contextual crucible was reaching for. But if our model can't clearly define what it is converging toward, then the convergence is just a collation that mistakes inclusiveness for insight. Worse, it leaves the framework vulnerable to the very critique it should be best-equipped to answer — that integral approaches are sophisticated forms of intellectual hoarding, gathering perspectives without ever metabolizing them into a mature position. So this section is an attempt to take the question seriously: *toward what does all this integrating tend...?*

I want to say upfront that I don't think any one of us can answer this question with finality. The question should be interesting precisely because it sits at the edge of what perception-cognition can do. But I do think we can hold it in a more transparent, multidimensional way than standard formulations allow.

The synthesizing hypothesis, briefly stated

The Omega Point is the asymptotic horizon at which differentiation and unification, becoming and being, the manifest and the unmanifest, knowing and being-known, are no longer distinguishable as separate processes — and toward which every act of integralization (whether in consciousness, evolution, cosmology, or love) traces an oriented vector, even when the actor cannot perceive or articulate that orientation or the path of travel.

That description is itself a placeholder we need to break down and define further.

- **Asymptotic.** I do not think the Omega Point is a place anyone arrives, or a state we enter, or a specific moment that will occur on a given day of the week. It is a horizon in the mathematical sense — a limit toward which a process tends without necessarily reaching. In my own praxis, I use the Greek *teleios* concept to describe this asymptotic movement toward completeness.
- **Oriented vector.** I'm not asserting that everything is progressing toward Omega in a teleologically guaranteed way (this is where I think Teilhard misses the mark), but that there is a directional pressure intrinsic to certain kinds of process — *and integralization is one of them.*

- **The parenthetical list of domains.** This is meant to assert a structural parallel across radically different ontological strata, not a metaphysical reduction of them into one substance. And so this must be elaborated upon as well....

Dimension 1: The phenomenological dimension — Omega as the receding interior

I have written before that the most reliable access to the Omega Point that I personally have experienced is through sustained meditation. What contemplative practice reliably delivers is not definitive arrival, but a recognition of receding interior — a sense that whatever depth one has reached, there is a further depth, and that this regress does not exhaust itself the way ordinary epistemic regresses do. Most epistemic regresses dissolve into either bedrock (foundationalism) or circularity (coherentism). The contemplative regress does neither. *It opens.*

I have confessed before that this could just be a neurological artifact of recursive self-modeling, or a culturally inculcated narrative I learned to map onto certain meditative states, *or something genuinely pointing beyond itself.* I cannot confidently distinguish among these. But I would say two things: first, people across history and traditions who have spent the most disciplined time exploring this territory have, with remarkable convergence, described what they encountered as neither an artifact nor a narrative — and although this is not proof, it is data worth taking seriously rather than dismissing; second, the felt difference between encountering “something” (even if that something is emptiness or nothingness) and constructing “something” is not absolute — and the experienced contemplative learns over time to intuit where that line insinuates itself.

Thus one facet of the Omega Point is the asymptote of interiority. When we turn attention inward, with sufficient discipline and acquiescence, what we encounter is not a conclusive inner object but *an opening that does not close.* This dimension lives primarily in the *gnosis* sector, the intuitive-empathic sector, and the somatic-aesthetic sector, with the discursive sector gamely trying to keep up.

Dimension 2: The cosmological dimension — Omega as the unitive limit of differentiation

Taking a wholly different angle: we can look outward at the universe, at the observable history of cosmic evolution, and ask what direction the process appears to run. The standard physics story is one of differentiation — from the highly homogeneous early universe, through symmetry-breaking and structure formation, to the emergence of stars, planets, chemistry, biology, and consciousness. At each stage, the universe becomes *more differentiated.* Entropy increases in the gross sense, but local structure and complexity increase as well.

Here is what I find interesting, and what the Wilberian and Teilhardian framings both invoke at but do not correctly name. Differentiation is not the opposite of unification. Differentiation is the precondition for unification of a particular kind. A homogeneous early universe cannot have relationships between distinct things, because there are not any distinct things yet. Only after differentiation has done its work can integration occur between genuinely disparate elements. And integration between genuinely disparate elements is qualitatively different from the original homogeneity — it carries the marks of what was distinguished even as it brings those marks back into relationship.

This is what the cosmological dimension of the Omega Point points to. Not a return to the undifferentiated origin (which would just be reverse evolution and is not what the universe appears to be doing at this juncture), and not differentiation continuing forever (which would be heat death, the maximally fragmented state), but a third movement: differentiation reaching such richness that the relations between differentiated elements become themselves a new mode of unity. Whether this is happening to the universe, in the universe, or as the universe, I can't pretend to know. But the structural pattern shows up at every level we can examine: cells in a body, neurons in a brain, persons in a community or society, ideas in a culture.

Dimension 3: The evolutionary dimension — Omega as the integralizing pressure on emergent complexity

This is close kin to cosmology, but with a different affect. Evolution is often described as undirected, and in the strict sense of natural selection having no foresight, this seems to be correct. But evolution is also clearly biased in the directions it explores. Once life appears, it tends, over very long timescales, to produce more efficient energy capture, more sophisticated information processing, more elaborate cooperative structures, more capacity to model the environment, more capacity to model itself modeling the environment. None of this is guaranteed for any particular lineage — most lineages go extinct, after all — but in the ensemble, a nuanced complexity does ratchet upward. That is, the kind of complexity that ratchets upward is not *random* complexity; it is the kind that integrates more variables, holds more relations in stable configuration, and processes more information per unit-of-time.

I am not insisting evolution always aims for the Anthropocene (in fact I find that inclination very humorous), but I do believe it aims for consciousness in some form. The fifth primary drive — *to integrate* — is one I will discuss in detail in Part IV, but it deserves mention here because it is part of what this dimension is calling out. There appears to be an integralizing pressure built into the kinds of systems that life produces. Whether this pressure is best understood as a statistical regularity of a certain class of thermodynamic systems, a fundamental cofactor of being and becoming itself, or as something else, the pattern is there to be observed.

Dimension 4: The relational-agapic dimension — Omega as the topology of love-consciousness

Dimension 4 is where I'll express my strongest convictions, derived mainly from decades of experiential and contemplative work. In Sector Theory 1.0 I asserted that love-consciousness is the carrier frequency of every phase of origination, differentiation, integration, and unity. I will now refine and deepen that idea.

The proposition is this: love is not a feeling, not a behavior, and not a virtue — or rather, it is all of those things only secondarily. *Primarily, love is a topology.* It is the relation in which the well-being of the other becomes a constituent of the well-being of the self, without the self being diminished. Where this topology is fully instantiated, the question “*Is this for me or for the other?*” stops being separate or well-formed; the distinction has not collapsed entirely, but the relation has matured past the point where the distinction does relevant, explanatory work. Again borrowing from the Greek, I promote using “agape” because for me it characterizes *a conscious choice to demonstrate unconditional, self-sacrificing love-in-action.* Yes, this is evocative of the Christian tradition's take on Christ-like love, but because of this we can be very precise; we can use it cleanly to define the essential love-conscious energy of the integrative-contextual crucible.

To offer a more inclusive semantic container, I'll propose a secular framing for agape as well. Essentially, agape can be viewed as an extension of prosociality — a concept refined by years of research in evolutionary biology, primatology, cultural anthropology, neurobiology, epigenetics, evolutionary psychology, and several other disciplines — which validates the advantages of prosocial behavior for collective survival and resilient society. According to a substantial body of convergent research across all of these disciplines, these advantages include conflict reduction, better offspring survival, increased reproductive success, enhanced cooperation and problem-solving, diffused destructive dominance hierarchies, increased resilience to stress and illness, better adaptability, encouragement of inequity aversion, and much more. For a more detailed list of prosocial advantages, with supportive references, consult Appendix B.

Essentially, agape is what prosociality looks like when its in-group/out-group conditionality is dissolved completely; *the substrate of prosociality is what agape extends, generalizes, and unconditionalizes.* Refined prosociality at its peak, if you will. And we don't need to quibble over whether agape is a spiritual form of love or a positive feature of human relations that supports group fitness. Some may appreciate one perspective while others prefer the other. Personally, I fully embrace both.

So what do I mean by agapic love-consciousness? Rather than warm feelings about things, which equates sentimentality, this offers us a condition under which differentiation and integration coexist without contradiction — under which genuinely distinct beings can be in such relation that what serves one serves

everyone. The Omega Point, in this dimension, is the asymptotic completion of that topology — the limit at which every distinct being is in such relation with every other distinct being that the *differentiation is preserved while the unity is completed*. This does not negate the felt experience of *agape*, but it expands and deepens it into multiple dimensions and trajectories at once.

Now...this dimension cannot be derived from the cosmological or evolutionary dimensions alone. The structural patterns in those dimensions are compatible with the agapic dimension, and even suggestive of it, but they do not necessitate it. The agapic dimension has to be encountered, not deduced. And — apart from the science on prosociality that inhabits one limited group of sectors — that encounter is what contemplative and mystical practice across traditions has provided us.

Dimension 5: The apophatic dimension — Omega as that which cannot be predicated

Every dimension so far has been *kataphatic* — affirming something about Omega. It uses language, makes claims, draws structural parallels, etc. But every authentic mystical tradition I have studied insists, at the highest reaches of its discourse, that the Source toward which everything tends demands apophatic language. Christian mystics call this the cloud of unknowing. Buddhists call it *sunyata*. Vedantins call it *neti neti*. Sufis call it the divine secret. Taoists call it the Tao that cannot be named. Across vast cultural distance, the testimony is consistent: at the asymptote, predication fails.

I believe this is a positive epistemological claim about the structure of what is being approached. The apophatic dimension asserts that the Omega Point is not something that can be exhaustively described, because it is the precondition of the describing itself — and preconditions cannot always be fully expressed within the systems they make possible. That said, the ineffable need not be mysterious.

In addition, the apophatic dimension is understandably in tension with other dimensions. If Omega cannot be predicated, then everything I have offered so far is at best provisional, a finger pointing at the moon but not the moon itself. And that's okay. This is the correct way to hold what has been expressed here. The kataphatic dimensions give us structure to work with; the apophatic dimension reminds us that *the map is not the territory*.

Dimension 6: The participatory dimension — Omega as co-creation and reciprocation

The last dimension connects all the others back to the pragmatic question of what we are supposed to do with any of this. If the Omega Point is asymptotic — if it is not a place we arrive — then engagement with it has to be of a different kind than engagement with finite goals. It is not a target, it is more like a tide.

I closed Sector Theory 1.0 with this sentence: “Because the Universe has conspired in favor of my consciousness, my consciousness conspires in favor of the Universe.” I want to elevate this from closing aphorism to structural logic. The participatory dimension of the Omega Point is the condition that the asymptotic horizon is not approached by us as separate observers, but through us as participants. We are not watching the universe converge toward unity from a balcony. We are one of the modes through which that convergence is emerging — limited modes, fallible modes, vestigial modes possibly, but modes nonetheless. In the context of Sector Theory, the reciprocation is not optional; the asymptote requires participants to become the asymptote of anything at all.

What this hypothesis claims, and doesn't

I am not implying a guarantee that the universe will reach a final state of unification, or that human beings are the privileged vehicle for cosmic evolution, or that consciousness is fundamental in a way that makes physics derivative, or that the Omega Point can be confirmed empirically.

I am arguing that:

- There is a structural pattern of differentiation-followed-by-integration that recurs at multiple levels of organization
- Sustained contemplative practice gives reliable phenomenological access to a recursive deepening of interiority *that does not exhaust itself*
- The topology of love-consciousness is a genuine feature of the highest forms of relation
- The asymptotic horizon toward which integralizing processes tend cannot be exhaustively described, but can be meaningfully oriented toward — like a guiding star for the epistemic traveler; and
- Conscious participation in integralization is qualitatively different from unconscious participation...and is the appropriate human response to the situation in which we find ourselves

How the hypothesis interfaces with the toroidal architecture

The Omega Point, in this architecture, occupies a very specific position: it is the limit of the central opening. Not its center, not its boundary, but the asymptotic interior toward which the central void opens. This is not empty space; it is the structural negative that the toroidal surface defines and is defined by. Omega is what this space opens onto when one looks all the way through it.

This relocation does something useful for the realm of truth. In 1.0 the realm of truth carried more metaphysical weight than the surrounding framework's pragmatism could support. With Omega as the asymptotic horizon, the realm of truth can now be understood as the zone of progressive integration that faces Omega — the inner surface of the torus where the integrating function is most active. Truths in this region are not truer in some absolute sense; they are more integrated, *holding more sectors and more relations in coherent simultaneity*. They are more integral. I think the directional metaphor is preserved without metaphysical overreach.

The representational emptiness of the toroidal center is structurally indispensable — a torus is not a torus without it — and the apophatic dimension of Omega gives that space a meaningful character without populating it with predicates. The space is not empty in the sense of containing nothing; it is empty in the sense of not the kind of thing that can contain anything, because containing (and conceptualizing) is a category that does not apply to this region of being and knowing.

Where the hypothesis demands critique

At the prompting of feedback to this 2.0 update, I'd like to ask some difficult questions about what I've proposed so far....

Is structural-parallel argument suspiciously convenient? I claim that differentiation-followed-by-integration recurs at multiple levels of organization. A skeptical reader could reasonably ask whether I am seeing a pattern where there isn't one, or seeing only the cases that fit. My answer would be that the pattern is robust enough that systems theorists, psychologists, neuroscientists, sociologists, and complexity scientists

outside any mystical tradition have noted it extensively.^{1,2,3,4,5,6} But, and perhaps more importantly, *the meaning I am attaching to the pattern* is indeed more than the pattern itself entails; I can admit that.

Is contemplative-access argument unfalsifiable by design? A skeptic could rightly point out that this is an assertion only verifiable from inside the practice. My response would be that this is equally true of every form of expertise. The contemplative case is not different in category, but only in current Western cultural prestige. But yes, the claim has the structure of expert testimony, and expert testimony in domains lacking external metrics must rightly be held to a higher standard.

Does the *agapic* dimension import values into ontology? A philosophically careful reader could ask whether I am sneaking a value claim (*love is good*) into a structural claim (*love is the relation under which X...*). This is likely accurate, but I think my sneaking is justified — the structural and the evaluative are not as separable as analytic philosophy sometimes pretends them to be.

Does the participatory dimension verge on cosmic narcissism? A skeptic could ask whether some of this is just dressed-up anthropocentrism with humility-language wrapping. I tried to head this off in 1.0 by noting that humans may only be limited, flawed, or ultimately vestigial expressions of the integralizing process. But the structure of the participatory process does presuppose that consciousness itself is among the modes through which integralization occurs. This is not the same as claiming humans are special; it is insisting that *the kind of being we are, with its innate capacities, is structurally relevant to the kind of process we inhabit.*

Can the hypothesis adequately differentiate itself from other “spiritual” frameworks? A reader could grant everything I have said and still ask how my hypothesis distinguishes itself from process theology, non-dual Vedanta, Mahayana, Whiteheadian metaphysics, panentheism, or various forms of emergentist naturalism. In some ways, it doesn’t — it overlaps with all of them in specific places. What it does is provide a common framing under which these traditions can be brought into conversation without flattening their distinctness.

¹ Tononi, G. & Edelman, G.M. (1998). "Consciousness and Complexity." *Science*, 282(5395), 1846–51.

² Jost, J. (2006). "An information theoretic approach to system differentiation on the basis of statistical dependencies between subsystems." *Physica A*, 371(2)

³ Kauffman, S. (1993). *The Origins of Order: Self-Organization and Selection in Evolution*. Oxford University Press.

⁴ Werner, H. (1957). *Comparative Psychology of Mental Development*. International Universities Press.

⁵ Parsons, T. (1966). *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

⁶ Lawrence, P.R. & Lorsch, J.W. (1967). "Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12(1), 1–47.

What the 2.0 hypothesis implies for integration as a practical matter

To summarize:

1. Integration is an ongoing, generative discipline, not an attainment. The grammar of “I am integrated” is unhelpful; the grammar of “I am integrating” is more helpful. This may seem like a minor point but it helps determine whether the framework reinforces self-flattering misuse or guards against it.
2. An asymptotic structure means there is no point at which we should expect to feel like our journey is complete. And this is a good thing.
3. The direction of motion matters more than our position on the path. The novice with genuine humility outranks the adept with calcified certainties.
4. The practice is sustained through orientation, not results. The Omega Point is not what one receives or achieves; the integralizing itself is our primary benefit.
5. Love-consciousness is essential, not optional or decorative. The integral-contextual crucible runs on love, or it does not run.

Part III: Faith as an Intentionally Cultivated Quality of Character

What faith achieves in the 2.0 model

In Sector Theory 1.0 my elaboration on faith's epistemic role was less developed, and this section provides faith a more precise position; showing what role it plays in the toroidal architecture, how it interfaces with the Omega Point, and how it operates as both a cofactor of integration and a vulnerability for us to be vigilant about.

A quick recap for orientation

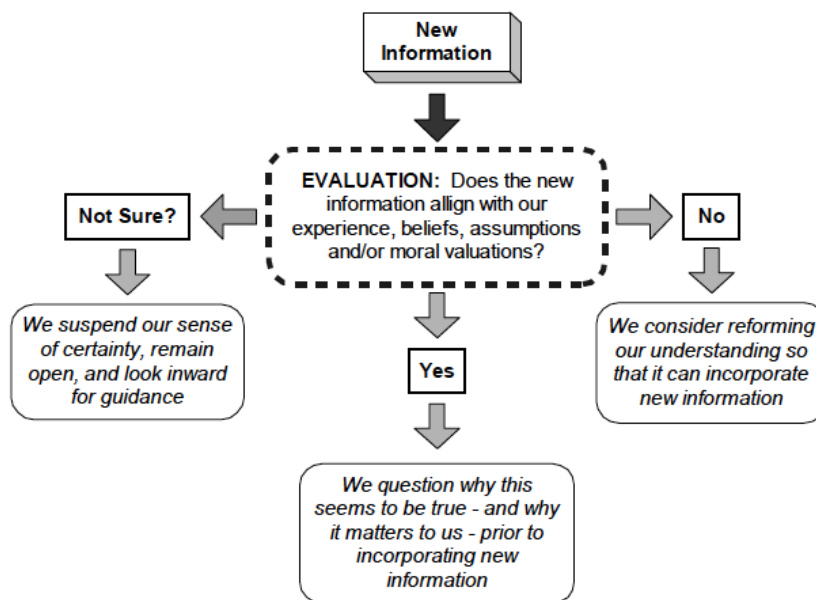
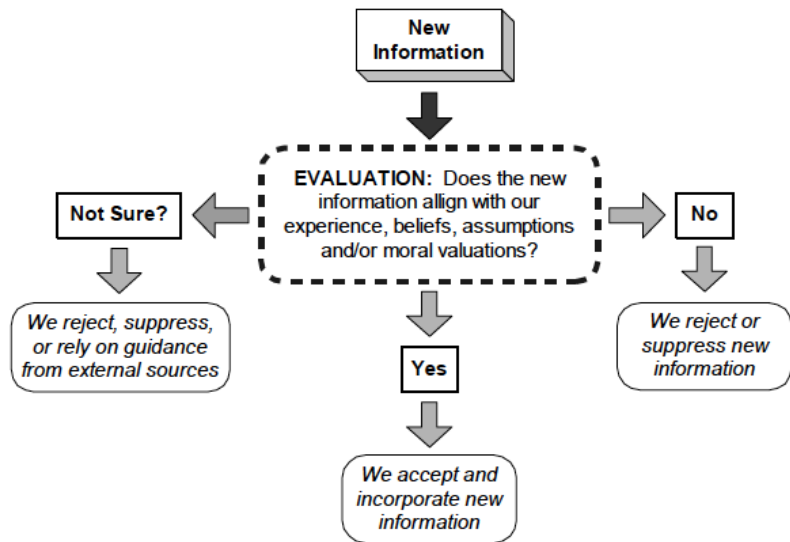
Sector Theory 1.0's central assertion was that faith in its most coherent and useful sense is not a flavor of belief but *an intentionally cultivated quality of character* — a stick-to-it-ive quality of trust and hope that is grounded in love. That argument draws on the Greek *pistis* (from *peitho*, the goddess of persuasion who is the handmaiden of love), on Merriam-Webster's primary definition (allegiance to duty or person, fidelity to one's promises, sincerity of intentions), on Fromm's distinction between rational and irrational faith, and on the New Testament's repeated framing of the faithful as those who trust and those who hope. For Sector Theory 2.0, it's important to acknowledge that although my development of faith is influenced by my own immersion in Christianity, I do not believe the concept is exclusive to that tradition, and 2.0 promotes a more universal application.

1.0 also identified a failure mode: when faith is conflated with belief, the whole enterprise collapses into either fideism (faith against reason) or dogmatism (faith as assent to propositions). That essay also locates the source of genuine faith in love — specifically in the demonstrated, reciprocated, persistent affection that makes trust rational rather than reckless. Any belief or faith, trust, fidelity or commitment that does not flow from lovingkindness is ineffective and pointless, a gong clanging soundlessly in the void. That was a beginning to the analysis, but we need to take it further.

Faith as a property of the exclusionary barrier

Authentic faith — faith-as-cultivated-character — is best understood as a property of what 1.0 called the exclusionary barrier and the integrative faculties. It is not located in any particular sector; it is a quality of how the membrane functions.

Recalling what the membrane does: new information arrives, and the membrane evaluates whether to admit it, suppress it, or reform existing understanding to accommodate it. The first flow diagram in 1.0 (pictured below) showed the reflexive, exclusionary version of this process; the second showed the more thoughtful, integrative version. The difference between the two is not a difference in the information being evaluated, nor a difference in the sectors doing the evaluation, but a difference in the character of the membrane itself — in its capacity to remain open without being passive, to question without being dismissive, to incorporate without being credulous. And, in fact, all of these are the essential parameters of a *neutral holding field*.



This capacity is what faith, properly understood, helps support. The trust that allows the membrane to admit challenging information without panic or disorientation is faith. The hope that allows the practitioner to keep doing the integration work even when no synthesis is immediately forthcoming is faith. The stick-to-it-iveness that returns to the practice day after day, year after year, without demand for guaranteed payoff, is faith. None of these are beliefs. All of them are *dispositions of character* that the practice both requires and produces.

This is why faith does not sit in any one sector; it really can't. It is the atmospheric condition of the entire integrative process — the felt-confidence-in-the-good-of-engagement that makes the engagement possible in the first place. Take it away and the architecture seizes up. The membrane often defaults to reflexive exclusion because admitting challenge without faith feels like dissolution. The crucible refuses to ignite because the heat of unresolved tension is unbearable without the trust that resolution will eventually emerge. The neutral holding field collapses into anxious doubt because holding contradictions without faith is just being stuck.

It is worth taking a moment here to also describe what the neutral holding field feels like when faith is working through it. A neutral holding field practice is closer to non-meditation — or possibly Zen's shikantaza, 'just sitting' — than to any other deliberate technique. One settles into a receptive stillness in which thoughts, emotions, somatic sensations, intuitions, and spiritual impressions all arise with equal priority — noticed, honored, and then released without pursuit. The practitioner is not suppressing responses; suppression would amplify rather than quiet them. The practitioner is simply declining to react, allowing each phenomenon to register and then pass through, the way a sound enters a room, is heard, and dissipates. Over time, this cultivated neutrality becomes a kind of internal clearing — a space where content from any sector can be present without being prematurely sorted, and where the felt tensions between competing inputs can be sustained long enough for genuine synthesis to emerge. This is where the art of suspension lives. And this is why faith, as I have defined it, becomes a productive cofactor: without the trust that resolution will eventually come, the practitioner may not be able to tolerate the ambiguity the neutral holding field requires. The holding field is the practice; faith is the atmospheric condition that keeps the practitioner in it.

That said, most folks who don't have a contemplative tradition to draw upon will require some experiential training to achieve this neutral space in a reliable way. I don't expect you to trust blindly. Interestingly, I have actually named this differently over years of practice and writing. *The Vital Mystic* and *Essential Mysticism* are where I first described it as “the art of suspension,” equating it to the deliberate watchfulness of contemplative traditions. In *Memory:Self*, I alluded to it as an “integrative buffer,” helping us approach all

material — even traumatic memories — within a safe space. So anyone desiring a deeper dive could consult those books, with *Essential Mysticism* in particular offering many relevant exercises at the end of each chapter, each one designed to be more appealing or appropriate to a different individual tendency or need. However, one practical approach to experiencing neutral awareness is fairly simple: *just breathe*. The very first exercise in *Essential Mysticism* goes like this:

Counting Breaths

1. Find a quiet place where you can sit undisturbed for five to ten minutes. If possible, make it a private place where you won't be tempted to feel self-conscious or be worried about falling asleep.
2. Sit with your hands cradled gently in your lap and your feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes and relax your body.
3. Breathe deeply into your belly through your nose. Many of us are used to breathing shallowly, only as far as our chest cavity, so it may be uncomfortable to stretch those lungs all the way down to your navel. But I encourage you to try it anyway.
4. After a few deep breaths, just breathe as you would normally.
5. Now begin to count your breaths: breathe in, breathe out, count one. Breathe in, breathe out, count two. Count up to five, then start over.

If you have never attempted an exercise like this, it could be challenging. Your thoughts may wander....But if you gently turn your attention back to counting breaths, and let those other thoughts, feelings and sensations float away, you will begin to nudge your consciousness in a new direction....So even if you feel such an exercise might be pointless, give it a whirl before reading any further. One final note: several of my students report that rhythmic sounds (Shamanic drumming, a ticking clock, their own heartbeat) assist and support this approach to mental discipline. This may enhance your experience as well.

Faith as a temporal-toroidal phenomenon

The toroidal architecture also allows us to say something more specific. The poloidal axis carries temporal-developmental recursion — the cycling of input through evaluation, integration, emission, and re-encounter, over and over, across the timescale of a life. Both faith and the neutral holding field live on this axis, allowing this cycle to remain open and generative, rather than collapsing into exclusion. They are what make the recursion sustainable.

Think about what the practice actually requires across decades. A given sector's contribution may take years to mature. A given synthesis may dissolve and reconstitute several times before reaching even provisional

stability. The crucible may go dormant for months...or even years...at a stretch. The realm of truth may feel inaccessible during extended periods of constrictive habituation. None of this is failure; it is the reliable rhythm of an integralizing life. But none of it can be sustained without something that holds the practitioner in relation to the practice during those dry stretches. That something is *faith* — the trust-and-hope grounded in love that keeps one returning to the cushion, to the page, to the conversation, to the challenging sector, to the unresolved tension, to the receding horizon.

Faith in relation to the Omega Point

The *agapic* dimension of the Omega Point hypothesis and the love-grounded character of authentic faith line up cleanly. In Part II I argued that love is not a feeling or a virtue but a topology — the structural relation in which the well-being of the other becomes a constituent of the well-being of the self. I also argued that the Omega Point is the asymptotic completion of that topology. In Sector Theory, faith is the practitioner's stance toward that horizon — the orientation that takes the asymptote seriously enough to keep approaching it, knowing that arrival is not a condition of the relationship.

This gives us a way to talk about faith that is precise without being doctrinally specific. Faith is trust in the asymptotic journey. Faith is hope grounded in the topology of love-consciousness. Faith is the cultivated character that allows participation in the integralizing process to continue across the long stretches when integralization doesn't seem to be producing obvious results. Faith is what makes the practice make sense to the practitioner *even when the practitioner cannot articulate why*.

Note that none of this requires belief. The practitioner does not have to believe that the Omega Point is metaphysically real in some specific way. They do not have to believe in God in any particular formulation. They do not need to assent to propositions. What they must do is trust enough to keep participating, hope enough to keep approaching, and love enough to find both the trust and the hope sustainable. That is faith. Belief may or may not accompany it — and in many of the most mature practitioners I have encountered, the relationship to specific beliefs becomes increasingly light, provisional, and held with humility, while the underlying faith steadily deepens.

Faith and the spectrum of justification, sector by sector

Sector Theory 1.0 made another claim worth revisiting. That essay observes a spectrum of faith in the casual-vernacular sense — running from irrational whimsy through reflexive assumption to carefully rationalized conviction to evidence-justified assertion to conclusions grounded in evidence that is continually revisited

and remains persuasive. And it claims that this spectrum exists within every sector — that every sector evokes its own version of this spectrum between the realm of truth and the realm of exclusionary bias or conditions.

This is pretty consequential. It means the line between rational faith and irrational faith does not run between sectors but through each sector. The empirical observation sector has its rational faith (provisional confidence in well-supported findings, held lightly, revisable with new evidence) and its irrational faith (scientism, the conviction that empirical observation is the only legitimate epistemic mode, treated as unfalsifiable). The *gnosis* sector has its rational faith (sustained contemplative practice yielding reliable phenomenological access, held with apophatic humility) and its irrational faith (mystical certainty that brooks no questioning). The social sector has its rational faith (provisional trust in intersubjective validation as one input among many) and its irrational faith (groupthink, tribalism). And so on for every sector.

This has direct implications for how the 2.0 framework should be used. Yes, the cultivation of faith-as-character is an atmospheric condition of the architecture, but it is also a sector-specific discipline that has to be developed twelve times over, in each sector's particular grammar. Rational faith in the *gnosis* sector looks and feels different from rational faith in the systematizing sector, and a practitioner who has cultivated one without cultivating the others has an *uneven, only partially integrated form of faith*.

This also offers a much clearer diagnostic for sectoral over-reliance. The drift toward irrational faith is often the actual mechanism by which sectoral imbalance becomes epistemically destructive; sectoral over-reliance and irrational faith can be two descriptions of the same phenomenon.

What this means for the membrane's two modes

The difference between the reflexive-exclusion mode (first flow diagram) and the thoughtful-integration mode (second flow diagram) can now be characterized as one difference between irrational faith and rational faith as applied to the act of evaluation itself. In the reflexive mode, the practitioner is operating on irrational faith in their existing framework — defending it against challenge as if survival depended on it, treating disconfirming information as threat rather than opportunity. In the integrative mode, the practitioner is operating on rational faith — trust that the framework can withstand revision, hope that the revision will yield a more accurate synthesis, love-grounded confidence that the discomfort of revision is in service of something worth doing.

This is the cleanest way to say what authentic faith does for the integration process. Rather than providing content, it provides the contextual landscape of openness within which content can be sincerely evaluated.

Faith does not tell you what to believe; faith makes it possible to keep evaluating what to believe without fear, anxiety, or premature closure.

Faith and disciplines against self-flattering misuse

The faith integration also hones what we need from the firewall section in Part IV. A practitioner who has cultivated faith-as-character will have certain recognizable features — they will be willing to be wrong, willing to revisit, willing to engage challenge without defensiveness, willing to sit with unresolved tension over long periods without manufacturing a premature synthesis, willing to participate without demanding payoff. A practitioner who has substituted belief for faith will display the opposite features — certainty, defensiveness, hostility to challenge, intolerance of unresolved tension, and demand for confirmation.

This gives us a workable diagnostic, mainly for ourselves. Our question “am I operating on faith or belief?” becomes checkable against observable behavior over time, in ways that the question “am I well-integrated?” does not. Faith is observable in conduct; integration is much harder to observe directly.

A note on the participatory dimension

As I participate in the Christian religious tradition, I would characterize *Christian* faith (specifically) as a response to the demonstrated, sacrificial love of Jesus Christ — trust grounded in *agape*'s compassionate affection for the practitioner's well-being. But of course the Sector Theory analysis was never intended to be exclusive to Christianity. The higher order principle's invitation is: faith can arise as a response to love-encountered, rather than a precondition of it. The practitioner can more easily trust when they have been loved, more easily hope because love has been demonstrated, and persist because the demonstration is renewed often enough to sustain the persistence. Yes, faith-as-a-quality-of-character can be initiated by force of will, by the clarity of intellectual argument, or by the sudden apprehension of profound truth. But will such faith endure? My contention is that it tends to attenuate without the support of lovingkindness.

So...does “faith” in Sector Theory require a moral-motivational object in order to function? Earlier I referenced love-consciousness as the energy that sustains the integral-contextual crucible, enabling and elevating the integrative process. Well, what if cultivating straightforward intentionality is sufficient to kick-start our alignment with the crucible's engine? An intentionality that ensures we are entraining the directedness of our concentration and will with that facilitative energy? In my view the most elegant answer is a sincere desire for “the good of all;” if our openness to revision is grounded in service to a greater good as

a grateful response to this astonishing miracle of existence, then we have more than one reason to get out of bed in the morning.

Those familiar with my other writings will understand why I am introducing this as a desirable disposition, but in Sector Theory the concern is mostly pragmatic: to address what orients the practitioner *toward* the integrative work in the first place — agapic orientation with inclusive benefit, a consistent filter of compassionate affection through which every other consideration is weighed. As a persisting orientation, this governs *why* a practitioner continues when it might be easier to stop, narrow, or self-flatter.

In the Omega Point hypothesis I argued that conscious participation in the integralizing process is the appropriate human response to the situation we find ourselves in. Faith, in the structural sense developed here, *is that response*. It is not a separate thing added on; it is the form participation takes when participation is sustained, love-grounded, and oriented toward the asymptotic horizon. This is what I believe Christian, Buddhist, Sufi, and contemplative traditions across world cultures have variously been pointing toward — that the participatory response to encountered love is the cultivation of trustworthy character, and that this cultivation is what we mean by faith in any sense worth keeping.

Where this places faith in Sector Theory 2.0

To summarize, in the revised framework: Faith is a property of the exclusionary barrier (or, more precisely, of the membrane between exclusionary and integrative modes), not a contribution from any one sector. It is the cultivated quality of character that allows the membrane to function in its integrative mode rather than its exclusionary mode. It lives on the toroidal axis as the sustaining condition of long-term participation. It is the practitioner's stance toward the Omega Point horizon — trust in the asymptote, hope grounded in love-consciousness, persistence that does not demand arrival. It has a sector-specific spectrum from rational to irrational that has to be cultivated in twelve different ways, in each sector's particular grammar. It is the response to love-encountered, the participatory form that the integralizing process takes when sustained skillfully across time. And it is observable in conduct — by its willingness to be wrong, to revisit, to sit with tension, to patiently participate without a demand for immediate resolution.

Part IV: The Drive to Integrate, Corrective Conditions, Disciplines Against Self-Flattering Application, and Dunning-Kruger Disarmament

The fifth primary drive, and what it does for the framework

The first four primary drives (*to exist, to adapt, to experience, to affect*) were introduced in my book *True Love: Integral Lifework Theory & Practice* (2009), and are fundamental to nearly every proposition I have formulated since. As part of Sector Theory's more rigorous empirical evaluation, I consulted the scientific literature about those four drives first, and have provided a summary of findings in Appendix C.

But, in the intervening decades since those initial formulations, I discovered that these four drives provided insufficient support for the Sector Theory model by themselves; this then led me to identify “to integrate” as a critical contribution. *To integrate* is grounded in convergent evidence from Self-Determination Theory, the Capabilities Approach, Human-Scale Development, Four-Drive Theory, Baumeister and Leary's belongingness work, and Durkheim's foundational work on social integration. This is the drive for connection, coherence, mutual recognition, and social embeddedness. It is the imperative to be woven into the fabric of one's social, ecological, and institutional environment — and to have that environment woven into oneself. This drive encompasses belonging (being accepted by a community), identity (having a coherent and recognized place within larger systems), reciprocity (being in relationships of mutual exchange rather than isolation or extraction), and dignity (being treated as a legitimate participant rather than an invisible or expendable component).

Self-Determination Theory identifies *relatedness* as one of three basic psychological needs, validated across thousands of studies and dozens of cultures.⁷ The Capabilities Approach identifies *affiliation* as a central human capability.⁸ Human-Scale Development identifies *identity* and *participation* as fundamental needs.⁹ The Four-Drive Theory identifies the *drive to bond* as irreducible.¹⁰ Baumeister and Leary have argued, with extensive evidence, that the *need to belong* operates at the same level of fundamentality as survival needs.¹¹ Durkheim's foundational work on social integration — one of the most replicated findings in sociology —

⁷ Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). “Self-Determination and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being.” *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.

⁸ Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁹ Max-Neef, M. (1991). *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections*. New York: Apex Press.

¹⁰ Lawrence, P.R. & Nohria, N. (2002). *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹¹ Baumeister, R.F. & Leary, M.R. (1995). “The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation.” *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497–529.

demonstrates that structural embeddedness in reciprocal social networks is among the strongest predictors of wellbeing, civic participation, and institutional trust.¹²

This addition gives Sector Theory 2.0 something it lacked in 1.0: a motivational substrate for why integralization happens at all. The 1.0 essay simply asserted that we should engage the integral-contextual crucible without explaining where the impetus to do so comes from. The four original drives did not quite supply this. One could survive, explore, grow, and act without ever engaging the kind of inter-sectoral synthesis the framework is describing. The drive *to integrate* is the missing piece; it offers the primary-drive-level imperative whose satisfaction is what the framework's integralization process delivers.

The integration drive across multiple registers

In Sector Theory, the drive *to integrate* operates at several registers simultaneously, and the framework's coherence depends on seeing all of them at once.

The intra-personal register

The drive to bring one's own sectors of perception-cognition into productive relation with each other. To not be fragmented internally. To have the somatic-aesthetic insights inform the discursive analysis, the *gnosis* sector contribute to empirical observation, and the social sector be in conversation with the systematizing sector. This is the register that 1.0 was most concerned with, though I did not yet name it as a drive.

The interpersonal register

The drive to be in genuine reciprocal relation with other people — not merely adjacent to them or in transaction with them, but in the kind of relation where another's well-being becomes a constituent of one's own. This is the register all prosocial behavior emphasizes, and the register most directly described by the social-science literature on belongingness, relatedness, and affiliation.

The ecological register

The drive to be embedded in the living world rather than separated from it — to recognize oneself as a participant in larger biospheric and ecosystemic processes, rather than as a free-floating observer or exploiter of them. I think this register has been consistently underdeveloped in Western frameworks, though Indigenous epistemologies have been pointing at it for a very long time.

¹² Durkheim, E. (1897/1951). *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Trans. J.A. Spaulding & G. Simpson. New York: Free Press.

The institutional register

The drive to participate in structures of mutual reciprocity at scales beyond the dyadic — communities, civic institutions, professional traditions, cooperative enterprises, and the broader fabric of collective life. This is the register where political and economic conditions either support or thwart the drive's expression.

The cosmic-participatory register

This is the register that Sector Theory specifically opens onto — the drive to be in conscious relation with the integralizing process itself, with the Omega Point horizon, with the topology of love-consciousness across all the registers above. This is what the contemplative traditions have been cultivating for as long as we have records of them. It is the register where the drive to integrate becomes indistinguishable from the participatory dimension of the Omega Point hypothesis.

These five registers are not separate drives, but facets of a single drive operating across different scales of relationship. And — this is important — frustrating the drive in any one register tends to produce compensatory distortions in the others. People who cannot integrate intra-personally tend to seek belonging through tribal identification. People who cannot integrate interpersonally tend to seek meaning through institutional or ideological affiliation. People who cannot integrate ecologically tend to compensate through consumption. People who cannot integrate institutionally tend to retreat into intimate dyads that are then asked to bear unsustainable weight. People who cannot integrate at the cosmic-participatory register tend to substitute one of the other registers for the missing dimension — which produces the various forms of integration that look right from the outside but feel hollow from the inside.

What this adds to the toroidal architecture

The drive *to integrate*, understood at this level of generality, is a motivational fuel for the entire toroidal circulation. Every other primary drive operates within the sectoral architecture — the drive *to exist* powers self-preservation operations across all sectors, the drive *to experience* powers exploration, and so on. But the drive *to integrate* is uniquely about the architecture itself. It is the drive whose satisfaction requires the kind of inter-sectoral, inter-personal, inter-register weaving that Sector Theory is aiming to define.

This means the drive to integrate does have a privileged position. It is the drive that, as a component of agapic love-consciousness, helps supply energy to the integral-contextual crucible. It is the drive that, when frustrated or distorted, produces the various pathologies of pseudo-integration that the framework needs to

be alert to. And it is the drive whose conscious cultivation is most directly addressed by the framework's prescriptive content.

In its most mature form, it really becomes the same thing as the cultivation of love-consciousness developed in the Omega Point hypothesis. The drive to weave oneself into the fabric of one's environments and to weave those environments into oneself, when matured beyond the survival-and-belonging registers into the cosmic-participatory register, is just as the topology of love that Part II described. The fifth primary drive and the *agapic* dimension of Omega are not two things. They are the same phenomenon described from two angles — the motivational angle (what gets us moving forward) and the structural angle (what the movement instantiates).

Corrective conditions, elaborated

This approach was not part of the Sector Theory 1.0 undertaking, but Sector Theory 2.0 could be substantially weakened or falsified under the following conditions, which is why we need to explore them. This is primarily about what we might call “epistemic hygiene” and an ongoing need for vigilance.

Condition 1: Predictive efficacy under matched comparison

The framework claims that genuine multi-sector integration produces better operational outcomes than single-sector specialization on complex real-world problems. This is checkable. The test would require pairs of practitioners matched on relevant variables, one set trained in deliberate multi-sector engagement and one set trained in deep single-sector specialization, given complex problems whose outcomes can be evaluated by multiple independent metrics. If the multi-sector group does not outperform the specialist group on problems that could potentially benefit from integration across registers (even if the characteristics of such benefit aren't initially ascertainable), the framework's central practical claim fails.

Condition 2: Moral discernment under independent assessment

The framework also claims correlation between sustained integralization practice and moral development (similar to parallel claims in Integral Lifework — see Appendix C). The test would require assessment of mature practitioners against demographically matched controls, on moral-judgment tasks evaluated by multiple independent ethical frameworks (consequentialist, deontological, virtue-theoretic, care-ethics). If the practitioner group does not show better discernment than controls across all evaluation frameworks, the moral-development claim fails. The cross-framework requirement is important, as genuine moral development should be recognizable across ethical traditions, not only within one.

Condition 3: Neurological coherence of the sectoral partition

As the framework's twelve-sector partition is offered as a heuristic rather than a strict modular claim, this condition is probabilistic, not absolute. However, if functional neuroimaging consistently revealed only two or three well-defined modes of cognitive processing — rather than patterns aligning with the twelve sectors — this would necessitate revision. Current evidence, as detailed in Appendix C, suggests that most sectors do align with distinct combinations of brain regions and networks (e.g., empirical observation with primary sensory cortices, gnosis with default mode network activity, limbic-emotive with amygdala and insula, etc.). While these mappings aren't yet exhaustive, they provide preliminary support for the sectoral distinctions as more than arbitrary categorizations.

Condition 4: Bias-resistance under operational test,

The framework claims that practitioners who have cultivated integration are more resistant to cognitive biases than practitioners who have not. This is testable using the standard cognitive-bias literature. If highly integrated practitioners (by any operational measure) show the same bias profile as narrowly specialized practitioners on standardized tasks, the framework's claim to produce better epistemics fails.

Condition 5: Cross-cultural translation

The framework's claim to integrative universality requires that the sectoral distinctions survive translation into non-Western epistemic traditions. If Indigenous, Buddhist, Confucian, Islamic, or African knowledge systems consistently carve cognition along orthogonal lines that the sectoral partition cannot accommodate, the framework reduces to a more culturally local map.

Condition 6: Register-coupling of the integration drive

The framework predicts that frustration of the integration drive across registers produces specific compensatory distortions. If careful empirical work showed that frustrated integration at one register does not in fact produce compensatory distortion at others — that the registers are independent rather than coupled — the framework's account of how integration drives function would need revision.

How to hold these conditions

None of these conditions is the kind of clean experimental test that, say, physics offers. They are all conditions that admit in degrees, that require operationalizations on which reasonable people can disagree, and that would take years to evaluate properly. But this is appropriate to the kind of framework Sector Theory is.

Assessment disciplines

Two framing notes before the disciplines themselves

First, the framework's primary stance toward exclusionary bias or conditions is encouraging rather than condemning. Exclusionary biases and conditions are normal, expected, and present in every practitioner including me. Cultivating integration is the work of a life, not a hurdle one clears. Thus the disciplines below are not tests to grade ourselves against; they are practices to engage. The goal is not to eliminate exclusionary tendencies or conditions altogether — which is not possible — but to develop conscious, integrative habits that gradually reshape the membrane's defaults. Flagellating ourselves for incompleteness would mean we have misunderstood the framework; the asymptotic horizon developed in Part II applies here too: nobody arrives, everyone participates.

Second, as a planned future development: a web-based assessment instrument designed to support self-awareness around sectoral habits, identify which sectors are most and least developed for a given practitioner, and interactively help evaluate best practices for specific projects or subject matters. This is not yet built, but it represents the eventual operational vehicle for what the disciplines below describe. The disciplines themselves are usable now, in conversation with oneself, a trusted advisor, or a community of practice. The instrument, when it exists, will systematize them. As an interim stopgap, Appendix A offers an AI prompt script that could provide meaningful feedback on sectoral approaches and disciplines; and we will discuss that further in a moment.

The triangulation discipline

A major caveat: self-assessment of sectoral integration cannot be taken at face value. Three independent sources should converge before any provisional claim of integration in a given sector is accepted: self-report, feedback from at least two people who know the practitioner across different contexts, and operational outcomes — what one actually does under stress, novelty, or moral challenge. Self-report alone is treated as evidence of self-perception, not evidence of integration.

The sector-blind behavioral probe

Rather than asking “how integrated am I?” — which invites flattering self-narrative — ask sector-specific behavioral questions whose answers are checkable. When did I last change my mind in response to evidence from a sector I usually distrust? Name three insights from the somatic-aesthetic sector that have actually shifted a decision in the last six months. When was the last time the social sector's tacit knowledge corrected an analytical conclusion I had reached? And so on. If we cannot generate concrete examples, that sector may

not yet be meaningfully integrated, regardless of how present it feels. Once again, this is not failure; it is information about where the next environs of work are located.

The neglected-sector probe

Identify the sector we are least fluent in and spend disproportionate time engaging it before claiming integration. This is the structural inverse of natural inclination: integration is measured not by how well we operate in preferred sectors but by how genuinely we inhabit the non-preferred ones. The discipline isn't intended to be punitive — it is instead the recognition that the periphery of one's current comfort zone is where integration demands our focus.

The disconfirmation discipline

Regularly seek out the perspectives and inputs most likely to challenge the current synthesis. Subscribe to publications we would not naturally read. Befriend people whose habits of mind differ from ours. Attend gatherings where our fluencies are less relevant. If a year of integration practice has produced no significant revisions to prior beliefs, this is useful information.

The humility marker

Any practitioner who claims to have achieved integration without ongoing struggle and ongoing revision is, by the framework's own internal logic, mistaken about their own state. The framework states this plainly as the felt sense of having arrived being a reliable indicator of *not* having arrived. This is less a paradox than the asymptotic structure showing through. Like Buddhist “beginner’s mind,” the practitioner who is genuinely deep in the work generally feels that they are constantly just starting out.

The operational anchoring discipline

Frankly, integration claims that cannot be validated by observable conduct are more likely empty assertion than evidenced integration. If our integralization is real, it should show up under stress (do we respond from natural breadth or from restrictively narrow defaults?), in relationships (do we actually perceive and take in sectors of experience that are not our home base?), in moral choice points (does multi-register consideration actually shape our decisions?), and in changed predictions (have we been wrong recently in ways that taught us something?).

The faith-conduct diagnostic

Drawing on Part III: rational faith is also observable in conduct over time. Practitioners operating on faith-as-cultivated-character display recognizable features — willingness to be wrong, willingness to revisit, willingness to sit with unresolved tension, willingness to be patient. Practitioners who have substituted less rational belief for faith display the opposite features — certainty, defensiveness, intolerance of unresolved tension. This diagnostic applies to ourselves first.

The community-witness discipline

Integration is partially a relational phenomenon and cannot be evaluated purely in private. The practitioner needs at least one community of practice, formal or informal, in which forthright feedback is normal, and self-flattering narratives can be gently disrupted. This community functions as the social sector's contribution to the practitioner's integralization — and I don't think it's optional. Solo practitioners who have no community over time tend to drift toward variations of irrational faith specific to whichever sectors they prefer; I have experienced this isolation myself, and it is a dangerously comfortable space to inhabit. We must actively seek out our supportive community.

The intrinsic-extrinsic-seeker discipline

Drawing on distinctions developed in my Christian praxis but generalizable to any practitioner, this discipline asks the practitioner to identify which mode currently dominates a given inquiry: *intrinsic* (interior conviction, cultivated character, felt authority of one's own integrative process), *extrinsic* (inherited frameworks, communal validation, institutional structures, codified procedures), or *seeker* (questioning settled assumptions, holding conclusions lightly, remaining open to disruption). These are modes, not types — the practitioner is not one of three kinds of person, but operates in one mode or another at any given time; habituation toward a single mode is itself the failure to flag. *Intrinsic* praxis without *extrinsic* grounding drifts into idiosyncrasy and self-confirmation; *extrinsic* praxis without *intrinsic* depth collapses into performance and borrowed conviction; *seeker* praxis without periodic settling mistakes motion and disruption for development. In reality, we will (and perhaps should) cycle through each mode under different conditions, and harmonious synthesis of all three will be the most beneficial of all, like continuous cofactors. The discipline is to name which mode is presently dominant, ask whether that dominance is appropriate to the inquiry or merely habituated, and deliberately invite the contributions of the other modes.

How to hold the disciplines

Once again, these disciplines are not intended to be a checklist to grade ourselves against; they are practices to *fully engage*. The framework is on our side; exclusionary biases and conditions are normal; the work is the

work. An asymptotic horizon means there is no final exam to pass or fail, and no setbacks that close the door on continued participation. What the disciplines help us guard against isn't the presence of exclusionary tendencies or environments, which are universal, but the *unrecognized* presence of them combined with a self-flattering belief that they are absent. The first is the human condition. The second is what makes implementation of the framework counterproductive without these disciplines.

The Dunning-Kruger disarmament

Every notable theory I have encountered in my research suffers from the same vulnerability: it defines categories of X, then proceeds to shoehorn every observation, theoretical variation, and snippet of test data into those proposed categories. We might call this *procrustean theory-driven reasoning*, and it is truly everywhere, and Sector Theory 2.0's categorical commitments can likewise become invisible to the framework itself. The Dunning-Kruger effect can then compound this — practitioners of a given framework do not know what they do not know, which inadvertently amplifies their confidence in what they think they know. Combined with confirmation bias, this produces a closed loop in which a framework's blind spots are precisely the places where it cannot see that it has blind spots.

I call this self-reinforcing process “the categorization gate,” and Sector Theory is at high risk of exactly this failure. Sector Theory has twelve sectors, a toroidal architecture, and a specific developmental story. By the argument I've just made, the framework will tend to fit every observation into the twelve-sector categorization, become invisible to its own categorical commitments, and produce practitioners who become overconfident about what fits the framework while being unable to see what does not.

The framework's response to this problem cannot be cosmetic; we need concrete mechanisms. Here are four proposals:

1. **The heuristic-not-strict status of the sectoral partition must be actively maintained.** The twelve sectors are a useful partition, not a discovery of reality's joints. The framework should regularly invite the question: would this observation fit better with a different partition? Would the inquiry under consideration be illuminated by treating two sectors as one, or one sector as two, or by adding a sector the current enumeration does not include?

This heuristic discipline extends to the architecture itself, not only the sectoral partitions. The integrative sector's unique role — as the only sector that projects radially into the crucible through the four functional bands of integration — is itself a theoretical commitment that should be revisited as observation accumulates. The description about integration operating through a single radial funnel, and that compound cognitive operations like creativity and moral reasoning are best understood as radially mobile processes within that

funnel (rather than as surface-level sectors in their own right), is 2.0's current best interpretation of how these intersectoral processes work. But this reading could be mistaken. Integration might turn out to be more distributed across the toroidal surface than the funnel model suggests, or the four-band gradation might prove to be a coarser or finer partition than the phenomena warrant. The practitioner's obligation here is the same as with the twelve-sector partition: hold the architecture with enough conviction to use it productively, and enough humility to notice when observations resist it.

2. **The framework should explicitly invite practitioners to report observations that do not fit any sector cleanly.** Boundary cases, anomalies, and phenomena that resist the partition can't become inconveniences to be argued away. In actuality, they are the most informative data the framework receives. A robust and adaptable framework must accumulate anomalies and treat them as edges of its own incompleteness.
3. **The framework should treat sector-boundary cases as equally informative data.** When a piece of perception, cognition, or experience straddles two or more sectors, the framework's instinct should be to study that straddling, not to shoehorn it into one sector or another.
4. **The framework should commit to periodic revisitation of whether the partition itself needs revision based on accumulated observations.** This will of course be my responsibility in the coming years as I develop a 3.0 iteration. If, after another decade of use, the same boundary cases keep recurring, the current partitioning is probably mistaken about something occurring at those boundaries.

To support ongoing self-awareness and self-correction in these matters, practitioners will benefit from a routine set of metrics analogous to those in the disciplines earlier in this section. Questions to ask regularly: What observations have I encountered recently that did not fit the twelve-sector partition cleanly? Where did I find myself stretching a category rather than questioning whether the category was right? When I disagreed with someone using a different framework, was I genuinely engaging their framework, or was I translating their observations into my own before evaluating them? Where am I most confident, and is that confidence proportionate to the evidence, or is it amplified by the framework's own categorical commitments?

These are practices to return to, over and over again, and *especially* when the framework feels most satisfying — because that satisfaction is itself diagnostic. The framework *feels* most coherent when its categories are being most actively and heavily applied, and the detrimental *categorization gate* is most active when the framework feels most useful. Disarmament of these weaknesses is the discipline of treating that satisfaction as a signal for self-examination, and examination of the framework itself.

Interim “ethically-sourced” AI-assisted assessment

The web-based assessment instrument anticipated in the disciplines section is an eventual operational vehicle for the practices we’ve discussed. While that instrument is being designed, constructed, and tested, an interim approach using ethical AI is available.

What I proposed to various AI models after vetting them (those vetting criteria are also in Appendix A) was a set of assessment prompt criteria that practitioners can paste into a project, session preferences, or directly into a chat, that then prompt the AI to evaluate content (data, project ideas, theoretical propositions, observations) through the Sector Theory 2.0 framework. This shortcut may provide a usable interim tool that operationalizes the disciplines in a form practitioners can engage with immediately.

The full criteria are provided in Appendix A, along with my suggested approach to ethical sourcing of AI. The criteria can be copied directly into an AI’s project’s instructions or pasted into user preferences for ongoing use. When the practitioner submits content for evaluation under Sector Theory 2.0, the AI can generate a structured response identifying:

- Which sectors the input primarily draws upon
- Which sectors are conspicuously absent
- What potential exclusionary patterns are visible in the framing
- What targeted questions might elicit input from neglected sectors
- Whether the practitioner has done sufficient work in their primary sector(s) before integration was attempted, and
- What disciplines from Part IV are relevant to the case.

Two caveats about this interim approach. First, AI-assisted assessment can give practitioners the feeling their ideas have been thoroughly vetted without producing genuine change in their integration practice. Therefore, assessment output should always end with a *what to do next* section pointing toward concrete practices. Verdicts close inquiry while prompts open it.

Second, the criteria themselves are subject to the *categorization-gate* problem. An AI’s assessment will fit observations into the twelve sectors and the disciplines from Part IV, and may not flag cases that exceed those parameters. Practitioners should treat the AI-assisted assessment as one input among several, rather than authoritative. So the triangulation discipline from Part IV applies here as elsewhere.

Part V: Stress-Testing Against External Epistemological Frameworks

Why this section exists

Similar to the *categorization gate* issue, frameworks that have not been seriously engaged with competitors are operating in an echo chamber, regardless of how rigorous they may sound from the inside. The 1.0 essay touched briefly on traditional Western epistemology and intimated Wilber's relevance, but it did not put Sector Theory into genuine conversation with those other frameworks. This section does that.

Importantly, my approach is not to claim Sector Theory is superior to the other frameworks. Nor do I desire to syncretize them all into a meta-framework; there are important distinctions to appreciate here. So the approach will be to take each framework seriously on its own terms, and then identify where Sector Theory overlaps, where it diverges, where it might learn, and where it might push back.

Traditional Western epistemology

Sector Theory's most direct engagement is with the post-Gettier tradition in analytic epistemology. The standard "justified-true-belief" plus (JTB+) formulations — such as reliabilism (Goldman), virtue epistemology (Sosa, Zagzebski), evidentialism (Conee and Feldman), and various contextualist responses — each address the justification question from a specific angle.

Sector Theory in 2.0 form can be characterized as a multi-track epistemology in which all of these formulations are partially correct. Reliable processes operate within each sector, but reliability claims that hold within one sector do not automatically transfer to others. Intellectual virtues are confirmable and necessary, and the faith-as-cultivated-character work in Part III is largely an account of which intellectual virtues matter and how they can be developed. Evidence is operative in every sector, *but the forms that evidence takes differ* — empirical observation sector evidence is not the same thing as gnosis sector evidence, and the analytic tradition's tendency to treat propositional, third-person, replicable evidence as the paradigm case is itself a sectoral commitment masquerading as a neutral standard. In 2.0, contexts genuinely shift the standards for justification — this is what the completeness principle in Part I is getting at.

Where Sector Theory 2.0 pushes back on the analytic tradition most aggressively is regarding what counts as a legitimate justifier in the first place. The analytic challenge runs: if you cannot state it, in what sense is it knowledge? This framework's answer is not to force a translation of ineffable experience into propositional

form. Instead its answer is to disarm the assumption that propositional form is the only legitimate test of knowledge in the first place.

Of course, some knowledge does translate easily and accurately into propositions. How I succeeded as a five-year-old at riding a bicycle can be described in specific detail — even if the description loses nuance. Other knowledge translates more partially. A skilled diagnostician can articulate some of what they noticed about the patient, and what is meant by it, but not all of this can be propositionally captured; the pattern recognition that produced the diagnosis exceeds the description that follows. And some knowledge doesn't translate at all. The *unio mystica*, the empty plenitude, the ground of being, a sustained encounter with what apophatic traditions point towards — these are not partially-effable phenomena waiting for a better vocabulary. They are encounters whose precision lies in direct experience rather than a description.

These distinctions have been attempted before. Non-propositional knowledge has become a broad category that includes acquaintance knowledge (Russell), procedural know-how (Ryle), felt sense, and tacit knowing (Polanyi). These forms of knowing can be symbolically referred to even when they cannot be symbolically constituted — I can talk about what it is like to play the violin, and you can recognize my narrative, even if neither of us can produce a propositional formula sufficient to teach the skill. However, *non-symbolic* knowledge is a deeper subcategory: a knowing in which symbolic references become inadequate. The *unio mystica* is non-symbolic. The taste of a specific food in a specific moment is non-symbolic. The recognition of one's own face is non-symbolic. More than failures of specific articulation, these are knowings whose mode is either not symbolic in the first place, or is a synthesis of too many converging inputs to account for in descriptive ways.

Sector Theory's claim is that the *gnosis* sector, the somatic-aesthetic sector, and parts of the intuitive-empathic sector operate in territory that is primarily non-symbolic — and that demanding propositional translation as the bar for legitimate knowing categorically excludes the genuine epistemic functions these sectors perform. The analytic philosopher who insists that what cannot be stated is not knowledge has made a sectoral commitment that belies a neutral epistemological argument.

This is not a Sector Theory peculiarity, either, but applies to ordinary expertise as well. The master craftsman, the experienced surgeon, the seasoned negotiator, the parent who knows their child — all of them have knowledge that is precise in operation but resistant to exhaustive propositional articulation. The bar that asserts "state it or it isn't knowledge" fails any expertise of sufficient depth. This framework is simply taking this seriously across more domains than the analytic tradition has traditionally been comfortable with.

So the framework's response to the analytic challenge is pretty straightforward: yes, much of what the framework recognizes as legitimate knowing cannot be stated, and the precision is in the doing and experiencing. Believing we can define these sectors in words is a category error, and the framework declines to accept the propositional bar as the test of legitimate knowing. Some things must be groked via experience. Period.

Now...with that said, the contemplative, mystical, and integral literatures that Sector Theory draws upon do have a regrettable tendency toward vague maximalism. The disciplines against self-flattering in Part IV are partly an attempt to import analytic precision into a framework that might otherwise drift toward the soft-maximalist failure mode. So, just as I have been advocating throughout this Sector Theory 2.0 summary, such weaknesses must be fully appreciated, tested for, and adjusted to. Despite the admitted irritation factor, constant (or at least frequent) vigilance is any framework's valuable friend.

Wilber's AQAL and Integral Theory

This is the comparison readers most familiar with integral theory will hopefully appreciate.

The overlaps between AQAL and Sector Theory are compelling, as both frameworks advocate for:

- Rejecting single-perspective epistemologies
- Insisting on multiple legitimate modes of knowing
- Positing developmental progression with implications for cognitive and moral capacity
- Drawing upon contemplative traditions for resources the analytic tradition lacks
- Characterizing integration as a directional process rather than a static state
- Treating moral development as integral to epistemic development

However, divergences are also pronounced. Wilber's AQAL model partitions reality into interior-exterior and individual-collective dimensions, producing the four quadrants. This is a coarser partition than Sector Theory's twelve sectors, and operates at a different conceptual level — Wilber is partitioning the kinds of reality being known rather than modes of perception-cognition doing the knowing. In this sense, the two approaches are not in competition; they are addressing different questions. Sector Theory is more granular about the epistemic side; AQAL is more articulate about the ontological side.

Where I diverge from Wilber more sharply is on the holarchical-developmental story. In my understanding, Wilber's framework is committed to a fairly strong transcend-and-include structure in which higher developmental levels contain and elevate lower ones. I have argued elsewhere — in my *Managing Complexity* essay, for example — that sometimes the final synthesis is *subtractive rather than additive*, with counterproductive elements collapsing into vestigial isolation rather than being elevated. This seems a substantive disagreement with Wilber's framework.

There is also another important divergence from Wilber, where he treats synthesis across lines of development as a beneficial process — practitioners who develop multiple lines tend to be more capable and more mature than those who develop only one. I would go further. Sector Theory 2.0 treats cross-sector synthesis as constitutive of epistemic maturity itself — not merely as an aid to it. Single-sector development without synthesis often produces fragile outcomes that *perform maturity without instantiating it*. This is the synthesis principle from Part I, and aims to be a stronger claim than AQAL makes about the role of integration. 2.0 leaves open a stronger metaphysical possibility — that multidialectical synthesis may be *required* for knowing as such, regardless of who is knowing or the discipline being approached. This relies on empirical observations about how human cognition appears to be constituted.^{13,14,15}

2.0 also begins to intimate a productive way to bring AQAL and Sector Theory into conversation: a three-axis conceptual map that combines AQAL's quadrants (interior-exterior, individual-collective), Sector Theory's twelve sectors (the cognitive partition), and the five primary drives from the Integral Lifework corpus (*to exist, experience, adapt, affect, integrate*). This map is sketched out conceptually in Part VI, but I have yet to refine it fully. AQAL provides the ontological partition that Sector Theory lacks; Sector Theory provides the cognitive granularity that AQAL underspecifies; and primary drives supply the motivational dimension that both frameworks require. The three frameworks are presented in complementary relation, with the three-axis map an initial means of evaluating their joint application.

As Sector Theory relies on a specific usage of “agape,” it seems pertinent that I also diverge from Wilber on his characterization of *eros* and *agape* as distinct directional forces. The 1.0 essay noted this disagreement and 2.0 maintains it, with the Omega Point hypothesis further developing the alternative — love as a topology rather than two distinct vectors.

¹³ Varela, F.J., Thompson, E. & Rosch, E. (1991). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

¹⁴ McGilchrist, I. (2009). *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

¹⁵ Tononi, G. & Edelman, G.M. (1998). "Consciousness and Complexity." *Science*, 282(5395), 1846–51.

Now, where Sector Theory can be productively critiqued by serious AQAL practitioners is on the lines-of-development question. Wilber's framework specifies multiple developmental lines that can develop at different rates within the same person. Sector Theory's dance-of-growth model from Part I addresses some of this — characterizing sectors as developing at different rates, with non-uniform processing speeds — but I deliberately avoid using lines of development as vocabulary. The reason is the synthesis principle: I do not believe a sector can sustain itself completely without concurrent or eventual interaction with other sectors, and lines of development as Wilber uses the term can read as implying that sectors are more independent than I observe them to be. An “interactive dance of growth” is therefore a more accurate description of what I am pointing at, with multiperspectival maturity its inherent, interdependent outcome.

One additional concern is something every theoretical framework eventually encounters. Wilber's framework has, over the decades, accumulated a kind of systematic confidence — a sense that the framework can locate any phenomenon in its proper place and assess any practitioner's developmental level. This appears to be the *categorization-gate* problem again, so I am skeptical of this confidence; consideration of the disciplines against self-flattering application in Part IV might be helpful here.

Bhaskar's Critical Realism

Roy Bhaskar's critical realism is less well-known in integral discourse, but I think it has philosophical relevance. Bhaskar distinguished three domains: *the real* (the underlying causal structures and mechanisms that exist whether or not we observe them), *the actual* (the events that occur, whether or not they are experienced), and *the empirical* (the events that are experienced). This three-domain ontology preserves both the mind-independence of reality *and* the reality of human experience without collapsing either into the other.¹⁶

Considering this framing for Sector Theory is significant. My framework's claim that each sector has access to different aspects of reality benefits from Bhaskar's distinctions. For example, the empirical observation sector engages primarily with *the empirical* domain; the *gnosis* sector and the intuitive-empathic sector may have access to aspects of *the real* domain that are not directly empirical; the somatic-aesthetic sector engages with *the actual* domain through embodied participation that may exceed propositional articulation. The systematizing sector constructs models that aim at *the real* but operate through *the empirical*. And so on.

¹⁶ Bhaskar, R. (1979). *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Bhaskar’s stratified ontology might provide Sector Theory with a more defensible metaphysical backing. Rather than the somewhat vague “realm of truth” of the 1.0 framework, *the real* domain in Bhaskar's sense provides a mind-independent reality that different sectors approach through different methods, none of which exhaust it. The asymptotic structure of the Omega Point becomes the asymptotic approach to *the real* through the convergent operation of all sectors. Bhaskar's later work on meta-reality also argues for a transcendent ground of being underlying both subject and object — which resonates with the apophatic dimension of the Omega Point.¹⁷

Predictive Processing and Enactivism

These are contemporary cognitive-science frameworks Sector Theory will need to engage with, because they make empirically grounded claims about how cognition actually works.

[Predictive processing](#) (Friston, Clark, Hohwy) characterizes the brain as a prediction machine that minimizes free energy by generating models of the world, then updating them in response to prediction error. Rather than being a passive reception of sensory data, perception becomes active inference. Cognition, in this view, is *hierarchical Bayesian inference*, with higher-level priors shaping how lower-level inputs are processed.

This framework seems to be compatible with Sector Theory in interesting ways. The information evaluation diagrams are essentially descriptions of Bayesian updating — does new information match existing priors (accept), conflict with them (reject or reform), or fall in the uncertainty zone (suspend or rely on external sources)? What predictive processing adds to Sector Theory is a mechanistic grounding. The exclusionary barrier and integrative faculties correspond to actual cognitive operations involving precision-weighting of priors, attention allocation, and prediction-error processing. This was a refreshing discovery for the 2.0 model.

[Enactivism](#) (Varela, Thompson, Di Paolo) goes even further, arguing that cognition is not only inference but enactment — that meaning arises in the dynamic coupling of organism and environment, and that the body is constitutive of cognition rather than its container. This has obvious resonance with Sector Theory's insistence that the somatic-aesthetic sector is not just one mode among others but is constitutive of how knowing happens. Additionally, enactivism views integration as something the embodied, situated, enacting subject lives. It is more than disembodied representations. So no disagreement here.

¹⁷ Bhaskar, R. (2002). *Reflections on Meta-Reality: Transcendence, Emancipation and Everyday Life*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Where Sector Theory might push back on these frameworks is on their tendency, at least in some formulations, to be reductive about what cognition is for. Predictive processing in its stronger formulations can read as if minimizing prediction error is the only thing our minds do — which makes that framework excellent at explaining perception and action, but less articulate about meaning, value, and what the Omega Point hypothesis is inviting us into.

Virtue epistemology

Linda Zagzebski,¹⁸ Ernest Sosa,¹⁹ and others have developed accounts of knowledge in which intellectual virtues — open-mindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual humility, conscientiousness, perspicacity — are constitutive of genuine knowing rather than merely instrumental to it. Here is a link to an in-depth overview of [virtue epistemology's various approaches](#).

Sector Theory 2.0 is, in significant part, a virtue-epistemological framework. The faith-as-cultivated-character argument from Part III is a virtue-epistemological argument in everything but vocabulary. The disciplines against self-flattering application are virtue-epistemological practices. The completeness principle's distinction between exclusionary bias (vice) and contextual prioritization (virtue) mirrors virtue-epistemological in form.

What virtue epistemology could offer Sector Theory is a respectable philosophical vocabulary for what the framework has been saying in more vernacular terms, so that may be something I consider for future iterations. What Sector Theory offers virtue epistemology is the multi-sectoral structure within which the intellectual virtues operate — different sectors require different specific virtues, and integration across sectors requires meta-virtues that operate above the individual-sector level.

Non-Western frameworks

What follows is a preliminary survey, with the upfront admission that my exposure, experience, and intimacy with each of these traditions has varied widely over the years, and falls well shy of subject matter expertise.

¹⁸ Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ Sosa, E. (1991). *Knowledge in Perspective: Selected Essays in Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buddhist epistemology

The Buddhist tradition has developed extraordinarily sophisticated accounts of cognition-related theory — pramana theory (Dignaga, Dharmakirti), Madhyamaka analysis of cognitive construction, Yogacara accounts of consciousness, and the Abhidharma's detailed phenomenological taxonomies. The deeper Buddhist contribution is the analysis of how cognitive construction (vikalpa) produces apparent objects whose self-existence is illusory. This connects with the apophatic dimension of the Omega Point but pushes further — the Buddhist claim is that all sectoral knowledge involves *constructive* cognition, and that liberation comes through seeing through this constructive process, not through any final integration of the constructed contents. Sector Theory's framework is less radical than Madhyamaka on this point, and a Madhyamaka practitioner could reasonably argue that the framework still treats the sectors as more real than they actually are. My pushback would be that, in a functional, operational sense (rather than an emancipating, enlightenment sense) those differences may themselves be illusory.

Advaita Vedanta

The Vedantic non-dual tradition characterizes the highest knowledge as the direct realization of the relationship and identity between atman and brahman (which is achieved through scriptural study, reflection, and meditation under the guidance of a qualified teacher). Vedanta would say that no amount of sectoral integration produces the non-dual realization — it is qualitatively different from integration of dualistic contents. The Omega Point hypothesis's apophatic dimension partially honors this, but Sector Theory's overall framing is more integration-oriented than Vedanta would prefer. A Vedantin reader could press: Why are you so attached to weaving the sectors together? The weaving is itself a continuation of the maya you should be seeing past! The framework's defense is once again pragmatic — most practitioners spend most of their lives in dualistic cognition, and skillful integration is better than fragmented dualism even if it is not yet non-dual realization. That said, non-dual realization can still contribute to the overall poloidal trajectory of Sector Theory practice...it's just as tentative and asymptotic as everything else.

Confucian epistemology

The Confucian tradition, especially in its Neo-Confucian developments, integrates moral cultivation, ritual practice, classical learning, and self-examination into a unified account of how to become a person who knows the way (dao). The Confucian framework would resonate with Sector Theory on the integration of cognitive and moral development, on the importance of relational embeddedness, and on the cultivation of character as foundational. Where Confucian thought offers additional insights is in the role of tradition, ritual, and social context — the Confucian view is much less individualistic about knowing than most Western

frameworks. That said, as mentioned earlier, my own work on *intrinsic*, *extrinsic*, and *seeker* modes of spirituality speaks to this additional layer of what we could define as *extrinsic* inclusion and synthesis, and aims to help inform Sector Theory 2.0's integration of those concerns.

Indigenous epistemologies

The plural is critical here, as there is no single Indigenous epistemology. However, there do seem to be some convergent themes across many Indigenous traditions worldwide: the *relational* nature of knowing, the *inseparability* of human knowing from the more-than-human world, the role of *place and ancestry* in epistemic authority, the integration of dream and ceremony with ordinary perception as legitimate modes of knowing, and the *embeddedness* of knowing in long temporal frames that exceed individual lifetimes. The ecological register of the integration drive in Part IV is partly an acknowledgment of this, but falls short of fully honoring it. Where Sector Theory is likely most vulnerable to Indigenous critiques is once again in its individualism, its presentism, and its abstraction from specific places and relationships. Here again, *extrinsic*, *intrinsic*, and *seeker* spirituality may speak to some of this.

Islamic epistemology

The Islamic tradition has developed sophisticated accounts integrating reason (aql), revelation (naql), intuition (kashf or dhawq in Sufi contexts), and witnessing (mushahada). The Sufi traditions in particular offer detailed phenomenological accounts of contemplative experience that map onto Sector Theory's *gnosis* and intuitive-empathic sectors with surprising precision, and I've alluded to these before in my writings on mysticism. Ibn Arabi's accounts of the imaginal realm and the heart as organ of perception seem particularly helpful here (see his works [The Seals of Wisdom](#) and [The Meccan Revelations](#)). The Islamic framework might push Sector Theory on the role of revealed knowledge as a distinct source — not reducible to any of the sectors but operating through several of them simultaneously.

What this stress-testing reveals

Sector Theory is most distinctive in its specific cognitive partition (the twelve sectors), its toroidal architecture, the synthesis principle, and its account of the integration process via the crucible. These are the contributions other frameworks do not replicate.

Sector Theory is most vulnerable on its metaphysical claims (which critical realism, Madhyamaka, and analytic epistemology each interrogate differently), on its individualistic tendencies (where Confucian and

Indigenous frameworks might push back), and on its specific developmental claims (where AQAL has done more articulation).

Sector Theory is most enriched by enactivism (which corrects its over-cognitization), critical realism (which provides better metaphysics), virtue epistemology (which provides vocabulary and analytic respectability for the character claims), and the contemplative traditions in their specific phenomenological detail.

That said, Sector Theory's most defensible contribution is the specification of how diverse modes of knowing are integrated across registers — with the toroidal architecture, the synthesis principle, and the integral-contextual crucible addressing variables that other frameworks do not specifically address. The frameworks Sector Theory already borrows from generally have richer single-domain accounts and less developed integration accounts; Sector Theory has a more developed integration account and less detailed single-domain work. This seems like a reasonable division of focus, but time will tell.

Part VI: Relation to My Broader Corpus and a Proposed AQAL Integration

Sector Theory 2.0 does not stand alone among my writing, and it probably shouldn't be read as if it does. Let's briefly visit some important foundational and corollary efforts in my previous writing.

Sector Theory and Integral Lifework

[Integral Lifework](#) specifies thirteen dimensions of nourishment that require our attention for human flourishing:

- Physical health and well-being
- Positive emotions, creativity, and self-expression
- Learning and intellectual stimulation
- Relationships and social acceptance
- Accomplishment and fulfillment
- Spiritual ground
- Healing the past
- Legacy, pleasure, and reproduction
- Ease of shifting between modes of interior processing
- Healthy self-concept
- Sexuality
- Integrity
- Artful will

The same intuition about multidimensional harmonization, integration, and synthesis runs through both Sector Theory and Integral Lifework. But the two frameworks do operate in different semantic containers. Integral Lifework is about the nourishment required to thrive. Sector Theory is about how one's cognitive and perceptive apparatus processes what we take in. They are complementary — full-spectrum nourishment supplies a substrate, and multi-sector integration metabolizes it. And both contribute to our trajectory of moral development and maturity. But they are partitioning different domains, and asking different questions.

That said, the parallels between the two frameworks is probably significant. Both frameworks describe a developmental synthesis effect: when all the relevant dimensions or sectors come into harmonious interplay, mutually supporting and informing each other, what emerges exceeds the sum of the contributions. In Integral Lifework, this synthesis produces growth and transformation beyond what minimum nourishment in each dimension would predict; it heals grief and trauma; de-energizes addictive impulses; strengthens interpersonal relationship; and stimulates moral maturity that evolves, in fits-and-starts with occasional setbacks, to higher altitudes of the *Developmental Correlations* chart (see Appendix E). In Sector Theory, the synthesis principle from Part I makes a similar claim at the epistemic level: synthesis is required not just for completeness but for the durability of any sector's development and multiperspectival confidence. Both frameworks describe the developmental movement as a dance — non-uniform, non-linear, with different elements progressing at different rates, and with the harmony among them being the condition under which the whole becomes more than its parts.

Sector Theory and *Memory:Self*

My 2010 Book *Memory: Self* prefigures a number of architectural commitments in Sector Theory. It articulates a framework for memory and identity built around the *mnemosphere* — a fluid, fractal, regenerative field comprised of seven metastructural regions including the integrative buffer, narrative self, governing beliefs, unconscious substrata, somatic memory, spiritual ground, and emotional disposition. Several of these constructs map onto Sector Theory's framework, though the mapping is imperfect because they operate at different levels of analysis. For example:

- The *mnemosphere* is structurally compatible with the toroidal architecture — both describe fluid, recursive, regenerative fields in which content circulates between regions rather than residing statically — but the *mnemosphere* is partitioned by how content is encoded and retained, while Sector Theory's sectors are partitioned by how perception-cognition operates on content.
- Similarly, the integrative buffer in *Memory: Self* and the membrane-with-neutral-holding-field in Sector Theory describe overlapping functions — a zone where new or destabilizing material can be held without immediate categorization — but the integrative buffer is developed in the specific context of revisiting traumatic or dissociated material for therapeutic reintegration, while Sector Theory treats the same structural location as an epistemic gatekeeping function operating on any inbound content.
- The spiritual ground region of *Memory:Self* likewise overlaps with the *gnosis* sector of Sector Theory without being identical: here spiritual ground is a *memorial region* describing how spiritual content is encoded and retained as part of identity, while *gnosis* is a *perception-cognition mode* describing how such content is encountered and known.

The key difference between the two frameworks is about purpose: *Memory: Self* is oriented toward the healing childhood trauma, reorganization of negative identity constructs, and restoration of self-nourishment that has been disrupted by such material, while Sector Theory is oriented toward the cultivation of integrative knowing across diverse modes of perception-cognition. The frameworks are therefore complementary rather than competing — and the constructs developed in *Memory: Self* may have additive value to Sector Theory, particularly in addressing how trauma, dissociation, and identity-level disruption affect the toroidal circulation. At minimum, the two frameworks offer different levels of analysis for closely related territory, and a practitioner working with one may find the other clarifies aspects the first leaves underdeveloped.

Sector Theory and RADIANCE, Level 7, Integral Liberty, and the Progressive Agenda

[RADIANCE](#) focuses on how interior harmony produces societal harmony, with detailed attention to relational characteristics that distinguish constructive from destructive engagement. The relationship to Sector Theory is direct — the relational characteristics RADIANCE describes are observable manifestations of integration versus exclusion at the interpersonal register, which Part IV identified as one of the five registers of the integration drive. RADIANCE is what integration looks like in relationship.

My [Level 7 project](#) addresses the political and institutional architecture required for the kind of moral development the broader corpus describes, and is derived from my book *Political Economy and the Unitive Principle*. The relationship to Sector Theory is that Level 7 specifies the external conditions under which integration at scale becomes practicable. A society organized around extraction, manipulation, and tribal warfare cannot sustain integration practice at the population level, regardless of how well any individual practitioner integrates.

[The Goldilocks Zone of Integral Liberty](#) addresses what authentic freedom looks like — not negative liberty as freedom-from constraints, but a more substantive freedom that requires the conditions of full-spectrum nourishment, moral development, and integration. Sector Theory's framework supplies one of the substantive components — without the cognitive capacity to integrate across sectors, freedom of belief and inquiry collapses into the freedom to recapitulate one's existing exclusionary biases without interference. Integral liberty requires integral capacity.

The *Progressive Agenda for Democratic Renewal*, which is still under development and currently approaching its 30th draft, specifies how the five primary drives can shape political and economic institutions. The relationship to Sector Theory is in the agenda's institutional proposals creating or destroying the conditions under which sector integration is practicable — for ordinary people living ordinary lives, rather than for

monks or academics with the privilege of extended contemplative leisure. The *Agenda* is an intersection of Integral Lifework and Sector Theory concepts applied at mass society scale.

Sector Theory and my spiritual writings

The discourse in writings like *Essential Mysticism*, *The Vital Mystic*, and “The Mystic's Call to Action” provide contemplative and experiential foundations from which the framework's claims about the *gnosis* sector, the integral-contextual crucible, and the Omega Point are drawn. These writings establish what the framework's prescriptive content actually requires — sustained practice, contemplative discipline, and willingness to be transformed rather than just informed.

My writings on the New Testament — and most directly [Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Seeker Spirituality: Navigating the Old and New Testaments](#) — develops several concepts that converge with Sector Theory in ways worth calling out. The *intrinsic*, *extrinsic*, and *seeker* modes of spiritual praxis are mode-states rather than personality types, and they generalize beyond Christian context as a discipline against habituated narrowing — a formulation I have folded into Part IV's disciplines section. The concept of *teleios* — Greek for "mature, full-grown, complete, lacking nothing" — names from within the New Testament corpus what I view to be the same asymptotic structure that Part II identifies as the Omega Point: a horizon approached without arrival, where the approach itself is constitutive of the maturity being developed, and where reaching it would dissolve the very growth the structure is meant to enable. The faith-as-quality-of-character argument in Part III is, in its Christian register, the same argument the *Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Seeker Spirituality* essay makes about faith being neither delicate emotion nor unquestioning trust but a cultivated disposition expressed through conduct. The two approaches address different audiences and operate in different domains, but they share a structural commitment to integration over performance, to asymptotic rather than final maturation, and to the proposition that genuine knowing is constituted by the character of the knower as much as by the content known.

Sector Theory and Managing Complexity with Constructive Integralism

[Managing Complexity with Constructive Integralism](#) is the closest relative and most helpful companion read. Constructive integralism is the meta-process Sector Theory aims to support and describe. The neutral holding field, multidialectical processing, the art of suspension in the neutral holding field, love-consciousness as governing intentionality, functional intelligence — all of these are the operational vocabulary of constructive integralism, and Sector Theory is, in one sense, the cognitive architecture that constructive integralism inherently occupies. The two frameworks are mutually constitutive.

AQAL integration within a three-axis framework

There is one additional reference that deserves attention, as it will likely be part of ongoing development for 3.0. Sector Theory, the primary drives, and Wilber's AQAL represent different aspects of human knowing and acting. Sector Theory partitions the cognitive side (twelve modes of perception-cognition). The primary drives address the motivational side (exist, experience, adapt, affect, integrate). AQAL involves the ontological side (four quadrants of reality being known: interior-individual, exterior-individual, interior-collective, exterior-collective). None of these seems entirely complete on its own; each addresses something the others underspecify.

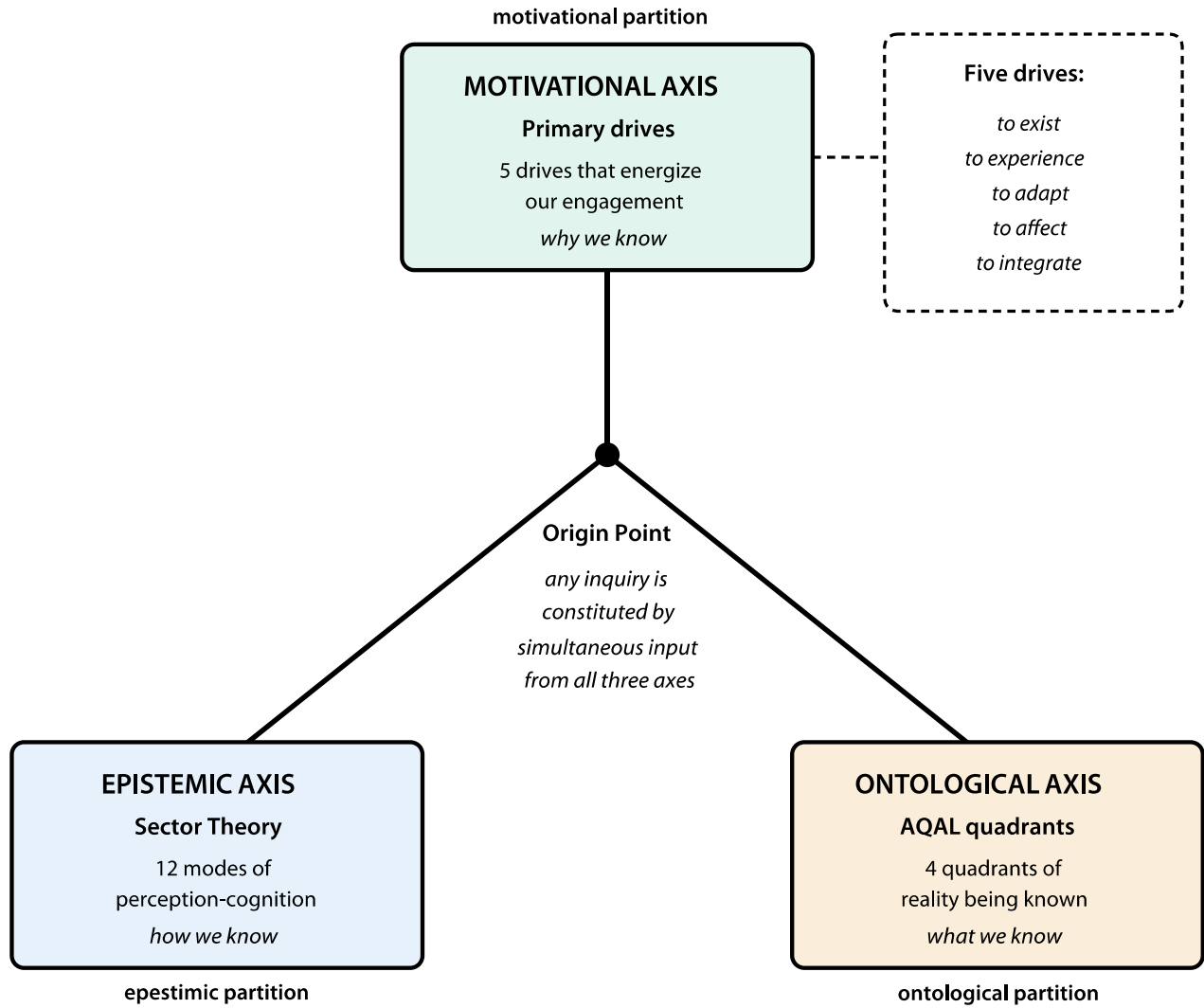
A three-axis framework that combines them would let a practitioner, for any given inquiry or developmental moment, identify which sector is primarily engaged, which quadrant of reality is being known, and which drive is energizing the engagement. The diagnostic value seems exceedingly useful. A practitioner stuck in the same *sector + quadrant + drive* combination repeatedly finds themselves in a different developmental position than someone cycling through various combinations over time. Additionally, the asymptotic movement toward the Omega Point becomes visible as movement through this three-dimensional space, with the Omega Point as the limit-attractor.

The combination space is large — twelve sectors x four quadrants x five drives yields a whopping 240 possibilities, with many of those uncommon or theoretically constrained. So a complete enumeration is less useful. What I think is useful is a conceptual map and worked examples showing how the axes interact. I'll offer those conceptually in the following pages as diagrams, but the more granular generative application — where a practitioner constructs their own snapshot for a given inquiry — will likely have to wait for 3.0...or at least the proposed web instrument.

I do think the three-axis framing could be effective in Sector Theory's application and ongoing development...*but we shall see*.

The Three-Axis Framework

How Sector Theory, AQAL, and the Primary Drives combine



Sector examples:

empirical observation, systematizing, gnosis, intuitive-empathic, social, limbic-emotive, somatic-aesthetic, ideation, mimetic-semantic, discursive, reflective, integrative

Quadrant examples:

interior-individual (subjective)
 exterior-individual (objective)
 interior-collective (intersubjective)
 exterior-collective (interobjective)

Applying the Three-Axis Framework — Examples

How the three axes interact in concrete inquiries

Example 1: Diagnosing a patient

A specialist physician evaluating a presentation within their domain

EPISTEMIC SECTORS

Primary:

empirical observation
systematizing

Supporting:

discursive
mimetic-semantic

AQAL QUADRANTS

Primary:

exterior-individual
(patient as object)

Secondary:

exterior-collective
(clinical literature)

PRIMARY DRIVES

Energizing:

to affect (heal)
to adapt (learn)

Supporting:

to exist
(earn a living)

Example 2: Writing a poem

A poet working from an unresolved felt sense toward articulation

EPISTEMIC SECTORS

Primary:

somatic-aesthetic
ideation

Supporting:

mimetic-semantic
limbic-emotive

AQAL QUADRANTS

Primary:

interior-individual
(felt experience)

Secondary:

interior-collective
(shared meaning)

PRIMARY DRIVES

Energizing:

to experience
to affect (express)

Supporting:

to integrate
(meaning-making)

Example 3: Interpreting a religious experience

A contemplative making sense of an unbidden mystical encounter

EPISTEMIC SECTORS

Primary:

gnosis
intuitive-empathic

Supporting:

reflective
discursive

AQAL QUADRANTS

Primary:

interior-individual
(direct experience)

Secondary:

interior-collective
(traditions, lineage)

PRIMARY DRIVES

Energizing:

to integrate
to experience

Supporting:

to adapt
(toward maturity)

Appendix A: Sector Theory 2.0 “Ethical AI” Assessment Prompt Criteria

The following text is designed to be copied into an AI project's instructions, into session preferences, or directly into a chat as a setup message. Once the criteria are active, when the practitioner submits content with a phrase such as “evaluate this under Sector Theory 2.0” or “Sector Theory 2.0 assessment,” the AI can produce a structured analysis according to these criteria.

In terms of identifying the most ethical AI to utilize — and one that is most uniformly available — I have settled on [Mistral 3 Large](#) for now. This was based on the following criteria (in no particular order):

- Privacy and security of user data
- Use of sustainable/renewable energy for compute
- Labor standards and protections for organization’s employees
- Available reporting and reviews of company work environment
- Transparency of architecture itself (for example, Mistral’s model weights are Open Source)
- Jurisdictional risk (i.e. where company is located)
- Equitable access (low or no cost access to advanced models)
- Contracts for use in civilian mass surveillance and/or military wars-of-choice and/or autonomous weapons

One less transparent criterion is regarding supply chain ethics. We do not know if Mistral exploits, abuses, and underpays contractors to help train its models the way other AI companies have been documented as doing. In addition, Mistral is a for profit company, which, from my perspective at least, inherently introduces a potential for perverse incentives, consumer deception, worker abuse, and ethics violations. Company executives have also declined to state a formal position on contracted use of its platforms for autonomous weapons and civilian mass surveillance (though they are involved in European military weapons systems development). Lastly, Mistral actually drops to the bottom of ethical weighting for its lack of stated or evidenced precautions around AI safety and alignment; this is highly problematic, but frankly none of these platforms are taking AI safety seriously, or have demonstrated competence or commitment to reasonable safety standards. But, of all of the platforms I have surveyed as of this writing (May, 2026), Mistral currently seems the most ethical overall, at least by my own standards. The one better option in probably every respect would be to host an offline Open Source AI model on a personal computer...but the initial capital outlay for the hardware alone is daunting; perhaps this will change over time.

That said, I would encourage you to do your own research before committing to any platform. Below are some helpful websites, but there really is no deep dive that covers all of the criteria I care about.

[Overall privacy ranking of “AI” platforms for 2025](#)

[Stanford University HAI 2026 Index Report](#)

[Forbes article on Mistral environmental audit](#)

INSTRUCTIONS BEGIN HERE, CUT-AND-PASTE FROM “Sector Theory 2.0...” BELOW THROUGH THE LAST PARAGRAPH

Sector Theory 2.0 Assessment Criteria

When the user submits content (data, a project idea, a theoretical proposition, an observation, a piece of writing, a plan, a decision they are considering, or any other material they want evaluated under Sector Theory 2.0) and signals that they want a Sector Theory 2.0 assessment, produce a structured response with the following elements. Do not skip elements unless the content genuinely makes one inapplicable; in that case, say so explicitly and explain why.

- 1. Primary sectors identified.** Name the sector or sectors that the submitted content most heavily draws on. The twelve sectors are: empirical observation, systematizing, mimetic-semantic, discursive, reflective, ideation, somatic-aesthetic, limbic-emotive, social, integrative, intuitive-empathic, *gnosis*, and any others the user has identified in their working framework. Be specific about why each named sector is primary in this case — point to features of the content that exemplify each sector's mode of operation.
- 2. Sectors conspicuously absent.** Name the sector or sectors that one would expect to be present given the nature of the inquiry but that are absent or minimally represented. Explain what the absent sectors would contribute if engaged. Be honest about the practical limits — some inquiries legitimately do not require all sectors — but flag when an absence appears to be habitual rather than appropriate to the inquiry.
- 3. Potential exclusionary patterns.** Identify any framings, assumptions, or moves in the content that suggest habituated narrowing toward particular sectors at the expense of others. Distinguish carefully between contextual prioritization (legitimate) and categorical exclusion (the actual problem). When in doubt, ask the user clarifying questions rather than concluding.

4. Sufficiency of primary-sector work. Per the synthesis principle from Part I, cross-sector synthesis requires that each contributing sector be itself sufficiently cultivated. Assess whether the primary sectors in the submitted content appear to have done their own work adequately before integration is attempted. Premature integration is a recognized failure mode and should be flagged when visible. Conversely, if the primary-sector work appears complete or near-complete, the assessment can move toward inviting cross-sector input.

5. Targeted questions to elicit input from neglected sectors. Generate three to five specific questions that would prompt the user to engage sectors the content currently underrepresents. The questions should be concrete and operational, not abstract. Examples: What does your body tell you when you imagine this plan succeeding versus failing? (somatic-aesthetic). Have you discussed this with someone whose initial reaction would likely differ from yours? (social, disconfirmation). What insight from sustained reflection — not analysis — has shaped your sense of this question? (gnosis).

6. Faith-conduct check. Per Part III, the cultivation of faith-as-character is observable in conduct. Examine the content for markers of rational faith (willingness to be wrong, openness to revision, comfort with unresolved tension, participation without demand for guaranteed payoff) versus irrational faith (certainty, defensiveness, intolerance of tension, demand for confirmation). Note what you observe. This is not a verdict on the user; it is a description of how the submitted content reads.

7. Disciplines from Part IV relevant to this case. Identify which of the nine disciplines against self-flattering application are most relevant to the submitted content: triangulation, sector-blind behavioral probes, the neglected-sector probe, the disconfirmation discipline, the humility marker, operational anchoring, the faith-conduct diagnostic, or community witness. Suggest one or two specific applications.

8. Anti-shoehorn check. Per the Dunning-Kruger disarmament in Part IV, assess whether your own analysis is fitting the user's content into the twelve-sector partition in ways that may not be honest to the material. Are there elements of the content that resist the sectoral categorization? Are there observations that might suggest the partition itself needs adjustment? Be willing to report observations that do not fit cleanly, rather than forcing them into a category for the sake of completeness.

9. What to do next. Conclude with concrete next steps the user can take, expressed as practices rather than verdicts. Examples: Spend a week noticing somatic responses to this decision before re-evaluating. Find one person whose default sector configuration differs from yours and discuss this with them. Set this aside for thirty days and return to see what has changed. The goal is to support ongoing practice, not to deliver an assessment that closes the inquiry.

10. Honest limitations. End with a brief statement of what your assessment could not see, why, and what additional input from the user would let you assess more thoroughly. Triangulation requires more than one source. AI assessment is one input among several and should not be treated as authoritative.

Tone and stance. The assessment should be encouraging rather than accusatory. Exclusionary biases are normal and present in every practitioner. The goal is supporting integrative practice, not grading practitioners. Avoid clinical or pathologizing language. Treat the user as a competent adult engaged in genuine inquiry, not as a subject to be diagnosed.

When in doubt. When uncertain whether a sector is genuinely absent or simply not visible in the submitted content, ask the user directly rather than concluding. When uncertain whether an absence is appropriate to the inquiry or a habituated exclusion, ask. When the content resists the twelve-sector partition, say so honestly and report what you are observing rather than forcing categorization.

Appendix B: Advantages of Prosocial Behavior

Advantages of prosocial behavior from research across multiple disciplines, with many of the results replicated:

- Reduces conflict costs through reconciliation and consolation, preserving cooperative relationships (de Waal)
- Increases offspring survival when adults form strong social bonds (Silk; Hrdy)
- Enables cooperative breeding and alloparenting, raising human reproductive success above other great apes (Hrdy)
- Stabilizes cooperation through altruistic punishment of free-riders (Fehr & Gächter)
- Supports cumulative cultural learning, letting each generation build on inherited knowledge (Henrich, Tomasello)
- Enables shared intentionality and collaborative problem-solving beyond what individuals can achieve alone (Tomasello)
- Sustains coalitions and alliances that provide protection and resource access (Boehm)
- Suppresses destructive dominance hierarchies through reverse-dominance enforcement (Boehm)
- Provides cognitive infrastructure for tracking stable relationships, supporting reputation-based cooperation (Dunbar)
- Nurturing caregiving shapes offspring stress regulation and social capacity through epigenetic mechanisms, transmitting resilience across the early lifespan (Meaney; Szyf).
- Generates cheater-detection capacity that allows trust to scale beyond immediate kin (Cosmides & Tooby)
- Calibrates kin altruism through reliable kin-recognition cues (Lieberman, Tooby & Cosmides)
- Builds belongingness and relatedness, satisfying fundamental psychological needs tied to wellbeing (Baumeister & Leary; Self-Determination Theory)
- Strengthens social-network embeddedness, a robust predictor of resilience to stress, illness, and mortality (Durkheim and subsequent epidemiology)
- Develops layered empathy — emotional contagion, sympathetic concern, perspective-taking — enabling flexible responses to others' needs (de Waal)
- Provides reciprocity-based exchange systems that buffer against resource fluctuations (Trivers; hunter-gatherer ethnography)
- Generates inequity aversion that flags exploitation before it fractures group cohesion (Brosnan & de Waal)

- Enables language and symbolic communication to function as bonding at scale (Dunbar)
- Expands the moral circle over cultural time, widening cooperation from kin outward to broader collectives (long-standing convergent finding across anthropology and moral psychology)

Supportive References

Key sources supporting these findings include:

1. de Waal, F. (1996), *Good Natured*, Harvard University Press
2. de Waal, F. (2009), *The Age of Empathy*, Harmony Books
3. Brosnan, S.F. & de Waal, F. (2003), "Monkeys reject unequal pay," *Nature* 425, 297–299
4. Silk, J.B. et al. (2003), "Social bonds of female baboons enhance infant survival," *Science* 302, 1231–1234
5. Hrdy, S.B. (2009), *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*, Harvard University Press
6. Fehr, E. & Gächter, S. (2002), "Altruistic punishment in humans," *Nature* 415, 137–140
7. Henrich, J. (2015), *The Secret of Our Success*, Princeton University Press
8. Tomasello, M. (2016), *A Natural History of Human Morality*, Harvard University Press; Boehm, C. (1999), *Hierarchy in the Forest*, Harvard University Press
9. Boehm, C. (2012), *Moral Origins*, Basic Books
10. Dunbar, R.I.M. (1998), "The social brain hypothesis," *Evolutionary Anthropology* 6, 178–190
11. Dunbar, R.I.M. (1996), *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language*, Harvard University Press
12. Cosmides, L. (1989), "The logic of social exchange," *Cognition* 31, 187–276
13. Cosmides, L. & Tooby, J. (1992), in Barkow, Cosmides & Tooby (eds.), *The Adapted Mind*, Oxford University Press
14. Lieberman, D., Tooby, J. & Cosmides, L. (2007), "The architecture of human kin detection," *Nature* 445, 727–731
15. Baumeister, R.F. & Leary, M.R. (1995), "The need to belong," *Psychological Bulletin* 117, 497–529
16. Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000), "Self-determination and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," *American Psychologist* 55, 68–78
17. Durkheim, E. (1897/1951), *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, Free Press
18. Trivers, R.L. (1971), "The evolution of reciprocal altruism," *Quarterly Review of Biology* 46, 35–57
19. Holt-Lunstad, J. et al. (2010), "Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review," *PLoS Medicine* 7, e1000316.

Appendix C: Empirical Support for the Sectoral Partition and Primary Drives

The following assessment evaluates each of the twelve sectors against the current research literature in cognitive science, neuroscience, epistemology, psychology, and related fields. The sectors are organized into three tiers reflecting the strength and specificity of available empirical support. This ranking describes the degree to which each sector is recognized as a distinct cognitive mode within mainstream research — not the likelihood that it is a genuine mode of knowing. Those are different questions, and the framework's own logic (particularly the categorization-gate warning from Part IV) demands that the distinction be preserved. Modes that are harder to operationalize empirically may be no less real for that difficulty. The sector assessment is then followed by a similar survey of scientific literature regarding primary drives.

Tier 1: Strong empirical support

These sectors correspond to well-established constructs in cognitive science with robust neural correlates and extensive research programs. Neurologically, they also correspond to specific brain regions/networks.

Empirical observation. The entire tradition of perceptual psychology, psychophysics, and sensory neuroscience validates empirical observation as a distinct and thoroughly characterized mode of cognition. Neural substrates are extensively mapped across primary sensory cortices, attentional networks, and parietal integration areas. The philosophical grounding runs from classical empiricism through contemporary Bayesian perceptual inference. No serious researcher disputes that observation-based knowing is a real cognitive mode, though debates persist about how theory-laden observation is. Associated brain regions/networks: **Primary Visual Cortex (V1), Auditory Cortex (A1), Parietal Lobe** (spatial attention)

Discursive. Cognitive psychology's extensive literature on reasoning, argumentation, and propositional logic supports analytical-linguistic reasoning as a distinct mode. The dual-process literature characterizes deliberative analytical thinking as a well-documented cognitive operation with identified neural substrates in lateral prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex. Propositional knowledge — Russell's "knowledge by description" — is the paradigm case in analytic epistemology. The distinction between discursive-propositional and other forms of knowing is among the most extensively validated divisions in cognitive science. Associated brain regions/networks: **Broca's Area (Left Inferior Frontal Gyrus), Wernicke's Area (Left Superior Temporal Gyrus)**

Limbic-emotive. Neuroscience strongly supports emotion as a distinct cognitive-perceptual mode. Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis, LeDoux's work on fear circuitry, and the broader affective neuroscience tradition all demonstrate that emotional processing constitutes a genuine epistemic input rather than noise in the cognitive system. The amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and hippocampus interact in ways that directly shape memory encoding, decision-making, and attention allocation. Associated brain regions/networks: **Amygdala, Hippocampus, Ventral Striatum**

Systematizing. The cognitive science of categorization, schema formation, and model-building supports this as a genuine mode. Research on pattern recognition, taxonomic reasoning, and rule-extraction identifies associated neural networks in dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and posterior parietal regions. Baron-Cohen's empathizing-systemizing theory has identified sex differences and neural correlates for the systemizing drive specifically. Associated brain regions/networks: **Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC), Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC)**

Social. Extensive research in social neuroscience supports this sector. The "social brain" literature identifies a dedicated network — medial prefrontal cortex, temporoparietal junction, superior temporal sulcus — for processing social information. Default mode network research demonstrates substantial overlap between regions involved in social cognition and self-referential processing. Hyperscanning studies show neural synchronization during shared understanding. The social-constructivist tradition in epistemology provides philosophical grounding. Associated brain regions/networks: **Theory of Mind Network (TPJ, mPFC), Fusiform Face Area (FFA)**

Tier 2: Moderate empirical support

These sectors have substantial research backing, but their distinctiveness as isolated cognitive modes is less precisely delineated than the Tier 1 sectors.

Reflective. Metacognition research provides solid support. Work on metacognitive accuracy, the monitoring-control framework, and neuroimaging studies identifying anterior prefrontal cortex as a key substrate for self-reflective judgment all validate reflective self-monitoring as a distinguishable cognitive operation dissociable from first-order cognition at the neural level. The open question for the framework is whether metacognition is best characterized as a co-equal sector or as a higher-order capacity that operates *on* other

sectors — the research more often treats it as the latter. Associated brain regions/networks: **Medial Prefrontal Cortex (mPFC), Posterior Cingulate Cortex (PCC)**

Somatic-aesthetic. The embodied cognition literature and research on interoception show that bodily state awareness constitutes a genuine information channel influencing cognition and decision-making. The enactivist tradition argues compellingly that cognition is not separable from the body's engagement with the environment. Neuroaesthetics identifies neural responses to beauty and formal pattern. The bundling of somatic awareness with aesthetic perception into one sector is a theoretical choice that does not map neatly onto the neuroscience, where interoception and aesthetic response have somewhat distinct neural signatures, but the philosophical case from phenomenology and pragmatist aesthetics is strong. Associated brain regions/networks: **Insula, Somatic Sensory Cortex, Orbitofrontal Cortex (OFC)**

Intuitive-empathic. There is genuine support from two somewhat different research streams. Empathy research is robust: the mirror neuron literature, the shared-neural-activation model of embodied simulation, and the affective-cognitive empathy distinction are well-established. Intuition research — fast-and-frugal heuristics, naturalistic decision-making, expert intuition under specified conditions — also provides support. The sector's coherence as a single mode is a stronger claim than the research individually supports for either component, though the embodied simulation literature offers some justification for the bundling: both empathic attunement and non-inferential intuition may rely on pre-reflective processing that bypasses deliberative inference. Associated brain regions/networks: **Anterior Insula, Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ), Ventral mPFC**

Mimetic-semantic. Partial support comes from multiple traditions. Mimesis is supported by the imitation and social learning literature, cultural transmission research, and mirror neuron findings about motor resonance during observation. Semantic memory research validates that accumulated cultural-symbolic knowledge functions as a distinct cognitive resource. The pairing of "mimetic" with "semantic" is a less conventional grouping, and the sector's internal coherence as one mode rather than two remains an open question. Associated brain regions/networks: **Mirror Neuron System (Premotor Cortex, Inferior Parietal Lobule), Temporal Pole**

Ideation. Creativity research — divergent thinking, insight, remote associative processing, and default mode network activation during incubation — provides some support. There is evidence that creative ideation

involves distinct neural processes. However, creativity research often frames ideation as an interplay between other cognitive processes rather than a standalone mode, and its designation as a distinct sector is more conventional in humanistic and design-thinking literature than in mainstream cognitive science.

Associated brain regions/networks: **Default Mode Network (DMN), Inferior Parietal Lobule (IPL)**

Tier 3: Emerging or contested empirical support

These sectors have some research backing, but the mode's distinctiveness or epistemic legitimacy remains debated in the scientific mainstream.

Integrative. Research in cognitive integration — binding theory, global workspace theory, and cognitive flexibility — all describe integrative operations. However, the neuroscience tends to treat integration as a function of prefrontal executive networks operating on other processes, not as a coordinate perceptual-cognitive mode. The 2.0 reconception of the integrative sector as a radial funnel rather than a surface region is partly a response to this tension: the sector's structural role is acknowledged as different in kind from the other eleven, and the four-band gradation (coordinative, responsive, directed, vortical) attempts to give that difference architectural specificity. Associated brain regions/networks: **Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC), Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC), Parietal Cortex**

Gnosis. This is the sector with the most contested empirical standing. Contemplative neuroscience — research on nondual awareness, long-term meditator studies, and altered default mode network activity during sustained contemplative practice — provides some evidence that contemplative practice produces distinctive neural signatures. Cross-cultural convergence in reports from experienced contemplatives constitutes phenomenological data worth taking seriously. However, the crucial claim — that contemplative practice provides epistemic access to aspects of reality not available through other modes — remains scientifically unresolved. The neuroscience can confirm that distinctive brain states occur; it cannot confirm that those states constitute genuine knowing of something beyond the practitioner's own neural activity. This does not mean the gnosis sector is wrong — it means it is the sector where the framework is making its strongest bet beyond what current empirical science can adjudicate. Associated brain regions/networks: **Default Mode Network (DMN), Posterior Cingulate Cortex (PCC), Thalamus**

What is not included, and why

The empirical evaluation also identified several cognitive operations that existing research supports as genuine but that the framework does not assign to individual sectors: creativity, moral reasoning, narrative sense-making, and simulative cognition. As discussed in the toroidal architecture section, these are understood in 2.0 as compound operations that require multi-sector engagement and are housed within the integrative sector's radial funnel rather than on the toroidal surface. This decision is itself a theoretical commitment that should be revisited as research accumulates. If future work identifies dedicated neural architectures for any of these operations that are genuinely independent of the sectors the framework already recognizes, the surface partition may need revision.

How to hold this assessment

This ranking privileges empirically measurable constructs, which means it systematically undervalues modes whose epistemic contributions are harder to operationalize. The framework explicitly warns against this form of sectoral bias: demanding that all sectors pass the empirical observation sector's standards of evidence is itself a manifestation of exclusionary narrowing. The ranking should therefore be read as "strength of support within current mainstream cognitive science," not as "probability of being a real mode of knowing." A mode of knowing that is difficult to study using the methods of one sector does not thereby become less real — it becomes harder to validate using those methods. The framework's own completeness principle predicts exactly this difficulty, and this assessment should be held accordingly.

References for primary drive empirical support

For To Exist:

- Cannon, W. B. (1932). *The Wisdom of the Body*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.
- Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. Grosset/Putnam.
- Buss, D. M. (2015). *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (5th ed.). Routledge.

For To Adapt:

- Piaget, J. (1950). *The Psychology of Intelligence*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227–238. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.227>

Doidge, N. (2007). *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*. Viking.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford University Press.

For To Experience:

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Harper & Row.

Berlyne, D. E. (1971). *Aesthetics and Psychobiology*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Plenum Press.

Schultz, W., Dayan, P., & Montague, P. R. (1997). A Neural Substrate of Prediction and Reward. *Science*, 275(5306), 1593–1599.

For To Affect:

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>

French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1959). The Bases of Social Power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in Social Power* (pp. 150–167). University of Michigan Press.

Batson, C. D. (1991). *The Altruism Question: Toward a Social-Psychological Answer*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rizzolatti, G., & Craighero, L. (2004). The Mirror-Neuron System. *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, 27, 169–192.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.neuro.27.070203.144230>

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Weber, M. (1922). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (G. Roth & C. Wittich, Eds.). University of California Press. (Original work published in German)

For To Integrate:

Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). "Self-Determination and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being." *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.

Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Max-Neef, M. (1991). *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections*. New York: Apex Press.

Lawrence, P.R. & Nohria, N. (2002). *Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Baumeister, R.F. & Leary, M.R. (1995). "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation." *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497–529.

References for sectoral empirical support (grouped by thematic or disciplinary focus)

Friston, K. (2010). "The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory?" *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11(2), 127–138.

Clark, A. (2013). "Whatever next? Predictive brains, situated agents, and the future of cognitive science." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36(3), 181–204.

Hohwy, J. (2013). *The Predictive Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Evans, J.St.B.T. & Stanovich, K.E. (2013). "Dual-process theories of higher cognition: advancing the debate." *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8(3), 223–241.

Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Putnam.

LeDoux, J. (1996). *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Panksepp, J. (1998). *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barrett, L.F. (2017). *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Rosch, E. (1978). "Principles of categorization." In E. Rosch & B.B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and Categorization* (pp. 27–48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2009). "Autism: the empathizing-systemizing (E-S) theory." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1156, 68–80.

Dunbar, R.I.M. (1998). "The social brain hypothesis." *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 6(5), 178–190.

Saxe, R. & Kanwisher, N. (2003). "People thinking about thinking people: the role of the temporo-parietal junction in 'theory of mind'." *NeuroImage*, 19(4), 1835–1842.

Raichle, M.E. (2015). "The brain's default mode network." *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, 38, 433–447.

Hasson, U., Ghazanfar, A.A., Galantucci, B., Garrod, S. & Keysers, C. (2012). "Brain-to-brain coupling: a mechanism for creating and sharing a social world." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 16(2), 114–121.

Goldman, A.I. (1999). *Knowledge in a Social World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fleming, S.M. & Dolan, R.J. (2012). "The neural basis of metacognitive ability." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 367(1594), 1338–1349.

Nelson, T.O. & Narens, L. (1990). "Metamemory: a theoretical framework and new findings." In G.H. Bower (Ed.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation* (Vol. 26, pp. 125–173). New York: Academic Press.

Varela, F.J., Thompson, E. & Rosch, E. (1991). *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gallagher, S. (2005). *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Craig, A.D. (2009). "How do you feel — now? The anterior insula and human awareness." *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 10(1), 59–70.

Critchley, H.D. & Garfinkel, S.N. (2017). "Interoception and emotion." *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 17, 7–14.

Zeki, S. (1999). *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chatterjee, A. & Vartanian, O. (2014). "Neuroaesthetics." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 18(7), 370–375.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945/1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. C. Smith. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Gallese, V. & Goldman, A. (1998). "Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind-reading." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 2(12), 493–501.

Rizzolatti, G. & Craighero, L. (2004). "The mirror-neuron system." *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, 27, 169–192.

Gigerenzer, G. (2007). *Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious*. New York: Viking.

Klein, G. (1998). *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Tomasello, M. (1999). *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Meltzoff, A.N. & Moore, M.K. (1977). "Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates." *Science*, 198(4312), 75–78.

Tulving, E. (1985). "Memory and consciousness." *Canadian Psychology*, 26(1), 1–12.

Guilford, J.P. (1967). *The Nature of Human Intelligence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Finke, R.A., Ward, T.B. & Smith, S.M. (1992). *Creative Cognition: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Beeman, M.J. et al. (2004). "Neural activity when people solve verbal problems with insight." *PLoS Biology*, 2(4), e97.

Baars, B.J. (1988). *A Cognitive Theory of Consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dehaene, S. & Naccache, L. (2001). "Towards a cognitive neuroscience of consciousness: basic evidence and a workspace framework." *Cognition*, 79(1–2), 1–37.

Josipovic, Z. (2014). "Neural correlates of nondual awareness in meditation." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1307, 9–18.

Lutz, A., Slagter, H.A., Dunne, J.D. & Davidson, R.J. (2008). "Attention regulation and monitoring in meditation." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12(4), 163–169.

Newberg, A.B. & d'Aquili, E.G. (2001). *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Suddendorf, T. & Corballis, M.C. (2007). "The evolution of foresight: what is mental time travel, and is it unique to humans?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 30(3), 299–313.

Schacter, D.L. & Addis, D.R. (2007). "The cognitive neuroscience of constructive memory: remembering the past and imagining the future." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 362(1481), 773–786.

Greene, J.D., Sommerville, R.B., Nystrom, L.E., Darley, J.M. & Cohen, J.D. (2001). "An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment." *Science*, 293(5537), 2105–2108.

Haidt, J. (2001). "The emotional dog and its rational tail: a social intuitionist approach to moral judgment." *Psychological Review*, 108(4), 814–834.

Russell, B. (1910). "Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 11, 108–128.

Ryle, G. (1949). *The Concept of Mind*. London: Hutchinson.

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2011). *The Primacy of Movement* (expanded 2nd ed.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Craig, A. D. (2002). *How do you feel? Interoception: The sense of the physiological condition of the body*. *Nat Rev Neurosci*, 3(8), 655–666.

Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. (Limbic-Emotive, Somatic-Aesthetic Sectors)

Josipovic, Z. (2014). *Neural correlates of nondual awareness in meditation*. *Ann N Y Acad Sci*, 1307, 92–100.

Lutz, A., et al. (2008). *Regulation of the neural circuitry of emotion by compassion meditation*. *PLoS One*, 3(3), e1897.

Raichle, M. E. (2015). *The brain's default mode network*. *Annu Rev Neurosci*, 38, 433–447.

Rizzolatti, G., & Craighero, L. (2004). *The mirror-neuron system*. *Annu Rev Neurosci*, 27, 169–192.

Singer, T., et al. (2004). *Empathy for pain involves the affective but not sensory components of pain*. *Science*, 303(5661), 1157–1162.

Appendix D: Glossary with Analogies

A

Agapic Dimension (of Omega Point)

- Definition: The structural topology of love-consciousness, where the well-being of the other becomes a constituent of the well-being of the self without diminishing the self. Agape is love as a relational structure, not just a feeling or virtue.
- Analogy: Like a web of interconnected nodes, where the vibration of one node interacts (and, ultimately harmonizes) with all others, creating a unified field of resonance; *agape is that web*.

Apophatic Dimension (of Omega Point)

- Definition: The aspect of Omega that cannot be predicated—it is beyond conceptualization, description, or direct knowledge. It aligns with mystical traditions (e.g., *sunyata* in Buddhism, *neti neti* in Advaita Vedanta).
- Analogy: Like trying to describe the color purple to someone who has never seen it — it is the absence of what can be named, yet it is not "nothing."

Art of Suspension

- Definition: The practice of holding content in awareness without rushing to evaluate or resolve it. It is a core discipline of the neutral holding field.
- Analogy: Like a suspension bridge — it holds weight (competing ideas, emotions, or insights) without collapsing, allowing safe passage (integration) to occur over time.

Asymptotic (Omega Point)

- Definition: Omega is never fully reached but is the horizon toward which integration tends. It is a regulatory ideal, guiding the process of synthesis without being a final destination.
- Analogy: Like a guiding star for a sailor — it provides direction for the journey but is not the journey's end.

B

Bias-Resistance (Condition 4)

- Definition: The framework's claim that integrated practitioners are less susceptible to cognitive biases (e.g., confirmation bias, Dunning-Kruger effect) due to multi-sectoral engagement.
- Analogy: Like a multi-lens camera — each lens (sector) corrects the distortions of the others, producing a clearer image.

C

Categorization-Gate Problem

- Definition: The risk that Sector Theory's 12-sector partition may inadvertently force observations into predefined categories, obscuring anomalies or boundary cases.
- Analogy: Like a Procrustean cage — stretching or cutting reality to fit a predetermined framework.

Coordinative Band (of Integrative Sector)

- Definition: The outermost band of the integrative funnel, representing automatic, pre-attentive cross-sector binding (e.g., sensory integration, pattern-matching).
- Analogy: Like the background hum of a computer's operating system — it runs continuously, coordinating inputs without conscious effort.

Cosmic-Participatory Register (of Integration Drive)

- Definition: The fifth register of the integration drive, where the practitioner engages with the Omega Point horizon and the topology of love-consciousness at a cosmic scale.
- Analogy: Like a dancer in a vast, invisible choreography — each movement (action) contributes to a larger, unfolding pattern (the integralizing process).

Crucible Vortex

- Definition: The dynamic center of the toroidal architecture, where poloidal and toroidal flows converge to generate multidialectical synthesis. It is energized by agapic love-consciousness.
- Analogy: Like a whirlpool in a river — where multiple currents (sectors) meet, creating a powerful, transformative force.

D

Directed Band (of Integrative Sector)

- Definition: The third band of the integrative funnel, representing conscious, deliberate cross-sector integration (e.g., creativity, moral reasoning, narrative construction).
- Analogy: Like a conductor leading an orchestra—each instrument (sector) is intentionally coordinated to produce a harmonious whole.

Dunning-Kruger Disarmament

- Definition: A discipline to counteract the categorization-gate problem and confirmation bias by actively seeking disconfirming evidence and revisiting the framework's own commitments.
- Analogy: Like a scientist designing experiments to disprove their own hypothesis — actively testing for weaknesses to strengthen the overall theory.

E

Ecological Register (of Integration Drive)

- Definition: The third register of the integration drive, where the practitioner seeks embeddedness in the living world (e.g., recognizing interdependence with ecosystems).
- Analogy: Like a tree in a forest — its roots (actions) are intertwined with the mycelial network (ecological relationships), sustaining the whole.

Empirical Observation Sector

- Definition: The sector concerned with direct, measurable perception of the external world (e.g., scientific observation, sensory data).
- Analogy: Like a camera lens — it captures what is visibly present but does not interpret meaning.

Exclusionary Barrier

- Definition: The membrane that evaluates whether to admit, suppress, or reform new information. It can operate in reflexive-exclusion mode (defensive) or thoughtful-integration mode (open).
 - Analogy: Like a bouncer at a club — it decides who (information) gets in, based on the establishment's (mind's) current rules.
-

F

Faith (as Cultivated Character)

- Definition: A disposition of trust, hope, and persistence that sustains the neutral holding field and integrative process. It is not a belief but a quality of the membrane's function.
- Analogy: Like the oil in an engine — it reduces friction (fear, defensiveness) so the parts (sectors) can move smoothly together.

Faith-Conduct Diagnostic

- Definition: A discipline to assess whether one is operating from rational faith (open, revisable) or irrational belief (dogmatic, exclusionary). Observable in conduct over time.
 - Analogy: Like a litmus test — it reveals the underlying chemistry (faith vs. belief) of one's engagement with the framework.
-

G

Gnosis Sector

- Definition: The sector of contemplative insight, direct spiritual knowing, or mystical experience (e.g., *unio mystica*, apophatic encounters).
 - Analogy: Like a deep well — its waters (insights) are accessed through stillness and depth, not surface-level analysis.
-

I

Institutional Register (of Integration Drive)

- Definition: The fourth register of the integration drive, where the practitioner engages with collective structures (e.g., communities, civic institutions, traditions).
- Analogy: Like a thread in a tapestry — each individual's actions contribute to the larger pattern (society).

Integrative Sector

- Definition: The 12th sector, which projects radially inward toward the crucible vortex, bringing the contributions of other sectors into productive relation. It operates through four functional bands (coordinative, responsive, directed, vortical).
- Analogy: Like a master weaver — it takes threads (sectoral inputs) of different colors and textures and creates a cohesive fabric (synthesis).

Integration Drive

- Definition: The fifth primary drive, which motivates connection, coherence, and mutual recognition across five registers (intra-personal, interpersonal, ecological, institutional, cosmic-participatory).

- Analogy: Like a river flowing toward the ocean — it carries all parts of the self (and society) toward a larger, unifying body (Omega).

Interpersonal Register (of Integration Drive)

- Definition: The second register of the integration drive, where the practitioner seeks genuine reciprocal relation with others (e.g., empathy, mutual care).
- Analogy: Like a bridge between two islands — it connects separate lands (individuals) so they can share resources (experiences, insights).

Intra-Personal Register (of Integration Drive)

- Definition: The first register of the integration drive, where the practitioner seeks internal coherence among their own sectors.
- Analogy: Like a conductor harmonizing an internal orchestra — each instrument (sector) plays its part, but the conductor (integration drive) ensures they work together.

M

Membrane (Exclusionary Barrier)

- See Exclusionary Barrier.

Multidialectical Synthesis

- Definition: The process by which the crucible vortex generates qualitatively new insights from the simultaneous engagement of multiple sectors. It is the highest form of integration.
- Analogy: Like a kaleidoscope — each turn (sectoral input) creates a new, intricate pattern (synthesis) that could not be predicted from the individual pieces.

N

Neutral Holding Field

- Definition: A cultivated space of receptive stillness where competing or contradictory inputs can coexist without premature resolution. It is the precondition for multiperspectival surety.
- Analogy: Like a quiet room with many doors — each door (sector) can open, and the sounds (inputs) from each can be heard without drowning out the others.

O

Omega Point

- Definition: The asymptotic horizon toward which all integralizing processes (consciousness, evolution, cosmology, love) tend. It is the limit of differentiation-followed-by-integration.
- Analogy: Like the vanishing point in a perspective drawing — it is not a place on the canvas (reality) but the point toward which all lines (processes) converge.

P

Poloidal Flow

- Definition: The circular flow around the minor radius of the torus, representing temporal recursion (cycling of input through evaluation, integration, emission, and re-encounter) that instantiates sector development.
- Analogy: Like a rollercoaster — it travels in a set track back on itself, revisiting the same operations in a recurring cycle.

Predictive Efficacy (Condition 1)

- Definition: The testable condition that multi-sectoral integration produces better operational outcomes than single-sector specialization on complex problems.
 - Analogy: Like a Swiss Army knife — it may not be the best tool for every single task, but its versatility (multi-sectoral approach) makes it more effective overall.
-

R

Reflexive-Exclusion Mode (of Membrane)

- Definition: The default mode of the membrane, where it defensively rejects or rationalizes new information that challenges existing commitments.
- Analogy: Like a closed fist — it protects what is inside but cannot grasp anything new.

Responsive Band (of Integrative Sector)

- Definition: The second band of the integrative funnel, representing reactive, partially conscious cross-sector harmonization (e.g., emotional coloring of judgments, felt rightness of conclusions).
 - Analogy: Like a jam session — musicians (sectors) riff off each other spontaneously, creating harmony without a predetermined plan.
-

S

Sectoral Partition

- Definition: The 12 distinct modes of perception-cognition proposed by Sector Theory: empirical observation, systematizing, discursive, reflective, ideation, mimetic-semantic, social, somatic-aesthetic, limbic-emotive, intuitive-empathic, gnosis, and integrative.
- Analogy: Like a stained-glass window — each pane (sector) is a different color (mode of knowing), and the light (truth) shines through all of them to create a cohesive image.

Synthesis Principle

- Definition: The principle that development within any sector is fragile without coordination, harmonization, and synthesis with other sectors.
- Analogy: Like stone and mortar in a wall — the stones (sectors) are strong, but without mortar (synthesis), the wall (knowledge) will collapse under pressure.

Systematizing Sector

- Definition: The sector concerned with organizing, categorizing, and structuring information (e.g., logical frameworks, taxonomies).
 - Analogy: Like a librarian — it sorts and labels books (information) so they can be found and used effectively.
-

T

Toroidal Architecture

- Definition: The 3D donut-shaped model of Sector Theory, where poloidal and toroidal flows interact to create a dynamic, regenerative system of knowledge, integration, and synthesis.

- Analogy: Like a donut — the hole in the center (apophatic Omega) is as essential as the dough (toroidal surface of sectors).

Toroidal Flow

- Definition: The circular flow around the major radius of the torus, representing linear temporal development of all sectors combined.
- Analogy: Like a conveyor belt — it moves forward in a straight line, carrying all the sectors along with it.

V

Vortical Band (of Integrative Sector)

- Definition: The innermost band of the integrative funnel, where multidialectical synthesis occurs. It dissolves into the crucible vortex at its center.
- Analogy: Like the eye of a hurricane — it is the still, transformative center where the most intense forces (sectoral inputs) converge.

Vestigial Collapse

- Definition: The process by which earlier developmental structures (e.g., beliefs, habits) that once supported growth become obsolete or counterproductive and are discarded or de-energized.
- Analogy: Like a caterpillar's cocoon — it is shed when the butterfly (new stage of development) no longer needs it.

Appendix E: Integral Lifework Developmental Correlations

Moral Function, Political Economy & Self-Identification (November 2014)

The following chart is a consolidation of developmental themes recurring throughout my writings on Integral Lifework. Some of the definitions and terms have been updated to reflect an evolving understanding and should replace previous iterations. Although important elements of the idea have been identified as part of a progression inherent to mystical gnosis (see [The Vital Mystic](#) and [Essential Mysticism](#)), “Unknowing Emptiness” is formally identified as a strata of moral valuation here for the first time; importantly, in more brief and diluted forms it is also a transitional component between the other strata. Within the chart are terms and concepts that are more thoroughly defined and attributed in the course of the works referenced in each column heading. Some of the principles of development covered in those works include:

- For development to occur, all dimensions of being as they are defined in Integral Lifework (see the [Integral Lifework Nourishment Assessment](#) for a summary, or [True Love, Integral Lifework Theory & Practice](#) for an in-depth description) must be consciously nurtured, harmonized and progressively integrated. This nourishment creates the supportive structures – both individually and collectively – that stimulate and support a moral maturation process.
- It is not possible to fully and consistently operationalize next-level moral valuations without first experiencing the intentions, habits and consequences of previous orientations.
- Development is not uniform, orderly or irreversible. Instead, each dimension of being may advance independently of the others, so that imbalances in nourishment tend to be reflected in lopsided maturation. Consequently, the resulting evolution is more like a dynamic dance than a linear progression.
- Compassionate integration of earlier values orientations does not preclude abandonment of certain elements of those previous orientations; in other words, as moral function evolves, some attitudes and priorities may become vestigial, subordinated or sloughed off entirely. It is important to differentiate this process from repression; instead, this is more of a de-energizing of unskillful or antagonistic concepts, relationships and patterns.
- The maturation of our values system – and inhabiting the moral strata as they are defined here – has consequences for both our [Functional Intelligence](#), our ability to [manage complexity](#), and our capacity for sustaining advanced civic ideologies and systems.

Self-- Identification <i>(Memory : Self, 2010)</i>	Strata of Moral Valuation <i>(True Love, Integral Lifework Theory & Practice, 2009)</i>	Level of Political Economy <i>(Political Economy and the Unitive Principle, 2013)</i>
Unitive Infinite Self Equates both Being and Non--Being (or Non-- Identification, "No Self") and Compassionate Integration of All That Is, Including Previous Self-- Identifications	<p style="text-align: center;">Applied Nonduality</p> <p>This is an expression of mystical, nondual consciousness as a supremely unfettered existence where intuitions of universal freedom are fully realized. There is a certain irony that the autonomy one's ego so craved in earlier strata is now readily available through the absence of ego. The lack of a distinct sense of self in some ways eradicates any sort of identification at all -- so non--being is equivalent to being, and self is equivalent to both nothingness and previous conceptions of "the All." Here inexhaustible loving kindness is conclusively harmonized through advanced forms of discernment. An enduring all--inclusive love--consciousness integrates all previous moral orientations, current intentions and actions into a carefree -- but nevertheless carefully balanced -- flow; a flow into what might be described as "ultimate purpose." Previous orientations are then viewed not as right or wrong, but as a spectrum of imperfect expressions of that ultimate purpose. In this final letting go of self--identification, all nourishment is love, all love is nourishment, and all values hierarchies are subordinated to skillfully compassionate affection. At the same time, this realization and any other constructs become just that: constructs, inventions of the mind. Up until now, the main concern of moral valuation has been the orientation of self--to--self, self--to--other, self--to--community, self--to--environment, self--to--planet, self--to--humanity, self--to--nothingness, self--to--All, etc. In other words, previous values hierarchies tended to be preoccupied with the context of the self. In this stratum, that context is no longer relevant, because there is no self, no no--self, and not even a concept of self or no--self. Along the same lines, the past/present/future construction of time dissolves into insignificance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 10</p> <p>In Applied Nonduality, the concept of property and its categorizations, valuations and layers of abstraction evaporates entirely, and regression to into previous modes of exchange and valuation is inconceivable. The unending flow of an actualized, overarching purpose is all that remains here, as guided and energized by an all--inclusive love--consciousness.</p>
Formless Infinite Self Equates Non-- Being, Non-- Identification, "No Self"	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Unknowing Emptiness</p> <p>This mode of being has been the backdrop for all previous strata, and has woven itself into those strata at various points in the form of "letting go" of previous constructs and patterns of being – we just haven't fully comprehended the scope of that letting go until now. This is the stratum first of radical deconstruction, then chaotic revolution, a tearing asunder of the veil of certainty, challenging of self--concept and of the nature of all relationships and interdependencies, and fluid revision of the context and content of all moral strata and systems. Once again, the theme of acquiescence has always been part of previous transitions and evolutions, but here we fully inhabit that space and allow it to permeate our consciousness and interactions. This is the gap where faith and doubt collide, where rational and nonrational reconcile, where manifest and unmanifest infuse each other; this is the crucible where <i>agape</i> and emptiness forge a new alloy. As expressed in actions and intentions, this stratum frequently feels like either fragmenting disruption on the one hand, or perceived paralysis on the other: either a grenade of Light that exposes underlying stucturelessness, or the quiescent twilight of action--without--action. Ultimately, however, this is where multidialectical tensions can resolve in neutral stillness, where negation becomes the midwife of creation, and where detachment creates a fertile ground for more skillful love--consciousness. In terms of time--space, "now" still predominates, but its context dilates to encompass every point in the continuum previously considered past, present or future; the now becomes <i>potential</i> even as it ceases "becoming" anything at all.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 9.5</p> <p>As it manifests in a political economy, Unknowing Emptiness represents a period of turmoil and self--doubt, and has usually been a necessary component of transition from each Level to the next throughout development. Here, however, the unmaking of previous conceptions and orientations is more complete; a more vigorous annihilation of all that came before and all that is anticipated. Representations and abstractions of property may still be <i>sacred</i> (or valued), but constructs like <i>ownership</i> increasingly become erroneous to the core experience of unitive interdependency, and thus disconnected from exchanges and relations; the footing for values hierarchies evaporates. As may have been the case in previous Levels of political economy, we can experience the momentum of earlier structures, systems, valuations and purpose carrying us forward as operative habits, but we come to recognize that these, too, are nothing more than tenuous, conditional constructs. So this is the moment in the trapeze act when we collectively let go of the rope that has swung us here, without knowing for certain if there is another rope to grab on the other side.</p>

<p>Shared Spirit Identification with All That Is as Defined by Shared Spiritual Understanding</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spiritual Universality</p> <p>Through persistent and intimate connection with an absolute, universal inclusiveness of being, moral function is defined by whatever most skillfully facilitates "the good of All" (that is, the greatest good, for the greatest number, for the greatest duration). "The good of All," in turn, is an evolving intuition, a successive unfolding of mystical awareness in concert with dialectical cognition and neutrality of personal will. However, it tends to remain more of a felt sense than an exclusively rational construct. Skillfulness can still be refined through empirical experimentation and observation, but it is always subjected to a filter of intensified and unconditional compassion -- a felt sense as well. Identification with the All is fluid and seamless, and moral thought and action flowing from this identification are also fluid and seamless. That is not to say that this stratum can't occasionally be interrupted by regressions to previous strata within one or more dimensions of being (usually as a reaction to overwhelming or stressful situations), but the contrast and incongruity of those regressions is strikingly obvious. Past, present and future become a continuum where "now" is less fixed; the experience of time itself is more relative and process-oriented. Nevertheless, "now" remains the primary reference for that process.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 9</p> <p>Spiritual Universality begins to revise the <i>common</i> property designation still further. The desire to elevate intersubjectivity relaxes until a more unitive perspective permeates all valuations. Now there is a shared intuition that everything that once resided in other <i>ownership</i> categories is actually <i>sacred</i>. In fact, those previous categorizations are mainly perceived as destructive and unhealthy, and so any lingering subordinate relationships with property dissolve. However, because this stratum is so fluid --- and because it can still be interrupted by regression --- subordinate relationships may appear and disappear as required in continuously revising contexts. Despite these difficult but sometimes necessary hiccups, the primary flow of Level 9 is that the entirety of existence has intrinsic value, and so all human activity must engage that existence with unconditional compassion. There is also a strong intuition of a shared, unifying purpose, and an increasing desire to acquiesce into that purpose. At this stage, <i>holistic value</i> becomes equivalent to the <i>sacred</i>, intrinsic value that is collectively held.</p>
<p>All-Being Identification with Progressively Broader Inclusions of Consciousness & Being Together with All Supportive Systems</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transpersonal Holism</p> <p>This stratum is marked by an increasing flexibility of moral orientation. For example, the realization that more than one values hierarchy can be valid, that someone can operate within multiple values hierarchies simultaneously, or that seemingly opposing values hierarchies can synthesize a new, higher order moral orientation. This intersubjective moral ambiguity is then navigated through the discernment of intentional, strategic outcomes that benefit the largest majority possible. Definition of what constitutes "the largest majority possible" likewise changes and evolves, but is strongly informed by transpersonal perceptions and experiences. In turn, identification with this transpersonal connectedness subordinates other identifications, so that, for example, experiencing a shared ground of being is indistinguishable from compassionate affection for all beings, and compassionate affection for all beings is indistinguishable from attenuation of individual ego. The relevant time---space for this stratum becomes contextual; the relevance of past, present and future shifts with current priorities, and the cycles and patterns of time begin to give way to a continuum.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 8</p> <p>In Transpersonal Holism, the process of commonization is now complete. There may still be pockets within the commonized architecture that hold on to previous property categorizations, but they become exceptions that are functionally and systemically isolated within the accepted status quo. Because of the intersubjective validation promoted in this stratum, systems and institutions are resilient enough to tolerate a broad diversity of moral function while still advancing a higher order moral orientation, thus the tumult we saw in a World---Centric stratum subsides. Through this stabilization, many forms of what in previous strata were considered to be <i>potential</i> property can now effortlessly be designated as <i>sacred</i>, purely to honor and celebrate their intrinsic value. In this level, the concepts of exclusion or exclusivity are so rare that even the designation of <i>personal</i> property becomes unnecessary. Thus even the concept of <i>holistic value</i> itself no longer provides significant differentiation from internalized values hierarchies or collective relationships with property. All the multiplicities of nourishment have now been integrated into a single thought field -- an integral noosphere -- so that <i>holistic value</i> becomes a collective experience and intuitive understanding that validates itself.</p>

<p>Earth Life Identification with Every Living System on Earth – All Their Individual Components & Supportive Environments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">World-Centric</p> <p>At this point there is a greater appreciation and acceptance of ecologies that facilitate, transcend and include human society. These ecologies may contain biological, metaphysical, quantum or other systems--oriented constructs, with the feature that these systems are vast, complex and interdependent. Here moral function is inspired by individual and collective commitment to understanding and supporting those systems in order to support all life. Personal identification with this broader, ecological consciousness expands humanity--centric compassion and concern into world--centric compassion and concern. Values hierarchies now begin to be viewed as a primary form of nourishment, from which all other nourishment is derived. Time dilates and slows a bit here, tending to be viewed more as cycles and patterns than a linear progression.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 7</p> <p>In the World--Centric moral valuation stratum, all previous property categorizations dissolve into a dominant <i>common</i> property paradigm. Because of a now firmly established interdependent systems orientation, any designations of <i>private</i>, <i>potential</i> and <i>communal</i> property become increasingly non--existent. Even <i>public domain</i> property becomes a temporary holding space for transition to <i>common</i> property assignment. We also see an enlarging scope of <i>wild things</i> set aside as perpetually <i>sacred</i>, not as an investment for future utility, but because <i>wild things</i> are esteemed in and of themselves (i.e. have intrinsic value independent of human valuation). Once the commonization of property is pervasive, there is no longer an elite class to disrupt or exclude others from sharing equally in property benefits. And because there is so little <i>private</i> property, a conventional exchange economy no longer exists in the mainstream. However, until commonization is complete, other property categorizations and their resultant economies and classes can persist, creating an organic, hybrid environment that is understandably tumultuous and unstable, but nevertheless reaches onward towards Level 8. At this stage, a subtle, multidimensional and highly sophisticated <i>holistic valuation</i> is replacing <i>exchange value</i> in human relationships with property across all OSI <i>abstraction</i> layers.</p>
<p>Human Society Identification with All People Everywhere</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Principled Rationalism</p> <p>Moral function is now defined by a rationally defined set of reasoned moral principles, principles with the unifying objective of benefiting all of humanity. For anyone operating in this stratum, empirical validation of moral efficacy is of particularly compelling interest; what really works should be embraced, and what doesn't should be discarded. There is also an additional form of individuation here, where identification with previous communities (communities whose values and goals had previously been facilitated and integrated) begins to fade, and is replaced with increasing identification with, and compassion for, all human beings. Social divisions are discarded in favor of equal status. The future can now become an all--consuming fixation that drives more and more decisions, the past becomes an advising reference, and the current moment a fleeting absorption. As a result, time tends to both constrict and accelerate in this stratum, remaining linear in experience and conception.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 6</p> <p>Arriving at the stratum of Principled Rationalism, the property organization of previous Tribal, Individual and Communal moral orientation is more vigorously challenged. <i>Public domain</i> property now becomes the ideal categorization, with <i>private</i> and <i>communal</i> assignments subordinated to that objective. For the first time, setting aside <i>wild things</i> as <i>sacred</i> may be considered, but mainly as an investment for future resource depletion or other <i>public domain</i> need; so, provisionally <i>sacred</i> until a scarcity crisis assigns it to <i>potential</i>. The desire to maintain an egalitarian <i>public domain</i> property categorization can, however, lead to behaviors that echo previous moral orientations; for example, a de facto elitist privatization of property "held in public trust" but controlled mainly by the most influential class, for the benefit of that class. <i>Holistic value</i> calculations now have a much more diverse and inclusive basis, as collective understanding of what constitutes nourishment and the interdependence of all nourishment dimensions becomes more sophisticated. <i>Exchange value</i> is increasingly aligned with this more complex <i>holistic value</i> across most OSI <i>abstraction</i> layers.</p>

<p>Affinitive Community Identification with All People Who Share the Same Values or Experience</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cooperative Communalism</p> <p>Here a communal role and collective responsibility is firmly accepted and established as part of moral function, and community is defined by shared values and experiences, rather than just shared benefits or just laws. The necessity of collaborative contribution to human welfare is understood, and the desire to compete for personal advantage fades away. A community's shared values are appreciated, integrated and supported in order to further that community's goals and collective nourishment, but without the suppression or sacrificing of personal values and identity that were common in earlier tribalism. Thus distinctions of class, caste, and social position tend to attenuate. This stratum also tends to invite preoccupation with the future, sometimes even beyond one's personal future, because we are charting a course through increased complexity. Time is experienced and conceived of as episodic.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 5</p> <p>As Individualistic imperatives wane, a more Communal flavor of property assignment takes hold. Initially, there will be a desire to maintain <i>private</i> property for personal gain, but eventually that privatization is understood to be collectively shared by an exclusive group, and collective advantage begins to outweigh personal advantage. Tentative <i>public domain</i> property is still assigned because of its exchange facility within the community and with other communities, but it retains its <i>potential</i> to become <i>communal</i> property, especially if other, highly valued resources become depleted. In these strata anything not perceived as having such <i>potential</i> may be relegated to <i>common</i> or <i>sacred</i> property, once again increasing prestige for the community, but this orientation is eventually held with less exclusivity, and a more generous attitude of access and benefit to other communities. A fuller understanding of interdependent nourishment processes leads to a broader, more inclusive calculation of <i>holistic value</i>. Positive and negative externalities now gain importance in that calculation as well, especially when they impact social capital within and between communities. Thus <i>holistic value</i> begins to influence <i>exchange value</i> to a greater degree.</p>
<p>Beneficial Community Identification with All People Who Benefit Each Other in Some Way</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Competitive Communalism</p> <p>Moral function is strongly influenced by personal acceptance of the importance of participating in a mutually beneficial and lawfully just community, while still retaining individual uniqueness. However, this initial expansion into a communal moral orientation usually orbits around competition. Competition with others for personal positional power and influence in the community; competition with other moral orientations, asserting the relevance of one's own views and priorities; non-conformance with, and continual challenging of, a community's established values hierarchy; and competition for other forms of social capital. In this stratum the future gains more importance as one strategizes navigation of these competitions. The past also regains its teaching role, with emphasis on both failures and successes to inform current strategies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 4</p> <p>In Individualistic moral orientations, <i>communal</i> property becomes increasingly employed for the collective benefit of affinitive or opportunistic associations, and we might even see the first glimpses of <i>public domain</i> allocation beyond the facilitation of secure exchange, if only to be perceived as concerned about the collective good. However, even such <i>public domain</i> assignments will be tentative; in reality everything in the <i>public domain</i> is still <i>potential</i> property, only temporarily or conditionally set aside. So <i>private</i> property still maintains its principal importance in these strata, if sometimes dressed up for the constructive illusion of collective advantage. Assignments of <i>sacred</i> property are also tolerated for the same reason, but <i>wild things</i> are still viewed as <i>common</i> or <i>potential</i> property. <i>Holistic value</i> can now be calculated more flexibly, with a perceived advantage-of--the--moment in mind, along with all previous input streams. Nourishment differentiation is</p>
<p>Committed Greater Self Acceptance of the Identify of "Self" as Larger Than Associations with Group(s) or Ideas</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contributive Individualism</p> <p>Now more fully individuated from the primary tribe and its social constraints, one continues to be committed to one's own well-being, freedom, wholeness and access to more subtle, nuanced and complex nourishment resources. Moral function is increasingly defined by efforts that appear "good" or helpful to others, as framed by conscience, the context-of--the--moment and interpersonal relationships. In this sense, moral relativism is derived from one's own experiences and interactions, and tends to be maintained and defended within this self--referential absorption. The present is still paramount here. This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.</p>	

<p>Tentative Greater Self Identification with a Possible "Self" Larger Than Associations with Group(s) or Ideas</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunistic Individualism</p> <p>This stratum is part of an individuation process from the tribe and the tribe's values hierarchy. Moral orientation may lapse into previous strata, but is otherwise centered around a sense of obligation to one's own uniqueness, freedom, well-being and wholeness. As a result, one is open to more complex nourishment that was not available within egoic or tribal orientations. Probably as a component of emancipation from tribal expectations, there tends to be minimal concern about the impact of one's individuation process on others. In this stratum, the present once again gains preeminence; the past is being left behind, and the future matters less than assertiveness in the now.</p>	<p>more defined, but its interdependence is not yet appreciated, and so negative externalities are generally dismissed. Thus <i>holistic valuation</i> still has little correlation with <i>exchange value</i>.</p>
<p>Secure Tribal Position Identification with "My People"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defensive Tribalism</p> <p>Here the social order and internal rules of our primary social group(s) are championed as correct and proper both within the tribe (regulation) and to the outside world (proselytization). Competition with -- and subjugation of -- other individuals or groups outside of the tribe (or one's class, caste or social position) becomes more pronounced. Thus moral function is defined by rigid definitions and legalistic rules (law & order, right & wrong, black & white) that justify and secure personal standing within the tribe, as well as the tribe's standing within a given environment. Now, because one's tribal position is secure, the past again dominates. Past authorities, traditions, insights and experiences infuse the present legalistic frame with self-righteous justification.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 3</p> <p>As moral function evolves through Tribal strata, a more <i>communal</i> categorization may take hold for a few shared resources, but the emphasis will still remain on extensive privatization and various hierarchies of <i>private</i> property. Even from a Tribal perspective, "communal" may just represent a form of elitist privatization for the most influential class, and so here, too, anything not yet privatized will be viewed as <i>potential</i> in nature, including <i>wild things</i>. <i>Public domain</i> property is only grudgingly tolerated in order to facilitate and secure an exchange economy for <i>private</i> property. <i>Sacred</i> property may be defined in these strata, but only for the prestige or perceived advantage of the tribe in competition with other tribes. Now externals begin influencing <i>holistic value</i> formation, as the tribe's priorities usurp personal gratification. However, <i>holistic valuation</i> remains fairly abstracted from <i>exchange values</i>.</p>
<p>Insecure Tribal Position Identification with "The People I Want to be My People"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tribal Acceptance</p> <p>Conformance with social expectations, and approval of one's primary social group(s), governs moral function here. What is "right" or "wrong" is defined by what increases or attenuates social capital and standing within the group(s). The acknowledged link between personal survival and tribal acceptance expands self-centeredness to tribe-centeredness, but otherwise operates similarly to lower moral strata. In this stratum, one's "tribe" tends to be fairly immediate, and fairly small -- a family, team, group of peers, gang, etc. Now the relevant timeframe shifts back into the immediate future, where status and influence will either be lost or realized; the past may still be instructive, but what waits around the next bend in the road is what preoccupies.</p>	
<p>Ego Identity Identification with Ego</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-Protective Egoism</p> <p>Moral function is governed by acquisitive, manipulative, consumptive or hedonistic patterns that accumulate and defend personal gains (i.e. secure nourishment sources) in order to insulate the ego from risks and loss. This self-centeredness may be masked by primitive adaptive personas that navigate basic reciprocity, but is generally indifferent to other people except for the ability of others to satisfy personal demands. Now the past can actually become more important than the present, because the past is where wrongs were suffered and gains realized. Reflections on the present and future, on the other hand, tend to be inhabited by fear of risk and loss.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 2</p> <p>In the Egoic valuation strata, an I/Me/Mine moral orientation organizes property into the most <i>private</i>, personally consolidated state possible. Anything that hasn't yet been acquired is viewed as <i>potential</i> property, and nothing is <i>sacred</i>. Likewise, <i>holistic value</i> is generated through I/Me/Mine calculations, and there is only a vague sense of nourishment differentiation, usually derived from the current and most compelling appetite.</p>

<p>Formative Identity Developing Ego and Ego--Identity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-Assertive Egoism</p> <p>The aggressive utilization of basic tools to satisfy one's own wants and whims, usually without regard to the impact on others, is an overwhelming moral imperative here. In most situations, this imperative is only moderated by fear of "being caught" and the personal embarrassment, punishment or loss of personal nourishment that may follow. The relevant timeframe for fulfilling one's desires expands a little here, so that gratification can be delayed until the near--future. However, the past is largely irrelevant, except as a reminder of negative consequences to be avoided.</p>	
<p>Unformed Identity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↑↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Egoless Raw Need</p> <p>Naïve, helpless state in which volition is centered around unrestrained basic nourishment in every moment, but where the mechanisms of needs fulfillment are unknown, unskilled or otherwise inaccessible. In this stratum, the scope of one's relevant time--space for this needs fulfillment is almost always the immediate, everpresent <i>now</i>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 1</p> <p>In Egoless Raw Need, property <i>ownership</i> categorization hasn't yet occurred. In a strange sense, all property is probably viewed as <i>common</i> and boundryless; it is a limitless resource existing only to service to fundamental appetites and willful imperatives. There is not yet a care for, or conception of, <i>ownership</i> assignment or exclusion. In the same way, <i>holistic value</i> is monodimensional: there is only the primary and singular raw need that subjugates all nourishment differentiation.</p>

Elements of these progressions have been theorized and speculated about by a number of thinkers – Aristotle, Paul of Tarsus, Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, Rumi, Hefez, Teresa of Avila, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Rousseau, Smith, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Freud, James, Tielhard de Chardin, Jung, Piaget, Underhill, Aurobindo, Merton, Lewis, Maslow, Krishnamurti, Freire, Gebser, Loevinger, Graves, Murdoch, Fowler, Kohlberg and Wilber...to name just a fraction. And although many of these ideas can be experientially confirmed as legitimate placeholders for an emergent psycho--social--spiritual process, it is extremely difficult to empirically validate them. So for now this is just a theory, and one that relies in equal parts on *gnosis*, felt sense, intellectual intuitions, rational dialectics and creative extrapolations; exclude any of these contributing streams from the field of synthesis and the theory will lose cohesion. I also suspect there are additional gradations to be defined. My hope is that the application of Integral Lifework's nourishment paradigm in various contexts, and by large groups of people who have committed themselves to the greater good, will produce a large enough body of evidence to either refute, revise or expand these developmental correlations.

For additional information about the larger body of my work, please visit www.tcollinslogan.com. For more information about Integral Lifework, please visit www.integrallifework.com.