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Iconism — Orientation Note, 24 August 2026 (v001)

Working note, Iconism Theory project. Written after reading the fifteen files added to the project between 21 and 24 August 2026: the Tier 1 handover package (Iconism Interface v002, The Tier Boundary v002, README – handover package v008), the four Claude-side notes produced against it (iconism_findings_065A_v001, iconism_tier_reconciliation_v001, iconism_dialogue_findings_21aug_v001, iconism_dialogue_findings_22aug_v001), the full 21–22 August transcript, and the three conversations with Google’s assistant (An exploration of inner space, how does panpsychism work, The issue with Consciousness..., and the IIT-pseudoscience thread).

Its purpose is to say what in that material changes the working perspective on Iconism as Tier 2, what it supersedes, and what it opens. Nothing has been written to source. A Maze of Dimensions v008 has not been read in full — it is Tier 1’s own document and the reconciliation note works from its Appendix A.

0. The short version

Three months ago Iconism was a topic list in philosophy of mind with a substrate document under it. It now has a spine, and the spine runs top to bottom: Tier 2 is **the behaviour of Tier 1** — four ways of doing against four ways of being — with a working test attached; icons sit at the **air position in every quadrant** and differ in each; the **socket** is Tier 2’s seed paradox stated from above; the **composite of all icons is itself an icon** of higher order; and the close of Tier 2 is **awareness becoming objective fact by being shared**.

That is a derivation, not a collection. It did not exist in May.

The consequence for this project is that the two documents which set its method — the project instructions and the concept map — are the most out-of-date things in it, and the Philosophical Log v6 is no longer the calibration reference the instructions make it.

1. What the August material changes

1.1 Tier 2 has a subject matter, and it is narrower than the topic list assumes

The interface note's §2 is the most consequential single paragraph in the handover: *Tier 1 is about what things are; Tier 2 is about the behaviour of Tier 1 — not what is, but what it does.* With the standing test attached: **a claim about what something is, made at Tier 2, either belongs at Tier 1 or means the boundary has been drawn in the wrong place.**

The project's topic categorisation is a philosophy-of-mind subject list — icons, conceivability, AI, positioning. That list is still right about *content*. It is wrong about *shape*. Iconism is now a structural theory of what Tier 1's facts do, of which the philosophy of mind is a consequence, and the order of work follows the structure rather than the subjects.

The is/does test has already bitten, in `icon_dynamics_v002.md` §2.2 and §8, and in both places the repair shortens the document because the ontology it was arguing for now arrives from below.

1.2 The Philosophical Log v6 is no longer the calibration reference

The instructions say that where the Log has a sharpened version of a position appearing in earlier form in the diary corpus, *the Log's version is the reference for what currently counts as settled*. That has been overtaken on at least four topics:

Topic	Superseding material
Consciousness / awareness	F62–F68 (22 August): icons as building blocks, the composite as higher-order icon, Dave, sharing as the close
Conceivability	F42, F43 (065A, July): the position-qualia zombie; conceiving requires an icon
Zombies	Diary 064A + F42 together; see §3 below
AI	F49, F50 (065A, July): material link versus virtual link; the orthogonality of empirical origin

The Log stays valuable as the last consolidated statement before August, and its own words on the four p-figures remain the best short statements of the verdicts. It is no longer the yardstick.

1.3 The zombie tension is closed, and by a better route than was expected

The instructions frame the resolution as verdict-management: Chalmers's p-zombie inconceivable, the modified zombie conceivable. That labelling move was already made in Diary 064A and recorded as Architectural Finding 1 in the concept map. What the July material adds is a **reason** rather than a relabelling.

F42 runs the zombie argument on an *anchoring* dimension instead of a created one: “Forget colour, consider position — just as important a quale. If Mr Zombie has no quale of position, he would be unable to pick up a cup and drink, so he’s not going to last long.” On created dimensions the framework has conceded that the quale is an addition with no Tier-1 correlate of its own kind, which is precisely why the debate is hard to win there. On position the concession is not available: a being stipulated to be functionally identical while lacking the position-quale is stipulated to act on the world while lacking the fact that ties its icons to the world. The stipulation is self-cancelling.

F43 puts the quarrel with Chalmers upstream of conceivability-entails- possibility altogether. Conceiving is forming an icon, not entertaining a sentence; a stipulation no icon can be formed to fit is *a form of words with an illusion of meaning*. The framework’s disagreement is not about whether conceivability is evidence of possibility. It is about whether the alleged conceiving has occurred at all.

Together these are the strongest publication-grade material in the corpus, and they are why conceivability.md is now writable.

1.4 Centre-of-awareness needs replanning rather than transferring

The instructions have the centre-of-gravity machinery being *transferred by analogy* from gravity_and_the_past_v1_0.md §13.6. The August material shows the author already owns the move in his own terms — Dave, the moving centre, *the most focussed part, the maximally connected at any given moment*, identity as centring. The job is therefore not transfer but **identification**: the two are one virtual-fact structure, and saying so is stronger than drawing an analogy.

F65 also dissolves whole-versus-centre as a false dichotomy — “Dave is both the whole and the heart” — which is roughly the shape the instructions gave the topic.

1.5 Four load-bearing threads have no slot in the categorisation

- **Icon dynamics.** Formation, decay, forgetting as the Q3→Q4 unboost (F61), the permissive void (F59), mis-occupancy as the account of error (F56, F59, F60), the socket. This is now the densest single body of Tier 2 machinery and it is spread across topics that do not name it.
- **The tier interface.** The seed paradox from above, Tier 2’s four quadrants, the answers to Tier 1’s open items. New since May and with nowhere to live.
- **Sharing, and the close of Tier 2.** F68–F70. Awareness becoming objective fact by being shared, in two registers; self-awareness as sharing with oneself. Sits at the Iconism–Spirit boundary but the mechanism is Iconism’s.
- **Negation.** 013, and see §3 below.

Cognitive variation (ADHD, neuro-divergence) remains in the categorisation and still has almost nothing behind it. It should either be given material or dropped to a flagged gap.

1.6 The modal vocabulary gives the socket a second characterisation

Tier 1’s substrate ledger already carries the four modalities — **orthodox, hyperdox, hypodox, anodox**, keyed to fire, earth, air, water. The author’s account to Google’s assistant is the fullest gloss of them in any document, and it names the source: the

paradox/hypodox pair is Eldridge-Smith's and citable; *hyperdox* and *anodox* are the author's own coinages.

For Iconism the consequence is direct. **Internality = hypodox = under-determined** is exactly the under-determined field of `icon_dynamics_v002.md` §4.3. **Individuality = anodox = defined non-being** is exactly the socket. The socket therefore has a modal characterisation as well as an elemental one, and free will gains its statement from the same place: "*it is only hypodox that permits any freedom to express that will*" — which is F48 (will is past-facts shaping the socket) read from the other end.

1.7 One terminological gain worth banking

"I use icon in the religious sense, i.e. that the image is so like the reality that the two have the same factual properties." That is the best one-line statement of D9 in the whole corpus, it is pitched for a reader who has none of the apparatus, and it answers the question a referee will ask about why the word is *icon* at all.

2. What is withdrawn or downgraded

- **The Emergence-grid tier/quadrant collision** (reconciliation §2.2) — withdrawn in full on the author's ruling. Tiers are successive turns of one wheel, not positions in a sweep; there was never a collision to report. The Tier 0 renumbering remains a command matter but is not a conflict with the interface note.
 - **The Tier 2 quadrant table** (reconciliation §5) — withdrawn as a category error. The quadrants are not stages of icon-formation; they are four perspectives on the same facts, each running its own sweep. F54 replaces it: icons sit at the air position in every quadrant, and the icon proper is Q3's inward turn, where the denied fourth reflection erects what it was reaching for. *The sector labelling in F54 is Claude's reading of the table walk and still needs the author's confirmation.*
 - **The holographic note as first written** — corrected by the author. The information stays *outside* and reaches only as far as the external edges of the space; the earlier version had the starpoints' inner ends depositing information on the boundary. The author's version is the derived one.
 - **The five convergences** (reconciliation §7) — not withdrawn, but the weighting stands: holography first because it is specific enough to be wrong, intrinsic→extrinsic second because F24 withdrew rather than added, and the last two are agreements of description. They should never be presented as five of a kind.
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3. The negation flip — a live inconsistency between two files now in the project

This matters more than its size, because both files sit in the knowledge base and a reader will meet the earlier one first.

iconism_tier_reconciliation_v001 §8 reports **negation** as the one Tier 1 ask Iconism cannot meet, and calls it *“the most promising piece of unclaimed machinery in the handover.”*

iconism_dialogue_findings_21aug_v001 **F60**, written the following day, answers it by refusing the premise. An icon is a collection of extrinsic relationships; each relation holds a similarity and a difference; *“the similarity cannot be cancelled, that is the very dimension of the relation, it is the difference that must be lost, but how can that be done, a degree of difference cannot be negated.”* Therefore icons cannot be negated at all — and Tier 1’s inference, *an icon that cannot be negated cannot be wrong*, fails. Wrongness in Iconism was never negation. It is **mis-occupancy**: the wrong icon floating into a void that happens to fit it. Iconism does not need a negation; it needs a fit criterion, and it has one.

What is still open is whether the folded/bent distinction does other work at Tier 2 — which is a different and smaller question than the one O13 was opened for. O13 should be restated in those terms rather than left standing as written.

4. What the conversations with Google’s assistant add

They are not padding. Three things come out of them that the diary corpus does not have.

4.1 The distinctive claim, stated for a general reader

“What they need is a new way of looking that shows them why a table cannot be panpsychic, but a brain can be, and for exactly the same reason.”

With the mechanism attached in the same conversation: every object has an internality; *“the internality of the table does not overlap the internality of its legs”*; all of them are hollow, the physical brain included; and what the brain adds is that *“its inner self has billions of dimensions”*, so its hollow can be *like* what it perceives, recalls, imagines, or deduces.

Nothing in the Iconism corpus states the framework’s central advantage that crisply. It is a candidate opening for the paper, and it does two jobs at once: it refuses panpsychism and it explains the refusal by the same machinery that grants consciousness to brains.

4.2 IIT is the real rival, and the positioning note is now both possible and urgent

The May concept map recorded Frankish, HOT, IIT and Global Workspace as too thin in the corpus to support positioning notes. IIT is thin no longer. The author’s verdict: *“IIT is nearer to it, the others are not in the game at all. But still the IIT people look at it all wrong, they think that they are looking at what is intrinsic, but they are not, as far as I can see actually considering what the intrinsic view is.”*

Three reasons this note should be written early rather than late.

- **The neighbour is close.** Tononi’s qualia-space has billions of dimensions, one axis per element, and holds that *the shape is the experience*. Read cold, that is a

paraphrase of the icon. The framework must say precisely where it parts company, and the author has already said where: IIT calculates integration from outside and infers an inside, which is an extrinsic method wearing intrinsic clothes.

- **The failure modes are contagious.** In September 2023 an open letter signed by 124 researchers branded IIT pseudoscience, on two grounds: Φ is not computable for any real system, so the theory is unfalsifiable in practice; and its consequences slide into panpsychism, attributing experience to inactive grids of logic gates. Iconism must be visibly clear of both, and it can be — the non-overlap of internalities is precisely an anti-panpsychism result — but it has to say so out loud rather than leave a referee to wonder.
- **It is where the framework's originality is easiest to see.** The distance between “a high Φ means it feels like something” and “the hollow is *like* what it holds, by Leibniz, at the points where they are indiscernible” is the whole of what Iconism has to offer.

4.3 The testability problem, in the author's own words, and it cuts both ways

“The issue with Consciousness is that any theory predicts that brains will be conscious when awake, which is no prediction at all, but a post-diction — just a story telling to explain what the hell happened.”

That is a good stick and the paper should use it. But it beats Iconism too, unless Iconism names something it predicts that its rivals do not — and the author's own candidate measurable is ruled out of the paper by his own 22 August ruling: *“For the purposes of any academic discussion, I would stick to whatever is entirely justifiable by the evidence of science, and the logic of the explanation.”*

So a decision is owed, and it is a command decision rather than this project's:

Either find a discriminating prediction that does not route through the contested applications — candidates exist in the corpus but none has been worked into one: the p-vampire verdict (no system of icons without a centre), the p-blindsighter (icons without awareness should be clinically attested, and blindsight is), mis-occupancy as the account of *why we misremember so often* (F59 predicts errors of closure rather than of fidelity — correct samples wrongly bound, not blurred copies), and the no-threshold consequence for animals (F72);

or state openly that the paper offers explanatory unification rather than novel prediction, and defend that as sufficient — which is a defensible position and one the framework is unusually well placed to argue, since its own post-diction complaint applies to every rival in the field.

What the paper must not do is leave the question unaddressed, because the author has already formulated the objection better than a referee would.

One caution the framework makes on itself, and it is better made here than found later. `icon_dynamics_v002.md` §6.1 has confirmation bias not as a flaw but as how cognition works, and F59 has the void permissive — anything that fits may float in. The framework therefore predicts that a domain dense with meanings will throw up compelling convergences whether or not anything is there. That does not settle the astrological question against the author. It means the striking cases cannot carry

evidential weight, which is exactly why the structural route is the one worth taking, and it is the reason his own publication ruling is the right one.

5. The method problem

The project instructions describe a mapping method: a `file_inventory.md` and a three-column `iconism_map.md`, one section per topic, each with *what we have / current position / tensions and gaps*.

`iconism_map.md` was never written. The plan was revised in May, on the author's own instruction — *get the substrate of theory complete and fully watertight before drawing out the material for papers as such* — to a substrate-first order, and what has actually carried the work since is:

- the **findings series** (F1–F72, D1–D10, O1–O16), which is doing the three-column job better than the three columns would have, because it records the author's words with a verdict attached rather than a summary; and
- `icon_dynamics_v002.md`, the substrate document, which is the Iconism analogue of `foundations.md` and was the architectural discovery the instructions told us to watch for.

The instructions should be rewritten to describe the method actually in use. A proposal is filed alongside this note.

Proposed additions to the topic categorisation, per the standing rule against re-categorising on the fly — these are proposals awaiting the author's decision:

1. **Icon dynamics** — formation and traversal, the socket, forgetting as relinquishment, the permissive void, mis-occupancy, error as closure failure.
2. **The tier interface** — the seed paradox from above, Tier 2's quadrants, what Tier 2 owes Tier 1 and what it has returned.
3. **Sharing and the close of Tier 2** — objectivity by sharing, the two registers, self-awareness as sharing with oneself.

And one deletion or rescue: **cognitive variation**, which has been in the list since May with no material behind it.

6. Open items, consolidated

Carried from the four notes, so that the ledger is in one place.

Item	Status
011	Do wholes of meaning obtain in arrangements of atoms as well as in brain-activity? Bears on Q3-or-four-quadrants. Author's leaning is narrow.
012	Does the 17 July passage close the AI verdict? Needs the author's ruling; Claude should not pick.
013	Negation. Needs restating: F60 answers the original question by

Item	Status
	refusing the premise; what survives is whether folded/bent does other work at Tier 2.
014	Is valenced rejection (F44, aversion sharpening the socket) a relation Iconism owes an account of, or is it Spirit's?
015	Does the constraint run on shared facts (convergence) or the other person's facts (communication)? Ruled out of the paper; open in the theory.
016	Is the quiet dissipation of peripheral icons (F66) the same Q3→Q4 relinquishment as ordinary forgetting, or a faster attrition?
The Newton possibility	Whether the intrinsic spiral also continues at Tier 2. If it does, F24's clean split needs a residual intrinsic term, and that term should show up somewhere observable. Untouched.
F54's sector labelling	Claude's reading of the table walk. Needs confirmation.
Twelve sectors	Not derivable from current material. Tier 1 has asked; the honest answer is not yet.
Findings renumbering	The F28/F29 double-use. Proposal in <code>iconism_findings_065A_v001 §0</code> , not yet ratified.
Command decision	The Tier 0 renumbering — now testable rather than arguable, and the tier-boundary criterion argues against it.

7. Recommended sequence

1. **conceivability.md** — writable now, and the document the paper needs most. F42, F43, the zombie resolution, the three-part criterion, the five p-figures. *Drafted alongside this note.*
2. **The queued edits to icon_dynamics_v002.md** — the light pass in §2, §3 and §8 from the reconciliation's §9, plus **F71**, which is a source edit rather than a note: the spatial language in §5 has to come out throughout, and the "*usually too slight to divert outcomes*" hedge gains the mechanism it lacked (slight means weakly connected in meaning).
3. **The tier-interface appendix to icon_dynamics_v002.md** — the seed paradox from above, the quadrants as F54 now has them, the answers to Tier 1's open items. This is the substantial new writing.
4. **The IIT positioning note** — short, and earlier than the rest of the positioning work, for the reasons in §4.2.
5. **icon_and_world.md**, then `consciousness_awareness_spirit.md`, `centre_of_awareness.md`, `ai_and_sentience.md`.

8. Summary paragraph for the command project

The 21–24 August material changes Iconism from a topic list with a substrate document under it into a theory with a spine. Tier 2 now has a stated subject matter — the behaviour of Tier 1, four ways of doing against four ways of being — with a working test

attached, and the is/does test has already shortened two sections of the substrate document by handing their ontology back to Tier 1. The architecture within Tier 2 is now named: icons sit at the air position in every quadrant, the socket is Tier 2's seed paradox stated from above and satisfies all three properties Tier 1 specified for the void of individuality, the composite of all icons is itself an icon of higher order (licensed by Tier 1's relations- primitive rule rather than invented for convenience), and the close of Tier 2 is awareness becoming objective fact by being shared — in two forms, between individuals and with oneself, the second making mindfulness a structural operation rather than a practice. The zombie tension is closed by the position-qualia argument of 10 July, which moves the debate onto an anchoring dimension where the framework's concession about created qualia is not available and the stipulation becomes self-cancelling; conceiving is redefined as forming an icon rather than entertaining a sentence, which puts the quarrel with Chalmers upstream of conceivability-entails-possibility. Negation, reported in the reconciliation as the one Tier 1 ask Iconism could not meet, was answered the following day by refusing the premise: icons cannot be negated, and wrongness was never negation but mis-occupancy. Two things now need decisions above this project. The first is the Philosophical Log v6's standing: it is no longer the calibration reference for consciousness, conceivability, zombies or AI, and the project instructions still say it is. The second is testability. The author's own formulation — that any theory of consciousness predicts brains will be conscious when awake, which is post-diction rather than prediction — is the best statement of the objection anyone has made, and it applies to Iconism unless the paper either names a discriminating prediction that does not route through the contested applications, or states openly that it offers explanatory unification instead and defends that. His own ruling of 22 August, that the paper takes only what is justifiable by the evidence of science and the logic of the explanation, makes the choice urgent rather than optional.

Companion documents: iconism_project_instructions_v002_proposal.md (the method rewritten to match what is actually being done), conceivability_v001.md (the first working document). Sources read for this note are listed in the header.