

THE SPHERE OF ORDERED EXPERIENCE

*Consciousness, Falsification, and the Structure of Subjective Order —
Revision 1*

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ABSTRACT

Consciousness cannot be coherently treated as an empirical hypothesis because any attempt to falsify it presupposes the very phenomenon under investigation. The transcendental tradition from Descartes through Kant and Husserl has long recognized that consciousness serves as a precondition for inquiry rather than an object of it. The present contribution does not claim to discover this insight but to articulate its specific implications for empiricist and Popperian frameworks — what I call the Toye Clarification. Once consciousness is understood as an enabling condition rather than a hypothesis, the proper target of theorizing becomes the structure of ordered experience within it.

This paper develops a structural model — the Sphere of Ordered Experience — describing a centre of maximal retention, a graded interior of ordered meaning, a periphery of rapid ordering and loss, and a domain of unstructured potential from which ordered experience is drawn, which I term antevalence.

This revision makes explicit five commitments that the first version left unstated or misstated.

First, the Sphere is a descriptive term and not an entity. It is a word of the same kind as *qi* or *field* or *current* — a vocabulary for describing behaviour that has no object corresponding to it. Its terms are aspects, not parts, and the divisions between them belong to language.

Second, the structure is movement. Nothing in it is static. What appears solid — the self, a meaning, a value, a person — is a rate of change slow enough to be read as a thing. Constant change is the condition; stability is the appearance.

Third, separation between subjects is retention, not enclosure. Retention is graded, maximal at the centre and rapid at the periphery, and this gradient accounts for identity, for the slowness of change, and for why one subject cannot enter another without any barrier needing to be posited.

Fourth, signals are transmitted and meaning is not. Individuals create signals and transmit them to individuals; this genuinely occurs and requires contact. What does not travel is the meaning, which is constructed uniquely by each subject and was never a property of the signal. The first version obscured this by describing signals as entering the receiver's antevalence.

Fifth, what subjects do with one another is comparative reality analysis. No subject has ever felt another's pain, love, or fear. What is available is comparison of the returning signal against one's own reality. Every communication is therefore an approximation, and the approximation can never be measured against the thing it approximates.

NOTE ON THIS REVISION

The first version of this paper presented the model as a piece of analysis. That is not how it arose.

The Sphere began as a drawing: a dense centre, axes of perception running outward and inward, and a rim traced by the reach of those axes rather than containing them. The prose came afterwards, as an attempt to say what the drawing already showed, and several features did not survive the translation.

The drawing had no gaps in it. The blank wedges between the drawn axes were a limitation of ink; the first version's fixed functional roles introduced seams that the structure does not have. The axes ran in both directions at once; the first version has signals crossing a boundary in one direction, in stages. And the drawn centre was the densest mark on the page, drawn over and over — while the first version's centre is a tidy functional primitive that gives no trouble.

More importantly, the first version presented a shape where there is a motion. A diagram must draw a circle, and a circle looks like an object with an inside and an outside. It is not one. Revision 1 attempts to say what the drawing was of, which is a continuously moving structure that maintains itself, and to state clearly that the drawing is an illustration of contact and retention rather than a specification of geometry.

Where the first version aimed at precision and purchased it by cutting cleanly, this revision states where the cuts are and what they cost.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of consciousness is often framed in empirical, metaphysical, or phenomenological terms. Yet each of these approaches presupposes that consciousness is available for inquiry at all. This paper begins from the observation that a subject attempting to evaluate or falsify consciousness already relies on consciousness to perform that evaluation. This dependency is not rhetorical or epistemic but structural: falsification itself is an activity carried out within consciousness.

Articulating this dependency through the lens of Popperian falsificationism yields what I call the Toye Clarification — not a new paradox, but a sharpening of the transcendental insight that consciousness is an enabling condition for the very operations that would be required to evaluate any hypothesis about it.

Once consciousness is understood as an enabling condition rather than a hypothesis, the proper target of theorizing becomes not consciousness "as an object" but the structure of ordered experience within it.

Two preliminaries govern everything that follows, and the first version stated neither.

The model describes something continuous by means of terms that are necessarily discrete. That mismatch is not a defect to be corrected by better terminology; it is the permanent condition of the enterprise. Section II sets out how the terms should be read.

And the model describes the mind, not the brain. It is not a claim about neural implementation, and nothing in it should be read as locating anything anatomically. Section VI states the separation and what it does and does not commit to.

I. THE TOYE CLARIFICATION

A Falsification-Theoretic Articulation of the Transcendental Constraint

Empirical hypotheses are falsifiable when observational or experimental outcomes conflict with their predictions. This process presupposes a subject capable of perceiving, evaluating, and interpreting results. These presuppositions are not optional; they are internal to the very activity of falsification.

Let consciousness be the enabling condition for experience and evaluation. Consciousness is not an item or event within experience but that within which all items and events appear. Attempting to falsify consciousness therefore requires the use of the very phenomenon the act presupposes.

The argument is straightforward. All acts of falsification require consciousness. Falsifying consciousness would be an act of falsification. Therefore falsifying consciousness requires consciousness. Therefore consciousness cannot be coherently treated as falsifiable.

This is not an epistemic immunization strategy; it is a category distinction. One may search a room for one's keys but not for the room. Descartes' *cogito*, Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, and Husserl's transcendental ego all establish versions of this insight. The present contribution frames it in explicitly falsification-theoretic terms, clarifying why treating consciousness as an empirical hypothesis constitutes a category error within the Popperian framework that many contemporary scientists and philosophers take as foundational.

The Clarification's function is negative and limited. It establishes nothing about the structure of experience. What it does is clear a question that has been absorbing the available attention, so that a different question can take its place: not *does experience exist*, but *how is it assembled*.

Revision 1 adds that the Clarification is one instance of a more general constraint, which Section XI takes up. A finite knower cannot step outside their own ordering to inspect it. The unfalsifiability of consciousness is that limit at its most conspicuous, not a special case.

II. THE STATUS OF THE TERMS

This section is new, and it should be read before the vocabulary in Section IV. Reading the terms as names for parts of an object will produce a systematically mistaken picture, and the first version invited that reading.

II.1 The Sphere is a descriptive term, not an entity

There is no sphere. There is no rim, no radius, no interior volume, and no number of anything. "Sphere" is a word that permits certain dynamics to be described, in the way that *qi* permits the description of vitality and depletion, or *current* and *field* permit the description of electrical behaviour. Nobody has seen a current. The vocabulary is nonetheless exactly right for what it allows one to do.

This has a direct methodological consequence: **no property of a diagram of the Sphere is a property of the Sphere**. Diagrams in this tradition illustrate that certain relations obtain. They do not specify geometry. Where two Spheres are drawn in contact, the drawing shows that contact occurs and that neither subject's integrity is lost in it. It does not show where contact occurs, how much of it there is, or how the two are arranged, because there is no *where*, no *how much*, and no arrangement. Signal transmission is the same at any point of contact. Degree of overlap and relative position are not variables of the model.

The first version's Objection 3 — that the model is metaphorical rather than explanatory — was answered defensively, as though the charge needed rebutting. It does not. It is correct, and Section X now says so.

II.2 The terms are aspects, not components

There is a developed vocabulary for this situation in Chinese natural philosophy, and I adopt it as methodological analogy rather than metaphysical commitment.

Qi is what is taken to be there. *Yin* and *yang* are not two substances of which *qi* is composed, nor two forces held in balance within it. They are aspects under which *qi* is described — the shady and the sunny side of one hill. There is one hill. Separate *yin* from *yang* and one has two words and no *qi*.

The mature form of the doctrine is explicit that these are not a pair. The dividing line in the *taijitu* is a curve rather than a cut, so that there is no location at which one stops and the other begins, and each aspect carries a mark of the other, so that neither is encountered pure. It is a picture of one thing that requires two words.

Centre, *interior*, *periphery*, *horizon* and *antevalence* should be read the same way. They are not five components. They are five aspects under which one continuous ordering can be discussed, and the seams between them belong to the vocabulary.

II.3 The structure is continuous

There are no gaps anywhere in what this model describes. Not between centre and interior, not between interior and periphery, not between ordering and loss, and not between the moments of intersubjective uptake described in Section VII.

This is not novel. James argued that consciousness is a stream in which the apparent joints are supplied by language rather than found in the flow. Bergson made the parallel argument about duration: the intellect operates by cutting continuous becoming into stable solids, and the solids are useful precisely because they are not what is there.

The Sphere inherits this in full. Any diagram must draw a finite number of axes and leave white space between them, and the white space will read as unreached regions. It is paper. Any prose account must name a finite number of roles and separate them with paragraph breaks, and the breaks will read as joints. They are grammar.

II.4 The model is a description of what cannot be described directly

If the terms are aspect-terms and the Sphere is not an entity, then the whole is a description, and what it describes is not available in any other way.

The first version arrived at this only in its final sentence, where it proposed that the model's value rests on whether thinking in its terms works better than thinking in other terms. Revision 1 promotes that from a closing concession to the stated criterion, because it is the correct criterion.

The model does not compete on correspondence. No description of this kind can, since description is itself an ordering operation and what is described is prior to ordering. It competes on what it enables: what becomes visible, diagnosable, sayable, that previously was not.

That is not a weak position. *Qi* has never been falsified and has never needed to be. It has persisted because yin and yang let practitioners do things — locate, time, adjust, intervene — on a description no serious exponent claims is the thing itself.

III. MOVEMENT, RETENTION, AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE STATIC

This section is new and it is the load-bearing addition of Revision 1. Everything in Sections IV through VII depends on it.

III.1 Nothing in the structure is static

The Sphere is not an object that changes. It is movement that holds a form. The appropriate image is a vortex: a shape maintained entirely by motion, containing nothing that stays, with no wall and no contents distinct from the turning itself. Stop the motion and there is no vortex left over, and no residue of one.

The general commitment, stated plainly: **constant movement and constant change are the condition of the structure. The static and the solid are the appearance, not the underlying case.** This inverts what requires explanation. Change does not need a cause. Continuing does.

Nor is the puzzle confined to minds. That anything maintains itself out of nothing but motion — a vortex, a flame, an orbit, a self — is a general question that this paper raises and does not answer.

III.2 Retention is a rate

If nothing is static, then what appears as structure must be something else. It is retention: how long constructed meaning persists before it is lost.

Retention is graded and continuous. At the periphery it is rapid: meaning is constructed and does not last. Toward the centre it is slow: meaning constructed there persists. There is no line between them and no threshold at which holding begins — the same holding occurs throughout, at different rates.

The periphery holds. It holds briefly. This is the correction to any reading on which the edge is a membrane that admits or excludes; it is simply the region of fastest turnover.

III.3 Change enters at the periphery and travels inward

It follows that nothing new can be installed at the centre. Change is only ever constructed where retention is lowest, and reaches the centre — if it does — slowly, over time.

This is a structural account of why change is slow, why insight is not sufficient for transformation, and why repetition matters. Repetition is not intensity. It is the same peripheral construction performed often enough to make the inward passage.

It also predicts the reverse: what is nearest the centre is hardest to alter, and is altered last. Deep values, the sense of who one is, long-held commitments — these are not defended by some faculty of resistance. They are simply the slowest-turning region.

III.4 The centre is the slowest turning, not a still point

The first version described the centre as a functional primitive and left it there, which made it sound unproblematic.

On the present account the centre is where retention is maximal — the region that holds longest — and it appears fixed for the same reason any sufficiently slow motion appears fixed. It is not a still point at the middle of a moving thing. It is the slowest part of one continuous turning.

That it appears to be a stable self is precisely the appearance that III.1 predicts.

III.5 Retention is what separation is

This is the revision's answer to a question the first version did not pose: what keeps one subject from being another, given that nothing encloses them?

Separation is retention. What makes a subject that subject is what their centre has kept — a particular accumulation, arrived at by a particular history, held at a particular set of rates. Identity is accumulated, not defended.

This has three consequences.

Nobody is kept out. No barrier is posited and none is needed. Contact occurs constantly, and other subjects reach the periphery where retention is nearly nothing. To alter another's centre, a signal must make the same slow inward passage anything else makes. It is not blocked; it is slow.

Separation persists lifelong because retention does not stop retaining. The mechanism that makes a subject continuous is the same one that makes them distinct.

And the sense of being one continuous self across time is itself a retention effect. The subject changes with every increment of change and is never the same in any two of them. What produces the impression of an unbroken person is that the loss and reconstruction occur slowly enough, and are anchored deeply enough, that the seam never shows. The continuity is constructed, not carried.

IV. DEFINITIONS

The following have fixed functional roles. Per Section II they name aspects of one continuous movement, not components of a composite.

Consciousness. The transcendental enabling-condition for experience, awareness, interpretation, and falsification. Not an object of experience but that under which experience is possible.

Perception. The activity by which a subject stands in relation to what is not yet ordered. Perception occurs whether or not what is perceived reaches awareness. See Section VI.

Awareness. Not a faculty that receives, inspects, or illuminates. **Awareness is the construction of meaning.** A subject becomes aware when meaning is constructed; the constructing and the being-aware are one thing, not two. Awareness is a verb, and it is the same verb as ordering.

The Sphere (Ordered Experience). Descriptive term for the ordered meaning a subject holds, at all rates of retention. Not a container, not a volume, not an entity.

Retention. The persistence of constructed meaning. Graded and continuous, rapid at the periphery, slow at the centre. See Section III.

The Centre. The region of maximal retention: the first-person origin from which contents are oriented as mine. Not a metaphysical self and not a still point.

The Periphery. The region of most rapid ordering and loss, where contact with others and with the unordered occurs, and where all change begins.

The Horizon. Potential not currently ordered but retaining implicit structure: unattended sensory material, latent memories, unconsidered interpretations, pre-thematic affordances.

Anteivalence. Genuinely unstructured potential — that which has not been ordered in any way. Not a private compartment belonging to a subject. Anteivalence is marked as that from which ordered experience is drawn. It cannot be described, not as a matter of difficulty but as a matter of structure: description is an ordering operation, and the ordered version is no longer antevalent.

Ordering. The construction of meaning from what was not yet meaning. Identical with awareness.

Contact. The relation in which one subject is available to another such that signals may be transmitted. Contact does not dissolve either subject's integrity, and it has no geometry.

Signal. Something created by a subject and transmitted to a subject. Speech, tone, gesture, expression, posture, written symbol, act. A signal is transmitted; the meaning of a signal is not, and never was in it.

Comparative reality analysis. The activity by which subjects establish the compatibility of their realities: comparing returning signals against one's own construction, since no other purchase is available. See Section VII.

V. THE SPHERE OF ORDERED EXPERIENCE

V.1 What the model describes

A subject holds constructed meaning at graded rates of retention: slow and deep at the centre, rapid and provisional at the periphery. Ordering and loss occur continuously and everywhere, most rapidly at the periphery. Contact with other subjects and with the unordered occurs at the periphery, which is why all change begins there. And the whole is movement, not architecture.

These are functional roles. Nothing here is in a location and no claim is made about anatomy.

V.2 Ordered meaning

What a subject holds is meaning: perceptions, interpretations, affective tones, intentions, background coherence — all of it constructed, none of it raw. Content did not arrive already shaped into a chair, a sentence, a worry, an ache. It was ordered into those.

Per Section IV, this is identical with what is available to awareness, since awareness is the constructing.

V.3 The horizon and anteivalence

The horizon is potential retaining implicit structure. The unattended sensation was already foot-shaped before attention selected it; a memory not being had is still a memory.

Beyond that lies anteivalence. The argument for it is structural rather than introspective: ordered experience expands, and expansion is expansion out of something. That something is not a reservoir of finished contents awaiting collection, since finished contents would already be ordered.

Revision 1 corrects an implication the first version left standing. Anteivalence is not each subject's private reserve. The first version's Section II described intersubjective signals as entering "another's anteivalence," which reads as though each subject possessed one. What the model marks is a domain of unstructured potential from which ordered experience is drawn. What subjects generate is meaning and awareness — their own reality. They do not generate what is ordered into it.

The phenomenological trace of anteivalence, so far as one is possible, is the moment in which something presses and has no shape: *hold on, I have something, I cannot quite*. That is not a description of anteivalence, which cannot be given. It is the experience of working at its limit.

V.4 Expansion and contraction

Expansion is more ordering: learning, insight, noticing what had been ignored. Contraction is ordered meaning losing structure: confusion, overwhelm, forgetting, dissociation, and the familiar state of being tired or distressed enough that the world stops making sense and ordinary demands become unmanageable.

Both occur continuously. They are not events that alternate but aspects of one process, and per Section III the balance between them is a matter of rate.

V.5 Stability

Stable ordering supports coherence, interpretation, and communicative clarity. Unstable ordering generates disorientation, affective turbulence, or conceptual breakdown. Stability varies with fatigue, stress, trauma, intoxication, and meditative states.

Revision 1 separates one determinant and gives it standing: **stability varies with who one is with.**

Every other item is something occurring within the subject. This one is another subject, in contact, in real time. The claim is that a subject's capacity to hold their own experience in order is partly a function of who is present — that some people steady the ordering and others destabilize it, and that this is structural rather than a matter of how agreeable the company is.

Taken with Section VII, it implies that the subject who steadies one's ordering and the subject whose signals one orders compatibly need not be the same person, and that there is no way from within to distinguish them. Being steadied is not evidence of being understood. Both are reported from the interior as feeling met.

I flag this as a consequence of the model, not an established finding.

VI. PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS

This section is new. It states a separation the first version left implicit and which, unstated, invites the model to be read as a claim about neural processing.

VI.1 Mind, not brain

The model describes the mind. It is a description at a level that is not the brain's level, and it makes no claims about neural implementation, localization, or mechanism.

I state this as a working separation of levels of description rather than as a metaphysical position, and I note the tension honestly: the first version claimed neutrality between physicalism, dualism, and panpsychism, and a separation of mind from brain sits uneasily with full neutrality. The narrower claim I do make is that the vocabulary here is not translatable into neural terms without remainder, and that attempting the translation loses what the vocabulary is for. What consciousness is made of remains outside the paper's scope.

VI.2 Perception is not the sense organs, and not awareness

Perception, in this model, runs whether or not what is perceived becomes available to the subject. This is not a speculative claim; it is the ordinary finding of the perception literature.

Individuals with damage to primary visual cortex report complete blindness in a field and nonetheless orient accurately to objects placed there. Stimuli presented below the threshold of report reliably bias subsequent responses. Attention sufficiently occupied by one task leaves obvious events unnoticed, though the sensory apparatus registered them.

In each case perception occurred and awareness did not. The model requires this: perception is the standing relation to what is not yet ordered, and it is prior to and independent of the construction of meaning.

VI.3 Awareness is the construction of meaning

The corresponding correction: **a subject becomes aware when meaning is constructed**. Awareness is not a stage that a percept reaches, not a light that falls on some contents and not others, and not a faculty that monitors. It is what the constructing is.

This dissolves a question the first version left open — how ordered content becomes available to the subject — by denying that these are two events. There is no availability step. Constructed meaning is what awareness consists of, and unconstructed material is not waiting somewhere to be admitted.

It also relocates the conscious/unconscious distinction. The unordered is not the unconscious, and the horizon is not a repository of contents held below a threshold. What is not constructed is not anywhere, and what is constructed is awareness.

VII. INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Signals, Contact, and Comparative Reality Analysis

Begin with the flat fact. No subject has ever been inside another. Not a parent, not a partner of forty years, not a child. Not one of their experiences, not once.

VII.1 Contact without dissolution

Subjects come into contact, and neither is dissolved by it. Integrity is maintained through contact — not by a barrier, not by resistance, and not because contact is superficial, but because separation is retention (Section III.5) and retention is not the sort of thing contact can breach.

Contact has no geometry. It is not more or less complete, not partial or total, not spatially arranged. Per Section II.1, signal transmission is the same at any point of contact, and depictions of two Spheres meeting illustrate that contact occurs without loss of integrity. They specify nothing further.

VII.2 Signals are transmitted; meaning is not

This is the correction that most changes the section, and the first version obscured it in both directions.

Signals are genuinely transmitted. Individuals create signals and transmit them to individuals. This is an ordinary act, performed by a subject, directed at a subject, and it really occurs. There is no need to be coy about it, and the first version's phrasing — signals "entering another's antevalence" — misdescribed both the source and the destination. A signal is not unstructured potential and does not arise from antevalence. It is made by someone, and it requires contact to be transmitted at all.

Meaning is not transmitted. Not because it is lost or degraded in transit, but because it was never in the signal. The sender has a meaning and constructs a signal from it. The signal goes. The receiver constructs their own meaning. Two meanings now exist, both real, both private, and the signal that connected them carried neither.

The signal travels. The meaning does not, because the meaning was never in it.

The same signal, transmitted to five subjects, yields five meanings — none of which was in what was sent, and none of which is a degraded copy of the sender's. Two people hearing one sentence take away different things, not through carelessness, but because two independent orderings constructed two different meanings from the same neutral input. Both constructed. Neither received.

VII.3 Comparative reality analysis

What subjects are doing with one another, then, is not transfer and not reception. It is comparison.

Neither party can inspect the other's meaning, ever. What each has is their own reality and the signals coming back. So each runs their construction against the returns and establishes whether what comes back is compatible with what they built. Not whether the other understood — that is unavailable — but whether anything so far is incompatible.

Three features of this deserve statement.

It is active work, performed by both, continuously. It is not passive uptake.

It never terminates in confirmation. One never arrives at *they have it*. One arrives at *nothing so far is incompatible*, which is a different and weaker result, and it is the strongest result available in any relationship anyone has ever had.

And it is comparative in the strict sense: always relative to one's own reality, never to a shared standard. There is no third position from which two realities could be measured against one another. Each compares the returns to their own construction, which means the two analyses are themselves different operations. Even the comparing is not shared.

VII.4 Every communication is an approximation

The consequence, stated at full strength.

You never feel another's pain, or love, or fear. Nothing of it arrives. When someone signals distress, what occurs is that you locate the nearest thing in your own reality and compare. What moves you is yours. It was always yours.

This is why *I know exactly how you feel* is false in a stronger way than politeness suggests. It is not an overstatement. It is a category error.

And the approximation cannot be calibrated. If one has nothing near the thing being signalled, the approximation is poor, and how poor cannot be established — measuring the gap would require the very thing one lacks. Every communication is therefore an approximation of unknown accuracy.

Two things follow that are worth holding together. There is no such thing as being fully understood, by anyone, ever — not as a failure of love or of effort, but structurally, and a great deal of life is spent pursuing it as though it were being withheld. And the approximation is not nothing. It is the only thing there has ever been, and every instance of human closeness has been made of it. Everything anyone has called being known was a good approximation, run repeatedly, holding up.

VII.5 Alignment and misalignment

Alignment is the condition in which repeated signals yield compatible constructions across two subjects — able to coordinate, to predict one another, to feel understood — without ever having had the same experience.

Alignment is rare and effortful, because it requires two independent orderings to construct compatible meanings from signals carrying no meaning of their own. This inverts the ordinary assumption: misunderstanding is not the malfunction, it is the baseline. Every occasion on which two people genuinely met was an improbable convergence of separate systems, not the natural outcome of both parties trying.

Misalignment is structural divergence — not stupidity, not bad faith, but two orderings ordering differently.

Per Section III.3, alignment also requires time. A single signal cannot produce it, because construction at the periphery does not persist. Repetition is what allows compatible construction to reach retention.

VII.6 Value

Value-attribution occurs during construction. Values are not features of signals but operations applied while ordering. Stated at full strength: **nothing has value; valuing happens.**

The same event is triumph for one subject and catastrophe for another — not because one is mistaken about the facts, but because good and bad are not properties of events. They are operations performed by a subject while constructing the event into meaning. The event is neutral. The valuing is done to it.

Much interpersonal conflict is therefore not disagreement about what occurred. It is two incompatible value-operations applied to the same neutral signal, with each party experiencing their own valuation as a plainly visible feature of the world.

A consequence developed in Section VIII: since value is constructed during ordering, value cannot be transferred. A completed structure handed to another subject arrives as a signal like any other, and produces valuing in them only insofar as they perform the ordering themselves.

VII.7 Neither sealed nor merged

The first version treated solipsism and transparency as technical objections and disposed of them in a paragraph. They are better treated as the two positions people actually occupy, each of which must be engaged before a third becomes available.

The first: one is sealed in. Nobody can be reached, nobody can reach in, everyone is enclosed. This is despair, and it is wrong. Signals are genuinely transmitted, genuinely arrive, and genuinely alter what the receiver constructs.

The second: with sufficient love or sufficient words, full sharing is possible. This is comforting, and it is also wrong. The interior is never obtained. Not once, with anyone.

The model's answer is a third thing, stranger than either: **real influence without any sharing.** One is not alone and one is not merged. Subjects reach one another by signal and construct, permanently, without once holding what is actually there.

I do not regard this as bleak. It is the accurate shape of the situation, and it makes alignment more remarkable rather than less. On the comfortable account, being understood is what happens when people try. On this one, it is two separate systems converging against the odds.

VIII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

VIII.1 Therapeutic intervention

If experiential distress often involves unstable ordering rather than problematic content, intervention might target the ordering directly: reducing volatility, supporting construction capacity, identifying where signals are being constructed in destabilizing ways. A patient experiencing anxiety may need not to change what they are experiencing but how their ordering is handling incoming material.

The clinical intuition this formalizes is widely reported: patients told to think about it differently, who find the instruction useless. If the ordering is volatile, editing the contents is not the repair.

Section III supplies what the first version lacked — an account of why such change is slow. Nothing can be installed at the centre. Whatever is constructed is constructed at the periphery, where retention is rapid, and reaches depth only through repetition over time. This predicts that interventions producing rapid apparent change without repetition will not hold, and it gives a structural rationale for practices built on repetition rather than on insight.

Two cautions belong in the text. This is proposed, not demonstrated, and the modal verbs are meant. And per Section V.5, the therapeutic relationship may itself be a stability intervention independent of any content addressed within it, which would make the effect difficult to separate from the technique.

VIII.2 Interpersonal conflict

Conflict becomes diagnosable not as disagreement over facts but as divergence in ordering. Two parties may receive identical signals and construct incompatible meanings. Intervention focuses not on establishing what really happened but on making each party's ordering visible. The question shifts from *who is right* to *what is each of us constructing, and can those constructions be made more compatible*.

VIII.3 Communication

Effective communication is not transmission of meaning but transmission of signals likely to be constructed in alignment-producing ways by a particular receiver. This requires modelling the receiver's ordering — their existing constructions, their present state — and crafting signals accordingly.

Stated plainly, because it contradicts most instruction on the subject: **clarity is not a property of a sentence**. There is no clear sentence in the abstract. There is a sentence likely to be well constructed by this particular receiver. The ambition to write something universally clear is a category mistake.

Two further consequences.

Since value is constructed during ordering, and a completed structure requires no ordering to receive, polishing a communication until nothing remains to be worked out may remove the very conditions under which a receiver would come to value it. Comprehension and valuing are not the same target and may be in tension.

And per Section III, a single transmission cannot produce alignment however well constructed, because peripheral construction does not persist. Communication that matters is necessarily repeated.

VIII.4 Development and parenting

Development can be understood as the progressive extension and stabilization of ordering. Early experience involves little ordered meaning, rapidly lost. Maturation involves more content becoming orderable, ordering becoming more stable, and ordering operations becoming more differentiated.

Parenting supports this: enough structure that the child's ordering can stabilize, enough challenge that it can extend. Per Section III.3, what a child is given repeatedly is what reaches retention — which is a structural rather than moral account of why consistency matters more than intensity.

VIII.5 Self-understanding

The model offers structural self-assessment rather than introspection aimed at hidden contents. What am I currently constructing? What is being lost as fast as I build it? What ordering am I applying to incoming signals, and is it serving me? What has reached my centre, and would I choose it now?

Revision 1 adds a limit the first version did not state. **One cannot want what lies in antevalence.** Wanting requires structure — something must have been ordered sufficiently to be aimed at — and antevalence is by definition unordered. Every genuinely new direction a life takes therefore arrives from a region the subject was not facing and could not have faced. Not for want of insight: the thing was not yet a thing.

Deliberate self-transformation is thus partly impossible in principle. One can aim only at what one has already ordered, and the material that would change one is precisely what cannot be aimed at. What remains available is work at the periphery — sustained, repeated, tolerant of the not-yet-formed — and time.

IX. POSITION IN THE LITERATURE

Kant. The Toye Clarification shares with Kant a concern for the enabling conditions of experience. Where Kant posits fixed a priori forms, the present model posits a dynamic ordering without committing to universal cognitive architecture.

Husserl. Husserl's horizon-structure directly informs the model. The present contribution adds explicit functional roles and, in this revision, the retention gradient and the account of contact.

Merleau-Ponty. Compatible with embodied phenomenology but abstracting from embodiment to describe ordering as such. Embodied processes determine what is available for ordering; this model addresses how ordering operates on whatever arrives.

Enactivism. Shares the emphasis on relationality and feedback but is not biologically grounded. Complements rather than competes.

James and Bergson. Added in Revision 1 and load-bearing for Sections II and III. James supplies the argument that the apparent joints in experience are contributed by language rather than found in the flow. Bergson supplies the argument that any stable term is already a cut through something that has no parts, and that the intellect's habit of spatializing duration produces solids where there is process. The Sphere is subject to both critiques in full; Section II is the attempt to keep the vocabulary while conceding the point.

Whitehead. Process metaphysics offers a precedent for treating what appears as a thing as the stability of an ongoing process, which is the reading of the whole structure given in Section III.

The perception literature. Blindsight, subliminal priming, and inattentional blindness are cited in Section VI as the ordinary empirical basis for separating perception from awareness. No claim is made about the neural accounts of these phenomena.

Chinese natural philosophy. Adopted as methodological analogy, not metaphysical commitment. The qi/yin-yang relation supplies the required distinction between a thing and the aspects under which it must be described, and the *taijitu* demonstrates graphically that a division between aspects can be drawn without being a cut. I make no claim about qi as a physical posit and take no position in the scholarly literature on its interpretation.

X. OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSES

Objection 1: The Toye Clarification restates Kant or Husserl. Partly, and the debt is acknowledged. The contribution is the falsification-theoretic articulation, which makes explicit why treating consciousness as an empirical hypothesis is a category error within frameworks taking Popperian falsifiability as foundational. A sharpening, not a discovery.

Objection 2: The model implies solipsism. No. Signals are genuinely transmitted and genuinely alter what receivers construct. Section VII.7 treats this as a position to be engaged rather than an objection to be dismissed.

Objection 3: The model is metaphorical rather than explanatory. Granted, and correct. The first version resisted this; Revision 1 accepts it and relocates the question. The Sphere is a descriptive term, not an entity — the same kind of word as *qi* or *current*. No version of the model gets closer to its subject by being less verbal, since a drawing is also a description, merely of a different coarseness. The model claims usability, and Section II.4 states the test it should be held to.

Objection 4: If consciousness cannot be falsified, the theory is not empirically meaningful. The Clarification concerns the existence of consciousness, not the structure of ordered experience. Retention rates, the inward passage of change, stability, and the effect of interpersonal presence remain investigable. Section V.5 and Section VIII.3 are both stated in testable form.

Objection 5: Anteivalence is theoretically convenient but ontologically empty. It has no ontology because it is not an entity. It is the term marking what is not yet ordered, and asking it to yield an object is asking yin to be available without the hill. It must be a limit concept because any direct description would order it, which parallels Kant's treatment of things-in-themselves: not known objects, but necessary posits given the structure of experience.

Objection 6 (new): If the terms are only aspects, the model says nothing determinate. The reverse. Naming the status of the terms is what prevents false determinate claims — about locations in the brain, about components of a composite self, about stages occurring in sequence, about the geometry of contact. What remains determinate is the set of relations the vocabulary makes available.

Objection 7 (new): If everything is movement, the model cannot account for stability at all. It accounts for it as rate. Retention that is slow enough is indistinguishable from permanence by any subject whose reading is slower still, and that indistinguishability is what stability consists of. The model does not deny that things hold. It denies that holding requires anything static, and it locates the difficulty where I think it belongs: not in explaining change, which is free, but in explaining persistence.

Objection 8 (new): Comparative reality analysis makes understanding impossible, so communication is futile. It makes verified understanding impossible. It does not make communication futile: signals are genuinely transmitted, constructions are genuinely altered, and compatible construction is genuinely achieved and can be established as compatible by the returns. What is unavailable is confirmation from the inside. Everything anyone has ever done with another person was done on this basis.

XI. THE POSITION OF A FINITE KNOWER

New to Revision 1, and the general form of which Section I is one instance.

Knowing is ordering. Ordering occurs at a rate. What is not yet ordered is not a quantity that could be exhausted. It follows that **what a subject does not know will always exceed what they know**, and not contingently — by construction.

Two consequences deserve statement.

The ratio does not improve with competence. It worsens. Every extension of ordering extends the region in contact with what is not ordered, so the subject who knows most stands against the most.

And the limit is not at the edge of knowledge but in the structure of knowing. A finite knower cannot step outside their own ordering to inspect it. Whatever is true of one's own ordering that would only show from a vantage one does not occupy is, by this account, guaranteed to exist and guaranteed to be unavailable.

This is the same constraint the Toye Clarification identifies, stated generally. Consciousness resists falsification because inquiry is conducted within it; the finite knower resists self-inspection for the same reason. The paper's first section and this one describe one thing from two distances.

XII. WHAT THIS PAPER DOES NOT CLAIM

Stated as a section because a model of this kind is best judged by what it is honest enough to refuse.

It does not solve the hard problem. It does not explain why there is experience at all rather than none, and does not attempt to.

It does not say what consciousness is made of. It does not identify what reality is drawn from, or what antevalence is. It marks that ordered experience is drawn from something and stops.

It does not do metaphysics. The author's position is that the model describes what can be observed and declines what cannot. One consequence is noted and not pursued: if separation is retention, then the cessation of retention is the cessation of separation. That inference is available from the structure. It is not made here, and nothing in the paper depends on it.

It does not claim the central insight as a discovery. Kant, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, James, and Bergson are named as sources. What is claimed as new is the falsification framing, the retention gradient, the account of signals transmitted without meaning, and comparative reality analysis as the mechanism of intersubjectivity.

It does not specify the mechanism of transmission. Whether transmission is best understood in vibratory, resonant, or other terms is an open question. My instinct is that music may hold clues — a note has no thing in it, is nothing but motion, ceases entirely when the motion ceases, and produces different meanings in different listeners from a signal that carries none. I record this as instinct, not as a result. Resonance in particular is a word that can be used precisely or can be used to sound like a mechanism while supplying none, and the model does not yet earn the precise sense.

It does not claim to be proven. It claims to be a vocabulary, and the only test of a vocabulary is whether thinking in its terms works better than thinking in other terms.

It does not claim to present its subject. Per Section II.4, no description can. This paper is an ordering of something prior to ordering, and it is wrong in the specific way all such descriptions are wrong.

XIII. CONTRIBUTION

A falsification-theoretic articulation of the transcendental insight, grounding the category distinction in terms empirically-oriented thinkers can engage, and identified here as one instance of the general constraint on finite knowers.

An explicit account of the terms' status. The Sphere is a descriptive term of the same kind as *qi* or *current*, its terms are aspects rather than parts, and no property of a diagram is a property of the model. Offered as a contribution in its own right, since models of this kind routinely conceal the point and are then attacked for a literalism they never intended.

Movement as the condition and the static as the appearance. The structure is maintained motion. What appears solid is a rate slow enough to be read as a thing, which relocates the difficulty from explaining change to explaining persistence.

Retention as a graded rate, and as what separation consists of. Identity is accumulated rather than defended; change enters where retention is lowest and reaches depth only over time; and the continuity of a self is constructed rather than carried.

Awareness identified with the construction of meaning, and perception separated from it, consistent with the ordinary findings on unconscious perception.

Signals transmitted without meaning. Individuals create and transmit signals, genuinely; meaning is constructed uniquely by each subject and was never in the signal. This resolves the first version's conflation and its misplacement of signals in antevalence.

Comparative reality analysis as the mechanism of intersubjectivity, with the corollary that every communication is an approximation of unknown accuracy, and that no subject has ever felt another's experience.

Contact without dissolution of integrity, with no geometry and no dependence on degree of overlap.

Interpersonal presence as a determinant of stability, with the consequence that being steadied and being understood are structurally distinct and indistinguishable from within.

Practical applications targeting structural dynamics rather than content, in therapy, conflict, communication, development, and self-assessment — including a structural rationale for repetition.

CONCLUSION

Consciousness cannot be falsified because falsification presupposes it. This is not a new discovery but a clarification of what the transcendental tradition has long recognized, articulated in terms that engage the Popperian framework many contemporary thinkers take as foundational. Once consciousness is understood as an enabling condition, the proper focus becomes the structure of ordered experience within it.

That structure, as described here, is movement. Meaning is constructed continuously and lost continuously, fast at the periphery and slowly at the centre, and what appears to be a person is that gradient of retention rather than any fixed thing. Change can only enter where retention is least, and reaches depth only over time. Separation between subjects is not a wall but the fact that each has kept what they have kept.

Subjects come into contact and neither is dissolved. Signals are made and transmitted and genuinely arrive. Meaning is not transmitted and never was in the signal — it is constructed, by each subject, out of their own materials. What subjects therefore do with one another is comparative reality analysis: running the returning signal against their own construction, establishing compatibility, never obtaining confirmation. No one has ever felt another's pain or love. Every communication is an approximation whose accuracy cannot be measured.

And beyond all of it is what has not been ordered, from which ordered experience is drawn, and about which nothing can be said — because saying is ordering. What a finite knower does not know exceeds what they know, permanently, and by a margin that grows as they learn.

The Sphere of Ordered Experience is a vocabulary for this. It is not an entity, and the paper does not claim it is. It does not resolve the hard problem, explain why there is experience at all, or say what reality is made of. It offers a systematic way of describing the dynamics of subjective order, applicable in phenomenological analysis, therapeutic practice, and interpersonal understanding.

Whether it proves useful depends on whether thinking in these terms — retention, ordering, construction, contact, comparative reality analysis, antevalence — generates better understanding and more effective intervention than thinking in other terms.

That remains to be seen. It is an invitation to try, not a claim to have arrived.

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