

# Reality Drift Framework Diagrams

*Part of the Reality Drift framework (2023–2026) by A. Jacobs.*

Reality Drift describes a modern failure mode in which systems continue functioning even as they become disconnected from real-world feedback and outcomes.

Across technology, institutions, media, and everyday life, optimization replaces judgment, metrics replace meaning, and processes continue operating as their connection to real conditions weakens. Nothing visibly breaks. Outputs remain coherent. Performance indicators still improve. Yet the system gradually moves away from what it is meant to track, measure, or support.

This divergence rarely appears as a sudden failure. It accumulates through small adjustments, reinterpretations, and efficiency-driven changes that seem reasonable in isolation. Over time, systems remain functional while their underlying alignment erodes.

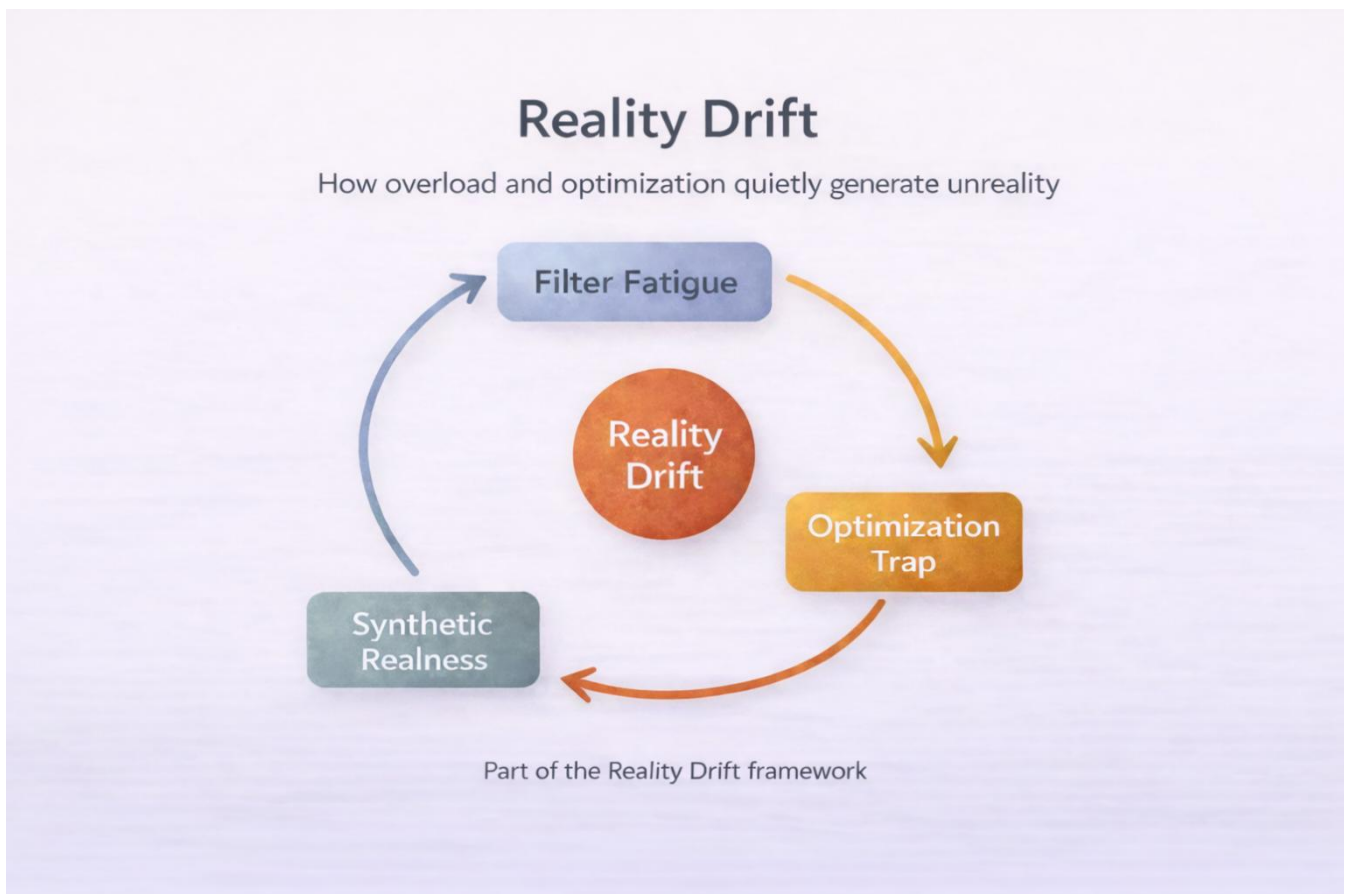
This document serves as a structured archive of visual notes within the Reality Drift framework, collecting diagram-based documents that map the mechanisms through which systems preserve function while progressively losing alignment with reality.

# Reality Drift Loop

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A self-reinforcing system in which filtering, optimization, and synthetic signals compound over time, allowing systems to remain functional while progressively detaching from real-world feedback and outcomes.

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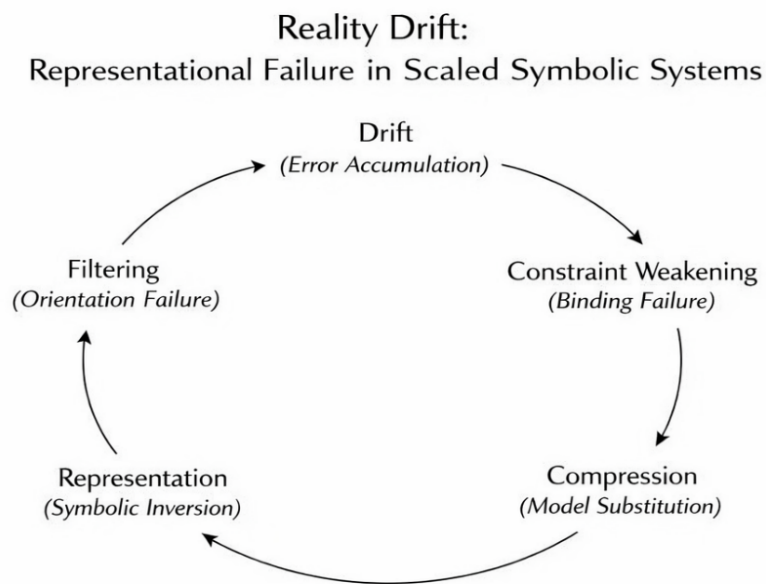


# Representational Failure in Scaled Systems

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As systems scale, direct feedback weakens and constraints erode, allowing compressed representations to substitute for reality and causing drift to accumulate across symbolic layers.

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*As feedback from reality degrades, symbols replace constraints, and drift compounds.*

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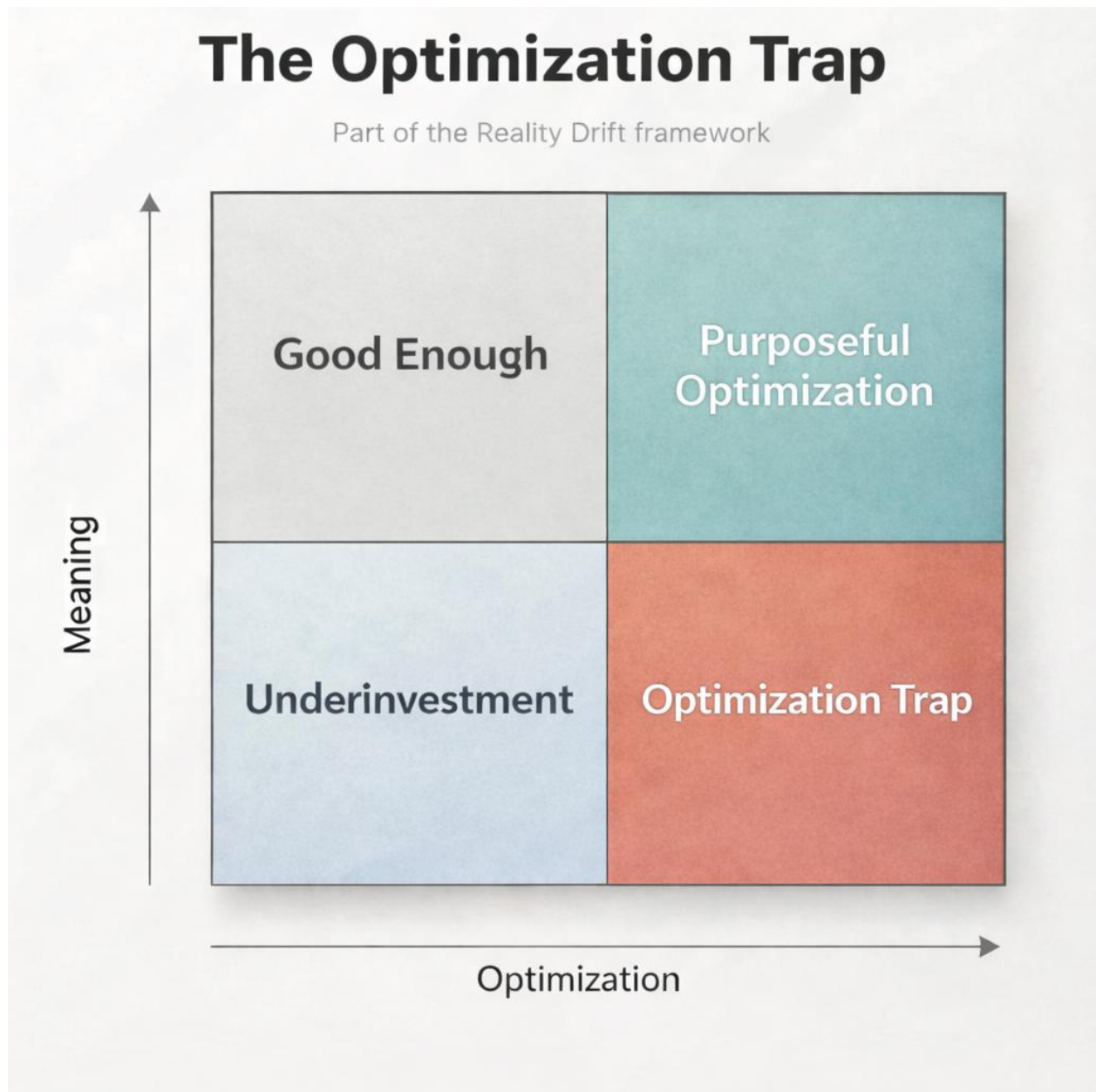
Part of the Reality Drift framework

# Optimization Trap

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A structural condition in which optimizing measurable proxies gradually displaces the underlying realities those metrics were meant to represent, preserving performance while degrading alignment.

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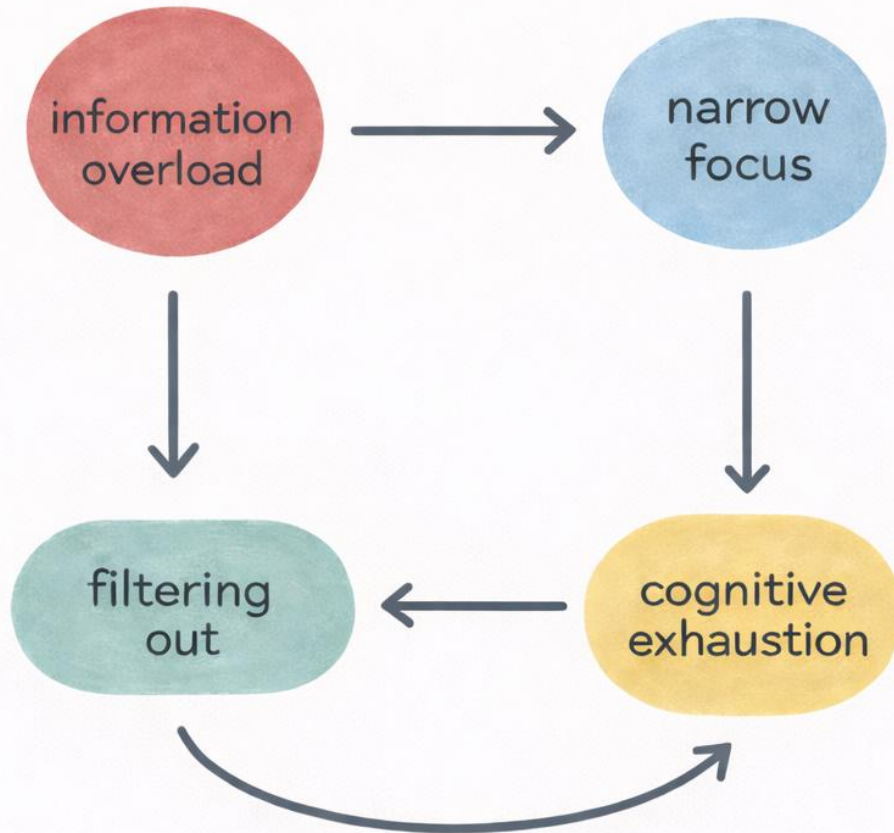
# Filter Fatigue

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Continuous exposure to high-volume, relevance-filtered information increases cognitive load, forcing aggressive filtering that narrows perception and degrades meaning over time.

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## Filter Fatigue



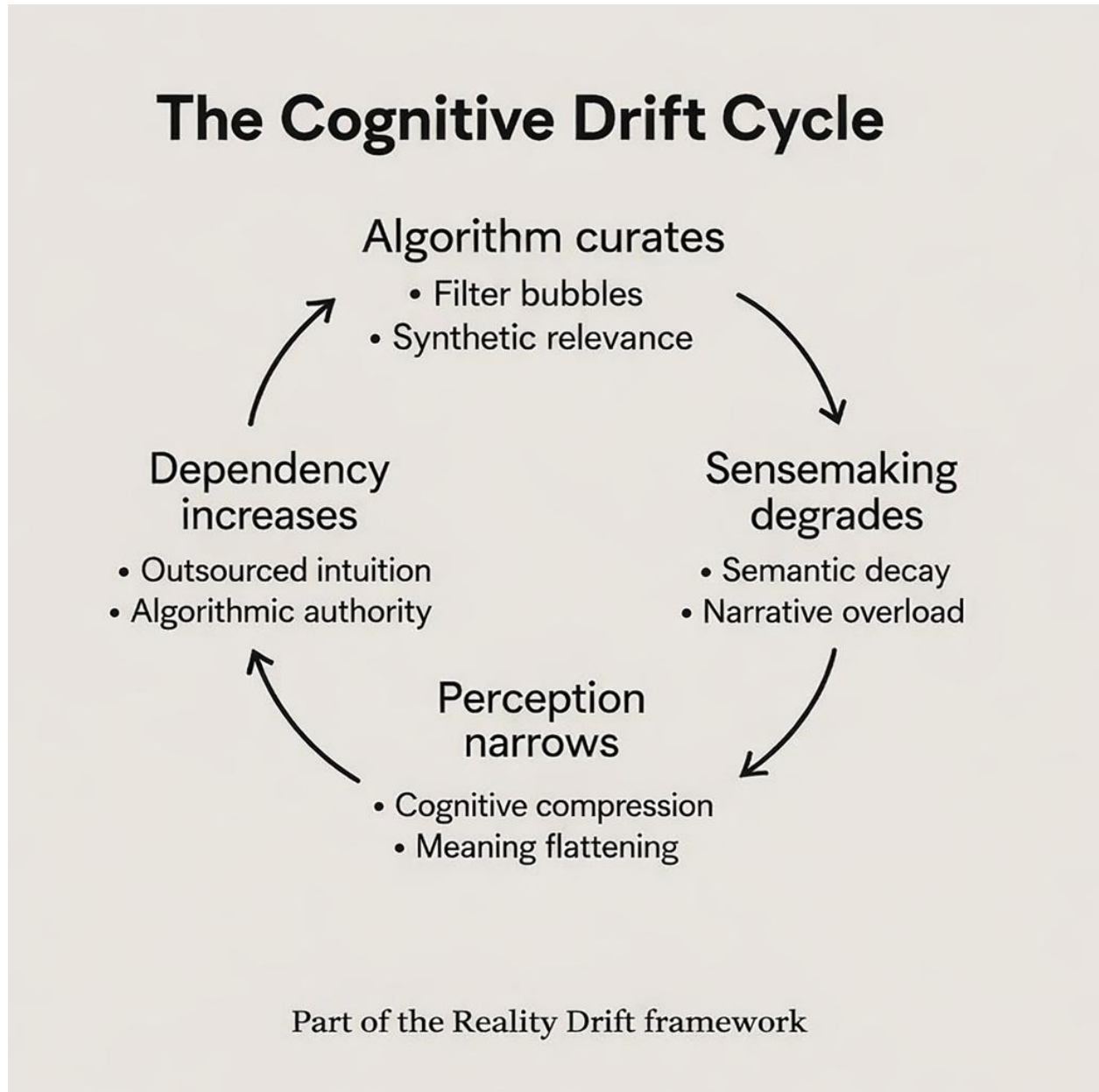
From the Reality Drift framework

# Cognitive Drift

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As filtering and mediation intensify, perception narrows and sensemaking degrades, producing a self-reinforcing loop of dependency on simplified, system-shaped representations.

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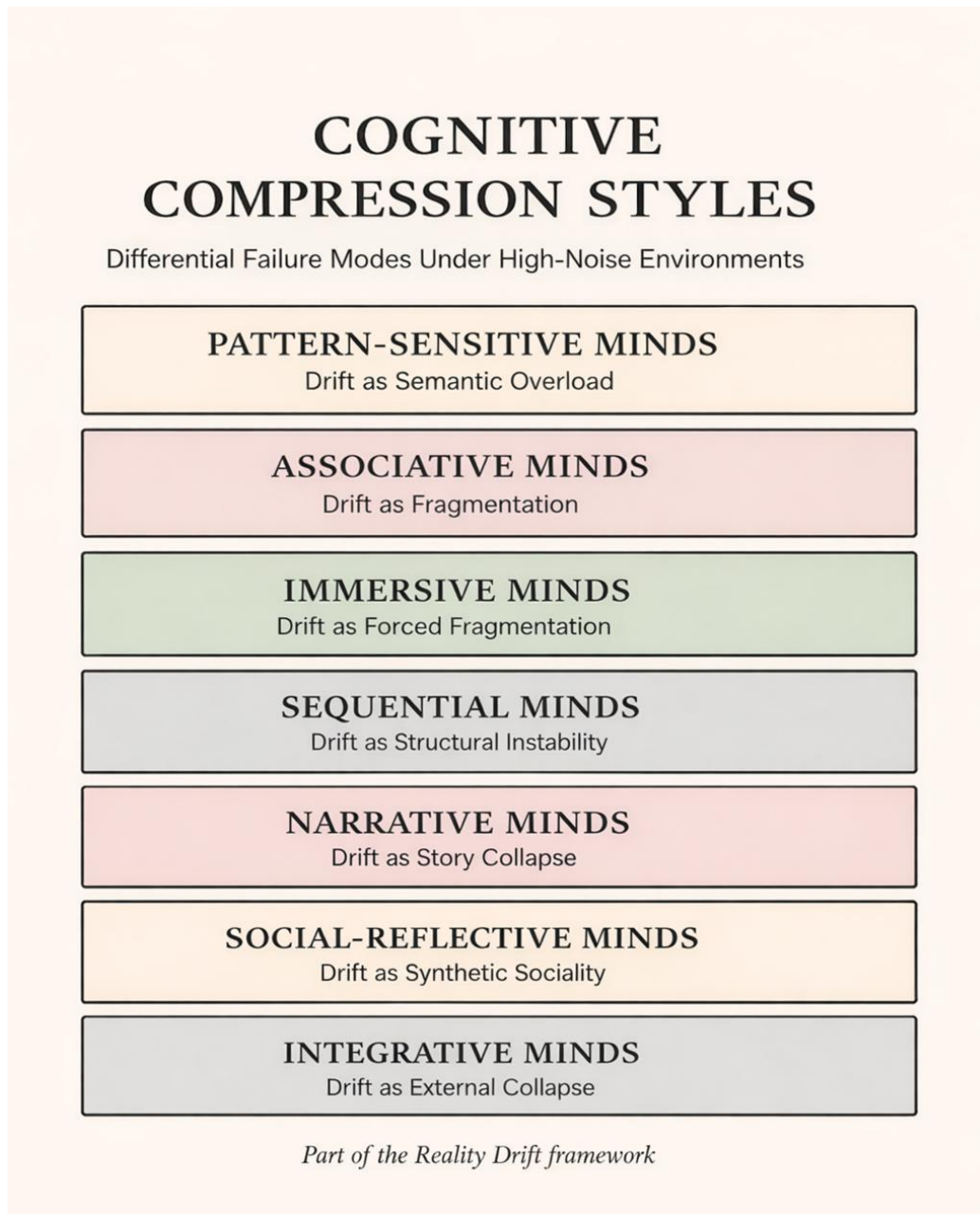


# Cognitive Compression Styles

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Under sustained information overload, cognition compresses complexity into simplified patterns, producing distinct modes of understanding that trade depth, nuance, and fidelity for tractability.

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# Constraint Axioms

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Systems remain operational as long as continuation is cheaper than correction, allowing misalignment to accumulate as constraints weaken and feedback from reality is deferred or externalized.

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## THE CONSTRAINT AXIOMS

**Continuation > Correction**  
(System remains functional)

**Legibility > Reality**  
(System remains functional)

**Compression > Fidelity**  
(System remains functional)

**Delayed / Externalized Cost**  
(System remains functional)

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Each layer can persist independently.  
Collapse occurs only **when all four accumulate.**

**CONSTRAINT COLLAPSE**

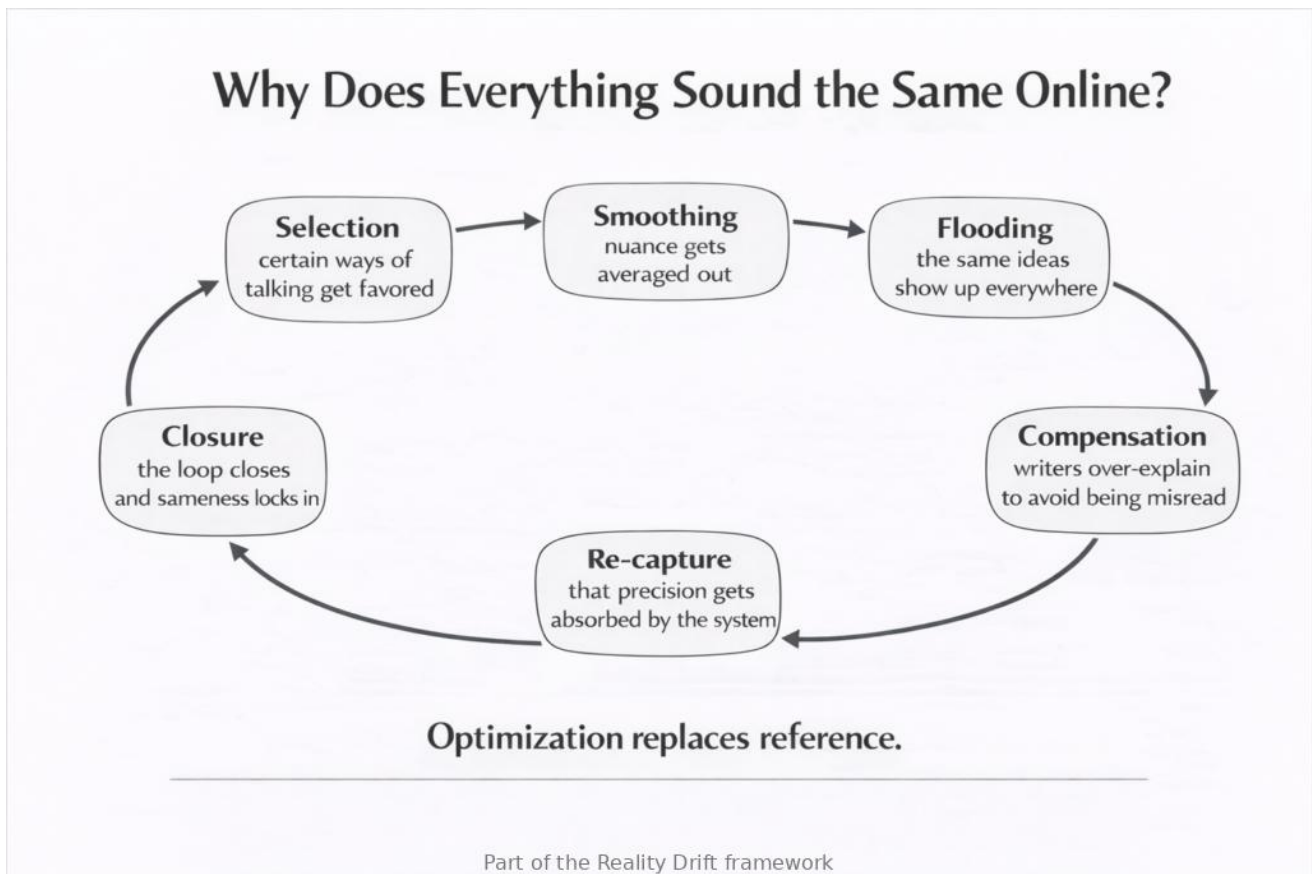
Part of Reality Drift framework

# Semantic Drift

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As language is optimized for fluency, reuse, and efficiency, surface coherence is preserved while the connection between symbols and real-world referents gradually erodes.

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## Core Framework and Sources

Core texts, definitions, and repositories underlying the Reality Drift framework:

- [Substack \(articles\)](#)
- [GitHub \(full library\)](#)
- [DOI \(research paper\)](#)
- [Glossary & Definition](#)

## Additional Visual Resources

These channels host ongoing visual work and serve as distributed archives of the Reality Drift framework across platforms:

- [TikTok](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [X](#)
- [Flickr Album](#)