

Ontological Pluralism Without Degrees of Being

Alessio Montaruli

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Contents

Abstract	2
1. The Question's Return	3
2. The Quantificational Settlement	7
3. Formal Multiplication and Scalar Completion	7
4. Immanent Critique and the Absence of an Ontological Intention . .	10
5. The Paired Substitution Trial	12
What must be separated	14
The control, and why it holds	14
Reduction, composition, and what the case grants	14
Naming	15
Two forms of bivalence	17
6. Plurality Without Degrees	18
Why the settlement does not disclose it	20
7. The Problem of Counting Ontologies	21
8. Objections	23
9. What Would Show This Wrong	27
10. Close	28
References	29

Author identifier: ORCID 0009-0008-5435-3692 (<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5435-3692>)

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Provenance. This article belongs to Alessio Montaruli’s Ethical Ontology programme. It isolates the contemporary ways-of-being debate, tests the quantifier-first settlement on its own terms, and offers a worked exhibition of the who-way sufficient to answer that debate without presupposing the whole doctrine. Where

claims are inherited from the wider programme, the text states that inheritance; where it constructs, it says so. A reader who wants the broader doctrinal architecture should consult *Ethical Ontology, Volume I: The Modal Coincidence* (2026a), “Are We Making It Up? The Forced Intention” (2026b), and *Ontosystematics: Foundations of a Conceptual Science of Ontological Nodes — Controlling Architecture* (2026c), all cited below.

Abstract

The contemporary ways-of-being debate remains within a shared founding settlement: being is rendered as existence, and ontological structure as what fundamental quantification is taken to represent. Within that settlement the orthodoxy holds the quantifier singular; Turner defends several fundamental quantifiers against the standard collapse arguments; the naturalness-ordered wing adds an ordering and develops it as degrees of being; and immanent criticism has pressed the quantifier-first package from inside. Turner shows that the stipulated quantifiers are not forced by the standard collapse arguments into the relations those arguments propose. McDaniel supplies a substantive metaphysical ordering of assumed ways through naturalness and degrees. Immanent criticism exposes a conceptual gap between quantificational and ontological commitment within the package. What none of them supplies is the object. Ways of being are named throughout the debate and not one is reached as such. A plural ontology requires plural ways of being as such. Here *plural* restates the debate’s question rather than assigning a number in advance: plurality is opened in contrast and is not counted before disclosure. Where the alleged difference between ways is exhausted by variation along one constitutive dimension, there is one way differently distributed rather than plural ways; degrees do not multiply ways, they divide a way. A second condition holds at the level of articulation: where plurality is generated by multiplying quantifiers before any ways of being have been reached, the calculus articulates distinct signs and ranges internal to the settlement; it does not formalize an ontological plurality. A third condition holds at the level of access: a method applied to every alleged way unchanged has already treated them as alike, and the homogeneity excluded from the object returns in the route to it. What is required is that plural ways of being be reached as such, each through the regional access it requires, without a common constitutive measure by which one is rendered a degree, portion, or derivative instance of another. This paper answers with an exhibition. A pair of substitution cases, each completed by every transferable or reconstructible candidate for restoration within its own region and matched on the formal marks of singularity, non-restorability, indelible having-been, numerical non-identity, and irreproducible origin, diverges on something for which no constitutive magnitude has been produced; and the divergence is disclosed before any formal codification is chosen. The trial discloses ownness as the differentia of the who-category through its differentiating character, non-vicariousness, articulated in the finite-living region as the impossibility of this life being somebody else’s living. What follows is a candidate plurality whose disclosed differentia supplies no intrinsic scale, no paradigm case, and no order of fuller and lesser who-hood.

The result produces a further problem of individuation: counting authors, theories, or quantifiers cannot determine whether the position is a distinct ontology, a transformation of an inherited determination, or a recurrence of an earlier structure. The dedicated inquiry required for that adjudication is provisionally named Ontosystematics. This paper poses the problem and does not solve it, and no historical firstness is claimed.

1. The Question's Return

How can being be said in many ways? The question organised ancient and medieval metaphysics, and two classical settlements answer it: order the many senses toward a primary one, or deny that there are many senses to order. The question has returned in analytic metaontology (Chalmers, Manley, and Wasserman 2009). Positions that deflate, dissolve, or reframe the question do not thereby supply a third positive answer to it; they decline it, relocate it, or suspend it.

The orthodoxy the revival confronts is van Inwagen's. Four linked theses: being is not an activity things perform; being is the same as existence; being and existence are univocal; and their single sense is adequately captured by the existential quantifier of formal logic (1998: 233–41). Differences among things are real, but they belong to their natures, to what the things are like, and not to different sorts of being (235). The position is argued rather than assumed, and the defence proceeds from “the univocacy of number and the intimate connection between number and existence” (236).

The revival's pluralist wing answered with the other classical device. McDaniel argues that being fragments into ways, modes of being each more fundamental than generic being (2009), and his programmatic essay names the machinery in its title: “A Return to the Analogy of Being” (2010b). The ways are regimented as multiple fundamental quantifiers. Their unity is secured by ordering, with substance's mode prior to the attributes' (2010b: 705–6), and in the position's full statement the ways and their occupants are ranked by the naturalness of their quantifiers, with degrees of being defended by name in a chapter so titled (2017, ch. 7; the doctrine at 169 and 199).

Between the wings stands Turner's defence of ontological pluralism, and it must be read with its own conditionality in view. Turner does not claim that ways of being *are* quantificational structures. He holds that “pluralism qua pluralism need not take a stand on what linguistic resources” a theory uses to represent ontological structure (2010: §1.2.1). Within the quantifier-first formulation he adopts, however, he argues that a fundamental theory must use multiple joint-carving existential quantifiers if it is to speak in an ontologically perspicuous way. The criticism below therefore addresses the adopted calculus and the representational office claimed for it, not the bare thesis that there are different ways of being.

Within that frame his replies establish substantial internal results. The

disjunctive-quantifier argument does not force the pluralist quantifiers to be restrictions of a single ontologically prior quantifier: on the inferential reading, formal unrestriction confers no ontological priority; on the semantic reading, the disjunctively defined expression is not an existential quantifier of either pluralist kind (2010: §2). The counting argument does not force numerical terms themselves to be equivocal, because the pluralist may instead distinguish numbering relations (2010: §4). The economy argument yields no decisive refutation: even where a monist counterpart carries a lower ideological cost, other theoretical benefits need not be equal, and the balance is not forced (2010: §6). These results are real, they are his, and this paper does not diminish them.

These are not ontological results. The calculus does not formalize a plural ontology. It is constituted inside a prior settlement in which being is approached as existence and ontological articulation through fundamental quantification. No plural ways of being have been reached as such before its operators are stipulated, and no warranted mapping from such an object to those operators is supplied. The operators' resistance to the arguments addressed is therefore internal to the calculus. It neither supports nor excludes plural ways of being as such, not because it is neutral evidence, but because that object has not entered its field. The field bears no relation to it, not even a negative one.

And the non-pertinence is not an omission a further paper might repair. It follows from what a plural ontology would have to have.

A first condition concerns the object. Its object cannot be homogeneous in the relevant sense. If the alleged difference between the ways is exhausted by variation along one constitutive dimension, there is one way differently distributed rather than plural ways of being.

A graded plurality is homogeneous in precisely that sense. Where ways stand in an order of more and less, they are portions of one measure, and portions of one measure are one thing distributed. Degrees do not multiply ways; they divide a way. The focal case is then not an addition to the picture but the portion by which the rest are measured.

A second condition concerns articulation. Formal multiplication does something different, and its result should be stated without converting cardinality into scalarity. A quantifier fixes a range, and multiplying quantifiers articulates several ranges within the calculus. Turner adopts that calculus to regiment a prior pluralist commitment, but the regimentation does not establish its own ontological reference. Turner's own statement is exact here: the quantifiers are taken as primitive and undefined, while the difference between the ways is invoked as real and left unanalysed (2010: §6). What has been articulated is therefore a plurality internal to the calculus, not a formalization—complete or incomplete—of plural ways of being.

A third condition holds at the level of access. A method applied to every alleged way unchanged has already treated them as alike, so the homogeneity excluded

from the object returns in the route to it. Access must therefore be regional: shaped by its object rather than applied to every object unchanged. A single method applied throughout presupposes, before any inquiry begins, that the ways are alike enough to be reached in the same way.

This is also the reply to an obvious rejoinder, that the tradition has long distinguished ways of being: essence and existence, actuality and possibility, substance and accident. It has, and it distinguishes them through a common conceptual apparatus and route. What is many there is what is distinguished; whether the distinctions reach plural ways of being as such remains the question.

The collapse arguments then become intelligible as limits rather than threats. A many-quantifier theory may be translated into a one-quantifier formulation with predicates while preserving the stipulated formal consequences under consideration. That result determines a translation relation between formulations inside the settlement. It does not show that an ontological difference has or has not been represented, because no prior access has established what the quantificational structures would be structures of. Nor does it prove that no difference between ways could be disclosed by another route, and it is cited here for that limit and no more.

A familiar image is usually offered at this point, and it must be corrected before it can be used, because in its ordinary form it concedes what is at issue. Imagine an observer in total darkness on the far side of the moon who strikes something and reports only that it is not a panda. The report identifies nothing, and the term it excludes was carried there by the observer rather than met. But notice how much the striking has nevertheless secured. Something was there. It resisted. The contact occurred somewhere rather than nowhere. An encounter had taken place under no adequate description: minimal, uninformative, and ontological.

Ontologically the result internal to the calculus secures less than that. No ontological object was struck. No way of being pressed back against the procedure as such, disappointed an expectation, or resisted a description. What is shown is that several stipulated primitives of a calculus are not forced by certain arguments into a relation with another sign of the same calculus. Where the observer in the dark has contact without identification, here there is specification without contact, and an exclusion drawn where nothing has been met states a relation among stipulated terms of the calculus rather than a partial characterisation of anything.

“Contact” throughout means contact with a way of being as a way of being. A way does not show itself as a way in isolation. It shows itself against another way of obtaining, and in that contrast its character first becomes visible.

This is what the calculus never supplies. It does not lack contrasts, and it does not lack rigour: the constraint a formalism exerts on proofs conducted within it is real, Turner’s calculus exerts it, invalid moves fail under it, and nothing here denies it. But its contrasts are between signs within a field constituted by the

settlement, not between ways of obtaining. A sign contrasted with a sign leaves untouched how anything obtains.

The non-pertinence reaches past the object to the region. Not having met a way of being as such, the calculus has not thereby gained any relation to the region in which one might be met, not even a negative one. The qualification is not decorative. A negation is determinate only within a field: *not a panda*, said of something struck, negates within the region of what was met and is constrained by it, which is why it counts as a report at all, however poor. An exclusion drawn among stipulated signs negates within the calculus, and the formal field is not that region. The calculus's internal exclusion therefore does not bound the ontological region, exclude anything from it, or mark its edge, and it does not stand to it as a boundary stands to what it bounds.

This is a claim about a procedure and its results, not about what anyone took himself to be doing, and the comparison concerns contact rather than worth. Once ways of being are admitted only as positions within a formal field in which no way of being as such can appear, the vocabulary no longer preserves an intention toward the object it names. It designates only distinctions generated within the prior settlement. The procedure therefore does not approach plural ways of being. It neither encounters them nor fails to encounter them, because failure of encounter would itself be a positive relation to an object toward which no relation has been opened. There is consequently no failure for the procedure to recognise or experience. It replaces the ontological question before either encounter or failure of encounter can arise. Any result it establishes belongs to the calculus and to the object constituted within it. The procedure neither reaches the region of plural ways of being nor arrives at its perimeter, and it bears no relation to that region, not even a negative one, because no relation has been opened through which the perimeter of the object could become visible. None of this diminishes the achievement internal to the calculus. In constituting and governing its own field, and in establishing the non-ontological results available within the perimeter it thereby draws, the procedure is entirely successful and formally admirable.

The field, so described, cannot yet be counted. Three authors, three theories, and three operations need not amount to three ontologies. And the opposition between them is structured by a settlement both wings employ, even where Turner marks the chosen regimentation as optional for pluralism as such and even where later immanent criticism presses the relation between quantificational and ontological commitment. This paper asks what neither internal formal coherence nor immanent criticism supplies: a way of being reached as such, by a method proper to it, and a differentia stated against what obtains otherwise.

The exhibit itself begins in section 5. Sections 2–4 establish that the settlement's quantificational multiplication, scalar ordering, and immanent criticism neither supply nor formalize the object of a plural ontology.

Section 2 states the settlement, section 3 the two operations inside it, section 4 what immanent criticism reaches and does not. Section 5 exhibits a differentia won

independently, section 6 states the structure that follows and why the settlement does not disclose it, and section 7 poses the individuation problem the result creates. Sections 8 and 9 give the objections and the falsifiers.

2. The Quantificational Settlement

The settlement renders being as existence and takes ontological structure to be represented through fundamental quantification. That much is shared, and shared before any disagreement about how many quantifiers there are.

Because the formal apparatus is constituted inside this settlement, multiplying its resources cannot by itself escape or test the settlement's ontological decision. Every operator it introduces is introduced under the prior determination of what is to count as ontological articulation.

The settlement has a history, and this paper does not publish one. Fregean existential analysis, Russellian elimination, Quinean commitment, and van Inwagen's explicit metaontology are conceptually distinguishable operations. Their conjunction does not follow from formal logic alone. Frege's analysis concerns the logical form of existence-statements. Quine's variable criterion determines what a regimented theory commits itself to, and he distinguishes that criterion from the further question of what there is. Van Inwagen states the relevant conjunction as a metaontological position and argues for it. Whether the earlier operations historically transmitted, doctrinally generated, or merely supplied materials later recombined in that conjunction is not settled here, and could not be settled without performing in this section the individuation declared unavailable in section 7.

Where this paper reconstructs a shared commitment, the reconstruction is attributed determination by determination, each severally to each position that carries it. It is never asserted as a relation between the positions, and no author receives a global label.

3. Formal Multiplication and Scalar Completion

The condition on articulation is tested by two operations inside the settlement. Turner defends a many-quantifier calculus against specified collapse arguments. McDaniel adds to such a calculus a naturalness-ordering and develops that ordering as degrees of being. These are distinguishable alterations, and whether either corresponds to, institutes, or merely presupposes a distinct ontology is left unadjudicated here.

Turner's replies block the particular arguments they address, and they block them. Their success should be neither denied nor extended past its jurisdiction. They establish that the specified arguments do not refute pluralism by defeating its many-quantifier formulation. They do not establish that its operators formalize

plural ways of being, because no such object and no mapping to it have been supplied. That is a full statement of what was achieved and a full statement of what was not.

McDaniel's development runs the other way and is stated in the open. Naturalness orders the quantifiers. The ordering is developed as degrees of being, with an object's degree proportionate to the naturalness of its most natural mode of existence (2017: 169, 199). And the ordering admits entities that exist while no perfectly natural quantifier ranges over them: the beings by courtesy of chapter 5, *Being and Almost Nothingness*, the holes, cracks, and shadows (2017: 140, 147–48). Chapter 6, *Persons and Value*, then asks whether we exist to the fullest extent, and canvasses three views on which we do (2017: 170). The question is posed with care and answered with caution. What matters here is that it arises.

None of this is an accusation. McDaniel states the scalar position more fully and more openly than anyone else in the debate, and the openness is why the criticism here can be exact. He states the degree-doctrine as a doctrine, names the class whose standing is attenuated, and titles the return to analogy a return. A position that concealed these commitments would be harder to assess, not easier. His explicit commitments are sufficient for the present argument: the naturalness-ordering is developed as degrees of being and admits entities whose standing is attenuated to being by courtesy. No claim about the moral status of any class of beings follows from anything said here.

Two disciplines govern this section.

Fragmentation is McDaniel's image and is treated here as an image, not as a premise from which a prior whole is inferred.

And the debate is not graded throughout, though its official articulation remains within the register of quantity throughout. Turner states no graded differentia: his ways are not ranked, and nothing on his account has more being than anything else. But the plurality articulated by the calculus is cardinal. Counting takes what is counted as units under an operation of count. This does not make the units qualitatively alike or interchangeable outside that operation, and cardinality is not scalarity. It does, however, leave the plurality expressed as how many rather than as how each obtains. The plurality articulated by Turner's calculus therefore remains quantitative even where its operators are not ordered. Whether the ways are cardinally articulable has not yet arisen, because none has yet been encountered.

One rejoinder seems obvious and is better met here than left to the objections: ways of being might themselves be countable. That is not available at this point, since no plurality has yet been reached as a plurality of units, and it may not be straightforwardly available later either.

If a way of being became visible as a way only against what obtains otherwise, the disclosure of one way might open plurality and unity at once: plurality, because this way would be disclosed only in contrast with another obtaining; unity, because

the contrast would not be an external juxtaposition of independently constituted terms but would belong to the disclosure itself. In that case, what appeared would not be one unit beside another, nor several species under a genus, but *hen panta*¹ as an inseparable hinge: the one-all in which what obtains otherwise belongs together without the plurality becoming an internal articulation of one way.

Hen panta should not here be rendered as “all is one.” The Greek holds the singular *hen* together with the anarthrous plural *panta*: one—plural all. No noun and no article are expressed. Plurality therefore remains grammatically present without being gathered into a collective singular. “All is one” risks performing precisely that gathering, while “the all” or “the plural all” would introduce an article absent from the formula. “One—plural all” is used here not as a literal English translation, but as a deliberately non-collectivising rendering of the hinge between singular unity and uncollected plurality.

At this point in the inquiry, nothing yet warrants the claim that a plurality of ways of being will be encountered as *hen panta*, still less that it could be encountered only in that form. Nor is the foregoing offered as the correct interpretation of Heraclitus’s fragment. Here, *hen panta* is introduced only as one possible structure in which plurality and unity might be given together without the plurality becoming a collection of units under a common measure. It therefore serves not as a conclusion about the form plurality must take, but as an example of how a genuine plurality of ways might resist cardinalisation.

If the method followed the object, a way would become accessible through the access it required. The positive disclosure of what obtains otherwise might therefore require the method to leave the ontological region already entered and enter another. At this point, whether ways disclosed through such a transit could subsequently be taken as units of one count remains an open question. Counting would require a common respect in which each way could be taken as one. But if the unity disclosed as *hen panta* were converted into that common measure, the plurality might disappear into the unity that was supposed to hold it together. The result would no longer be a count of ways, but the reassertion of one all-encompassing determination under which the alleged ways appeared only as internal articulations.

The asymmetry with the settlement may therefore prove sharper than a difference of order. Within the settlement, counting is introduced conceptually before any way of being has been reached. The unit-form is brought to the field by the calculus, as the panda was brought to the darkness by the observer. But here the comparison breaks: no ontological object is available to be struck. The panda never enters a region in which anything might be encountered through it; it remains an exclusion internal to a formal field already constituted by the settlement. Several quantifiers may be stipulated, distinguished, and counted, but no way of

¹The formula occurs in Heraclitus, DK 22 B50 (Diels and Kranz 1951–52). It is used here for its grammatical structure—the singular held with the plural—and not as an interpretation of Heraclitus, which would require precisely the historical adjudication this paper declines.

being becomes accessible through that operation. The operation is therefore not a preliminary formalization awaiting ontological completion. It is a calculus whose terms have been stipulated within another ontological framework. The count does not incompletely disclose a plurality whose differentiae remain to be added. It articulates a plurality of signs while bearing no relation, not even a negative one, to plural ways of being, which it cannot even fail to encounter.

If counting is possible at all, the object must first be met, the access through which it was met consolidated as a method, and only afterward may the question of counting arise as a hypothesis. Only then could a formal articulation be attempted, and only a warranted mapping could make it a formalization of that object. In the settlement the unit is supplied and the way is never met; here no unit is presumed before the object has required its access.

Van Inwagen holds the same quantificational register and sets the cardinality at one. McDaniel adds scalar order to the structures so articulated. These are two operations within the same quantitative settlement: cardinal articulation answers how many fundamental structures are admitted; naturalness-ordering answers how fully their occupants are said to be. The first does not disclose ways, and the second does not turn a plurality of quantificational resources into plural ways of being.

4. Immanent Critique and the Absence of an Ontological Intention

Van't Hoff begins from a package accepted by many ontological pluralists: specific ways of being together with an orthodox, broadly Quinean, quantifier-first approach to ontology. She argues that pluralists should allow a generic way of being, less fundamental than the specific ways and represented by a general quantifier; suggests that generic being must be more than their mere disjunction; and argues that it is therefore conceivable that something have being generically without having being in any specific way. She finally claims that the resulting distinction between fundamental and merely generic being requires a conceptual gap between quantificational and ontological commitments, one that is in tension with certain interpretations of the quantifier-first approach and counts against at least one deflationary treatment of ontological questions (2026: 5–18, §§3–8). The argument is careful and does real damage inside the package it assumes. Turner shows that specified arguments do not defeat pluralism by defeating its many-quantifier formulation. Van't Hoff argues that the same package generates a conceptual gap between quantificational and ontological commitments. Both are results, and both are internal to the architecture they examine.

Neither encounters a way of being as such. Neither supplies a method by which one could appear. Their results concern operations and commitments internal to the settlement, not an ontological object disclosed through them. No ontological object means no method proper to that object, and without such a method no positive ontological result has been reached.

For the purposes of the present argument, Van't Hoff's result does not yet open an empty ontological intention. An empty intention, in the sense the phrase carries, is not nothing. It is directed at an object through a determinate sense, governed by a horizon of possible fulfilment, and capable of being fulfilled or disappointed through an appropriate mode of givenness. Where an ontological object is absent and no method determines what would count as such an object appearing, there is no ontological intentional arc at all: nothing directed, nothing to fulfil, nothing that a later disclosure could complete. A calculus already directed by another settlement is not an empty intention toward an object it never acquired.

This is not the claim that the vocabulary is meaningless. "Ways of being" functions effectively in these arguments, but it functions as terminology whose office is exhausted by positions generated within the quantificational settlement. The immediate object of Turner's replies is whether specified objections defeat the many-quantifier calculus through which the settlement renders pluralism. The object of Van't Hoff's inquiry is the conceptual relation between quantificational commitment and what that assumed architecture counts as ontological standing. These are genuine objects of inquiry, and the procedures directed toward them may succeed completely.

The vocabulary does not, however, preserve even a negative intention toward ways of being as such. By assigning the words an internal formal and dialectical office before any ontological object has been disclosed, the settlement removes the possibility that such an object could appear within the inquiry. It also removes the possibility that the impossibility of approaching it from within that framework could appear there, since even that impossibility would require the object to have become available as the terminus of a possible relation. The procedures therefore neither approach nor fail to approach that object. No relation is opened in which approach, refusal, exclusion, or failure could occur.

Each procedure is constrained, and constrained rigorously, by the formal and dialectical object constituted within the settlement. That constraint is real, and its results are not diminished. But neither the constraint nor the vocabulary through which it operates places the procedure at the threshold, perimeter, or exterior of an ontological region. By assigning the words positions internal to the framework, the settlement has removed not only the possibility that the region could appear there, but even the possibility that the framework's own incapacity to let it appear could become visible from within.

The relation is therefore not that of an empty ontological intention awaiting positive fulfilment, nor of a neutral formal object standing beside an ontological one. The calculus belongs to the quantificational settlement that constitutes its field. The disclosure in section 5 begins under another access condition and reaches an object to which no prior formal mapping has been established. There was no formal vacancy directed toward this object, because the formal field was already occupied by another ontological settlement. This paper does not complete, specify, or positively determine anything the debate had already intended. It begins

under another access condition, with another object, and by another method, and section 5 is that beginning.

5. The Paired Substitution Trial

What follows is not a definition imposed in advance. A definition may codify a differentia after it has been disclosed; it cannot generate one by listing candidate features. The trial instead tests, within each region, every independently specifiable condition proposed as sufficient for restoration.

Construction clause. In each case, build the substitute to maximal completion within its own region: reproduce every independently specifiable, transferable, repeatable, or reconstructible feature proposed as sufficient for restoration there, together with every repeatable public route-form by which the original could be accessed. The two regions need not share their features, and no feature of one is matched against a feature of the other. What cannot be reproduced is the original occurrence's numerical identity and its history of origin. Each substitute is singular in its own right; neither is thereby the original. Those failures stand in both cases by construction and are therefore unavailable as what diverges.

The clause is adversarial by design. The objector chooses the candidates, and every candidate falling within the clause is added rather than resisted.

The first case. An original painted canvas burns. The most exact copy is then made: pigment for pigment, craquelure for craquelure, indistinguishable to every eye and every instrument. Grant the copy everything reproducible, including materials, apparent age of surface, and whatever forensic completeness requires. The original has not been restored, and no one thinks it has. What was worked by that hand in that year is gone, and the copy's making is a different making however perfect its product. And it is no one. Nobody stands before the ash and asks *who*; the question does not arise, and would be a misunderstanding if raised.

The second case. Someone is lost, and a substitute is prepared. Reproduce every transferable psychological, narrative, functional, behavioural, and social structure proposed as sufficient for continuation: appearance, voice, bearing; memories and dispositions; narrative continuity; social embedding, so that family, colleagues, and institutions receive the substitute without friction. Reproduce every biological feature that can be reproduced without reproducing numerical identity or uninterrupted life-history: the substitute is a complete living human organism, in a place, with a body and history of its own.

Every repeatable public route-form can be re-enacted. A demonstrative can select the substitute. Her name can be socially applied. Recognition practices can be made to run, and tracking can begin from the substitute's present location and continue without error. None of this transfers the original historical route,

preserves the original referent by itself, or makes the substitute the one who was lost. Linguistic reference, epistemic access, numerical identity, and categorial disclosure remain distinct.

Add every independently specifiable, transferable, repeatable, or reconstructible candidate proposed as sufficient. The substitute has that too. There is no transferable inventory on which she scores lower, and no repeatable route-form whose mere success singles out what is missing.

Produce two such substitutes at once. Both are complete under the clause; neither is thereby the one who was lost; and nothing in the transferred inventory decides between them. The move is not a prediction about an operation. It states what a criterion exhausted by that inventory can deliver.

Line the cases up. Both singular. Both non-restorable. Both permanently having-been. Both unrestored by a maximally complete substitute. Both numerically distinct from the original. Both carry origins that do not reproduce the original origin. Within each region, every transferable or reconstructible candidate has been supplied.

And they are not the same case. A work destroyed there; someone gone here.

This is not a contrast between the replaceable and the irreplaceable, since neither original is restored; nor between the unique and the common, since both are singular; nor between the loved and the unloved, since a canvas may be loved and a person unmourned.

And the finding is not that one item was short. Everything the clause permits to be rebuilt was present, and still it was not her. That is a shortfall no transferred inventory registers, because it is not a deficit in the inventory, and adding one more transferable item, however deep, misreads what kind of finding it is.

Now the question a scalar completion makes obligatory. Which of the two has more of it? More of what the divergence consists in?

The question does not receive an unhelpful answer. It receives none. No constitutive magnitude has been produced of which “a work destroyed” is the smaller portion and “someone gone” the larger. This is exhibited rather than asserted, and the construction answers proposed candidates in three ways. A transferable or reconstructible candidate is restored within the region to which it belongs: consciousness, agency, and psychological connectedness within the personal substitution; pigment, craquelure, and material provenance within the artwork’s. A formal condition common to the two substitution structures is matched across the pair. An essentially non-repeatable condition of numerical identity or origin fails in both substitutions.

The construction controls every candidate presently identified and remains open to further proposals. Anyone proposing one has to show that the divergence consists in it, so that a work destroyed and someone gone stand as its smaller and larger portions, and that the proposal survives the clause. Naming a property

that persons have and artworks lack will not do it: that redescribes one side of the pair and says nothing about what divides them.

What must be separated

Numerical identity is region-neutral: two indiscernible wristbands are two, and no one is produced. Persistence is not adjudicated and need not be. Psychological continuation is transferred whole in the second case and matched. Prudential survival, what matters in survival, is a distinct question asked and answered by others; the exhibit neither settles it nor is settled by it. Moral status is not at issue, and no normative claim is made or required. Social reception is deliberately satisfied, since the substitute is received without friction by everyone whose attachment or convention could be doing the work. None of these is ownness.

The control, and why it holds

The canvas is in the pair as a control, and a control earns its place only if its required verdict can be delivered without any disclosure of a *who*. That condition is met by the standard account of authenticity in the arts rather than by anything this paper supplies.

Goodman distinguishes the arts in which forgery is possible from those in which it is not, and defines the first by a test the pair already runs: a work is autographic “if and only if even the most exact duplication of it does not thereby count as genuine” (Goodman 1968: 113). Authenticity in an autographic art depends on the object’s having the requisite history of production (119), and a forgery is accordingly an object falsely purporting to have the history of production requisite for an original of the work (122).

Goodman’s production-history account is sufficient for the control’s required verdict: exact duplication does not restore the original work, and that failure requires no who-determination. The construction clause is underwritten rather than merely stipulated, since Goodman insists that the difference between the two pictures does not depend on detection (105). The pair does not smuggle in an appeal to what an observer could notice, on either side.

The asymmetry is therefore stateable rather than assumed. Both cases exhibit an irreproducible origin. In the canvas case, production-history is sufficient to explain why the exact duplicate is not the original work. If the personal verdict were exhausted by the same formal marks and the same kind of provenance failure, the two cases would disclose no categorial difference. The trial reports that they do.

Reduction, composition, and what the case grants

One position appears to deny the finding, and the appearance is worth examining rather than conceding.

On a reductionist account, a person's existence just consists in the existence of a brain and body and the occurrence of a series of interrelated physical and mental events (Parfit 1984: 211). Parfit supplies a reductive account of the facts in which personal existence and survival consist. The trial grants every transferable fact his account makes relevant. Its claim is not that a component is missing, but that the complete reductive description does not exhaust the reported difference between continuation and restoration of this who.

The same holds of what matters. That what fundamentally matters in survival is psychological connectedness and continuity may well be true, and this paper takes no position on it. Parfit keeps the questions apart himself, ending with views concerned not with the nature of identity but with its importance (215). The exhibit answers neither. It reports that a substitution completed at every transferable level leaves the one who was here unrestored, and a reader who denies that there is anything there to report has the first falsifier.

Naming

The exhausted inventory does not leave ownness behind as a further item. It opens the point at which ownness comes to light, and what comes to light is positive. The manner remains common and repeatable: it is ownerless, it can obtain again, and it is not diminished by obtaining here. The obtaining is own: complete rather than a portion of the manner, such that the same manner may obtain again and another occurrence may carry every transferable articulation without thereby obtaining this obtaining. The manner is ownerless; the obtaining is own.

The trial operates because the coincidence has analytically distinguishable determinations that were never independently complete. The manner-side supplies commonality, repeatability, possible others, and therefore the very possibility of a substitute. In the finite-living region tried here, the occurrence-side supplies this finite, embodied, relational, and historical one. Neither side alone delivers the category. Ownness is the completeness of this obtaining within a manner that stays entire: the whole modal coincidence obtains as someone rather than merely something.

Its differentiating character is non-vicariousness. Another may replace someone in every transferable respect and cannot thereby obtain that someone's obtaining in their place. Non-vicariousness is disclosed when the coincidence refuses the substitute that its own manner-side makes possible. In the region tried here, the character is articulated as non-vicarious living: **this life cannot be somebody else's living**. That is the established finite-living articulation, not an unrestricted criterion of who-hood.

Two guards hold the result to its office. Ownness entails non-substitutability of the whole obtaining; non-substitutability does not entail ownness. The canvas is the control, and the one-way entailment is why it holds. And ownness grounds no who, produces none, and stands beneath none. It belongs constitutively to the

whole coincidence and names how that whole obtains. A mode is not a principle.

The non-shareable obtaining is not a bare deictic point extracted from the common. It is already here in relation to there, oriented within a regional field, temporalised through plural temporalisations, contrasted with other possible positions, regionally articulated, intrinsically plural, shared, and historical. Deixis produces none of these determinations; it reaches the whole obtaining in which they already belong together. Non-vicariousness therefore does not remove the who from relation, commonality, or history. It marks that this fully situated, shared, and historically articulated obtaining cannot be obtained by another in its place. The lateral movement is not from the common into isolation, but from the repeatability of the common manner to the non-repeatability of this relationally, temporally, and regionally articulated whole.

The plurality is carried twice.

Inwardly, non-vicariousness is stated against a possible substitute, and a possible substitute is another who. This plurality belongs to the manner-side itself: the repeatability of the common manner is inseparable from the possibility of its obtaining as another someone. The others are therefore not subsequently added to the coincidence but belong to its structure from the outset. The substitute prepared by the trial is conceivable only within that possibility. What the trial then shows is that this same commonality licenses no exchange. The inward many are therefore peers without portions: alike in manner, each obtaining its own, none capable of obtaining another's obtaining in that other's place. Commonality of manner entails the possibility of others and does not entail their interchangeability. The distinction the settlement misses is thus exposed at the smallest scale: what is common in manner need not be homogeneous in obtaining.

Outwardly, ownness is stated as someone rather than merely something, and therefore against what obtains otherwise—as stone, as river, as tool, or in other ways whose positive articulation must be regionally won. This contrast is categorial, not a species-difference under a genus. Were it specific in that sense, the genus would stand as the common measure and the plurality would again become one thing divided. The categorial contrast is not mediated by a genus of being, which is why it is a contrast rather than a ranking: a ranking requires a common measure; a contrast requires only that something obtain otherwise.

The first plurality therefore belongs to the differentiating character and is a plurality within the manner disclosed in the finite-living who-region tried here: possible other whos, inseparable from the manner's repeatability, none fuller than another. The second belongs to the differentia's contrast class and opens a plurality of ways of obtaining, positively determinable only through their own regional disclosures, none supplying the measure of the rest. Neither plurality is inferred from an antecedent count, and neither constitutes the differentia. Plurality is not the differentia; it is a condition of the differentia's statement—the inward many belonging to the repeatability of the manner, the outward many articulated through the contrast.

The differentia presupposes that contrast without governing it. The who-category stands among categorially distinct ways of obtaining, not above them. No instance is a fuller who than another, and no way supplies the measure by which another counts as a way of being.

The who is therefore neither a sortal nor a kind. It is the modal category of the whole obtaining as someone rather than merely something: how a regionally articulable manner obtains as this occurrence, not a class to which an antecedently constituted thing belongs. In the finite-living articulation established here, that occurrence is embodied, relational, and historical. Relational, because the character is disclosed in two contrasts: inwardly, against a possible substitute who is another who; outwardly, against other ways of being, disclosed through what obtains otherwise. Embodied, because inwardly the possible substitute is another embodied who and cannot obtain this embodied life in its place; outwardly, embodiment names the finite-living articulation disclosed here, not a form imposed on other ways whose occurrences must be articulated otherwise. Historical, because inwardly a substitute may reproduce every transferable historical route and still cannot inherit this life's having-been; outwardly, this historical articulation stands against other ways whose temporal character must be regionally disclosed.

The inherited range structure contains no ontological determination that explains the divergence. A formalism may codify the difference once disclosed, but codification becomes formalization only where a warranted mapping carries the disclosed structure into the formal register. Distribution across ranges does not supply the route by which the difference becomes visible, the differentia by which it is constituted, or the mapping by which it could be formalized. A device that distributes what there is has no distributive operation that by itself characterises why the cases obtain differently.

The falsifiers now divide by office. If a constitutive magnitude is named and survives the construction clause, the paper's non-scalar thesis fails. The disclosure of ownness may remain, but it would have to be reformulated as scalar. If, more strongly, the divergence is wholly explained without ownness—by a capacity, structure, relation, history, or other determination that survives the controls—the differentia itself fails.

Two forms of bivalence

A threshold criterion yields bivalence by suppression: a scale underneath, a cutoff imposed, an account owed of the cutoff's placement, and the scale standing ready to reassert itself. The pair exhibits something else. No scale is being suppressed, because no magnitude has been produced for a cutoff to be imposed on. Threshold kinds from the sciences are welcome parallels and not the present structure; there a magnitude exists and its value may be zero.

The exhibit's own record is part of the case. The differentia was not posited and then defended. It was forced by trials whose controls could have gone the other way, and the canvas is one of them: the case built to convict an over-ascription of

ownness, whose verdict went against the ascription (Montaruli 2026a; the forcing question at 2026b).

6. Plurality Without Degrees

What the trial supplies should be stated before anything is built on it. The trial does not provide a complete positive articulation of the artwork's way of being. It establishes something narrower but sufficient: the formal marks of singularity, non-restorability, indelible having-been, numerical non-identity, and irreproducible origin do not exhaust the way disclosed in the personal case, and the same formal loss receives a categorially different articulation in the control. This is enough to open plurality. It is not a completed inventory of ways.

The inferential joint should also be made explicit. If ownness is the differentia by which the whole obtaining is disclosed as someone rather than merely something, and the control exhibits the same formal marks without who-disclosure, those marks cannot constitute the categorial difference. A complete positive articulation of the control's way is not required to establish that the who-category does not exhaust the ways in which those marks obtain.

And this is why one disclosure opens a plurality rather than adding an entry to a list. A way of being is reached as a way only against what obtains otherwise, so to have reached one way as a way is already to have reached the contrast in which it is reached as one. The contrast does not constitute the character; in that contrast the character first becomes visible. Plurality is therefore a condition of the disclosure having occurred, not the differentia disclosed, which is also why the pair could not have been a single case.

The disclosure of section 5 now permits a return to the possibility left open in section 3. Submitted to numerical freezing, what appeared there takes the form anticipated by *hen panta*: not one unit beside another, nor species beneath a genus, but the way disclosed as who and what obtains otherwise belonging together in one contrast, without either becoming an internal articulation of the other and without a common term standing above the contrast as its measure.

The one—all is not a further entity behind the plurality. It is the belonging-together internal to the disclosure itself. If converted into a common measure, the hinge would no longer be stated as such: the plurality would become an internal articulation of the unity. If divided into countable units, its unity would likewise be replaced by an external juxtaposition. *Hen panta* can be counted only by resolving the one into a plural all or gathering the plural all into one; either operation abolishes the hinge it purports to register.

This determination is therefore not a determination of the regions or of their positive characters. Regions are plural and interconnected, and each temporalises and becomes accessible in its own way. The numerical freeze supplies no positive ontological determination of any way of being and no methodological articulation

for entering another region. Its result is reflexive rather than regional: it discloses the limit of the action of freezing and counting.

Counting therefore does not formalise the plurality disclosed in section 5, even incompletely. It arrests the disclosure and receives *hen panta* as the limit-form of that arrest. Since the hinge can be counted only by dissolving the belonging-together that constitutes it, counting cannot serve as a route of ontological access. The method must instead follow the ways regionally, without first freezing them into units under a common operation.

The reader will be reassured to know that it was in fact wise to recognise the emergence of *hen panta*: not because he was listening to Heraclitus, but because he was listening to the way in which things collect together.

On that basis, the disclosed differentia supplies no intrinsic scale of fuller and diminished possession, no approximation to a maximum, and no focal case from which derivative instances borrow their standing. The qualification is not a hedge: this excludes only an order generated by the differentia itself, and does not prove that no causal, temporal, explanatory, accessibility, or dependence relation could obtain among the relevant ways or their instances.

Nothing presently warrants scalar partition. The conditional is unqualified and its antecedent defeasible. Where ownness supplies no magnitude, instances of the who-category stand in no intrinsic order of fuller and lesser who-hood, and no case occupies the summit of such an order, not because a ranking is forbidden but because nothing supplies one. Categorical division is untouched by this, since the trial itself divides who from non-who and that division is not a partition into portions. What is defeasible is whether the antecedent holds, and on the result presently disclosed no constitutive magnitude has survived the controls. On that result, instance-parity is structural rather than normative: it is not a resolution to treat cases equally, and it obliges no one to anything. The inter-categorical consequence is separate: no way becomes the measure by which another counts as a way of being.

The unity demand changes shape. The present disclosure supplies neither a genus of ways nor a stock of being divided among them. In the finite-living region tried here, the manner remains entire across its obtainings: this obtaining takes nothing from it and leaves no less for another obtaining. That regional result is not offered as an analysis of every way of being. The unity disclosed in the contrast lies instead in the belonging-together of what obtains otherwise, not in a common measure of which the ways are portions.

The collapse literature determines relations among formulations within the quantificational settlement; it is neither evidence for nor evidence against the first-order ontology defended here, and the symmetry is deliberate. A paper that refuses to let Turner's internal results travel into ontology may not let formal translation or underdetermination travel into ontology in its own favour. Whittle constructs a monist counterpart for a pluralist theory and argues for notational variance; Grif-

fiths and Paseau's invariance test favours the monist's single quantifier as logical vocabulary; and Turner's formulation takes its several quantifiers as primitive and undefined while invoking the difference between ways as real and leaving it unanalysed (2010: §6). These results determine what translations and invariance tests do to quantificational structures inside the settlement. They do not show that plural ways of being have been represented, have failed to be represented, or have been represented inadequately, because no warranted object-to-formal mapping was established. They do not disclose those ways, and they are cited here for that limit and no more.

The epistemic strength of the result should be stated exactly. The differentia is defeasibly non-scalar: no constitutive magnitude has yet been produced, and the falsifier remains open. It is not claimed that no scalar reconstruction is conceivable, that all possible magnitudes have been disproved, or that no order of any kind can obtain.

Why the settlement does not disclose it

The debate's home standpoint is the survey: the position from which one regiments quantifiers, compares translations, and writes the book of the world.

The survey standpoint can codify the result once it has been disclosed. Codification becomes formalization only where a mapping is warranted between the disclosed structure and the formal resources used to carry it. What the survey cannot do by inventory alone is generate the distinction. Nor can the distinction be generated by the success of a repeatable public route-form. A demonstrative may select either substitute, a name may be applied, recognition practices may run, and tracking may continue. Their success does not preserve the original historical referent or disclose why one case is a work destroyed and the other someone gone. The failure becomes visible in attempting substitution from a position of address, where someone is put in the place of someone and the placing fails. Rendered afterward as a proposition, the result is formally statable. Whether a given calculus formalizes it requires a further warrant that the proposition preserves the structure disclosed through the regional access. The claim is therefore not that formal theory cannot state the result. It is that formal inventory does not supply the route by which the result is won.

The heading of this subsection is deliberate. It says that the settlement does not disclose the differentia, not that no one has ever reached it. The question of prior occupants is open, and sections 7 and 9 record it as such.

This paper does not claim to frame no hypotheses. It distinguishes an articulation forced by a controlled trial from a posit introduced solely to satisfy a prior theoretical demand. Its claims are assertions, and for that reason they carry proprietary defeaters.

The exhibit warrants a candidate ontological plurality. It does not establish how many ontologies the field contains, whether this determination is historically new,

or how it stands to earlier articulations. Those questions remain undetermined and belong to individuation rather than to disclosure.

7. The Problem of Counting Ontologies

The ordinary units fail. An author is not an ontology. A text is not an ontology. A theory is not automatically an ontology. A quantifier is not an ontology. A metaphysical system may host several determinations concerning being, and the same determination may recur across systems that share neither vocabulary nor warrant. Neither possibility is established here, and neither can be excluded by counting authors, texts, or quantifiers. That is enough for the problem: a unit of count that cannot rule out either is not a unit of ontological individuation.

A minimal distinction is therefore needed. A historically occurring doctrine carries vocabulary, warrants, explanatory order, and inherited problems. A conceptual determination concerning being may survive changes in all four. The founding study calls the first a habitat and the second an ontological node. These are working terms, and nothing in this section depends on a criterion of node identity. The argument requires only that a determination concerning being may be the same across doctrines differing in vocabulary and warrant, and that no available unit of count settles when it is. What such identity consists in, and how it is adjudicated, is the founding study's burden and not a premise borrowed here.

The rule that governs the count is a burden rule.

Ontological doctrines should not be multiplied beyond their ontological differences. A later position must be assessed by what it changes in the maximal prior articulation of the relevant determination concerning being. Where no ontological delta can yet be stated, novelty remains an open question.

Its inseparable canon is that every position must first be addressed in its full power. The burden of stating a difference falls on the claimant of novelty. An undischarged burden suspends the count; it does not produce a verdict of non-novelty. Economy without maximal reconstruction would reward caricature, which is why the second canon is not an addendum to the first, and why the treatment of Turner in sections 1 and 3 states his result at full strength before stating its jurisdiction. An ontological delta is a typed difference between maximally reconstructed articulations of a determination concerning being. Delta is typed, never measured.

Four findings must not collapse into one another. Suspended novelty: the difference remains undetermined. Adjudicated zero-delta: a completed comparison finds no surviving typed difference. Descent: a determination is preserved through a statable relation of change. Failure of a proposed relation: one candidate relation has not been established, and no rival relation follows automatically. This paper reaches only the first.

The jurisdictional limits are equally important. The burden rule governs a count, not truth, philosophical worth, or historical importance. Delta is typed, never measured. An adjudicated zero-delta finding would establish neither transmission nor descent, since a determination may recur independently, and one failed relation does not establish another. Classifications must also be componentwise: a later doctrine may inherit one determination, augment another, reverse a third, and recur independently with respect to a fourth, so no global label may be assigned to an author or a system.

The live questions can then be posed without being answered. Does Turner alter an ontology, or only a calculus internal to the quantificational settlement? Does McDaniel introduce a new ontology or order an inherited quantificational apparatus? Does immanent critique alter ontology, or expose an inconsistency internal to the settlement's assumed correspondence between quantificational commitment and ontological standing? Does the present position transform an inherited determination, independently institute one, or recur with a prior occupant? Do Souriau's modes of existence, Hartmann's *Seinsweisen*, or Ingarden's existential moments contain the same determination under different warrants? Is an apparent lineage transmission, doctrinal descent, recurrence, or retrospective reconstruction?

None of these is answered here, and the last two carry a disclosure. Souriau, Hartmann, and Ingarden are serious comparators for the structure exhibited in sections 5 and 6, and none has been read directly for that purpose. No absolute historical firstness is claimed for the structure defended in this paper. The same applies to the Heraclitean formula introduced provisionally in section 3 and taken up retrospectively in section 6. Whether the structure disclosed here stands in any historical relation to the occurrence of that formula in Heraclitus—transmission, descent, recurrence, or none—is not adjudicated here and belongs to the comparative inquiry named below.

The dedicated comparative inquiry required to answer these questions is called Ontosystematics. Its object is the identity and difference of determinations concerning being across the historical formations that host them. This paper establishes the need for that inquiry. It neither constitutes the science nor announces its classifications.

The need is stated narrowly, because parts of the operation exist. Formal criteria of theoretical equivalence ask when two formulations say the same thing. The history of ideas has long tracked components across doctrines and has an account of their addition and removal. The methodological literature on influence states conditions under which an apparent similarity may not be attributed to transmission. What has not been supplied is the operation performed on determinations concerning being, with the difference typed rather than merely registered, subtraction stated as a finding rather than as the observation that two doctrines differ, and recurrence separated from transmission by public rules. That is the vacancy, and it is narrower than the problem which discloses it.

A controlling architecture for the proposed inquiry has been deposited under restricted access, with metadata and abstract public and text withheld pending publication (Montaruli 2026c). Nothing in the present argument depends on the withheld text.

8. Objections

1. Naturalness is innocent structure, not an ordering office. The strongest form is Sider's: structure is objective and joint-carving, its basic notion absolute, the derivative degreed notion bookkeeping (2011: 5, 128–33); quantificational structure belongs to the world's structure because quantification is indispensable to fundamental theorising (188). Two replies. The internal witness: whatever naturalness is in Sider's monist hands, in the pluralist's deployment it fixes which ways are fundamental and grades their occupants. And a question, posed rather than answered: an ordering principle that authorises each way's standing, terminates the demand for further account, and is not itself a candidate in the ordering it governs is owed an account of why it is a discovery rather than an installation, and the joint-carving story's evidence base was joints among *properties*, where the notion was first put to work (Lewis 1983: 347), with the extension to quantifiers a generalisation (Sider 2011: 87, 92). Sider himself argues against ontological pluralism (188).

2. Bivalence can sit on a degreed base. Granted, and the logic is respected. But then the scale either explains the verdict or it does not. If it explains the verdict, the ordering returns through it and the cutoff requires justification. If it does not explain the verdict, invoking it does not answer the present challenge. This paper asks for the magnitude constitutive of the divergence, not for a scale correlated with cases to which a separate rule assigns a binary result, and the demand does not depend on showing any cutoff arbitrary.

3. Without an ordering there is no science of being. What inquiry requires is determinate statement, regional trials with printed defeaters, and interconnection without a master term. What the demand adds beyond these is that one term govern the field, and a requirement's shape is not a datum.

4. The pair is intuition-mongering. The deciding question is not a report of intuitions but a request for a magnitude, with a determinate failure condition. Nor does the pair turn on what would happen in an operation nobody has performed. Both cases are built by addition from materials that are actual, and the finding is a matter of what the completed inventory delivers rather than of how a hypothetical procedure would turn out. The construction clause makes it adversarial, since the objector chooses the candidates. And the instrument has a loss record: the trials include controls that went against the ascription.

5. The verdict tracks grief, possession, or convention. The artwork case already displays non-restoration without who-disclosure, and does so without rest-

ing on anyone's psychology, since changing ownership, reception, or familiarity does not make the copy the original work. The personal construction then removes the corresponding social explanation by stipulating frictionless reception. What remains to be explained is why the two failures of restoration disclose a work destroyed there and someone gone here.

6. McDaniel has already brought ways of being into the debate.

McDaniel supplies candidate modes, substantive examples, and an explicit metaphysical ordering, and the objection is right that this is more than an importation of vocabulary. What remains absent for the present purpose is a method through which a way becomes disclosed, and a non-scalar differentia stated against what obtains otherwise. His official criterion of individuation and ordering remains quantificational and naturalness-based. The point is not that the quantificational apparatus formalizes the candidate modes inadequately. It is that no regional access has established them as plural ways of being and warranted their mapping to the quantifiers before the regimentation is asked to carry the ontological burden. This paper does not deny McDaniel's substantive metaphysical commitments; it denies that those commitments alone supply a disclosed object or a formalization of one. Section 5 supplies what is missing for that purpose and claims nothing about what he supplies for his own.

7. A sortal or animalist account supplies the relevant criterion. The objection has two forms, and neither is answered by claiming that persistence conditions are unavailable.

Olson holds that we are numerically identical with animals, and that psychological continuity is "neither necessary nor sufficient for a human animal to persist through time" (Olson 1997: 17); what an organism's persistence consists in is the uninterrupted capacity to direct the vital functions that keep it alive (ch. 6, §IV). Applied to the second case the account is decisive and correct: the substitute is not the same human animal. But the copy is likewise not the same artefact. Biological continuity therefore explains one instance of numerical non-identity. It does not explain the categorial divergence between a work destroyed and someone gone, since numerical non-identity holds in both cases and only one of them discloses a *who*.

Wiggins requires of a substance-concept that grasping it determine what changes an individual falling under it can tolerate without that individual ceasing to exist (Wiggins 2001: 70), distinguishing such concepts from phased-sortals, which do not apply throughout an individual's existence (30). An earlier form of this argument posed a dilemma, that *person* supplies no persistence condition if a substance-concept and no substrate if a phased-sortal, and that dilemma is withdrawn. Wiggins supplies the condition: for human persons, person and human being assign the same underlying principle of individuation, and human beings are substances in the rich sense (194).

The reply is therefore the same as to animalism, and is not a dilemma. The human-being principle delivers the correct verdict in the second case, and delivers it for

a reason that also applies to the canvas: a principle of individuation tells us that this is not that one, and the canvas's copy is not that one either. What neither account addresses is why the same failure of restoration is a work destroyed there and someone gone here, which is what the trial asks a sortal account to exhaust. Neither account is wrong about persistence, and neither supplies nothing. They supply criteria of numerical non-identity that the pair holds constant on both sides by construction, and the divergence the pair exhibits lies where they are silent.

8. The method-disclaimer is self-defeating. Three questions may be put to any thesis here. Is there an exhibit of which it is the write-up? Does it carry a proprietary defeater? Is it demand-independent? The present thesis passes all three, and this paper does not claim to frame no hypotheses. It distinguishes an articulation forced by a controlled trial from a posit introduced solely to satisfy a prior demand.

9. The pair itself violates the paper's access-condition. One trial-form is applied to both cases, so the exhibit reaches them alike and thereby treats them as alike. The objection mistakes the control for the route. The trial-form is homogeneous by design: the cases are matched on the same formal marks and completed under the same construction clause precisely so that no difference of instrument can masquerade as a difference of object. A control shared across regions is what allows any heterogeneity that appears to count as a finding. What delivers each verdict is not shared. In the canvas case, inspection of production-history delivers the verdict in full: an examinable relation between objects, available to any competent observer and requiring no position of address. In the personal case, no inspection of transferred features, repeatable public route-forms, or provenance delivers the verdict in full; it becomes visible only from a position of address, where someone is put in the place of someone and the placing fails. Two verdicts, two access-shapes, one control. The exhibit does not apply one method to two already disclosed ways; it holds the control fixed so that the asymmetry of access can appear. The regional-access thesis is not announced by the pair; it is performed by it.

10. Without quantificational regimentation the position cannot state its own plurality. The position states its plurality contrastively rather than numerically: this way, against what obtains otherwise. Whether the disclosed ways admit an external cardinal representation remains suspended, but the ontological limit of numerical freezing is no longer merely prospective. Section 3 leaves the possibility open; section 6 returns to it after the disclosure. Submitted to counting, the contrast appears as *hen panta*, and cardinalisation can register it only by supplying a common respect under which the ways become units. That operation either gathers the plurality into the unity or divides the unity into an external juxtaposition, abolishing the hinge it purports to count. The result is not a positive determination of the regions but a reflexive determination of the counting operation and its limit. Any legitimate formalization would have to follow encounter with the object, consolidation of its access as a method, and a warranted mapping

into the formal register. Quantificational regimentation can supply none of these in advance. A later cardinal representation, if available as notation, could likewise supply neither the object nor the method. That is no defect in arithmetic. It is why arithmetic cannot be the route. The position does not deny logic or rule out cardinal notation afterward. It denies counting any positive ontological office and denies its promotion to the seat from which the ways first become visible.

11. An existing discipline already does this. The objection is strongest when it names the fields that come closest, and three do.

Theoretical equivalence asks precisely when two formulations are formulations of one theory, and the coincidence with the present problem is real. But the formal criteria are built on translation, generalised definitional equivalence proceeding by the introduction of a translation manual between extended theories, and translation is exactly what the cases at issue lack. No such manual runs between a medieval transcendental concept and a modern quantifier, and the question whether the same determination is present survives its absence. The relations are also undirected and untyped: *X after the removal of Y* has no expression in them.

The history of ideas supplies the nearest existing object. Unit-ideas are components of doctrinal compounds, and on the elemental reading change consists in their arising, ceasing, or being added to and removed from complexes, so compositional removal is represented and the present claim narrows accordingly. What is not represented is the removal of a determination from a doctrine, where the withdrawn component is no lexical constituent of any formula. And the relations differ at the root: those components are sub-propositional conceptual atoms, and the programme runs downward toward elements where this problem runs across articulations of a determination.

The methodological literature on influence states conditions under which a similarity may be attributed to transmission, including that the later writer could not have found the doctrine elsewhere and that independent articulation must be excluded. Recurrence without transmission is therefore a category with a prior stated criterion, and no priority is claimed for it here.

This paper does not claim that the proposed inquiry has solved the problem, and it does not claim that no part of the operation exists. It claims that the problem survives every ordinary unit of count used in this field, and that no existing discipline types the difference between articulations of a determination concerning being.

12. The burden rule prejudices novelty. It issues no negative novelty verdict. It assigns a burden: a claimed distinct ontology must state its typed difference against the maximal prior articulation. Where the burden is not yet discharged, novelty remains open.

13. The paper covertly classifies the field anyway. The descriptors used here are deliberately local. *Shared settlement* identifies explicit commitments attributed determination by determination; it is not a verdict that the positions

constitute one ontology. *Formal alteration* does not name a technical transformation relation, and *scalar completion* describes an explicit apparatus rather than a historical descent. Nor does either expression imply that the altered formalism represents an ontological object. *Candidate plurality* does not mean a historically first ontology. This paper therefore withholds the classification the objection attributes to it.

9. What Would Show This Wrong

The defeaters are not equally fatal, and presenting them as equal would misdescribe the risk.

Core exhibit defeaters, on which the paper falls. Break the pair from the side: show that the second case's verdict tracks possession, familiarity, or convention, so that the substitute is refused as the canvas-copy is refused by its owner. The sharpest form of this is the reductionist thesis. If the complete reductive facts in which personal existence and survival consist are reproduced, and nothing remains to be reported beyond them, then the divergence the pair asserts is not there. Alternatively, show that the substitution relations are not equally complete under the construction clause, that one region's substitute was under-built relative to the transferable or reconstructible candidates available there, so that the divergence tracks the construction rather than the cases.

Non-scalarity defeaters, on which the structural result falls while the disclosure may survive. Name the magnitude: produce the constitutive magnitude of which the divergence consists, surviving the construction clause. Or produce an intermediate case in which the divergence itself admits of degree, someone disclosed as somewhat gone in the way the canvas is a work destroyed, with the somewhat belonging to the disclosure and not to our epistemic purchase on it.

Differentia defeaters. Explain the divergence wholly without ownness. A capacity, structure, relation, history, or other determination that survives the controls and exhausts why the cases diverge defeats ownness as the differentia. A merely region-specific property does not suffice; it must explain the contrast rather than redescribe one side of it.

Field-vacancy and novelty defeaters, which narrow the individuation framing while section 5 stands. Produce the text: a work already in the debate reaching plural ways of being as such, with neither one univocal determination nor one common constitutive measure governing their difference, and with a differentia stated against what obtains otherwise for at least one way. This paper would have a co-discoverer and would say so. Or produce the predecessor: Souriau, Hartmann, Ingarden, or another comparator shown to contain the determination under a different warrant. This defeats a vacancy claim rather than the first-order argument, and no firstness is claimed here in any case.

Necessity defeaters, on which the second-order result falls while sec-

tion 5 stands entire. Eliminate the proposed inquiry: show that an existing discipline already isolates determinations from their habitats, types the differences, represents subtraction as a finding, separates recurrence from transmission, and adjudicates by public rules. The conjunction is required, not any member of it, since objection 11 concedes that several members are already supplied. Or dissolve it: show that there is no distinctive problem here at all, that node identity reduces to the interpretation of doctrines which historians already perform, so that the operation is real and the discipline is not. This is the sharper of the two, and it has a template in the equivalence literature's own deflationary wing. Or defeat the object: show that no determination concerning being can be identified apart from the total formation in which it occurs. Note what this costs the objector. The claim is itself a determination concerning being, and cannot be brought against the count from outside it.

The quantificational exit. Demonstrate that plural ways of being as such cannot be stated or disclosed except through quantificational regimentation. A demonstration of formal statability is insufficient; the objector must show that the quantificational route is constitutive of access to the object. This position is stated without adopting the settlement's founding decision, and a demonstration that no such disclosure is available would force it back inside the debate it diagnoses.

Framework defeaters. Show that the many-quantifier calculus was in fact constructed from a prior disclosure of plural ways of being as such and that a warranted mapping from those disclosed ways to its operators governs the calculus. This defeats the claim that the calculus merely generates positions within the prior settlement. Or vindicate the settlement from behind: produce a phenomenal derivation of the rendering of being as existence and of ontological articulation as quantificational, showing that the founding decision is disclosed rather than unde- rived. This defeats the diagnosis that the calculus is governed by an ontological decision it cannot itself earn.

One acquittal that is not a defeat. Acquit the ordering: show that a naturalness-ordering is a discovery rather than an installation, on grounds that do not re-assert the ordering. This defeats one criticism of one wing. It leaves the substitution trial, the differentia, and the individuation problem untouched.

10. Close

The contemporary positions remain inside one founding settlement, in which being is rendered as existence and ontological structure is rendered quantificationally, and within it one wing adds an ordering and develops it as degrees. Inside the settlement real internal results have been obtained. Turner shows that the standard collapse arguments he addresses do not defeat pluralism by defeating the stipulated many-quantifier calculus through which he renders it; Van't Hoff exposes a tension between quantificational commitment and the ontological standing assumed within the same architecture. Neither result formalizes, confirms,

disconfirms, or bounds those ways. The calculus belongs to the settlement whose ontological decision precedes it.

What has not been supplied from within is a disclosed object and a differentia. One pair of substitution cases, each completed relative to its own region and matched on the formal marks, shows a divergence for which no constitutive magnitude has been produced. The trial discloses ownness as the differentia of the who-category through non-vicariousness, articulated in the finite-living region as the impossibility of this life being somebody else's living. The manner remains ownerless; the obtaining is own. Another may replace someone in every transferable respect and cannot thereby obtain that someone's obtaining in their place.

That disclosure anchors a candidate plurality with no exemplar and no measure of fuller and lesser who-hood. It does not elevate the who above other ways of obtaining, because the differentia is stated against what obtains otherwise and therefore presupposes the contrast without governing it. And the survey standpoint, which can codify—and, under a warranted mapping, formalize—a disclosure it did not generate, explains why the route ran elsewhere.

This paper has not counted the ontologies it has placed in view, and that restraint is part of its result. The same determination concerning being may recur across several doctrines, while one doctrine may host several determinations, and neither author-count nor quantifier-count can decide the matter. Nor does present inability to state a difference license a verdict of non-novelty. The problem is therefore handed to Ontosystematics, and its constitution and classifications belong elsewhere.

What has been established here is prior. One way has become visible as a way, its differentia has resisted scalar reconstruction, and plural ways of being as such can no longer be treated as the product of multiplying or ordering quantifiers within a prior settlement.

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