Skeptical Notes on a Geometric Model of Virtue

> **We do not *know* that morality is geometric.**
> **We only know that some geometric models compress our thinking usefully.**
> **What follows is a notation, not a revelation.**

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1. Minimal Assumptions

Let me assume only:

- **(A1) We can talk about *directions* of moral orientation (compassion, justice, etc.).**

- **(A2) These directions can combine like vectors (you can be compassionate *and* truthful, etc.).**

- **(A3) Human experience of morality is never "purely planar" or ideal; it is always distorted by consciousness (ego, trauma, culture).**

No universals are assumed. There is no abstract *Justice*; there are only particular configurations of behavior we group under that heading.

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2. The Hexagon as a Basis

Define a 6-dimensional real vector space $V \cong \mathbb{R}^6$ with an orthonormal basis corresponding to six virtues:

$\mathcal{B} = \{ e_C, e_F, e_H, e_R, e_J, e_T \}$

- **e_C = Compassion**

- **e_F = Fidelity**

- **e_H = Humility**

- **e_R = Reverence**

- **e_J = Justice**

- **e_T = Truth**

Any *ideal* moral configuration in the hexagon-plane is then:

$v = c\,e_C + f\,e_F + h\,e_H + r\,e_R + j\,e_J + t\,e_T \in V$

$v=ceC+feF+heH+reR+jeJ+teT \in V$

with real coefficients c,f,h,r,j,t representing how strongly each direction is activated in that moment.

This is the 2D moral polygon in abstract form (six directions around the circle). So far, all of this lives in a purely "ideal" plane—no shadows, no ego.

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3. Adding the Z-Axis: Shadows from Distortion

Humans, however, never live *in* V alone. Our moral life is always filtered through consciousness.
Introduce a shadow axis $z \in \mathbb{R}$ orthogonal to the plane:

- $z > 0$: Excess-shadow (virtue inflated → fanaticism, rigidity, enmeshment)

- $z < 0$: Deficiency-shadow (virtue collapsed → cruelty, betrayal, nihilism)

For a *single* virtue e_k (say, Justice), think:

- Planar component: how much "justice-direction" is present.

- Vertical component: how that justice is distorted into vengeance or complicity.

Formally, extend to a "moral + consciousness" space:

$W = V \oplus \mathbb{R} \cong \mathbb{R}^7$

and let a momentary moral state be:

$s = (v, z) \in W$

Now define a distortion map:

$D: V \times \mathcal{C} \to \mathbb{R}$

where $\mathcal{C}$ is the (complicated) space of consciousness-context: ego level, fear, trauma, social pressure, etc.

Given an ideal vector v and a context $c \in \mathcal{C}$:

$z = D(v, c)$

- If $z = 0$: the virtues in v are expressed without major distortion (an ideal we never quite reach).

- If $z > 0$: the configuration in v emerges through

excess-shadows (e.g. justice→punitive zeal, reverence→fanatic purity).

- If $z < 0$: the same v emerges through deficiency-shadows (justice→complicity, reverence→nihilism).

Thus the experienced moral vector is not v, but the 3D resultant:

$$\tilde{v} = v + z\,n$$

where n is the unit vector along the shadow axis.

We never inhabit the flat hexagon; we only ever inhabit $\tilde{v}$.

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4. Shadows Per Virtue (Fine-Grain Version)

If we want per-virtue shadows, we can refine this to six scalar distortions:

$$\sigma_i \in [-1,1], \quad i \in \{C,F,H,R,J,T\}$$

- $\sigma_i > 0$: excess-shadow for virtue i (e.g. $\sigma_J > 0 \to$ vengeance)

- $\sigma_i < 0$: deficiency-shadow for virtue i (e.g. $\sigma_J < 0 \to$ complicity)

- $\sigma_i = 0$: balanced expression (ideal limit).

Then define:

$$Z(v, c) = (\sigma_C, \sigma_F, \sigma_H, \sigma_R, \sigma_J, \sigma_T)$$

and the full state as:

$$s = (c,f,h,r,j,t;\;\sigma_C,\sigma_F,\sigma_H,\sigma_R,\sigma_J,\sigma_T)$$

We can interpret:

- Effective virtuous strength for each direction:
  $$v^{\text{virtue}}_i = m_i \cdot (1 - |\sigma_i|)$$
- Shadow intensity for each direction:
  $$v^{\text{shadow}}_i = m_i \cdot \sigma_i$$

where m_i is the coefficient of e_i in v.

This keeps the Armstrong point clear: there is no universal "Justice"; there are only particular states sss with particular values of jjj and σJ\sigma_JσJ at a given time.

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5. What This Buys (and What It Doesn't)

- It does not prove that morality *is* a hexagon in a seven-dimensional space.

- It does give a compact way to talk about:

  - multiple virtues active at once (the 6-vector vvv),

  - their distortions into vice (the shadow parameters σi\sigma_iσi or scalar zzz),

  - and the fact that we only ever observe the distorted 3D result, not the ideal plane.

This is a skeptical geometry: a map we admit is approximate, while still using it to reason about how compassion, fidelity, humility, reverence, justice, and truth bend into their shadows whenever consciousness tilts the plane.

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I. The Six Virtues as the Encoded Edges of the Polygon

Take a hexagon (C_6 symmetry).
 Each edge corresponds to a moral direction:

1. **Compassion**

2. **Fidelity**

3. **Humility**

4. **Reverence**

5. **Justice**

6. **Truth**

These are **not universals**, in the Armstrong sense.
 They are **structural regularities** in the moral lattice—stable *patterns* that emerge again and again.

They are like **fundamental modes** of vibration or orientation in a 2D moral plane.

But **humans never experience the pure plane**.

We experience the **3D projection**:
 the vector emerging orthogonally—**the Z-axis**, the axis of consciousness.

And *that* is where the shadow-forms manifest. The distortions of the plane up and down. The curvature of the field due to coupling and mass effects and forces and accelerations.

II. The Z-Axis: Consciousness as Vertical Distortion

Imagine a perfect 2D polygon lying flat.

If you live in that plane, you could in principle experience pure, unmixed justice, or pure fidelity, or pure compassion.

But humans do not inhabit that plane.
 We are **3D beings with recursive consciousness**, which means:

- we *tilt* the plane through perception, memory, trauma, ego

- the virtue-vectors no longer lie flat

- their interactions produce **vertical distortions** (shadows)

Thus:

- **Excess-shadows** = *positive Z displacement* (virtue inflated into domination or absolutism)

- **Deficiency-shadows** = *negative Z displacement* (virtue collapsed or inverted)

This is why:

- compassion → self-erasure OR cruelty

- justice → vengeance OR complicity

- truth → rigidity OR deceit

- reverence → fanaticism OR nihilism

- humility → self-abasement OR arrogance

- fidelity → tribalism OR betrayal

These shadow outcomes are **not separate categories**.
 They are **geometric distortions** of the planar virtue-directions.

The moral life is the *3D resultant vector* of all six.

III. Armstrong's Particularism: No Universals, Only Vectors

Armstrong's metaphysics is perfect here.

He argues:

- There are **no universals** floating out there ("Justice," "Truth," "Goodness");

- There are only **particular instantiations** with real structural similarities.

In this model:

- **There is no Justice**

- There is only the *vector sum* of the six virtues as they tilt into the Z-axis of consciousness.

There is no *abstract fidelity*, no *ideal compassion*.

There are only:

- one man's loyalty today

- another's betrayal tomorrow

- a neighbor's small act of mercy

- a tyrant's weaponized truth

- a child's instinctive reverence

- a mother's exhausted compassion

- a judge's punitive justice

- a lawyer's deceptive truth

- a pastor's arrogant humility

The ontology is a field of vectors, not Platonic forms.

This fits the entire moral geometry system:

- **Virtues live in the plane** (but never perfectly).

- **Human moral experience lives in the Z-axis** (distorted).

- **The total moral state is a 3D resultant vector**, produced by dynamic interactions between virtues and shadows.

There is no "universal" justice.
 There is only the emergent 3D geometry of particular moral acts. And hopefully we can bend the moral arc of the universe towards justice, albeit at great time scales.

IV. The Key Insight Uncovered

This is essentially a **geometric theory of particularism**:

> The six virtues are the *basis vectors* of the moral plane.
> Humans never act inside the plane.
> They only express the *3D projection* of those vectors—
> the Z-axis distortion produced by consciousness.

This means:

- The "shadows" are not vices per se—
   they are **geometric failures of orientation**.

- Vice is not the absence of virtue—
   it is the *misalignment* of virtue.

- There is no evil as substance—
   there is evil as **misoriented resonance**.

This matches a dual-apex model perfectly:

- **Upward apex = virtues remain close to the plane**
   → minimal distortion
   → compassion, fidelity, humility, reverence, justice, truth

- **Downward apex = severe curvature of the plane**

       → strong vertical distortion
       → tribalism, cruelty, vengeance, fanaticism, deceit, arrogance

The entire moral doctrine becomes:

Morality is geometry under consciousness. Geometry gives the beauty of perfect properties and universally-applicable rules of symmetry and transformation. The relations of human ideals and human nature inside of human consciousness.