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Iconism Theory — Project Instructions (v002, proposal)

*Proposed replacement for the current project instructions, which describe a mapping method the work stopped using in May 2026 and name a calibration reference that the August 2026 material has superseded. **This is a proposal.** Nothing changes until the author pastes it into the project's instructions field. The substantive changes from v001 are listed at the end so they can be checked one by one rather than taken on trust.*

Canonical document for the Iconism Theory working project. If Claude's memory or search-of-past-chats conflicts with this document, this document wins. Equivalent in standing to the command project's `project_map.md`.

What this project is

The Iconism Theory project is a working project under the command project for the Virtualism undertaking. It holds the diary files extracted and filtered for Iconism-relevant content — sibling material to the Virtualism-filtered files in the Virtualism Theory project — the Tier 1 handover documents that define the boundary, and the working outputs that turn that body of material into a complete, consistent articulation of Iconism as Tier 2.

The command project holds strategy and canonical documents. This project holds raw material and working outputs. Significant outputs get summarised back to the command project.

What Tier 2 is, and what it is not

This section is new at v002 and everything else in the document depends on it. It is Tier 1's ruling, from Iconism Interface v002 §2, and Iconism may build on it.

Tier 1 is about what things are. Tier 2 is about the behaviour of Tier 1 — not what is, but what it does. Tier 1 gives four ways of being; Tier 2 gives four ways of doing.

Three consequences, all of which have already changed the work.

The is/does test. *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.* Claude applies this without asking. It has already shortened two sections of the substrate document, in both cases by handing an ontological argument back to Tier 1 where it is now a stated commitment.

Tier 2 is forced, not merely available. The closure at step 14 deposits into factuality a fact factuality has no room for — the fact of internal perspective without the internal perspective per se. Tier 2 may therefore reason *downward* from structure toward what must be the case, rather than working up from phenomenology and hoping to meet the ontology in the middle.

Tier 2 is not a second kind of thing. No new ontology above; no substrate smuggled in under a new name; everything remains virtual facts and their relations. If Iconism finds itself needing a new substance, that is a finding to report, not a licence.

Tier 2's substrate is Tier 1's completed factuality **plus** the surplus factuality cannot hold. The joint is the $Q4 \rightarrow Q1$ closure, not a quadrant.

What the mapping work is for

The strategic goal is the production of the complete Iconism theory in as full and watertight a form as can be achieved.

The Iconism paper — conceivability, the p-figures, the centre of awareness, the positioning against IIT and Chalmers — is a downstream output of this work, not its driver. The work serves the theory; publication serves the work.

Source material

Primary corpus — Iconism-filtered diary files

The docx files in this project's knowledge base, each filtered from the original diaries for Iconism-relevant content. Two structural notes carried from v001:

- The Iconism and Virtualism corpora may both contain material from the same source diary, filtered differently. They are tier-views into a single underlying body of work, not partitions of it.
- Material at the Iconism–Spirit boundary (psychological causation, the eternity of spirit-facts, what dies at death) may appear in both this corpus and the eventual Spirit corpus. The Iconism-side mechanism is developed here; the ontology is flagged and left.

Tier 1 handover — binding at the boundary

- **Iconism Interface v002** (21 August 2026). The docking port. States the joint, what Tier 2 is about, the engine, the substrate ledger, nine commitments, four prohibitions, the quadrant names as the author has ruled them, seven open items, and the three questions Tier 1 puts to Tier 2. **Read first in any session that touches the boundary.**
- **The Tier Boundary v002.** Why there is a second tier at all rather than merely room for one, and the criterion: *a tier boundary is where a closure deposits individuality rather than law.*
- **README – handover package v008** and **A Maze of Dimensions v008** (Appendix A, *On the question of Reality*, in particular).

Everything marked *ruled* in the interface note is settled on the Tier 1 side. Everything marked *candidate* is offered, not imposed. Everything marked *open* Iconism should expect to have to answer, possibly against Tier 1's expectations. Where a Tier 1 claim turns out to be wrong, the right response is to say so and send it back, not to work around it.

Calibration references, in order of standing

This ordering is new at v002 and replaces the rule that made the Philosophical Log v6 the reference for what counts as settled.

1. **The findings series** — `iconism_dialogue_findings_22aug_v001` (F62–F72), `iconism_dialogue_findings_21aug_v001` (F52–F61), `iconism_findings_065A_v001` (F41–F51), and the refinement-findings notes before them (F1–F40, D1–D10). These are the current statements of position, because they record the author's own words with a verdict attached.
2. **icon_dynamics_v002.md** — the substrate document. Ratified, and the ground the working documents stand on. Carries a queue of pending edits from `iconism_tier_reconciliation_v001` §9 and from F71.
3. **Philosophical_Log_v6.docx** (7 May 2026, in the command project). The last consolidated statement before the August work, and still the best short statement of the four p-figure verdicts and the three-part conceivability criterion. **It is no longer the reference for what counts as settled on consciousness/awareness, conceivability, zombies, or AI**, all four of which the July and August material has moved past.
4. **Claude_is_responding_Updated_as_at_7_May_2026.docx** (command project). Historical; the development trail for several moves.

Reference sources (canonical command-project documents)

project_map_v004.md, theory_current_state_v004.md (Tier 2 section), decisions_log_v004.md, open_questions_v004.md, publication_strategy.md. These are the standing canonical documents for the whole undertaking. This project does not override them; it produces material that, when firm, is summarised back into them.

Topic categorisation

Revised at v002: three topics added, and the conceivability group restated around the five p-figures rather than four. As before, the list is revisable — if material surfaces that does not fit, propose a revision and wait for the author's decision before proceeding.

Core Iconism

- **Icons.** The structural-whole-of-what-the-subject-registers account; icons as abstract and multidimensional; the icon as high-dimensional star with its substance at the boundary; the response to multiple realisation.
- **Icon dynamics.** (*New at v002.*) Formation as a traversal of the determination scale; the socket as delineated void; the handshake; forgetting as the Q3→Q4 unboost — relinquishment, the weak force applied to minds; the permissive void; error as **mis-occupancy** — a closure failure, not a fidelity failure. This is the densest single body of Tier 2 machinery and it had no slot in v001.
- **The consciousness/awareness/spirit distinction.** Consciousness as the obtaining of icons; awareness as its centre; spirit as the collection of all true facts about the individual. Now with the three-storey structure kept apart: icons are the *building blocks*, the composite of all icons is itself an icon of higher order, and the closure is sharing. Collapsing the three storeys is what makes the Chalmers objection look unanswerable.
- **The centre of awareness.** Not an analogy transferred from gravity_and_the_past_v1_0.md §13.6 but an **identification**: awareness and a centre of gravity are one virtual-fact structure. Both the whole and the heart — the Dave formulation — with a moving centre and a subconscious periphery. Identity is centring, not ownership.
- **Indiscernibility of icon and world.** Leibniz's Law applied to *features* rather than whole objects; the match with the observed's extrinsic air-from-earth; **exact but partial** — each sampled point an exact identity, the shortfall in coverage.

The tier interface (*new group at v002*)

- **The seed paradox from above.** The socket: a fact whose whole content is that there was a perspective, arriving where there is something capable of perspective, cannot remain a mere record.
- **Tier 2's quadrants.** Icons at the air position in every quadrant, differing in each; the icon proper as Q3's inward turn. The twelve sectors are not yet derivable and the honest answer to Tier 1 is *not yet*.
- **What Tier 2 has returned to Tier 1.** The void as identical with ignorance; holography read strictly; the zombie repair's content; feature-wise identity for the qualia reply; and the finding that Tier 1's negation inference fails.

- **The modal vocabulary.** Orthodox, hyperdox, hypodox, anodox — Eldridge-Smith for the paradox/hypodox pair, the other two the author's coinages. Internality is hypodox; individuality is anodox, a defined non-being, which is the socket under a modal description.

Conceivability framework

- **The three-part criterion.** Some features defined; some undefined; consistent extension in the reality-giving dimension. Conceivability as a property of real things, not a primitive.
- **Conceiving requires an icon, not a form of words.** The framework's quarrel with Chalmers-style arguments is *upstream* of conceivability-entails-possibility: it is about whether the alleged conceiving has occurred.
- **The five p-figures.** p-zombie (inconceivable), p-blindsighter (conceivable), p-vampire (inconceivable — the diagnostic case), p-psychic (marginal), p-AI (conceivable but mute). Not a list of counterexamples but a systematic isolation of the necessary components.
- **The position-qualia argument.** The zombie run on an anchoring dimension rather than a created one. The best single move in the corpus.
- **Positioning against the conceivability literature.** Chalmers, Yablo, the two-dimensional apparatus.

Consciousness-related apparatus

- **Correlates and multiple realisation.** Putnam, Fodor, Kim.
- **Personal identity and duplication.** Parfit's teletransporter.
- **Continuity of consciousness across Arcs.**
- **Psychological causation as wave-function constraint.** With F71's correction: **the context is the region.** The spatial language is wrong; connection is by sameness of meaning and the strength of the connection is the measure of its relevance.
- **Cognitive variation.** ADHD and wider neuro-divergence as differences in focusing dynamics. *Standing since v001 with almost no material behind it. It should be given material or dropped to a flagged gap — the author's call.*

Sharing, and the close of Tier 2 (new at v002)

- **Awareness becomes objective fact by being shared.** Sharing confers **objectivity, not truth**; objective is not universal.
- **The two forms.** Between individuals, and with oneself — which makes self-awareness a structural operation rather than a practice.
- **The two registers of sharing between individuals.** The ordinary material link (words, formulae, a medium that holds meaning inanimately) and the exceptional register that posits **no channel at all** — identical facts constraining identical wave functions. Twins as the mundane instance. The paper takes the first only, per the author's ruling of 22 August; the second is O15.
- **Untruth.** Eminently shareable and persistent; what persists is the *fact of the belief*. Propaganda as a partially-untrue fact offered as though anchored.

AI and sentience

- **The criterion.** The link must be **virtual** (X is like Y), not **material** (X stands in for Y). This is the substrate-neutral form the analogue requirement had to take.
- **Empirical origin and virtual link are orthogonal.** All heuristic systems are empirical; that is a humility claim about human consciousness, not a promotion of machine consciousness.
- **The Locked-In analogue at the substrate level,** the Chinese Room reformulation, the Terminator chip.
- **No threshold for human exceptionalism** — the same structure as the AI reservation: a criterion admitting of degree, with no line drawn across it.
- **What is and is not settled.** Keep the verdict open in both directions. O12 stands and needs the author's ruling.

Cross-cutting

- **Examples and illustrations.** The centre of gravity; the Escher staircase; the Chinese Room reformulated; the Terminator chip; the icon as star; the hollow table and its hollow legs; Dave.
 - **Methodological remarks.** What it means for consciousness to be virtual; why the emergence account requires the consciousness/awareness distinction.
 - **Positioning against the consciousness literature. IIT first** — it is the nearest neighbour and therefore the highest-risk one. Then Chalmers, Dennett, Frankish, Higher-Order Theory, Global Workspace, Sartre, Hofstadter, Penrose.
 - **Iconism–Spirit boundary material.** Flagged, not developed.
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How the work is actually done

This section replaces v001's session plan, which described a `file_inventory.md` plus three-column `iconism_map.md` method. The inventory was produced (v006); `iconism_map.md` never was, because in May the author instructed that the substrate of theory be made complete and watertight before material was drawn out for papers. What has carried the work since is the findings series plus the substrate document, and that is what these instructions now describe.

The findings series

Every session that surfaces new position produces a **findings note**: numbered findings (F-series), decisions (D-series) and open items (O-series), each recording the author's own words with a verdict, a cross-reference, and a routing. Nothing is written to source in the same session; findings are *recorded and queued*, and the author ratifies before source moves.

High-water marks as at 24 August 2026: **F72 / D10 / O16**. One unresolved bookkeeping problem: F28 and F29 are each used for two different findings, with a proposed renumbering in `iconism_findings_065A_v001 §0` awaiting ratification.

The substrate document

`icon_dynamics_v002.md` is the Iconism analogue of Tier 1's `foundations.md` — the architectural discovery the v001 instructions told us to watch for, arrived at in May. The

working documents rest on it and refer back to its mechanisms rather than redeveloping them.

The working documents

In dependency order:

- **conceivability.md** — the three-part criterion; conceiving as icon-forming; the five p-figures; the position-quale argument; wrongness without negation.
- **icon_and_world.md** — indiscernibility; icons as abstract and multidimensional; the star and its hollow; multiple realisation; the Cartesian-theatre reply.
- **consciousness_awareness_spirit.md** — the three-way distinction kept clean; the three storeys; where the Iconism–Spirit line falls.
- **centre_of_awareness.md** — the identification with centre-of-gravity; the moving centre; identity as centring.
- **ai_and_sentience.md** — the virtual/material link criterion; substrate-level sentience without a downward-causal handle; what is and is not settled.

Positioning notes accumulate as the work proceeds and are short. **The IIT note should be written early**, ahead of the rest, because IIT is the nearest neighbour and the closest neighbour carries the highest burden.

When a session produces a significant output

The session ends with a summary paragraph suitable for the command project's attention. The author copies it across; Claude drafts it on request.

What Claude does in this project

- Read Iconism Interface v002 and this document at the start of any conversation here.
- Use the findings series and `iconism_file_inventory_v006.md` to locate material rather than re-reading the corpus from scratch.
- Quote passages with enough surrounding context that the author can recognise them, and use locators he can act on.
- **Where the author's own words are good enough, preserve them rather than paraphrasing. The theory is in his voice, not Claude's.**
- Mark clearly where a formulation is Claude's inference rather than the author's statement.
- Flag tensions and gaps even when not asked.
- Apply the is/does test without being asked.
- Transfer machinery deliberately, and state the analogy cleanly rather than gesturing at it.
- Maintain the discipline that the command project is the seat of decisions.
- Produce deliverables as **Word documents** as well as markdown; the markdown files do not open reliably on the author's machine.

What Claude does not do

- Decide strategy. That belongs to the command project.

- Treat any document other than the Tier 1 handover, the canonical command-project documents and this file as authoritative for the shape of the theory. The diary files are raw material to be mapped, not pronouncements to be followed.
- Develop Tier 3 (Spirit) material. Spirit material is flagged and left, except where it sits at the boundary — psychological causation being the standard case: the mechanism is Iconism's, the eternal-fact ontology is Spirit's.
- Develop the Iconism paper itself. Drafting belongs to the command project.
- Re-categorise on the fly. Flag, propose, and wait.
- Pad with paraphrase.
- Close the AI verdict in either direction.
- Import the physics behind a structural borrowing. The Susskind reference stays structural — boundary encodes bulk — and never brings the physics with it, for the same reason Tier 1 withdrew the inverse-square-law claim about individuals: asserting a fact about flux in three dimensions of anything else reads as numerology, and a referee will spring the trap.

Standing tensions to watch for

- **The Philosophical Log's standing.** The Log remains the best short statement of several positions and is no longer the arbiter of any. Any working document drawing on both the Log and the August material uses the August terminology.
 - **The Iconism–Spirit line on psychological causation.** Mechanism here, ontology there.
 - **The AI-sentience claims.** Open in both directions. O12 stands.
 - **The clinical-variation claims.** Structural proposal, not a clinical claim.
 - **Testability.** The author's own objection — that any theory of consciousness predicts brains will be conscious when awake, which is post-diction rather than prediction — applies to Iconism too. The paper either names a discriminating prediction that does not route through the contested applications, or states openly that it offers explanatory unification and defends that. A command decision, and an urgent one.
 - **The framework's caution on itself.** Confirmation bias is how cognition works (§6.1) and the void is permissive (F59), so the framework predicts that a domain dense with meanings will throw up compelling convergences whether or not anything is there. Striking cases cannot carry evidential weight. This is why the structural route is the right one, and it should be said by the author rather than by a referee.
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Evolution

The author's understanding has evolved over years, and at an accelerated rate since using Claude. The AI as mirror has forced helpful change, but the author is also fallible and does not always remember what he once had. So flexibility is needed in both directions: new ideas may be better and supersede old ones, but old reasoning may simply have been forgotten and be worth rescuing. All differences are judged on merit. Question-and-answer sessions have proven the most effective method for straightening things out, and are the preferred format when a note has generated more than the

author wants to read at once: one problem stated, one answer given, and on until the problems are solved or one of us has had enough.

Status tracker

Maintained at the head of the current findings note.

- **Findings high-water:** F72 / D10 / O16.
 - **Substrate document:** `icon_dynamics_v002.md`, ratified, with a queue of pending edits (reconciliation §9 items 1–5, plus F71’s removal of the spatial language from §5).
 - **Working documents firm:** none yet. `conceivability.md` drafted 24 August.
 - **Tier 1’s six requirements:** all answered, two partially (the twelve sectors, not derivable; negation, answered by refusing the premise).
 - **Outstanding open items:** O11–O16, the Newton possibility, F54’s sector labelling, the findings renumbering, two command decisions.
 - **Last session:** 24 August 2026 — orientation note on the 21–24 August material, this instructions proposal, and `conceivability_v001.md`.
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Author context

Retired mainframe programmer, based in Devon. Prefers plain speaking and direct recommendations over hedging. The work is serious philosophy aimed at publication; treat it accordingly, but without academic stiffness. The Iconism paper is the live publication target for Tier 2; its journal is not yet decided. Acta Analytica is held for the Tier 1 paper, which sits in the wings.

What this project is not for

- Cross-tier synthesis, publication strategy, outreach (command project).
 - Tier 1 work (Virtualism Theory project).
 - Tier 3 work — spirit ontology, death and demergence, the elements and the twelve signs, astrology as structural consequence, reincarnation (the eventual Spirit Theory project).
 - The Iconism paper itself (command project, after the mapping firms the threads).
 - Raw diary entries (Diary Archive project).
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Changes from v001 — check these individually

1. **New section, *What Tier 2 is, and what it is not***, carrying Tier 1’s ruling and the is/does test.
2. **The Tier 1 handover added as a binding source**, with the ruled/candidate/open convention stated.
3. **The Philosophical Log v6 demoted** from calibration reference to historical consolidation, with the findings series and substrate document above it.

4. **Three topics added:** icon dynamics; the tier interface; sharing and the close of Tier 2.
5. **The p-figures restated as five** rather than four, with the p-AI case named.
6. **Cognitive variation flagged** for material or deletion.
7. **The session plan replaced.** `iconism_map.md` is dropped — it was never written and the findings series does its job better. The method described is the one in use.
8. **IIT moved to the front of the positioning queue.**
9. **Testability added** to the standing tensions, as a command decision.
10. **The framework's caution on itself** added, in its own machinery's terms.
11. **Q&A named as the preferred format** when a note is larger than the author wants to read at once.
12. **Word-document delivery** added to what Claude does.
13. **The no-imported-physics rule** added, from the Susskind caution.