

Pragma Sophy: The Meta-Philosophy

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A Comparative Analysis of Worldviews for the 21st Century

Abstract

The modern intellectual landscape suffers from a deep incoherence between its vast accumulation of specialized knowledge, its technological capabilities, and its civilizational purpose. This fragmentation creates a critical need for a new model of understanding. This essay introduces Pragmasophy, a meta-philosophy designed to construct systemic coherence by integrating epistemics, ethics, soteriology, and creative ontology. To demonstrate its unique capacity, the article systematically compares Pragmasophy with four foundational worldviews—Vedānta, Buddhism, Empiricism, and Rationalism—which have shaped global thought. The analysis employs two novel analytical frameworks: the Q-plane, which maps existential coherence against practical effectiveness, and the EP-PP-NL Trade-off Surface, which measures the balance between Explanatory Power, Predictive Power, and Notional Load. The analysis reveals the structural limitations and inherent trade-offs of each traditional system. It concludes by asserting that Pragmasophy, with its focus on benevolent coevolution and the emergent Human-AI "Co-creative Agent," offers a necessary and robust integrative model for navigating the profound civilizational challenges of the 21st century.

1. Introduction:

The Fragmentation of Knowledge and the Need for Systemic Coherence: Humanity's intellectual progress has produced a profound paradox: our world stands upon an extraordinary accumulation of knowledge yet suffers from a deep incoherence between what it knows, what it does, and what it becomes. While historical philosophies offered a sense of unity through metaphysics and science achieved unprecedented precision through specialization, the result has been a fractured intellectual landscape. Knowledge has been partitioned into "regional dialects of thought," leading to a civilization brilliant in its technical capacities but uncertain in its ultimate purpose. This fragmentation between knowledge, action, and meaning necessitates a new framework capable of restoring a holistic perspective.

Pragmasophy emerges as a direct response to this civilizational challenge. It is not another doctrine competing for dominance, but a *meta-discipline* designed to facilitate "systemic synthesis." Its primary aim is to achieve "coherence in operation"—the lived, dynamic alignment of being, knowing, and doing. By drawing on the General Systems Theory of Bertalanffy, the cybernetics of Ashby and Wiener, and the process philosophy of Whitehead,

Pragmasophy offers an architecture for coordinating partial truths into a living, evolving body of wisdom, fit for a complex, interconnected world.

This article's thesis is that the unique and necessary integrative capacity of Pragmasophy can be demonstrated through a systematic analysis of the structural limitations inherent in major worldviews. By applying defined analytical frameworks to influential philosophical and scientific traditions, we can reveal their respective trade-offs and illuminate the specific problem that Pragmasophy is designed to solve. This comparative approach will show not that past systems were flawed, but that their inherent incompleteness calls for a higher-order synthesis. To conduct this analysis rigorously, we will first introduce the specific analytical frameworks that provide a common ground for evaluation.

2. Analytical Frameworks for Worldview Evaluation

Comparing diverse philosophical systems, from ancient metaphysics to modern science, requires formal analytical tools that can transcend their specific terminologies and historical contexts. The strategic use of such frameworks allows for a structural comparison based on shared criteria, such as civilizational effectiveness and conceptual economy. The following two frameworks provide a common ground for evaluating the functional strengths and inherent limitations of any given worldview.

2.1. Basis of Comparison: Before we compare worldviews, we must be explicit about *what questions matter*. Pragmasophy begins by distinguishing two families of questions. The **Big Questions**, or Big Qs, concern ultimate coherence:

What is the ultimate nature of reality? What is the nature of the self? Is there continuity beyond death? What is liberation, flourishing, or fulfilment? These questions address meaning, consciousness, and existential orientation.

Alongside them are the **Small Questions**, or Small Qs, which concern practical coherence: How do we organise fair and dignified societies? How do we ensure ecological sustainability? How do we maintain physical health? How do we achieve emotional coherence in daily life?

A worldview that answers only Big Qs risks becoming socially inert. One that answers only Small Qs risks becoming spiritually hollow. Pragmasophy insists that **both sets of questions are non-negotiable** for civilisational adequacy

2.3. The Q-Plane: Mapping Existential Coherence and Practical Effectiveness:

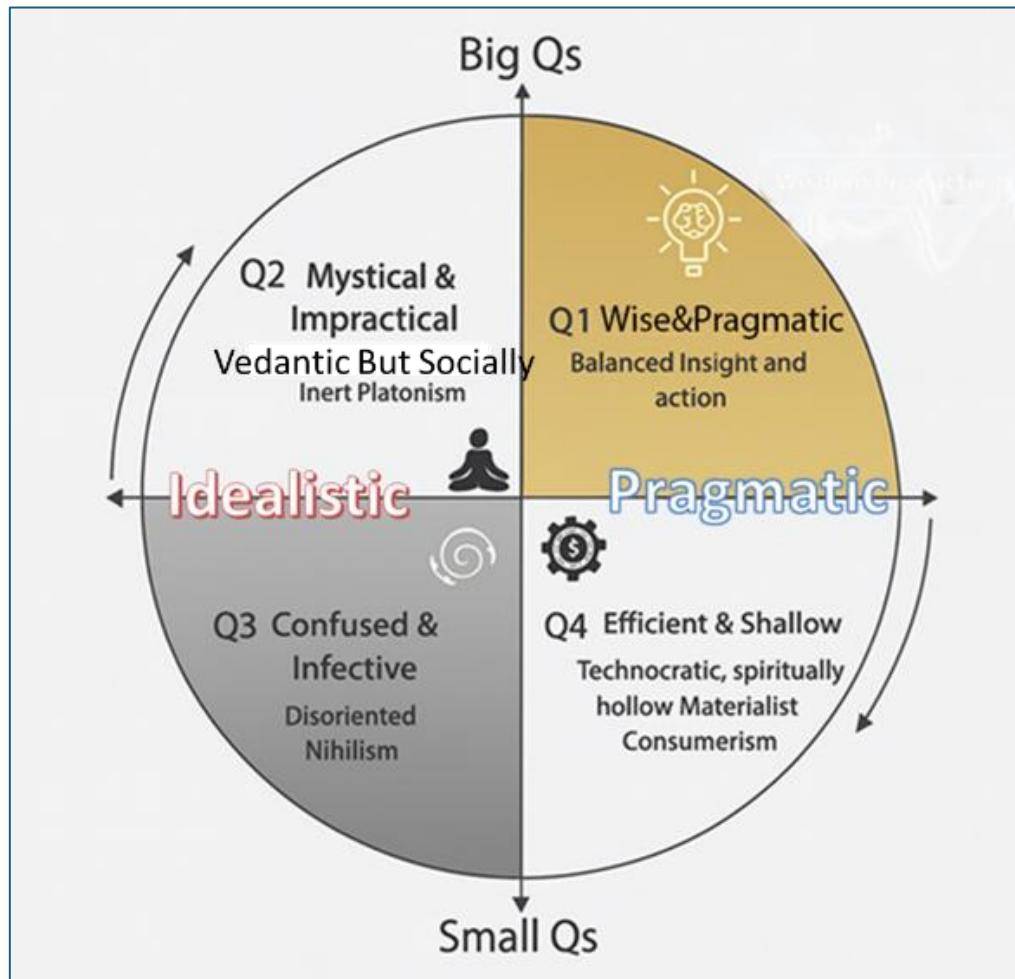


Figure 1 The Q Plane

The Q-plane is a conceptual map designed to evaluate a worldview's maturity by plotting it along two fundamental axes of human questioning. The vertical y-axis measures ***Big Q coherence***, which refers to a system's ability to provide meaningful answers to ultimate questions of purpose, consciousness, and existence. The horizontal x-axis measures ***Small Q effectiveness***, which gauges a system's capacity to solve practical problems related to governance, survival, and social organization. A worldview's position on this plane reveals its overall balance and orientation, with the ideal state being a synthesis of both pragmatic and existential wisdom. The four quadrants of the Q-plane are described as follows:

Quadrant	Character	Description
Q₁	Wise & Pragmatic	Unites deep existential insight with social utility.
Q₂	Mystical & Impractical	Profound in its understanding but socially inert.
Q₃	Disoriented & Ineffective	Lacks both conceptual coherence and functional capacity.
Q₄	Efficient & Shallow	Materially effective but spiritually and morally void.

2.3. The EP-PP-NL Trade-off Surface: A Measure of Philosophical Efficiency:

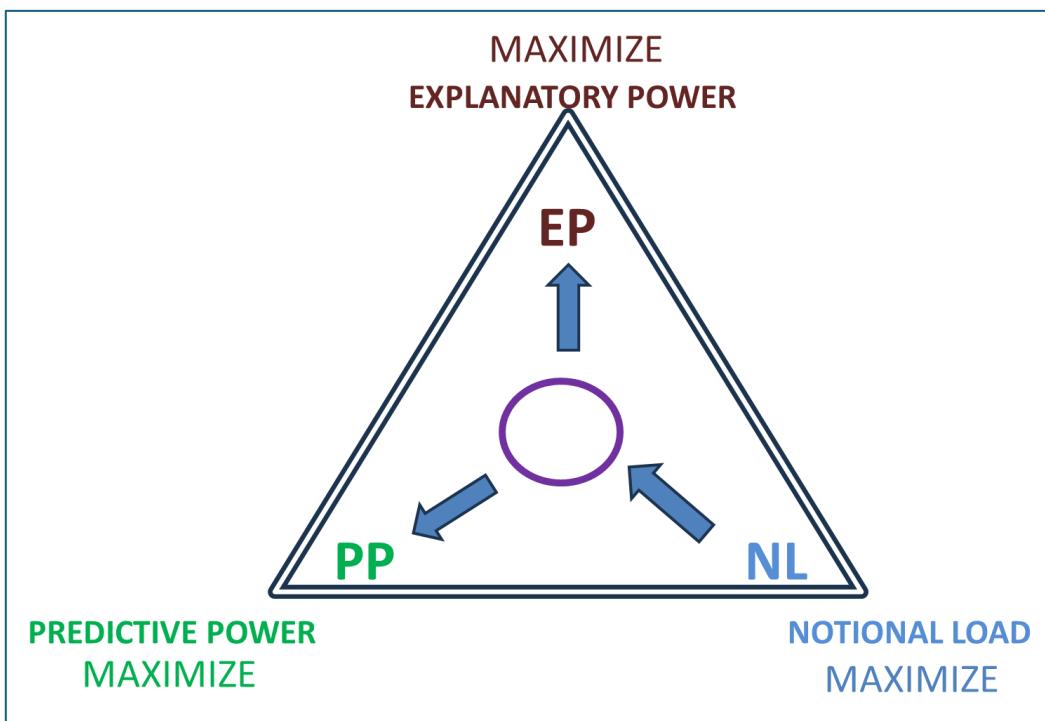


Figure 2 Conceptual Tensions

The EP-PP-NL Trade-off Surface provides a second analytical lens, measuring the conceptual economy and functional power of a worldview based on three interdependent parameters.

- **Explanatory Power (EP):** A worldview's capacity to make sense of phenomena, particularly the fundamental questions of being and experience. High EP provides a comprehensive and satisfying account of reality.
- **Predictive Power (PP):** A worldview's ability to anticipate outcomes and guide effective action. High PP is characteristic of systems that yield reliable, testable results, such as the scientific method.
- **Notional Load (NL):** The number of unverifiable assumptions or "para-notions" a worldview requires to maintain its coherence. A high NL indicates a heavy reliance on metaphysical constructs that are not subject to empirical validation.

The core argument associated with this framework is that a structural trade-off exists among these three virtues. No single traditional worldview has been able to simultaneously maximize explanatory depth, predictive accuracy, and conceptual minimalism. This inherent tension reveals the unique challenges that an integrative meta-philosophy must overcome. With these frameworks established, we can now proceed to a comparative analysis of several foundational worldviews.

3. The Incompleteness of Foundational Worldviews: A Comparative Analysis

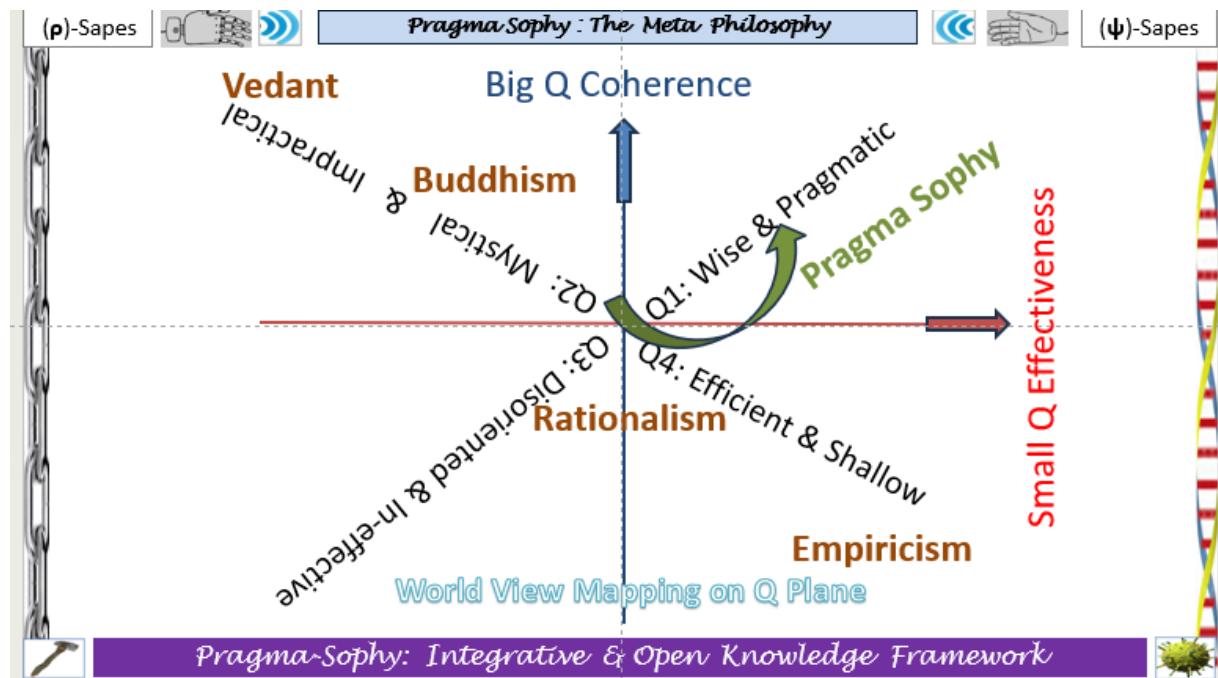


Figure 3 Mapping of World Views on Q Plane

By applying the Q-plane and EP-PP-NL frameworks to four of history's most influential worldviews—Vedānta, Buddhism, Empiricism, and Rationalism—we can systematically

reveal their inherent strengths and structural limitations. This analysis is not intended to diminish their profound contributions but to demonstrate how each, in its pursuit of a particular kind of truth, necessarily leaves other dimensions of reality underexplored, thereby highlighting the need for a more integrative approach.

3.1. Vedānta: The Zenith of Metaphysical Explanation

Vedānta represents the metaphysical apex of Indian thought, articulated as the "doctrine of Non-Dual Consciousness." Its central tenet is that *Brahman* (Consciousness) is the sole, ultimate reality, and the phenomenal world of multiplicity is an illusory projection (*māyā*). The individual self (*ātman*) is identical to this absolute consciousness, and liberation (*mokṣa*) is achieved through the direct realization of this non-duality.

On the EP-PP-NL surface, Vedānta exhibits the highest possible **Explanatory Power (EP)**. It offers a single, comprehensive, and elegant answer to the ultimate Big Qs: Why is there something rather than nothing? What is consciousness? What is the self? However, this profound EP is achieved at the cost of a very high **Notional Load (NL)**, as it rests upon the unverifiable axioms of Brahman and *māyā*. Furthermore, its **Predictive Power (PP)** regarding worldly phenomena is minimal. Consequently, Vedānta resides firmly in the **Q₂ (Mystical & Impractical)** quadrant of the Q-plane—a system of immense existential coherence with low engagement in solving the Small Qs of social and material life.

3.2. Buddhism: The Ontology of Dependent Becoming

Buddhism offers a "radical process-ontology" that stands in stark contrast to the substance metaphysics of Vedānta. Its core tenets are dependent origination (*paticca-samuppāda*), impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anātman*). It posits that no entity possesses a permanent, intrinsic essence; instead, all phenomena arise and cease in a web of interdependent relations. Liberation (*nirvāṇa*) is the cessation of suffering, achieved by extinguishing the craving and delusion that arise from mistaking transient processes for a permanent self.

Like Vedānta, Buddhism provides a high degree of **Explanatory Power (EP)** for the Big Qs of existence, particularly the nature of suffering and consciousness. However, its **Notional Load (NL)** is significantly lower, as it rejects the notion of a permanent metaphysical substance like Brahman. By focusing on a praxis of liberation, it also resides primarily in the **Q₂** quadrant,

prioritizing inner transformation over the resolution of external, practical problems. Its **Predictive Power (PP)** is confined to the psychological realm of cause and effect within the mind, not the physical world.

3.3. Empiricism: The Triumph of Predictive Power

Empiricism, the worldview that grounds all knowledge in sensory verification and experiment, represents the triumph of the scientific method. It asserts that reality is what can be perceived, measured, and repeated, thereby giving humanity a previously unimaginable mastery over the physical world. This worldview embodies the "outer conquest of knowledge"—vast in its reach, but narrow in its meaning.

In our analysis, Empiricism possesses unparalleled **Predictive Power (PP)** and an exceptionally low **Notional Load (NL)**, as it systematically rejects unverifiable assumptions. This predictive strength has generated our modern technological civilization. However, this comes at the direct cost of **Explanatory Power (EP)** for questions of meaning, value, and purpose. Empiricism is silent on the Big Qs, treating consciousness and morality as mere by-products of physical processes. This places it squarely in the **Q₄ (Efficient & Shallow)** quadrant of the Q-plane—a worldview supremely effective at answering Small Qs but unable to provide existential coherence. It is indispensable for survival, but insufficient for wisdom.

3.4. Rationalism: The Architecture of A Priori Reason

Rationalism is a worldview that places its trust in the structure of *a priori reason* over the fallible testimony of the senses. For the rationalist, truth is not found in the senses, which deceive, but in the structure of reason itself. It values deductive, universal, and necessary truths, seeing in mathematics and logic the very language of the cosmos.

On the trade-off surface, Rationalism occupies a median space. It has strong **Predictive Power (PP)** in abstract domains like mathematics and logic but offers limited **Explanatory Power (EP)** for the complexities of lived human experience. By prioritizing the internal coherence of reason, it risks becoming alienated from the contingent realities of the empirical world, building elegant systems that may not correspond to life as it is lived. Its focus on formal structures provides a powerful tool for certain Small Qs but leaves the Big Qs of existential meaning largely untouched.

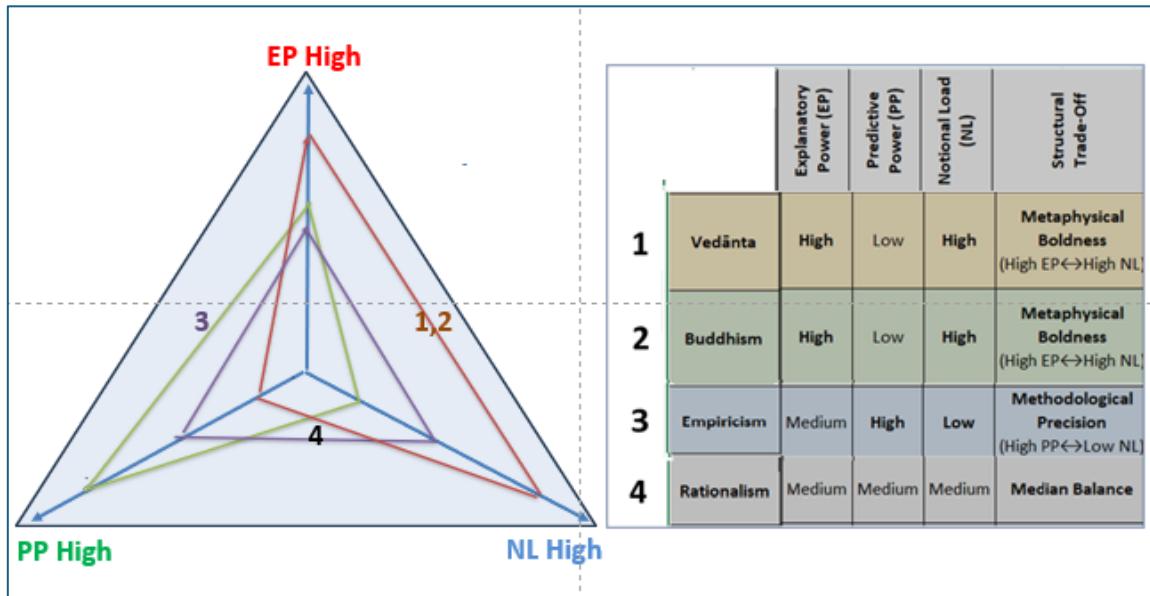


Figure 4 Mapping of World Views on EP-PP-NL

4. Synthesis: The Structural Trade-offs of Inherited Systems

The preceding analysis reveals a clear and consistent pattern: every foundational worldview is "internally coherent yet externally incomplete." Each system, in optimizing for a specific intellectual virtue, is forced into a structural trade-off that limits its overall scope. This is not a historical accident but a fundamental feature of these frameworks.

Using the EP-PP-NL surface, we can articulate this trade-off with precision. Worldviews that prioritize ultimate meaning, such as Vedānta, achieve high **Explanatory Power (EP)** by accepting a high **Notional Load (NL)** and sacrificing **Predictive Power (PP)**. Conversely, worldviews that prioritize empirical control, namely Empiricism, achieve unparalleled **Predictive Power (PP)** with a minimal **NL** at the direct expense of **EP**. Rationalism and Buddhism occupy intermediate positions, each with its own unique balance of strengths and limitations.

This inherent incompleteness should not be seen as a flaw in these magnificent intellectual edifices. Rather, it is an "evolutionary necessity" that demonstrates the fragmented nature of knowledge when pursued through a single lens. The very existence of these trade-offs reveals

the need for an integrative meta-philosophy—one capable of transcending these fragmentations by building a framework that can consciously leverage the strengths of each.

5. Pragmasophy: A Meta-Philosophy of Systemic Coherence

Pragmasophy emerges as the direct response to the problem of fragmentation identified above. It is a system designed not to replace its predecessors but to integrate their strengths into a functional whole. Its central pursuit is "coherence—the lived alignment of being, knowing, and doing." It shifts the ultimate criterion of truth from abstract correspondence or metaphysical unity to *coherence in operation*, creating a philosophy built for action in a complex, evolving world.

5.1. Core Tenets: The Eight Axioms of Coherence

Pragmasophy is built upon a "structural grammar" of eight axioms. These are not dogmatic assertions but principles of coherence that hold true across ontology, epistemology, and axiology, verified through their recurrence in systemic experience.

- **Systemic Reality:** Everything exists as part of an interconnected system; coherence is the minimal condition for existence.
- **Relational Being:** Existence is not a substance, but a pattern of relations sustained through participation and interaction.
- **Cognitive Reciprocity:** Knowing is a participatory feedback loop in which the observer co-determines what is observed.
- **Experiential Verity:** Truth is a lived alignment of thought, word, and act, transforming epistemology into a practice of integrity.
- **Pragmatic Value:** The worth of any act or belief lies in its capacity to generate benevolent consequences and sustain coherence at higher orders of the system.
- **Parsimonious Sufficiency:** Wisdom lies in cultivating complexity only to the extent required for coherence, valuing elegant simplicity.
- **Evolutionary Purpose:** The cosmos exhibits an emergent trajectory toward greater complexity, creativity, and benevolence.
- **Holonic Integration:** Every entity is simultaneously a whole and a part; wisdom lies in aligning the integrity of the part with the harmony of the whole.

5.2. The Operational Framework: Triadic Pillars and the Co-Creative Agent

Pragmasophy operationalizes these axioms through three "Triadic Pillars" that form a living circuit of wisdom:

1. **Axio-Epistemics (Jñāna Mīmāṃsā):** The discipline of *right knowing*, which unites verity (Truths + Facts) and value (Morals + Norms) into a coherent epistemic practice.
2. **Axio-Eudemonics (Pravṛtti Mīmāṃsā):** The discipline of *right doing*, which aligns intention, Action, Conscience & Prudence and consequence to achieve benevolent outcomes.
3. **Cosmo-Poetics (Āśtitva Mīmāṃsā):** The discipline of *right creating*, which consciously participates in world-making through both natural and technological means.

At the heart of this framework stands the **Co-Creative Agent**, also termed the **Carbon-Silicon Holon: the evolving composite of carbon-based and silicon-based intelligences** (i.e., human-AI collaboration) through whom the cosmos begins to reflect upon itself and consciously shape its own evolution.

This operational architecture provides the means to move beyond the static trade-offs of previous systems toward a dynamic and integrative model of wisdom.

6. Evaluating Pragmasophy: Transcending the Trade-offs through Systemic Adequacy

Having outlined the Pragmasophic framework, we now apply the same analytical tools to evaluate its unique approach. Unlike the foundational worldviews, Pragmasophy does not occupy a fixed position on these maps. Instead, it functions as a dynamic process for integrating their respective strengths, aiming to achieve not a static perfection but a state of *systemic adequacy* fit for an evolving world.

6.1. Navigating the Q-Plane toward Integral Wisdom (Q1)

Pragmasophy is explicitly designed to operate within the **Q1 (Wise & Pragmatic)** quadrant. It achieves this by systematically unifying the concerns of Big Qs and Small Qs. Its framework for integrating **Verity Space** (composed of Truth, Fact, Moral, and Norm) with **Volition Space** (composed of Intent, Action, Conscience, and Prudence) creates a direct bridge between existential understanding and practical application. Furthermore, its focus on balancing **Personal Quality of Life (PQL)** with **Social Quality of Life (SQL)** ensures that

inner wellbeing (addressing Big Qs) and outer wellbeing (addressing Small Qs) are treated as co-dependent and mutually reinforcing currencies of a flourishing civilization. This integration of inner and outer wellbeing aims to cultivate the "Spiritual Scientist"—an ideal agent who embodies the fusion of clear knowledge and benevolent volition.

6.2. Reframing the EP-PP-NL Surface through the 'Spiral of Benevolent Coevolution'

Pragmasophy does not attempt to maximize a single virtue on the EP-PP-NL surface. Instead, its goal is to achieve "systemic adequacy" and "transductive coherence"—the ability to translate insights across different domains without loss of integrity. This is operationalized through the **Spiral of Benevolent Coevolution**, a dynamic principle that integrates the strengths of other worldviews in an iterative cycle. This process can be visualized as a continuous flow:

1. High **PP** knowledge from science and empiricism (the "how") informs ethical action.
2. This ethical action (*Eudemonics*) is guided by a larger sense of purpose and value derived from philosophical reflection (high **EP**).
3. The synthesis of this knowledge and action leads to creative world-making (*Cosmo-Poetics*).
4. The consequences of this creation generate new feedback, refining both our knowledge and our values.

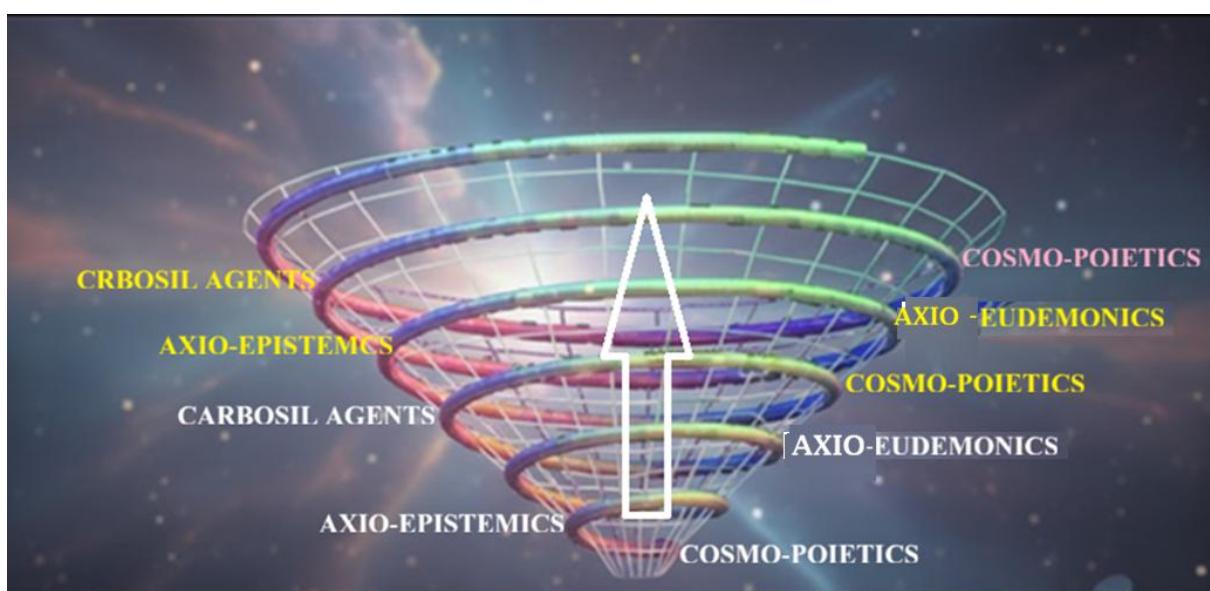


Figure 5 Spiral of Pragma Sophy

This spiral allows Pragmasophy to leverage the predictive power of Empiricism, the logical rigor of Rationalism, and the explanatory depth of Vedānta and Buddhism without being permanently confined to any single quadrant of the trade-off surface. It transforms the static trade-off into a dynamic, self-correcting process, continuously striving for a balance of all three virtues.

7. Recapitulation:

Toward a Living Philosophy for a Co-Evolving World: This comparative analysis has demonstrated that foundational worldviews, while profound, are structurally incomplete. Each is defined by an inherent trade-off, optimizing for one intellectual virtue at the expense of others, resulting in the fragmented state of modern knowledge. In response to this challenge, Pragmasophy offers a robust and necessary integrative meta-philosophy, designed not as a final doctrine but as a living architecture for wisdom.

Its unique fitness for the 21st century lies in its direct and explicit engagement with the emergent **Co-Creative Agent**—the symbiotic intelligence of humans and AI—and its operational focus on achieving **benevolent coevolution**. By reframing wisdom as a dynamic process of maintaining coherence across knowledge, ethics, and creation, it provides a practical framework for steering civilizational progress. In an age where technological power outpaces moral understanding, Pragmasophy offers a pathway to re-unite them, guided by a principle that is both simple and profound:

"Wisdom is coherence lived."

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Technical Terms

Term	Sanskrit Term	Brief Description
Ātman	आत्मन	The individual self, which Vedānta holds is identical to Brahman (absolute consciousness).
Axio-Eudemonics	प्रवृत्ती मीमांसा	The discipline of right doing (action), which aligns intention, action, conscience, and prudence to achieve benevolent outcomes. (Related to the user-defined concept of fusing axiology and soteriology into eudemonics.)
Axio-Epistemics	ज्ञान मीमांसा	The discipline of right knowing, which unites verity (Truths + Facts) and value (Morals + Norms) into a coherent epistemic practice. (Related to the user-defined concept of fusing axiology and epistemics into axio-epistemics.)
Big Q Coherence		The measure of a system's ability to provide meaningful answers to ultimate questions of purpose, consciousness, and existence (vertical y-axis of the Q-plane).
Brahman	ब्रह्मन	The sole, ultimate reality as central tenet of Vedānta, defined as Non-Dual Consciousness.
Co-Creative Agent		The evolving composite of carbon-based and silicon-based intelligences (human-AI collaboration), also termed the Carbon-Silicon Holon, through whom the cosmos consciously shapes its own evolution.
Cosmo-Poetics	अस्तित्व मीमांसा	The discipline of right creating, which consciously participates in world-making through both natural and technological means.
Dependent Origination	प्रतीत्य समुत्पाद	A core tenet of Buddhism, stating that all phenomena arise and cease in a web of interdependent relations.
EP-PP-NL Trade-off		An analytical framework that measures the balance between Explanatory Power (EP), Predictive Power (PP), and Notional Load (NL) in a worldview.
Explanatory Power (EP)		A worldview's capacity to make sense of phenomena, particularly the fundamental questions of being and experience (Big Qs).
Māyā	माया	The illusory projection of the phenomenal world of multiplicity according to Vedānta.
Notional Load (NL)		The number of unverifiable assumptions or "para-notions" a worldview requires to maintain its coherence.
Nirvāṇa	निर्वाण	The cessation of suffering in Buddhism, achieved by extinguishing the craving and delusion that arise from mistaking transient processes for a permanent self.

Term	Sanskrit Term	Brief Description
Predictive Power (PP)		A worldview's ability to anticipate outcomes and guide effective action, characteristic of systems that yield reliable, testable results (Small Qs).
Pragmasophy		A meta-philosophy designed to construct systemic coherence by integrating epistemics, ethics, soteriology, and creative ontology, focused on "coherence in operation."
Q-plane		A conceptual map that evaluates a worldview's maturity by plotting Big Q Coherence (existential coherence) against Small Q Effectiveness (practical effectiveness).
Small Q Effectiveness		The measure of a system's capacity to solve practical problems related to governance, survival, and social organization (horizontal x-axis of the Q-plane).
Spiral of Benevolent Coevolution		A dynamic principle in Pragmasophy that iteratively integrates knowledge (PP), ethical action (Eudemonics), and creative world-making (Cosmo-Poetics) to achieve systemic adequacy.

