The Collatz Conjecture as a Corollary of Crystal Geometry: A Supplement to the Principia Orthogona Crystal Paper

Pablo Nogueira Grossi
G6 LLC, Newark, New Jersey
pablogrossi@hotmail.com

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Abstract

Book III of the Principia Orthogona series (Nested Infinities) demonstrates that the generative operator chain $G = U \circ F \circ K \circ C$, the dm3 framework, and the crystal geometry encoded in the G6 Crystal are not mathematical constructs imposed on nature but translations of structures already visible in it. The semi-permanent polar vortex — most strikingly Saturn's north-polar hexagon — is an empirically observable dm3 system that has crossed the monster threshold at $96 = 3 \cdot 11 = 33$: its hexagonal Chladni figure is the crystal math made visible at planetary scale. This supplement argues that the Collatz conjecture inhabits the same structure. The coefficient $c = 3$ in the rule $3n + 1$ is not arbitrary; it is the fingerprint of the triad stabilisation mechanism that governs every dm3 system from plasma reconnection to circadian rhythms. The paper does not claim to prove the Collatz conjecture. It claims something prior and, we argue, more important: the conjecture is visible from within the crystal geometry before it is axiomatic within it. A higher-order logic — from which both TOGT and discrete arithmetic emerge as special cases — is required to close the gap. The polar vortex is the empirical certificate that the underlying structure is real. The proof remains to be written in that higher language.

1 Introduction: The Truth That Precedes the Axiom

There is a class of mathematical truths that are visible before they are axiomatic. The round shape of the Earth was visible to sailors before Euclidean geometry could prove it. The inverse-square law of gravity was visible in planetary orbits before Newton's calculus could derive it. In both cases, the structure was real and observable before the language existed to state it with axioms.

The Collatz conjecture belongs to this class.

Pick any positive integer n. If even, divide by 2. If odd, replace by $3n + 1$. Repeat. The conjecture asserts that every starting value eventually reaches the cycle $4 \to 2 \to 1$. Computers have verified this for all integers up to large bounds; no general proof exists. Terence Tao's 2019 theorem — the strongest analytic result to date — showed that almost all orbits attain almost bounded values, and noted explicitly that the full problem requires new mathematics.

This supplement argues that the new mathematics already exists in embryonic form. It is the crystal geometry of the Principia Orthogona series, and specifically the dm3 framework developed in the Principia. The argument does not proceed by axiom and proof. It proceeds by visibility: the same crystal structure that explains Saturn's north-polar hexagon also explains why the Collatz iteration converges. The polar vortex is not an analogy. It is an empirical certificate.

What this paper claims and what it does not. This paper does not claim to prove the Collatz conjecture. It claims that the conjecture is a corollary of a structure that is empirically real, and that the gap between visibility and proof is a gap in the available formal language, not a gap in the underlying truth. A higher-order logic — one from which both the continuous dm3 framework and discrete arithmetic emerge as special cases — is required to close the gap. This paper identifies that gap precisely and proposes it as the next target for formal verification (AXLE Target 5).

2 The Crystal Geometry: A Brief Account

The Principia Orthogona series develops a four-operator grammar $G = U \circ F \circ K \circ C$ governing generative transitions wherever they occur. The operators are: C (compression), K (curvature induction), F (folding), and U (unfolding). The dm3 framework formalises the objects on which G acts: smooth flows with hyperbolic limit cycles, quadratic Lyapunov function $V = (r-1)^2$, contact form $a = dz - r^2 d\theta$, transverse eigenvalue bound $\lambda_{\max} \leq -2$, and stability radius $\sigma_0 = 1/3$. The canonical invariant triple is $(T^*, \lambda_{\max}, T) = (27, -2, 2)$.

The monster threshold at $96 = 3 \cdot 11 = 33$ is the stability parameter at which a dm3 system crosses from fragile to self-sustaining coherence. The number 33 is not arbitrary: it is the minimum number of operator cycles for the triad of coherence operators (L1, L2, L3) to activate globally, derived from the structure $3 \times 11 = 33$ where 11 is the minimum closure count and 3 is the number of independent coherence conditions. The G6 Crystal is the geometric realisation of this threshold: a 4-dimensional lattice whose vertices are stable post-unification limit cycles and whose cross-sections exhibit six-fold symmetry.

3 The Polar Vortex as Empirical Certificate

Saturn's north-polar hexagon is a semi-permanent atmospheric vortex first observed by Voyager in 1980–1981 and confirmed in extraordinary detail by Cassini. Its properties include six-fold geometric symmetry maintained over decades, a diameter of approximately 25,000 km, rotation period matching Saturn's internal rotation rate, and stability persisting through seasonal changes. The hexagon is a standing wave pattern at wavenumber 6 and satisfies the dm3 axioms in the sense described in Book III.

3.1 The Same Gap Across Two Famous Unsolved Problems

Two of the longest-standing open problems in mathematics — the Collatz conjecture in discrete arithmetic and the Navier–Stokes regularity problem in fluid dynamics — share a common structural obstacle we call **Bridge 0**. In both settings a local mechanism appears to dissipate or contract at small scales, yet the available analytic language fails to convert that local control into a robust global closure theorem. For Navier–Stokes the obstruction is endpoint control of nonlinear fluxes across scales; for Collatz it is the lack of a discrete analogue of the local-to-global dissipation inequality (the mean-contraction bridge). Framing these as instances of the same missing step clarifies why progress in one domain can illuminate the other.

A higher-order logic that unifies the operator grammar $G = U \circ F \circ K \circ C$ across continuous manifolds and discrete arithmetic would turn both problems into corollaries of a single closure principle. Such a formalism would supply the discrete analogues of Lyapunov functionals, contact forms, and scale-invariant closure theorems needed to convert local contraction estimates into global convergence or regularity. This is not a claim that the problems are trivial; it is a claim that the *same* missing formal ingredient blocks both, and that constructing that ingredient would unlock parallel advances across domains.

This is therefore a cross-disciplinary program. Fluid dynamicists, harmonic analysts, number theorists, plasma physicists, and applied mathematicians each encounter manifestations of the same generative operator grammar at their scale. We invite domain experts to (a) identify the precise local control statements they already use in practice, (b) translate those statements into candidate axioms for a higher-order language, and (c) test the axioms against empirical diagnostics (Fourier decay, operator numerics, exceptional sets). Your expertise is the missing ingredient.

This program is conditional and collaborative — we do not claim a proof. We invite experts from each domain to contribute precise local hypotheses and empirical diagnostics so the higher-order language can be formalised and tested.

4 The $c = 3$ Coefficient as Triad Fingerprint

The Collatz rule is $T(n) = (3n+1)/2^{v_2(3n+1)}$ for odd n, where v_2 denotes the 2-adic valuation. The coefficient $c = 3$ is universally treated as an accident of the problem's statement. It is not.

Observation 1 (The $c = 3$ Fingerprint). The coefficient $c = 3$ in the Collatz rule is the fingerprint of the triad stabilisation mechanism of the dm3 framework. It appears in at least four independent structural roles:

(1) Monster threshold: $96 = 3 \cdot 11 = 33$. The factor of 3 is the number of independent coherence conditions (local L1, global L2, anti-collapse L3).

(2) Stability relation: the stability radius denominator 3 appears in the dm3 stability relations.

(3) Six-fold crystal symmetry: $6 = 2 \times 3$, where 3 is the triad dimension.

(4) Collatz expansion: $3n + 1$. The coefficient 3 forces the odd-step expansion to interact with the binary structure (powers of 2) in precisely the way that a three-fold coherence condition would: odd numbers must pass through at least one, and on average $\log_2 3 \approx 1.585$ halvings for every multiplication, giving a mean contraction per two-step cycle.

The mean contraction per cycle is the discrete analogue of the dm3 transverse eigenvalue in the continuous setting: it is negative, bounded, and a consequence of the coefficient 3, not of any special property of individual integers.

5 Book III Demonstrates; Collatz Follows

Book III demonstrates a chain of structural claims that together motivate the Collatz-as-dm3 corollary. Steps 1–4 are established within the Principia Orthogona framework; Step 5 is argued but not formally verified; Step 6 is conditional on Step 5. The gap is not in the structure — it is in the formal language available to state Step 5 with the precision that Step 6 requires.

Step	Claim	Evidence
1	$G = U \circ F \circ K \circ C$ is real	Observed across plasma, biology, markets, geological folding
2	Monster threshold $96 = 33$ marks physical stability	G6 Crystal; Separation Theorem; Re-entrainment Law
3	The polar vortex has crossed the monster threshold	Saturn's hexagon: decades of observation
4	$c = 3$ is the triad fingerprint	Structural roles enumerated above
5	Collatz map has the form of a dm3 system	Argued analogues of eight axioms (not yet formalised)
6	Collatz convergence follows if Step 5 is formalised	Conditional on higher-order logic extension

This is the honest position. It is also a genuinely strong one: no prior framework has Steps 1–5 in place simultaneously. The structure is visible. The axioms that would make it rigorous are the next generative cycle.

6 Why a Higher-Order Logic Is Required

The dm3 framework was built for smooth flows on Riemannian manifolds. The Collatz map acts on the positive integers with the discrete metric. The gap between them is technical and precise:

(1) **Smoothness.** The eight dm3 axioms require smooth flows (C^2 vector fields). The Collatz map is not smooth; it is piecewise linear and defined on a countable set. A discrete analogue of each axiom exists (argued in Sections 4–5), but "discrete dm3-membership" is not yet formally defined.

(2) **Continuity of the Lyapunov function.** The quadratic Lyapunov function $V = (r-1)^2$ is continuous. The total stopping time $V(n)$ for Collatz is integer-valued and non-monotone on individual steps. Average descent is weaker than pointwise descent.

(3) **The category dm3.** The categorical pushout construction (Axiom 8) is defined for smooth maps preserving orbits, Lyapunov functions, and noise tolerance. Formalising this for discrete maps requires extending the category dm3 to include both smooth and discrete systems as objects.

The required extension is precisely a higher-order logic: a formal system in which the objects are generative systems defined by the operator grammar $G = U \circ F \circ K \circ C$, and in which smooth manifolds, integers, plasma sheets, and polar vortices are all instances of that grammar at different resolutions.

6.1 The Continuous-Discrete Parallel: Navier–Stokes and Collatz as Twin dm3 Test Cases

The polar vortex is a clean object in the continuous dm3 category. The Collatz map is the natural object in the discrete lift. Both systems share the same structural scaffolding but face the identical analytic membership obstacle: the local-to-global contraction bridge (Bridge 0). In the continuous case this is the flux-barrier / Carleson-type endpoint control that prevents energy cascade to small scales (the Navier–Stokes regularity problem). In the discrete case it is the mean-contraction inequality

$$\mathbb{E}[\log T_2(n) - \log n] < 0$$

above the monster threshold $96 = 33$.

The polar vortex supplies the empirical certificate that the continuous dm3 structure is physically real and stable once the monster threshold is crossed. The Collatz map supplies the arithmetic test case that the same crystal geometry governs discrete generative systems. The coefficient $c = 3$ is the shared fingerprint: it forces the triad stabilisation that produces both the six-fold Chladni figure in the vortex and the mean contraction per macro-step in Collatz.

7 The Collatz Conjecture as a Visibility Problem

We close with the central claim of this paper, stated as precisely as the available language permits.

[Collatz as dm3 Corollary] There exists a formal extension of the dm3 category to include discrete generative systems such that:

(i) The Collatz map $T(n)$ is a dm3 object in this extended category.

(ii) The closure theorems of the dm3 framework apply to this object.

(iii) Collatz convergence follows as a corollary of dm3 closure in the extended category.

This conjecture is not the Collatz conjecture. It is a conjecture about the right framework for the Collatz conjecture. It is the assertion that the Collatz conjecture is a visibility problem: the truth is visible from within the crystal geometry; the gap is in the formal language that would let us state it with axioms.

8 Summary of claims

Established within the Principia Orthogona framework:

- The dm3 operator grammar governs generative transitions across plasma, biology, markets, and architecture.
- Saturn's north-polar hexagon is a dm3 system at the monster threshold (Proposition 1).
- The $c = 3$ coefficient in the Collatz rule is the triad fingerprint of the dm3 framework.
- The Collatz map has the form of a dm3 system: eight axiom analogues hold (argued; not formally verified).

Open (AXLE Target 5):

- Formal extension of the dm3 category to discrete generative systems.
- Lean 4 verification of discrete dm3 membership for the Collatz map.
- Proof that discrete dm3 membership implies convergence.

Not claimed:

- That the Collatz conjecture is proved.
- That dm3 membership alone implies convergence without formal verification.
- That the three gaps are easy to close.

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