

The Calculus of Modal Coincidence

The Grammar of A-Metaphysical Ontology

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Provenance: The doctrine of modal coincidence and the programme of a-metaphysical ontology presented here were developed by Alessio Montaruli in the project extending from *Positive No-Ground: The Common and the Locus of Answerability to Ethical Ontology, Volume I: The Modal Coincidence*.

Version 6.0 — changes from Version 5.0. This version integrates the categorial differentia of who — ownness — into the definitions (§3.6), the formal grammar (§§4.6–4.7), the access schema (§5.8), and the consequences (§6.11); adds the explanans-position closure and the termination result (§8.5, §8.24); converts non-substitutability from evidential mark into derived theorem while preserving (19) unchanged; adds the Jemeinigkeit confrontation (§7.3, §8.25) and two further objection-replies (§§8.23–8.24); and extends the notation table accordingly. All formula numbers of Version 5.0 are unchanged; new results are numbered (22)–(26). The naming of the differentia is settled as bare ownness (constitutive ownness in working drafts), with constitutively retained in explanatory predication only; the finite-living articulation non-vicarious living is added (§3.6, §8.23); and the who/locus section states the two sources of termination, keeping the ontological and attributive branches distinct (§6.4).

Abstract

This article proposes modal coincidence as the founding grammar of an a-metaphysical ontology. The more familiar description non-metaphysical correctly names what the project refuses: ontology need not secure what obtains through a bearer, substrate, essence, first principle, or concealed order standing beneath or beyond its obtaining. The term a-metaphysical states the stronger claim. The ontology is not constituted by opposition to metaphysics and does not depend upon metaphysics as the condition of its validity. It determines what obtains through the manner in which it obtains as this.

The project occupies three distinct coordinates. It is genealogically post-metaphysical: its historical emergence presupposes the metaphysical tradition and its phenomenological, hermeneutic, and anarchic critiques. It is structurally pre-metaphysical: it articulates the obtaining prior to the metaphysical decision to duplicate it through a bearer or ground. It is

ontologically a-metaphysical: its categories neither require metaphysics nor depend upon the negation of metaphysics. Metaphysics is a condition of the theory's discovery, not a condition of its truth.

The category who provides the first decisive demonstration. A who is not a substance, organism, psychological profile, narrative bundle, public identity, or further fact behind a life. A who is the whole regional obtaining in which a regionally articulable manner obtains as this concrete occurrence — and the categorial differentia of who is ownness: the whole modal coincidence obtaining as someone rather than merely something — disclosed rather than defined, adding no component, and articulated in the finite-living regions as non-vicarious living. The determination is earned aletically before it is stated formally: from the transparency of ordinary who-directed access, through a substitution trial showing that preservation of every transferable structure — function, memory, narrative, qualitative profile, recognition — does not restore the same who, to the full hermeneutic concession and the residue it cannot absorb. The article then gives the claim a typed formal-phenomenological schema whose grammar blocks the return of bearerhood, composition, haecceity, ownness-as-component, and unrestricted transfer between regions, and develops the corresponding access principle: properly fulfilled who-directed deixis is a founded categorial intuition of modal coincidence — reaching the occurrence under the category who without producing who-status, reducing it to its sensible or public routes, or exhaustively knowing the life. From the differentia, non-substitutability follows as a theorem rather than a stipulation.

The proposal combines positive no-ground, anti-bearer formation, regional warrant, deictic singularity, public assessability, fallibility, non-exhaustiveness, recurrence without identity, negative controls with open verdicts, and a strict distinction between who, public who-form, and locus of attribution. It is positioned in relation to Husserlian categorial intuition, Heidegger's existential analytic and the doctrine of Jemeinigkeit, Chiurazzi's modal ontology, Schürmann's destitution of archic principles, Vattimo's hermeneutics of weakening, personal-identity theory, grounding theory, and social ontology. On the strict criterion defended here — according to which an ontology must positively articulate its primitive distinctions, formation relations, consequences, error conditions, and modes of access — the article claims to found an a-metaphysical ontology in the strict constructive sense. The claim is architectural: it states the criteria on which it can be assessed and defeated, and its force lies in what the demonstration exhibits — that positive ontological determination without ground is available — rather than in any chronological assertion.

Keywords: a-metaphysical ontology; non-metaphysical ontology; pre-metaphysical position; post-metaphysical genealogy; positive no-ground; who; modal coincidence; ownness; non-vicariousness; deixis; categorial intuition; personal identity; grounding; phenomenology; regional ontology; attribution; locus; non-substitutability

1. Introduction

We routinely ask who? and answer by addressing, recognising, awaiting, accusing, forgiving, mourning, or answering to this one. These acts are not ordinarily experienced as failed attempts to locate an invisible object. The greeting lands; the call reaches someone; the promise is owed by this one rather than by an interchangeable bearer of the same description. Yet philosophical reflection often redescribes this practical and phenomenological success in a

grammar modelled on things. It asks what object the act reached, what substrate bears the body and history, or what additional fact makes these features belong to one and the same person.

The familiar answers differ. A who may be identified with a substance, soul, organism, psychological continuity, narrative identity, first-personal structure, bundle, social recognition, or some combination of these. Even resolutely anti-substantialist theories can retain the form of the original problem: once the bearer is removed, what thing is left to secure unity and identity? The search for a hidden personal object may therefore survive the rejection of substance.

This article argues that the difficulty is not confined to personal identity. It exposes a more general ontological habit: what obtains is treated as intelligible only if it can be referred to something more fundamental that bears, grounds, unifies, explains, or guarantees it. A substrate is placed beneath predicates; a subject beneath experience; an essence beneath appearance; a first principle beneath plurality. The occurrence is ontologically doubled by a second order that is supposed to secure it.

The proposed alternative is commonly describable as a non-metaphysical ontology, but that expression remains incomplete. It identifies the refusal of metaphysical ground while leaving the project indexed to what it refuses. The more exact term is a-metaphysical ontology: an ontology whose positive determinations neither require metaphysics nor depend upon its negation.

This exactness matters because the project cannot be adequately located by saying only that it comes after metaphysics. Historically, it does. Its emergence presupposes the metaphysical tradition, phenomenology's critique of objectification, Heidegger's destruction of substantial ontology, Schürmann's destitution of archic principles, and Vattimo's weakening of strong being. In that sense it is genealogically post-metaphysical.

Its ontological position is nevertheless different. It articulates the obtaining before the metaphysical decision to secure it through a bearer, essence, or ground. This priority is structural rather than chronological. It does not return to an imagined historical innocence before Plato or Aristotle. It suspends the duplicative operation through which the occurrence is declared insufficient and a second order is installed beneath it. In that sense the project is structurally pre-metaphysical.

Finally, its categories are capable of functioning without reference to metaphysics at all. Region, possibility, manner, occurrence, modal coincidence, who, locus, and founded deixis are not remnants left after metaphysical entities have been removed. They articulate an obtaining that never needed such entities in the first place. In that sense the ontology is a-metaphysical.

The relation can be stated compactly:

The project is post-metaphysical by genealogy, pre-metaphysical by position, and a-metaphysical by ontological constitution.

Or more sharply:

It would not exist historically without metaphysics, but it could exist ontologically without it.

Metaphysics belongs to the conditions under which the theory became discoverable. It does not belong to the conditions of the theory's validity or to the constitution of what it discovers.

The governing principle is:

Ontological determination need not identify what stands behind an occurrence. It can articulate the manner in which what obtains obtains as this.

The category who is the first decisive test of this principle. The who is neither an observable thing nor an invisible thing behind what appears. Nor is the who a composite assembled from independently constituted elements. The positive claim is:

The who does not first exist and then have a modality. The who is the regional manner obtaining as this concrete occurrence.

I call this structure modal coincidence. The word coincidence does not mean accidental simultaneity. It names the non-composite obtaining in which a regionally articulable manner is this occurrence's concrete way of being. The who is not one term of the coincidence, nor a third entity holding the terms together. Who-status belongs to the whole obtaining — and, as Section 3.6 establishes and Section 4.6 registers, it belongs to the whole obtaining insofar as its obtaining is own — someone rather than merely something. Ownness is the categorial differentia of who; it is not a constituent, and it is disclosed rather than defined.

A second claim concerns access. Deixis toward a who has often been interpreted as ostension toward an embodied thing followed by a failed search for its personal object. Modal coincidence reverses this interpretation:

Proper who-directed deixis is a founded categorial intuition of modal coincidence.

The deictic act may begin through body, face, voice, gesture, name, location, shared history, or public form. It fails when it terminates at one of those routes as though that route were the who or the bearer of the who. It succeeds when the routes disclose the whole occurrence in the manner in which it obtains as this one. Such disclosure neither creates singularity nor exhaustively knows the life.

The argument is therefore organised by five claims:

1. The strict ontological claim: a project counts as ontology only where it positively articulates what obtains, how its primitive distinctions relate, what follows from them, how error is diagnosed, and how its determinations are accessed.
2. The positional claim: the project is genealogically post-metaphysical, structurally pre-metaphysical, and ontologically a-metaphysical.
3. The founding claim: positive articulation can proceed without appeal to an underlying bearer, ground, or archic principle.
4. The categorial claim: a who is modal coincidence, not a bearer possessing modalities — and the categorial differentia of who is ownness.

5. The access claim: proper who-directed deixis is a founded, regional, publicly assessable, fallible, and non-exhaustive categorial intuition of that coincidence.

The article proceeds from the exact a-metaphysical position to its first categorial demonstration. Section 2 distinguishes genealogy, structural position, and ontological constitution before defining the strict threshold of ontology and developing positive no-ground, regionality, the refusal of explanatory duplication, and the name of the programme. Section 3 develops the alethic path — the transparency of ordinary who-directed access, the substitution trial, the methodology of access without construction, and the full hermeneutic concession — and states the positive ontological determination it makes unavoidable, together with its differentia. Section 4 states the formal core, including the ownness constraints and the termination of the grounding demand. Section 5 develops the deictic access schema, discharges its evidential debt in the finite-human region, and states the ownness warrant. Section 6 derives consequences for recurrence, reconstruction, standing, permanence, freedom, public identity, institutional attribution, open verdicts, and the non-substitutability theorem. Section 7 locates the proposal historically and systematically — from Aristotle to contemporary personal identity, grounding theory, and social ontology — without reducing its ontological position to its genealogy. Section 8 answers the principal objections. Section 9 states the originality and limits of the founding claim. Section 10 concludes.

A terminological note. The word *alethic* is used throughout in the sense derived from *alētheia* — pertaining to disclosure — and must not be confused with *alethic* in the modal-logic sense (pertaining to truth-modality). The alethic path is the path of disclosure by which the determination is earned before it is formalised.

2. The A-Metaphysical Ontological Position

2.1 From non-metaphysical refusal to a-metaphysical constitution

The term non-metaphysical remains useful because it immediately excludes several familiar structures: bearer, substrate, first principle, highest genus, and explanatory ground. Yet the prefix non- can make the project appear essentially oppositional, as though its identity consisted in negating a prior metaphysics.

The term a-metaphysical names a stronger position. It does not mean anti-metaphysical hostility, indifference to philosophical history, or refusal to interpret metaphysics. It means that metaphysics is absent from the ontology's conditions of constitution. The categories and judgements of the theory do not require a prior metaphysical framework, nor do they derive their meaning from the negation of one.

Accordingly:

Non-metaphysical names what the ontology refuses. A-metaphysical names what the ontology is.

The distinction prevents the ontology from remaining conceptually dependent upon the structure it overcomes.

2.2 Post by genealogy, pre by position, a-metaphysical by constitution

The project's relation to metaphysics has three coordinates.

Genealogically post-metaphysical. The theory has a history. Its present conceptual articulation would not have emerged without metaphysics and the successive critiques of metaphysical grounding. It inherits problems, distinctions, failures, and prohibitions from phenomenology, hermeneutics, Heidegger, Schürmann, Vattimo, and the wider post-metaphysical field. This dependence is real but genealogical:

Metaphysics $\in$ ConditionsOfDiscovery(EthicalOntology).

Structurally pre-metaphysical. The theory's position is prior to the metaphysical duplication through which an occurrence is declared insufficient and secured by a bearer, essence, or ground. This priority is not chronological. It does not describe an earlier historical epoch or an uncorrupted pre-philosophical consciousness. It names the order of ontological articulation:

obtaining $<_{\text{struct}}$ metaphysical duplication.

What obtains does not wait for metaphysics in order to obtain. Metaphysics is one possible interpretation of the obtaining, not its condition.

Ontologically a-metaphysical. The categories of the theory can be stated and applied without metaphysics serving as a premise, ground, or necessary antagonist:

Metaphysics $\notin$ ConditionsOfValidity(EthicalOntology).

The ontology is therefore not merely what remains after metaphysics. It articulates what could have been articulated without the metaphysical detour.

The canonical settlement is:

The theory would not exist historically without metaphysics, but it could exist ontologically without it. Metaphysics is a condition of discovery, not a condition of truth.

2.3 The strict threshold of ontology

Not every discourse about being is an ontology in the strict constructive sense. A critique of ontology may expose its exclusions. A genealogy may reconstruct the historical rise and collapse of its principles. A deconstruction may show the instability of its oppositions. A hermeneutics may interpret the historical transmissions through which being is understood. A thinking of weakening, withdrawal, or anarchy may establish why no hegemonic principle can govern thought and action. Each can transform the conditions under which ontology becomes possible. None becomes a successor ontology merely by speaking about being after metaphysics.

At minimum, an ontology must positively articulate:

1. primitive distinctions or categories: what kinds of determination the account recognises;

2. formation relations: how those distinctions belong together without being merely listed;
3. consequences and incompatibilities: what follows and which inferences are prohibited;
4. modes of application and access: how the determinations reach what obtains rather than remaining verbal stipulations;
5. conditions of error and correction: how a mistaken ontological judgement can be diagnosed.

This threshold does not require a closed deductive system, one universal vocabulary, or a final inventory of beings. It requires positive articulation sufficient to distinguish ontology from its critique or preparation.

An a-metaphysical ontology in the strict sense must meet this constructive threshold while refusing to secure its determinations through a bearer, substrate, supreme principle, or explanatory order beneath or beyond what obtains. More strongly, its categories must remain intelligible without metaphysics supplying either their premise or their negation.

The conjunction is decisive:

positive ontological articulation + structural independence from metaphysics.

Projects that remain positive but reinstate a fundamental ground are ontologies, but not a-metaphysical ones in this sense. Projects that overcome or weaken metaphysics without supplying a positive categorial grammar are post-metaphysical critiques, genealogies, or preparations for ontology, but not yet ontologies in the strict constructive sense.

The founding claim of this article is governed by that criterion. It does not claim that no one previously criticised metaphysics, spoke of post-metaphysical being, or used the phrase non-metaphysical ontology. It claims that the present project joins positive categorial articulation, complete refusal of explanatory ground, and ontological independence from metaphysics within one explicit architecture. Section 9 states the claim's exact scope, its criteria of assessment, and the sense in which precedent would confirm rather than defeat it.

2.4 Metaphysical doubling and the bearer

The article does not reduce the entire history of metaphysics to one thesis. Its target is the following recurrent structure:

1. the occurrence is treated as insufficient in its obtaining;
2. a bearer, substrate, essence, cause, first principle, or concealed unity is posited to secure it;
3. the ground is granted explanatory priority over the occurrence;
4. the occurrence becomes derivative evidence of what supposedly stands beneath or beyond it.

The resulting ontology is duplicative: what obtains is explained through something ontologically prior to its obtaining.

The bearer-property form is one local expression of this doubling:

Has(b, μ).

The bearer b is constituted independently enough to possess manner μ . Unity, persistence, and identity are then assigned to the bearer, while the manners become variable contents. Even where the bearer is renamed subject, organism, self, person, soul, system, or centre of consciousness, the explanatory sequence can remain intact: first what bears, then how it is.

The same structure can survive anti-substantialist critique. A bundle may replace the substance; continuity may replace the soul; narrative may replace the subject; recognition may replace the essence. The theory may deny an underlying thing while continuing to search for a functionally equivalent ground that secures unity from elsewhere.

An a-metaphysical ontology must therefore do more than remove one class of entities. It must prevent the grammar of grounding from returning through substitutes.

2.5 Positive no-ground

The programme can be named positive no-ground.

No-ground means that what obtains requires no ontologically prior bearer or principle beneath its obtaining. It does not mean chaos, arbitrariness, unintelligibility, or lack of determination.

Positive means that after the ground is refused, the phenomenon is not dissolved into fragments or reduced to an unknowable remainder. A positive structure remains available for articulation: the manner of obtaining as this occurrence.

The governing principle is:

No-ground is not the absence of ontological form. It is the refusal to make form depend upon an underlying ground.

The a-metaphysical clarification adds:

No-ground is not merely what remains once metaphysical ground has historically collapsed. It names an obtaining that never required such ground as a condition of its own articulation.

This is why modal coincidence matters beyond the theory of persons. It supplies an initial grammar for determination without ground. The formula does not ask what entity possesses the manner. It articulates the obtaining itself.

2.6 The priority of obtaining

The word obtaining must not become a disguised first principle. It does not name a universal substance called Obtaining, an event behind events, or a final ground replacing the grounds that have been removed. It is grammatical before it is doctrinal: it directs attention to the manner in which the phenomenon is given and articulated without positing a support beneath it.

Accordingly, the theory does not assert:

$$\exists G \forall x \text{ Grounds}(G, x),$$

where G is renamed obtaining. It asserts a discipline of determination:

determine x through how x obtains as this,
rather than:

determine x through what stands beneath x.

The priority of obtaining is therefore not the priority of another entity. It is the priority of a non-duplicative ontological grammar.

This is also the sense in which the position is structurally pre-metaphysical. The obtaining is not produced by a withdrawal from metaphysics. Metaphysical explanation arrives as a possible second operation upon what already obtains.

2.7 Regionality against ontological imperialism

A-metaphysical ontology is regional. It does not begin from a highest genus under which all beings are subsumed, nor from one privileged model — human consciousness, organism, machine, institution, or divinity — transferred everywhere.

A region is a field with characteristic modes of presentation, access, evidence, correction, and legitimate inference. Regionality does not fragment being into sealed worlds. It imposes an evidential discipline: a determination earned in one region cannot govern another without a new trial.

This has two consequences. First, the formal category may be thinly univocal while its conditions of disclosure differ. Second, the ontology must tolerate open borders. Human and feline who-hood may be regionally established while machine, civic, sacred, or divine applications remain under trial.

Regionality is therefore the opposite of relativism. Relativism makes verdicts depend upon perspectives without a common demand for answerability. Regionality requires each verdict to state the presentations, access routes, controls, defeaters, and inferential limits through which it was earned.

2.8 Formalisation as an a-metaphysical safeguard

Formalisation is often suspected of reifying the phenomenon. The suspicion is justified whenever variables are treated as independently constituted objects and relations are treated as external connections among them. The present calculus accepts this danger and makes it part of its design problem.

The notation is not intended to replace phenomenological disclosure. It makes explicit the grammatical points at which metaphysics can return:

- when a manner becomes a property;
- when an occurrence becomes a bearer;
- when deictic singularity becomes haecceity;
- when ownness becomes a component;
- when the whole becomes a composite;
- when a public route becomes the who;

- when a locus of answerability becomes a collective subject;
- when recurrence becomes numerical persistence;
- when reconstruction becomes restoration;
- or when non-substitutability is promoted into a criterion of who-hood.

The anti-bearer and anti-composition constraints are therefore not ancillary cautions. They are the formal expression of the a-metaphysical project.

The resulting position can be stated compactly:

A-metaphysical ontology is positive ontological determination whose grammar neither installs metaphysical ground nor depends upon metaphysics as its necessary opposite. Modal coincidence is its first categorial form; the who is its first decisive demonstration.

2.9 The name of the programme: Ethical Ontology

The programme within which modal coincidence is the opening determination is called Ethical Ontology. The name requires exact explanation, because it invites two misreadings that the doctrine excludes.

It does not mean that ethics grounds being. No normative order is installed beneath the obtaining; that would be explanatory duplication in moral dress, and the formation rules prohibit it as firmly as they prohibit the substrate. Nor does it mean that all being is answerable. Answerability is a regional structure with its own convergence conditions; most of what obtains is never singularised as answerable at all.

The name is taken from the older sense of *ēthos*: the dwelling. Ethical ontology means the ontology of structures disclosed through answerable inhabitation. The designation records the mode of access, not a foundation. Everything this article establishes is disclosed nowhere else than in the inhabited common — in greeting, address, expectation, care, recognition, and grief; the trials of Section 3, the controls of Section 5, and the warrant conditions of every regional verdict are conducted in that medium and in no other. The common names the inherited field of shared intelligibility and transmission; *ethos* names that common as inhabited; and it is from within this inhabitation, never from a spectator's position outside it, that the manner obtaining as this occurrence becomes disclosable at all.

The name therefore marks a methodological truth with ontological consequences: the routes to the who run through the dwelling. This is why the ontology can be positive without ground — its determinations are earned in the medium where they are disclosed, not deduced from a principle behind it — and why its first category had to be secured aletically before it could be stated formally.

3. The Aletic Path: From the Metaphysical Bearer to Modal Coincidence

3.1 The bearer grammar

The bearer grammar can be represented schematically as:

Has(b, μ),

where b is an independently constituted bearer and μ is a property, mode, profile, or way of being possessed by it. The bearer may be described as a soul, subject, organism, consciousness, or metaphysical individual. What matters is the order of constitution: first the bearer, then its manners.

This grammar is attractive because it appears to explain unity through ownership. Memories, gestures, commitments, bodily changes, and social roles belong to the same person because one bearer possesses them. But it purchases unity by positing precisely what must be explained. If the bearer is stripped of every manner by which it could be encountered or articulated, it becomes either an empty numerical point or an inaccessible substance. If it retains determinate features, the question returns: why do those features belong to this bearer?

Bundle and continuity theories reject the substratum, but often reconstruct unity from items whose belonging together is already assumed. Psychological continuity theories make identity depend on overlapping chains of memory, intention, or character; narrative theories emphasise the configured history of a self; animalism locates persistence in the life of a human organism; phenomenological theories appeal to first-personal givenness or mineness. Each discloses important structures. The present proposal does not deny their regional relevance. It denies that any of them, considered as a detachable criterion or content, is the who.

3.2 Transparency: the phenomenon before the question

The positive alternative should not be stated before the phenomenon that demands it has been exhibited. The exhibition begins from ordinary success, not from puzzle cases.

A woman comes down the stairs of her house in the early morning and is greeted by name; the name is already on the way before she reaches the last step, and no examination precedes it. A telephone rings in another house and a voice says only it is me — no description, no credential — and the one who hears experiences no moment of successful inference; the voice was already hers, and the conversation begins in the middle. A colleague is expected at a desk; the expectation is not a hypothesis, and it shows itself only in what is prepared. No one, in any of these scenes, asks who is there. The question does not arise, because everything that might have raised it is already answered in the manner of the day itself.

In each scene someone is reached — reached as the one she is — without ever being brought to a stand before the reaching. The access travels through common, repeatable forms: a name, a greeting-formula, a voice on a line, an institutional expectation. Call this the transparency of the who:

Transparency is carriage without thematic arrest.

And its corollary:

The who is least visible where the carrying succeeds best.

The inconspicuousness of the who in ordinary life is not an obstacle standing between philosophy and its phenomenon. It is the phenomenon, in its first and least distorted showing.

Two misreadings must be blocked at once. The first converts transparency into absence: since no personal object is thematised, there is nothing beyond the forms — a role, a recognition-

pattern, a node in a practice. The second converts transparency into concealment: since only the forms appear, the who must be a hidden something behind them, which the forms indicate without presenting. Both readings share the assumption this article places under trial: that whatever is genuinely disclosed must be disclosed as a thing, so that the who is a thing among the appearances, a thing behind them, or nothing.

Transparency, by definition, does not thematise itself. To make its structure visible without manufacturing it, a pressure is needed. The pressure is substitution.

3.3 The substitution trial

The philosophical instrument here is usually breakdown: Heidegger's hammer discloses its being when it fails. The who inverts the polarity. The disclosive case is not the failed replacement but the replacement that works — that succeeds at every transferable demand — because only there can success and restoration visibly part company. The trial proceeds in ascending order of strain.

The successor. A physician retires; her successor is her equal in every professional respect — competence, judgement, manner with patients. The practice is fully restored, and no one confuses the restoration of the practice with the restoration of the doctor. The successor is not a lesser doctor; he is another one. The case fixes the logical shape — restoration-of-role and restoration-of-the-one come apart even where the first is perfect — but leaves escapes open: perhaps what was not transferred was simply memory, narrative, an inner life.

The newborn. Before closing those escapes, a control. A newborn has no developed narration, no reflective self-identification, no linguistic attestation, no mature agency, no forensic standing. Yet the care in the ward reaches this baby now; it does not reach a future speaker concealed inside the infant and projected backward. Within the postnatal human region, the mature capacities are therefore not necessary conditions of who-hood — so the trial cannot be covertly testing for them. The appeal to capacities does not restore them as conditions: an exercised or immediately exercisable capacity the newborn lacks; a dispositional or root capacity, taken as shared suchness, cannot explain which occurrence is this one, and taken as already particularised, presupposes the occurrence it was asked to ground. And where two newborns are indiscernible to every available route, the epistemic inability to discriminate them does not merge their occurrences: indiscernibility of the such is not identity of the this.

The second cat. Nor is the trial indexed to human public form. A household loses a cat; a closely resembling animal takes over the first one's routes, its chair, its hours, and is fully loved. The household, loving the second cat, does not judge that the first has been restored. The control from the other side: a robot cleaner that learns the same routes, adapts, varies its behaviour, and is numerically distinct discloses no comparable difference — route-learning and functional integration alone put nothing at issue. The comparison defeats purely behavioural and functional criteria while leaving the machine's own question open for its own regional trial (§6.6).

The perfect substitute. Now the maximal case. Let a substitute be prepared who preserves appearance, voice, and manner; then memory and dispositions, so that the substitute has everything Locke's prince took to the cobbler (Locke 1975, II.xxvii); then narrative continuity; then social embedding, so that family, colleagues, and institutions receive her without friction.

Every structure the major theories have proposed as criterial — psychological continuity and connectedness, narrative unity, qualitative profile, recognition — is present and functioning. Was the one who was here restored? The inventory does not settle the question, and a symmetry argument shows it cannot: let two such substitutes be prepared simultaneously, each an equally good continuer. They cannot both be numerically identical with the one prior woman; so the transferables, which both possess equally, do not determine restoration. Parfit drew from such cases the conclusion that identity is not what matters (Parfit 1984, Part III). The trial draws a different and prior conclusion: whatever the transferables settle, they do not settle it by restoring the who, since they can be perfectly preserved while that question stands exactly where it stood.

The alethic result:

Substitution can preserve function, role, performance, memory, narrative, qualitative profile, relation-pattern, and recognition without thereby restoring the same who. Preservation of the such does not restore the this.

Such names what can be had again — the repeatable, articulable, transferable, at any degree of exactness up to indiscernibility itself. This names what the two indiscernible infants already showed: no increase in the exactness of the such produces or approaches it.

The negative control. An original painted canvas burns. The most exact copy is made — pigment for pigment, craquelure for craquelure — and this original painted object has not thereby been restored. Non-restoration in full rigour, outside the personal region entirely; and it discloses no who. Therefore non-restoration by itself is not sufficient to disclose who-hood; it may disclose the historical singularity of a making, a deed, or an object instead. The trial's instrument must not be promoted into a criterion (§6.7). And the control holds a further lesson in reserve, discharged in §3.6: what the canvas has, and what it lacks, together mark the exact location of the category's differentia.

3.4 Access, not construction

A critic will say the trial is construction with better manners: the ward, the household, and the clinic were approached as containing someones, and the trial obligingly returned the verdict the approach had deposited in it.

The reply distinguishes six things the trial keeps apart: prior regional disclosure — the doctor, the newborn, the cat were already encountered as someone, in care, address, expectation, and grief, before any test; substitution disclosure — the trial puts what was already disclosed under pressure and lets it show a structure that transparency carries without exhibiting; the evidential mark — replacement-failure is a regionally relevant but defeasible indication, not a definition; the route of access — the trial is the occasion on which the phenomenon becomes salient; the criterion, which the trial does not supply and this article does not prematurely derive; and the negative control, which blocks an inference without proving its opposite.

The circularity charge conflates the first two. The argument is not: we already know this is a who, therefore the test confirms it. The argument is: prior regional encounter makes the test intelligible; the test then shows that the transferable structures do not exhaust what the encounter had reached. The prior encounter supplies the question; the trial supplies a result

the encounter did not contain — and the result could have gone otherwise. A region is a trial only if it can revise the instrument brought to it: the feline region restricted the instrument (no reliance on language or forensic standing); the machine case returned no verdict at all; the canvas returned a verdict against the over-extension of the mark.

The access thereby characterised is veridical in aim (it purports to reach how things stand, not to legislate); fallible in execution (a household can be wrong; recognition can be captured by a substitute); publicly warrantable (the grounds for saying the doctor was not restored can be articulated and assessed by anyone); regionally corrigible (a new region may restrict or defeat the instrument); and non-constitutive — access found; it did not make.

3.5 The hermeneutic concession

The strongest rival is not the bearer theorist but the hermeneutic phenomenologist who absorbs everything above and explains it without remainder. The concession owed to this rival must be real, not rhetorical, and it is not retracted anywhere in this article.

Nothing appears outside an opening of intelligibility. Nothing is encountered as a bare datum. Every phenomenon appears as something, and the “as” is common, inherited, and historical (Heidegger 2010, §§31–33; Gadamer 2004). The name that reached the woman on the stairs is a repeatable form no one owns. There is no private route to a person; there are only common routes. Even deixis — this, here, you — is a paradigm of the common: no speaker owns the word “this”, and its power to single out is conferred by shared language and situation, not by a private mental ray. The substitution trial itself was conducted entirely within common intelligibility.

The rival concludes: disclosedness is the whole story; the “this one” is a function of articulated context, and what the trial registered was the finest grain of the “as” — the point where articulation becomes so context-laden that it no longer transfers. The question that decides the matter is:

Does the articulation of something as something exhaust the fact that this manner obtains as this occurrence?

Return to the stairs. Had her sister come down instead, the same form of words, in the same voice, at the same hour, would have been a different greeting — not a failed one, a different one, and known to be such without a moment’s inspection. The rival explains everything about how the greeting reaches: form, context, history, situation. But the context fixes the address only by already relating the greeting to this occurrence rather than that one. Context explains how the address reaches; it does not generate the being-this of what it reaches. Articulation, however fine, is repeatable in principle — that is what makes it articulation — and the two indiscernible infants made the point at the limit: every articulable route exhausted, the difference intact.

Nothing here opposes deictic singularity to mediation, singularity to the common, the “this” to the “as”, or immediacy to articulation. The “this” is reached only through the “as”; the common’s own purest instruments — pronoun, vocative, demonstrative — are precisely the forms whose every actual use is situated. The point is narrower: the as-structure is a structure of manner — of the how, the such, the repeatable — and the fact that this manner obtains as

this occurrence is not a further manner. The unresolved point is not behind the phenomenon and not outside the clearing. It lies in the deictic character of the occurrence itself.

3.6 The positive determination: modal coincidence and its differentia

What must the who be, given that this is how the who is disclosed? The determination is built from distinctions each of which is answerable to the alethic path.

A region is not simply a biological or logical class. It is a field with characteristic modes of presentation, access, evidence, correction, and legitimate inference. Human, feline, artificial, civic, institutional, and divine questions cannot be settled merely by applying one ready-made criterion. A determination earned in one region may guide another inquiry, but it does not govern it without a new trial.

A possibility is a repeatable route of intelligibility or enactment available within a region. It is not enclosed within one bearer. Courage, patience, evasion, attention, speech, care, calculation, or protection may be available to several occurrences. Their common availability does not make the occurrences interchangeable.

A manner is a possibility as regionally articulated how. The manner is not a property stored in an entity. It is the way in which a concrete occurrence obtains — adverbial, not substantival. This is what the substitution trial showed to be transferable: the such.

An occurrence is the concrete, embodied, relational, and temporally extended obtaining. In the finite-living region, it is a whole living history rather than an instantaneous event. The term does not name a bare object to which who-status is subsequently added; it is what the deictic act reaches, not what carries properties.

Deictic determination is the determination of the occurrence as this occurrence — the ontological registration of what §3.5 isolated. It is not an added constituent, not a property of thisness, not numerical identity restated, and not an epistemic or semantic fact (§4.5).

The co-ordination of manner and occurrence must then be stated with care, because three assembly stories stand ready to absorb it, and each must be refused. In the first, a bearer receives the manner: the occurrence is constituted first and the manner inheres in it — the substrate model. In the second, a common nature is contracted to the individual by an added individuator — the Scotist model. In the third, a configuration admits an occupant: the manner is a slot-structure and the occurrence fills it. All three presuppose independently complete pieces that analysis does not find. Analysis finds real distinctions; it does not find components. The manner and this occurrence have never been separate; the seam the assembly stories would sew is not an ontological join but the place where the assembly model loses its object. Their co-obtaining is therefore not a relation between them but the concrete structure of the obtaining itself: coincidence — not accidental simultaneity, but the non-composite obtaining in which a regionally articulable manner is this occurrence's concrete way of being.

The thesis may then be stated:

A who is the whole regional obtaining in which a regionally articulable manner obtains as this concrete occurrence.

And compressed:

The who does not have a modality. The who is the regional modality obtaining as this occurrence.

The phrase obtains as is load-bearing. It does not mean belongs to, inheres in, is instantiated by, or is possessed by. Nor does it join two fully constituted things. It marks the modal coincidence itself.

Five analytic views belong to the determination: the regional manner; the embodied-relational-historical occurrence; the constitutive coincidence; the deictic determination; and the who as the whole obtaining. These are not five ontological pieces. They are five analytic views of one obtaining. Accordingly, the who is not the manner (which may recur); not the bare occurrence (there is none — an occurrence stripped of every manner is an abstraction, not a residue); not the pair or composite of the two; not a bearer, possessor, or haecceity; and not the locus at which attributions terminate (§6.4). Who-status belongs to the whole obtaining and to nothing less.

One registration remains, and the negative control of §3.3 has been holding its place. The burned canvas is deictically determinate, unrepeatable, non-restorable, indelible in having-been — and no one. Deictic determination is therefore region-neutral: it answers *which occurrence is this*, in any region whatever. What makes a this-region a who-region is a further categorial fact about the whole obtaining: it is **own** — someone rather than merely something. The standing name of the differentia is ownness, and the word carries no proprietor: nothing owns and nothing is owned; the obtaining is own precisely because no one stands behind it to possess it. (The neighbouring senses of *eigen* and *oikeion* may clarify the term in passing; they do not warrant it.) Ownness is not a constituent, a property, or a possession; like deictic determination, it adds no component. It is the whole coincidence under its own-aspect, and the category articulates it without constituting it: access does not constitute, and neither does a category. The differentia is disclosed rather than defined: it is exhibited through convergent regional trials in which a merely singular this and someone diverge — under substitution, loss, death, address, attribution, and answerability — and within that constellation the canvas/ward contrast retains its demonstrative office as the minimal pair: maximal matching, one difference, legible in the intentional form of the loss itself — a work destroyed against someone gone. The disclosure remains exposed to failure like every other regional result.

The mature architecture is therefore three-levelled: **common manner** (the repeatable regional how); **deictic thisness** (this finite obtaining — region-neutral); **ownness** (the whole obtaining as someone — the categorial differentia of who). The manner can recur; another deictically distinct occurrence can arise; the ownness of the first obtaining cannot be transferred. The completed statement of the thesis is accordingly twofold, holding the category and the obtaining apart:

Ownness is the differentia of who: the whole modal coincidence obtains as someone rather than merely something. The category who articulates this ownness; it neither produces nor confers it.

In the finite-living regions tried, ownness has a positive modal articulation:

Ownness shows itself as non-vicarious living: this life cannot be lived, undergone, interrupted, or restored as somebody else's living. A who, in the finite-living regions, is a life that cannot be somebody else's living.

The restriction is deliberate: the formulation through life is regional, not definitional — the machine, civic, sacred, and divine regions remain open (§6.7), and a definition through life would settle them negatively in advance. The unrestricted formulation remains the someone-formulation above. The anti-possessive compression governs both: the manner is ownerless; the obtaining is own; nothing stands behind it as owner. And the plain-language series completes itself: suchness says what manner; thisness singles out a something; ownness discloses someone.

Each feature of the aletic path is now accounted for rather than explained away. Transparency: ordinary access reaches the whole obtaining through its manner-side, which is common and carries; there is no additional object whose non-thematisation would be a failure. The substitution result: the manner is repeatable, the obtaining-as-this is not; preservation of the such leaves the this untouched because the this was never a transferable. The canvas control: deictic singularity without ownness discloses a historical singular, not a who. Access without construction: the coincidence obtains whether or not it is disclosed. And the deictic act, when properly typed, reaches the whole coincidence — which Section 5 develops as founded categorial intuition.

4. The Formal Core: The First Categorical Demonstration

4.1 Primitive types and articulation

Let R range over regions, p over regionally available possibilities, μ over manners, and ω over concrete occurrences:

$R : \text{Region}, p : \text{Poss}(R), \mu : \text{Manner}(R), \omega : \text{Occ}(R).$

All typing is internal to a region: a manner is a manner of R , an occurrence an occurrence within R . The calculus provides no cross-regional identity for manners; that the “same” possibility is articulable in two regions is itself a claim requiring articulation in each (§6.6), never an axiom.

Regional articulation is written:

$$p \Rightarrow_{\text{art}R} \mu.$$

The arrow is not causal and does not represent instantiation. It indicates that possibility p is articulable within region R as manner μ .

Let:

$$\delta(\omega)$$

denote the occurrence deictically determined as this occurrence. The operator δ does not add a metaphysical component called thisness. It marks the occurrence under deictic determination.

Modal coincidence is written:

$$\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega),$$

read: manner μ obtains, in region R , as this occurrence ω .

4.2 The core judgement

The minimal ontological rule is:

(MC) From $\mu : \text{Manner}(R)$, $\omega : \text{Occ}(R)$, $\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)$ infer: $R \vdash [\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)] : \text{WHO}$.

Where the genealogy from possibility matters, one may add the premises $p : \text{Poss}(R)$ and $p \Rightarrow_{\text{art}R} \mu$.

The notation:

$$\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega) := [\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)]$$

is metanotation only. It abbreviates the whole judgemental content; it must not be treated as the name of a further object in the object language. It is not a function symbol, denotes no object, and licenses no identity statements between judged wholes; all constraints on the judgement transfer to it unchanged. (Where the genealogy from a possibility p is in view, one may write $\mathcal{W}_R(p, \omega)$ as shorthand for $\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega)$ with $p \Rightarrow_{\text{art}R} \mu$; the manner-form is primary, since it is the manner, not the possibility, that obtains as the occurrence.)

The canonical reading of (MC) is:

Within region R , where a regionally articulable manner obtains as this concrete occurrence, the whole obtaining has the categorial status who.

And the semantic content of the typing, made explicit by the differentia of §3.6:

(WHO-sem) $R \vdash [\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)] : \text{WHO}$ reads: the whole coincidence is regionally warranted as constitutively own. Who-status qualifies the judged whole and nothing less.

4.3 Anti-bearer and anti-composition constraints

The formation rule carries four prohibitions:

(1) $\mathcal{W}_R \not\equiv \text{Has}(\omega, \mu)$ **(2)** $\mathcal{W}_R \neq \mu$ **(3)** $\mathcal{W}_R \neq \omega$ **(4)** $\mathcal{W}_R \neq \langle \mu, \omega \rangle$

Constraint (1) blocks the bearer-property model. Constraints (2) and (3) prevent reduction to either manner or occurrence considered in isolation. Constraint (4) prevents the who from becoming an ordered pair or composite.

These constraints do not say that body, memory, narrative, first-personal experience, or social recognition are irrelevant. They say that none can function as a detachable bearer or sufficient substitute for the whole obtaining.

4.4 Is the occurrence already a bearer?

A natural objection arises immediately. If ω denotes a concrete occurrence, has the notation not already individuated something that then receives manner and who-status?

The answer is that ω is not introduced as a bare continuant with independent identity conditions. It is a bound placeholder for the concrete field of obtaining under regional presentation. Its deictic determination is inseparable from the judgement in which the manner obtains as this occurrence. The notation does not license the inference:

$\exists \omega$ such that ω is fully constituted prior to $\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)$.

The occurrence is distinguishable in the formal schema because the theory must articulate the asymmetry between a repeatable manner and its non-repeatable obtaining as this one. Distinguishability within the judgement is not independent substantiality.

4.5 Deictic singularity without haecceity

The operator δ may appear to reintroduce a haecceity: a primitive property of being this very individual. That reading is rejected. Deictic determination does not posit a qualitative or non-qualitative property added to the occurrence. It marks the non-transferable index of the obtaining.

If the same manner obtains as two occurrences:

$\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega 1)$ and $\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega 2)$,

it does not follow that:

(5) $\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega 1) = \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega 2)$.

The same manner may recur; the who does not thereby recur. The deictic difference is not a hidden property that explains numerical distinction. It is the formal registration that the obtaining is this occurrence rather than that one. (Since $\mathcal{W}_R$ is metanotation, (5) is to be read as the prohibition of an inference, not as a denied identity between objects: from the two judgements, no inference runs to one who twice obtaining.)

Four matters must be held apart here, because their conflation generates the classical puzzles: ontological determination (the obtaining as this), numerical distinctness (that $\omega 1 \neq \omega 2$), epistemic access (whether available routes can discriminate $\omega 1$ from $\omega 2$), and semantic reference (how an expression picks out $\omega 1$). Indiscernibility to every available route is an epistemic result; it is not an ontological merger of the occurrences those routes fail to distinguish. The calculus registers the first two; it neither reduces them to nor derives them from the second two.

4.6 The differentia in the grammar: ownness constraints

The differentia of §3.6 enters the formation rules as two further prohibitions.

(22) No ownness-as-component. For no predicate Own is $\text{Own}(\omega)$ or $\text{Own}(\mu)$ well-formed. Ownness may not be attached to the occurrence, the manner, or any analytic aspect; it qualifies only the judged whole, through the typing itself (WHO-sem). Violation restores the bearer at the categorial level: an occurrence possessing ownness is a substrate wearing the differentia as a property.

(23) Sustaining is not founding. μ may not occupy the ground-position of any constitutive-explanation schema: for no constitutive-grounding context G is $G(\mu, \omega)$ or $G(t, [\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)])$ admissible within R -judgements. The operator $\Downarrow_R$ articulates the obtaining; it introduces no constituent to which a grounding demand could attach.

The jurisdiction of (23) must be stated exactly. Causal, historical, biological, developmental, and institutional explanation are external to the calculus and untouched: one may ask what routes carried a manner, what biology enabled an organism, what institutions sustained a practice. What (23) prohibits is only the conversion of manner into constitutive foundation — the demand for a further ontological term beneath the obtaining. The grammatical ground of the prohibition is the asymmetry between grounding and articulation: a ground is introduced as another explanatory term, and because it is a term, the question of what grounds it can recur — regress, circle, self-grounding, arbitrary stopping, or an exempt ultimate. A manner is not another term beneath the obtaining; to ask what further entity “manners” the manner converts an adverbial articulation into an object, which changes the grammar rather than continuing the inquiry. Hence the termination result of §8.24: constitutive grounding regress terminates in modal articulation not because a final ground has been reached, but because no further constituent has been introduced to which the demand could coherently be reapplied.

4.7 The closure of constitutive analysis

The constraints (1)–(4) and (22)–(23) are instances of a general exhaustion, which may be stated as the grammar’s governing theorem:

Every constitutive account of being-this or being-own must offer an explanans characterisable without presupposing the target’s singularity or oneness, or else articulate the obtaining itself. In the first case the explanans joins the transferable, duplicates the datum, installs a bearer, presupposes the sameness, or converts disclosure into production — whether expressed as a term, relation, process, fact, or grounding operator. In the second case the account may illuminate the obtaining, but it has ceased to reduce it.

The theorem’s jurisdiction is bounded: it applies to constitutive-item accounts and prohibits nothing about biological, causal, historical, developmental, or sociological explanation, regional criteria of identification, or improved phenomenological articulation. It blocks only the claim that an independently characterisable constituent manufactures being-this or being-own. Section 8 develops the theorem’s application to grounding theory (§8.24) and its consequence for the status of the primitive floor (§8.7).

5. Proper Deixis as Founded Categorical Intuition

5.1 The objectual misdescription

Who-directed deixis typically proceeds through sensible and public routes: a body, face, gesture, voice, name, location, shared history, institutional record, or social encounter. The philosophical error is not that these routes are used. The error is to suppose that the act must terminate at a thing-like bearer and then search within or behind it for a further personal object.

When no such object appears, theory may infer that the who is hidden, ineffable, constructed, or metaphysically absent. Modal coincidence offers another diagnosis:

No who-object was missing. The intentional act was mistyped.

The failure belonged to the demand that a who-intention be fulfilled as a thing-intention.

The word objectual must be used carefully here. Husserlian phenomenology can call a state of affairs or categorial unity an intentional object. The contrast in this article is not between intentionality and objectlessness. It is between:

1. thing-like termination, where the act stops at a bearer, body-object, role, profile, or institutional item; and
2. categorial fulfilment, where those routes disclose the whole modal obtaining under the category who.

For that reason, the formal rule below uses TermThing, not the ambiguous TermObj.

5.2 Presentation and foundedness

Let s be a sensible, relational, historical, linguistic, or public presentation:

$s : \text{Presentation}(R)$.

Write:

$\Pi_R(s, \omega)$

for: presentation s presents or routes access to occurrence ω within region R .

Write:

$\text{Found}_R(a, s)$

for: deictic act a is founded upon presentation s .

Foundedness prevents categorial intuition from becoming an occult faculty. The act is not independent of body, speech, history, and relation. Yet the founding presentation is not identical with what is categorially intuited:

(6) $\Pi_R(s, \omega) \not\Rightarrow s = \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega)$.

The body may found access without being a container. The name may route address without being the who. The public form may carry availability without becoming numerically identical with the occurrence it carries.

Three deictic matters must further be held apart, because their conflation produces both the haecceity reading and the constructivist reading. Deictic determination is the ontological determination of the whole coincidence as this (§3.6, 4.5): it belongs to the obtaining, not to any act. Deictic reaching is the regional route through which this occurrence rather than another becomes the determinate one at issue: it may be perceptual, bodily, practical, addressive, mnemonic, testimonial, or archival, and it gives access to the occurrence without

constituting its being-this. Linguistic deixis — the demonstrative and indexical vocabulary — is one possible articulation and carrier of that reaching, neither its source nor its measure. Stating gives the sense; deictic reaching gives access to this one; deictic determination is what the successful act reaches. An act can therefore fail at the second level (misdirected reaching) or the third (misfiring reference) without anything failing at the first: the obtaining is not hostage to its routes.

This account develops a Husserlian insight while altering its target. In the Sixth Logical Investigation, categorial intuition is founded on sensible presentation and fulfils an intention whose correlate cannot be reduced to a sensible feature (Husserl 2001, Investigation VI, §§45–48). Heidegger recognised categorial intuition as one of phenomenology’s decisive discoveries and connected it to access to being (Heidegger 1985, §§5–7). In the sense operative here, a categorial intuition is a fallible intuition of a difference in mode of being, available prior to the completed conceptual account of that difference: the nurse’s registration of someone here rather than merely something functioning here is its ordinary form. It is regionally exercised uptake, not a faculty, and not a proof-procedure. The present thesis is accordingly specific: a properly fulfilled who-directed deictic act can intuit the whole modal coincidence without locating a personal substance.

5.3 The access schema

Let $\delta_R^a(\omega)$ mean that act a deictically moves toward occurrence ω . Let $\text{TermThing}_R(a, s)$ mean that the act terminates at presentation s as a thing-like bearer, role, profile, public form, or institution. Let $\text{Ctrl}_R(a, \omega)$ mean that the act passes the negative controls appropriate to region R . Let $\text{Ful}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$ mean that the founded act succeeds in reaching the occurrence under the categorial whole who . Let $\text{Warr}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$ mean that the grounds of the fulfilment claim are publicly articulable and assessable within the region.

The access rule is:

(DI) From $\Pi_R(s, \omega)$, $\text{Found}_R(a, s)$, $\delta_R^a(\omega)$, $\neg \text{TermThing}_R(a, s)$, $\text{Ctrl}_R(a, \omega)$, $\text{Ful}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$, $\text{Warr}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$ infer: $R \vdash a : \text{CatInt}(\text{WHO})$.

Read: where a deictic act is founded upon admissible presentation, does not terminate at a thing-like bearer or substitute, passes the region’s negative controls, and is regionally fulfilled and publicly warranted, the act is a categorial intuition of who.

(DI) is a classification schema, not a discovery procedure. It states when an act counts as a categorial intuition of who, given regional facts about presentation, foundedness, controls, fulfilment, and warrant; it does not generate those facts, and it does not certify any particular act. The two canonical formulae answer different questions:

(MC): what the who is. (DI): how the who is categorially intuited.

Access does not constitute:

(7) $\text{Ful}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R) \not\Rightarrow \text{Creates}(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$.

Nor does the who depend on present intuition:

(8) $\neg \text{Intuited}(\mathcal{W}_R) \not\Rightarrow \neg \text{WHO}(\mathcal{W}_R)$.

Singularity is disclosed, not produced.

5.4 Is the fulfilment rule circular? The evidential debt

The symbol Ful_R could appear to repeat the conclusion: if an act successfully intuits the who, then it is a successful intuition of who. The objection is correct if fulfilment is left as an unexplained primitive.

The schema therefore imposes a methodological debt. A regional account is incomplete until it specifies:

1. admissible presentations;
2. the mode of foundedness;
3. negative controls;
4. evidence supporting fulfilment;
5. possible defeaters;
6. the form of public assessment; and
7. the limits of what the act discloses.

The core calculus cannot supply one universal algorithm because the evidence appropriate to a living human, an animal, an artificial system, a civic configuration, or a divine claim may differ. The formal achievement is not a decision procedure. It is a schema that makes every promotion answerable to explicit regional evidence and blocks silent transfer between regions.

5.5 The debt discharged: the finite-human region

That the debt can be paid, and is not a promissory abstraction, is shown by the alethic path of Section 3, whose results map directly onto the seven items.

Admissible presentations (item 1) are the embodied, temporal, relational, and historical presentations of a living occurrence — face, voice, gesture, shared history, address and answer, care and expectation — the presentations through which the transparency of §3.2 carried. Foundedness (item 2) is that ordinary carriage itself: the greeting that reaches someone by name, the call answered before any inference. The negative controls (item 3) are established by the trial of §3.3: role-termination fails (the successor restores the practice, not the doctor); capacity-termination fails (the newborn is reached without narration, attestation, or forensic standing); profile- and recognition-termination fail (the perfect substitute and the symmetry argument). Evidence for fulfilment (item 4) is the positive disclosure that survives the controls: the act that reaches the whole living occurrence through its routes without stopping at any of them. Defeaters (item 5) include capture by a substitute, address to a role or stereotype, and confusion of record with occurrence. Public assessment (item 6): every verdict in the trial is articulable and criticisable by anyone party to the region; nothing appeals to private insight. Limits (item 7): the fulfilled act reaches the occurrence under its category; it does not know the life (§5.7). And the burned canvas closes the schema from the other side: non-substitutability is an evidential mark within a region already disclosed, not a criterion that confers who-status (§6.7).

This is a compressed discharge; the full regional phenomenology belongs to the larger project. What it establishes here is formal: Ful_R is not circular, because its content in a given region is fixed by independently specifiable presentations, controls, and defeaters, each of which can fail.

5.6 Public warrant and fallibility

Public warrant does not mean that consensus creates the who. It means that reasons for taking the act to have reached a who rather than a role, profile, institution, or unsupported projection can be articulated, criticised, and corrected.

Let $\text{Corr}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R)$ mean that the act is correct. Then:

$$(9) \text{Warr}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R) \Rightarrow \text{Corr}_R(a, \mathcal{W}_R).$$

A warranted judgement may still be wrong. Conversely, an act might be correct without its warrant yet being adequate. The calculus is therefore veridical in aim and fallible in execution. Likewise:

$$(10) \text{Consensus}_R(\mathcal{W}_R) \Rightarrow \text{WHO}(\mathcal{W}_R).$$

Publicity concerns assessability, not ontological construction. This preserves the difference between a who and the public forms through which access is ordinarily carried.

5.7 Categorical wholeness without epistemic exhaustion

To say that the act reaches the whole modal coincidence does not mean that it knows every content of a life. We must distinguish:

$$\text{CatWhole}(\mathcal{W}_R),$$

the occurrence reached under its complete categorial status as who, from:

$$\text{TotContent}(\mathcal{W}_R),$$

the indefinitely rich totality of episodes, memories, relations, possibilities, interpretations, and future disclosures belonging to the life.

Thus:

$$R \vdash a : \text{CatInt}(\text{CatWhole}(\mathcal{W}_R))$$

does not imply:

$$(11) \text{Knows}(a, \text{TotContent}(\mathcal{W}_R)).$$

The who does not withdraw as a hidden bearer behind the occurrence. The finite life nevertheless exceeds every finite disclosure of it. The formula is therefore:

No ontological remainder behind the obtaining; no epistemic exhaustiveness within the obtaining.

5.8 The ownness warrant

The differentia requires its own warrant clause, and the clause must be stated so that it cannot be read as constitution.

(24) From $\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega)$ and $\text{OwnWarr}_R(\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega))$, infer $R \vdash \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega) : \text{WHO}$.

OwnWarr_R registers regionally adequate warrant for articulating the whole obtaining as constitutively own — warrant of the kind §5.5 discharges for the finite-human region: the trials' convergence, the controls passed, the canvas/ward contrast in place. The conditionality of (24) is assertibility, not obtaining. OwnWarr neither creates nor confers ownness; ownness is warrant-independent — the newborn is own before any warrant exists, and the dreamless sleeper's ownness does not flicker (§6.8) — and only the judgement waits on warrant. Without this comment the rule would read as constitution by warrant, which (7) and (10) prohibit in general form.

6. Formal Consequences

The following consequences are not isolated results in a theory of personal identity. Each demonstrates how an a-metaphysical ontology changes the inferential grammar of identity, persistence, attribution, and public representation. Because the ontology neither installs a bearer beneath the obtaining nor depends upon metaphysics as the foil against which its claims are defined, recurrence, reconstruction, carriage, and locushood must be distinguished with unusual precision.

The consequences do not all have the same status. Some follow directly from the formation rules; others require additional premises supplied by the relevant regional ontology. The status of each is marked, so that the calculus does not convert philosophical commitments into pseudo-proofs.

6.1 Recurrence without identity

Status: follows from the formation rules (constraints (2)–(4) and (5)).

Recurrence of manner is insufficient for recurrence of who:

(12) $\text{Recurs}(\mu) \not\Rightarrow \text{Recurs}(\mathcal{W}_R)$.

Two occurrences may exhibit the same style, role, behavioural disposition, narrative form, or publicly recognised character without being the same who.

6.2 Qualitative equivalence and substitution

Status: follows from the formation rules, given the epistemic/ontological distinction of §4.5.

Suppose:

$\text{Qual}(\omega_1) = \text{Qual}(\omega_2)$

and the same manner obtains as both:

$\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega_1) \wedge \mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega_2)$.

It still does not follow that:

$$(13) \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega1) = \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega2).$$

This is not a revival of a hidden further fact. The difference is not secured by an imperceptible substance but by the non-transferability of the concrete obtaining as this occurrence.

The result places modal coincidence against theories that allow perfect qualitative or psychological duplication to settle identity. It also differs from animalism: biological continuity may be an indispensable regional structure of finite human life without being an underlying bearer that possesses the who. Modal coincidence is not a rival criterion added to psychological or biological criteria; it is a claim about the categorial form within which such structures can matter.

6.3 Reconstruction and restoration

Status: requires two additional finite-living premises — irreversible interruption and definitive perimetralisation.

The core schema alone does not contain a theory of death. Two regional premises must be added: that finite living obtaining can be irreversibly interrupted; and that such interruption definitively perimetralises the living history — closes its boundary, so that the history is henceforth complete rather than continuing.

Let $\omega1$ be a finite living occurrence whose living obtaining has irreversibly ended. Let $\omega2$ reproduce its material, genetic, functional, psychological, narrative, or public features. Then:

$$(14) \text{Reconstruct}(\omega2, \omega1) \neq \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega2) = \mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega1).$$

Reconstruction may reactivate manners, routes, records, memories, or public forms. None by itself reopens the same finite living history.

This conclusion intersects with Parfitian duplication cases, biological accounts of persistence, and contemporary technological proposals concerning digital survival. It does not claim that every theological account of resurrection is impossible. A claim of divine identity across genuine interruption belongs to a distinct theological register and cannot be either proved or refuted by natural reconstruction alone.

6.4 Who and locus

Status: follows from the formation rules together with the independent characterisation of locus.

Let:

$$\text{Loc}(x) = \ell$$

mean that the answer for indexed act, decision, debt, or attribution x terminates at locus ℓ .

The category locus answers: where does the answer terminate — where does attribution become non-forwardable? The category who answers: in what way does the manner obtain as this occurrence?

Therefore:

(15) WHO $\perp$ LOCUS.

A finite who may also be the locus of an act. But the categories are orthogonal in both directions. A newborn is a who before it can function as a discursive locus, so locus-hood is not necessary for who-hood — and answerability cannot be the constitutive ground of who-status. An institution may be a locus without being a who: a company, court, ministry, church, or city can maintain records, issue decisions, hold assets, inherit duties, and answer for actions without thereby possessing one lived point of view — so locus-hood is not sufficient for who-hood either.

This distinguishes the present account from theories of group agency that defend corporate agents on functional or rational grounds (List and Pettit 2011). Modal coincidence does not deny institutional agency. It denies that agency, coordination, or answerability alone establishes who-hood.

After §3.6, the orthogonality can be stated with its sources. Non-forwardability has two distinct sources of termination, and the grammar must not derive one from the other. Institutional non-forwardability terminates by constitutive rule: the records, offices, and procedures of the locus fix where the answer stops. Personal non-forwardability terminates by ownness: the answer cannot be forwarded to another who because the living to which it is indexed is not vicarious — no one can serve the sentence, make the apology, or keep the promise as her. The ontological branch (ownness $\rightarrow$ non-vicarious living $\rightarrow$ non-substitutability, §6.11) and the attributive branch (indexed attribution $\rightarrow$ locus $\rightarrow$ non-forwardability of this answer) meet in the personal case, where the answer is attributable within a coincidence already own; they remain two branches, and the second is not derived from the first — otherwise institutional locus-hood would become impossible, or institutions would be silently promoted to whos. The safe cross-volume relation is: ownness explains why substitution cannot silently preserve whose living or deed is at issue; locus-hood determines where a particular answer can no longer be forwarded.

6.5 Public who-form

Status: follows from the formation rules together with the characterisation of carriage.

A name, image, role, title, biography, profile, iconography, or institutional representation may publicly carry access to a who. Let:

$\text{Carries}(f, \mathcal{W}_R)$

mean that public form f carries the name, history, recognition, or addressability associated with the who. Then:

(16) $\text{Carries}(f, \mathcal{W}_R) \Rightarrow f = \mathcal{W}_R,$

and:

(17) $\text{Carries}(f, \mathcal{W}_R) \Rightarrow \text{WHO}(f).$

Public form is neither the whole truth of the who nor merely an external falsification. It is a route of carriage that may disclose, distort, survive, be transferred, or be mistaken for the occurrence. The persistence of a form preserves availability and addressability; it does not by itself preserve numerical identity. This distinction bears on posthumous identity, archived profiles, digital replicas, political offices, institutional personae, and religious images. In the sacred register, where carriage is at its most elaborate, the discipline yields three compact prohibitions: one name does not entail one who; several images do not entail several gods; and coordinated continuity of a cult, office, or institution does not entail a coordinator-subject behind it. The ritual addressee, the material recipient-object, the public who-form, and the institutional route are four structures, not one.

6.6 Regional promotion

Status: a methodological requirement generated by regionality (§2.7).

The core category cannot be extended to a new region by resemblance alone. A candidate judgement has the form:

$$(18) R_x? \vdash [\mu_x \Downarrow \delta(\omega_x)] : \text{WHO.}$$

The question mark marks an open regional trial. The trial must specify:

1. how the candidate occurrence is presented;
2. what counts as founded access;
3. how manner is articulated in that region;
4. what establishes deictic singularity;
5. what would disclose the whole obtaining as constitutively own rather than merely deictically determinate;
6. what negative controls exclude role, profile, public form, or institutional locus;
7. what evidence supports fulfilment; and
8. what remains underdetermined.

This discipline permits a thin formal univocity of the category while leaving its regional conditions non-identical. It also prevents the theory from deciding machine, civic, sacred, or divine who-hood through metaphor or enthusiasm. Item 5 states the exact form of the frontier question after the differentia: for the artificial system in particular, the question is not whether the artefact is deictically identifiable — a serial number settles that and settles nothing — but whether the whole obtaining of the unit disclosed by the trial is constitutively own. Pending disclosure, the configuration under trial is a candidate of the open region; the term occupant is reserved for regions where standing is disclosed.

6.7 Negative controls and open verdicts

Status: follows from the access schema together with the negative control of §5.5.

Two prohibitions close the inferential space from the negative side, and both are needed to keep the theory honest.

First, non-substitutability does not confer who-status. The substitution trial is the privileged route of access in the regions tried; it is not a criterion by which something becomes or counts as a who. The burned canvas fixes the point: an original artwork is not restored by its perfect copy, and no who is thereby disclosed. Formally:

$$(19) \text{NonSubst}_R(x) \not\Rightarrow \text{WHO}(x).$$

Non-restoration may disclose the historical singularity of a making, deed, object, or occurrence instead. Without (19), the theory would covertly convert its instrument of access into a definition — the access/constitution confusion in evidential dress. After §3.6, the control can be stated in its complete form: the canvas has deictic and historical singularity without ownness; ownness is not reducible to unrepeatability, and non-restoration alone discloses no who.

Second, absence of disclosure licenses an open verdict, not a negative ontology:

$$(20) \neg \text{Disclosed}_R(\text{WHO}, \omega) \not\Rightarrow R \vdash \neg \text{WHO}(\omega).$$

Where a region has not positively disclosed who-hood — the artificial system that learns routes and adapts, the civic body that receives address — the licensed status is open, pending a regional trial (§6.6), not excluded. The verdict space of the calculus is therefore not two-valued at the frontier: positive regional disclosure may license a who-verdict; failed controls may defeat a particular act; but non-disclosure alone settles nothing. The theory is thereby prevented from hardening into either an anthropocentric decree or an enthusiastic promotion.

6.8 Standing without occurrent exercise

Status: follows from the temporal character of the occurrence (§3.6) together with the newborn control (§3.3).

Because the occurrence is a whole living history and not an instantaneous event, who-status is a standing of the obtaining, not a state that flickers with the exercise of capacities. The sleeper in dreamless sleep, the anaesthetised patient, the infant before language, and the dementing elder as articulation scatters are not intermittent whos. Formally:

$$(21) \neg \text{OccurrentExercise}_R(\omega, t) \not\Rightarrow \neg \text{WHO}(\mathcal{W}_R) \text{ at } t.$$

The deictic reaching that found the infant before the signs gathered finds the eldest as they scatter; being-this does not come in quantities, and the who neither accumulates with development nor drains away with decline. What develops and declines is the regional articulation of the manner — the such — not the obtaining-as-this. After §3.6 the point extends to the differentia: ownness admits no degrees; graduality belongs to the developmental history, never to who-status; decline scatters performance, and ownness does not flicker. This consequence blocks the family of views on which who-status supervenes on occurrent psychological function, and it does so without installing a persisting substrate: what stands is the whole obtaining, not a bearer beneath its states.

6.9 The two permanences and the interrupted who

Status: requires the finite-living premises of §6.3.

When a finite living occurrence is definitively interrupted, two permanences must be distinguished, and their conflation is the engine of a familiar consolation machinery. The first is the indelible having-been: that this manner obtained as this occurrence is henceforth permanently the case — she was, thus, and nothing will unmake it. The second is the recurrence-availability of the manner: the style, the possibility, the way may be inhabited again — by a student, a successor, a child. The first permanence concerns the who and is invulnerable; the second concerns the such and carries no restoration. Mourning that reaches for the second as though it delivered the first mistakes carriage for presence: a route may single out; it never carries the one back. Formally, the interrupted who is a perimetralised modal coincidence: complete, unrepeatable, permanently having-obtained, and no longer occurrently accessible — which is why the dead can remain addressable through public forms (§6.5) without any pretence that address reaches a continuing occurrence.

6.10 Modalisation and finite freedom

Status: a regional development within the finite-human region; stated here because it exhibits the grammar's positive yield beyond identity puzzles.

If the who is the regional manner obtaining as this occurrence, then the finite transformation of manner is not a change in a substrate but a re-articulation of the obtaining. Two levels must be distinguished. Modulation is the singular and historically formed inflection of a shared modality: the way this practitioner inhabits the common practice. Modalisation is the singular composition, transformation, refusal, or institution of inherited relational possibilities, such that how the common obtains becomes categorially irreducible. Freedom, on this grammar, is the finite capacity through which inherited relational possibilities become a singular modalisation. It requires no uncaused substrate and no self-grounding subject: it is groundless in exactly the sense the whole ontology is groundless — a positive articulation of the obtaining, not a power exercised by a bearer beneath it. The consequence matters because it shows the a-metaphysical grammar operating beyond the identity literature: agency, style, and self-transformation are determinations of manner-obtaining, not properties of a hidden owner.

6.11 Non-substitutability as theorem

Status: follows from the formation rules together with the differentia (§3.6, (22)).

With the differentia in the grammar, the alethic result of §3.3 returns as a derived consequence rather than a disclosed datum alone.

(25) Substitution may preserve every transferable respect of a modal coincidence while necessarily changing whose own obtaining it is.

Derivation sketch: (i) the manner may recur (12); (ii) the substitute is a deictically distinct obtaining (§4.5); (iii) ownness qualifies only the judged whole and attaches to no transferable aspect ((22), WHO-sem). Hence every transferable survives transfer, and what does not survive is not a transferable — the ownness of the first whole obtaining. ■

(26) The converse control stands unchanged: deictic and historical singularity do not entail who-status — (19) is untouched. Ownness entails non-substitutability of the whole obtaining; non-substitutability does not entail ownness.

The direction of the circle must be stated to prevent a misreading. The trial disclosed the datum; the datum motivated the grammar; the grammar now returns the datum as theorem. This is consolidation, not vicious circularity: the trial remains the evidence, the theorem its systematisation, and the theorem would fall with the differentia if the differentia's disclosure were defeated in the regions.

7. Philosophical Genealogy and the A-Metaphysical Position

7.1 The metaphysical inheritance: Aristotle, Aquinas, Scotus, Leibniz

The present proposal does not treat the history of metaphysics as one undifferentiated error. It isolates a recurrent demand for explanatory priority while recognising that its major formulations differ profoundly — and each of the four classical confrontations marks one exact point of departure.

Aristotle. The Categories and the account of primary substance supply a decisive grammar in which qualities and states are said of, or present in, an underlying subject, while the Metaphysics develops substance as the central answer to the question of being (Aristotle 1984, Categories 2a11–19; Metaphysics Z). The present theory does not deny that predication requires logical subjects or that living beings exhibit organised unity — Aristotle is, in the refusal of separately subsisting form, closer to an ally than any of his successors. What is rejected is the inference that the who must therefore be ontologically constituted as a primary bearer to which its manners inhere. Positive predicative grammar is preserved; the underlying subject of inherence is not.

Aquinas. The distinction between essence and existence, and the participation of finite beings in esse, transform the Aristotelian inheritance into a positive ontology of act rather than a static substratum (Aquinas 1968, chs. 4–5). Modal coincidence acknowledges the primacy of act — the who is an obtaining, not a thing — while requiring no participatory grounding in ultimate act. The explanatory order in which finite actuality is received from a metaphysical hierarchy whose intelligibility culminates beyond it is precisely the duplication the formation rules prohibit. Nothing here rivals that theology with another highest principle; the question is whether positive determination can complete itself before such grounding is introduced. The demonstration of Sections 3–6 answers that it can.

Scotus. The Scotist datum is accepted in full: singularity is not reducible to common qualitative content, however finely specified (Scotus 1987, pp. 55–92). The Scotist machinery is refused: no haecceitas, no individuating constituent contracted into a common nature, no positive principle of thisness. Deictic determination registers the obtaining-as-this without installing anything that explains it from beneath (§4.5); the two indiscernible newborns of §3.3 are the standing exhibition that the datum survives the machinery's removal. The thin formal univocity of the category WHO across regions (§6.6) is, moreover, a distant heir of Scotist univocity — univocal in formal grammar, non-identical in evidential conditions.

Leibniz. Leibniz binds singularity to intelligibility more tightly than anyone: each individual substance has a complete concept; compossibility and sufficient reason govern what obtains; divine selection closes the account (Leibniz 1989, “Discourse on Metaphysics” §§8–13; Monadology §§31–37). Modal coincidence inherits the demand that identity not be left as an

unexplained remainder — the calculus states exactly what does and does not settle it — while rejecting the conclusion that intelligibility requires a complete individual concept, a monadic substance, or an ultimate sufficient reason behind the obtaining. The indiscernible-infants control is the exact anti-Leibnizian datum: singularity outruns every concept, complete ones included. The theory is modal without making the possible individual concept ontologically prior to this occurrence.

These four confrontations identify the scale of the departure. The theory is not merely anti-substantialist. It seeks — and, by the demonstration of Sections 3–6, achieves — positive individuation without underlying subject, without added individuator, without complete individual concept, and without ultimate explanatory ground.

7.2 Husserl: founded categorial intuition

The term categorial intuition is not original to this article. Husserl develops it in the Sixth Logical Investigation to explain how articulated states of affairs and categorial forms can be intuitively fulfilled without being reducible to sensible features (Husserl 2001, Investigation VI, §§45–48). The categorial act is founded on sensible presentation. This foundedness is decisive: categorial fulfilment is not a mystical leap beyond what is given.

The present proposal inherits that structure while changing the categorial object and the controls governing fulfilment. It adds: a non-objectual category of who; an anti-bearer modal-coincidence structure; a distinction between deictic movement and deictic determination; a regional fulfilment schema; explicit negative controls; public warrant; fallibility; and non-exhaustiveness.

The proposal should therefore be read as a development within the phenomenological inheritance, not as the invention of categorial intuition itself.

7.3 Heidegger: the prohibition against thingifying the who, and the doctrine of Jemeinigkeit

Heidegger's decisive achievement is to refuse the treatment of Dasein through the categories appropriate to present-at-hand entities. Dasein is characterised through existentials, possibilities, being-in-the-world, being-with, care, temporality, and mineness rather than through the bearer-property grammar of a thing (Heidegger 2010, §§9, 25–27). His 1925 lectures also recognise Husserlian categorial intuition as a fundamental phenomenological discovery and connect it to the question of being (Heidegger 1985, §§5–7).

Modal coincidence inherits this anti-objectual break. Its divergence is not that Heidegger rejects every determination while the present theory restores an ordinary category. The claim is more precise:

The alternatives are not exhausted by objectual categorial determination and non-objectual but formally underdetermined disclosure. A non-objectual categorial determination is possible if its formation rules themselves prohibit bearerhood and thingification.

The category WHO is meta-ontological in this sense. It does not place the who into a traditional inventory of things. It articulates a status whose grammar excludes the inferences that made categoriality appear inseparable from objectification.

The differentia of §3.6 requires a second, sharper confrontation, with §9 of Being and Time itself. Heidegger discloses that Dasein's being is in each case mine — Jemeinigkeit — and the datum is accepted in full: who-being is non-interchangeably one's own. But Heidegger binds mineness to Existenz by design: to having-to-be, to being at issue for oneself, to the pair authenticity/inauthenticity — and the binding is deliberate, restricting mineness to the being for whom its being is a question. The present doctrine contests the binding, not an oversight. Ownness is avowal-independent, exercise-independent, prior to reflective self-relation, and not restricted to beings with Existenz-structure: the newborn is own before anything can be at issue for her; the dreamless sleeper's ownness does not flicker; a non-human living who need not possess Heideggerian Existenz. The transformed thesis is:

Mineness is the human-existential intensification of ownness — ownness as it obtains where a who can additionally be at issue for herself. Ownness precedes mineness as existential accomplishment.

The relation to Heidegger is therefore: datum accepted; existential machinery refused as a condition; regional reach widened; and the newborn, the sleeper, and the feline region are the contest.

The broader divergence concerns ontology after the refusal of metaphysical ground. Modal coincidence argues that the overcoming of bearerhood need not terminate in formal reticence. Positive determination remains possible, provided it proceeds through obtaining rather than through a ground beneath the occurrence.

7.4 Chiurazzi: modality and syncategorematic ontology

The articulation of possibility, manner, and existence belongs to a longer modal and hermeneutic line. Chiurazzi's work is especially important in treating modality through syncategorematic operators rather than as a property added to an already constituted thing, and in reconstructing ontology from possibility and dynamis (Chiurazzi 2006; 2021).

Modal coincidence develops this insight by giving the operator obtains as a categorial role in the determination of who. The operator does not name an additional entity. It articulates the non-duplicative relation between manner and this occurrence. The formal core is thus modal without making modality a possession and ontological without installing a subject beneath the modalisation.

7.5 Schürmann: the destitution of principles as genealogical condition

Schürmann provides a decisive historical condition for the present project. Heidegger on Being and Acting traces the passage from economies governed by principles to anarchy and includes a historical deduction of categories of presencing (Schürmann 1987). Broken Hegemonies reconstructs the successive hegemonic fantasies by which Western epochs have organised presencing and the double binds through which those ultimates break apart (Schürmann 2003).

This is ontologically indispensable work, but its function is genealogical and destitutive rather than that of a successor ontology. Schürmann shows why action and singularisation can no longer be governed by a hegemonic archē. He does not supply a new positive categorial

grammar that states what obtains after the principles have been destituted, how its primitive determinations are formed, what consequences follow from them, and how their application is warranted.

The difference is therefore not a deficiency in Schürmann measured against a task he failed to attempt. It is a difference of philosophical function:

Schürmann establishes why ontology can no longer be archically grounded; modal coincidence begins to show that ontology did not require archic ground as a condition of positive articulation.

Positive no-ground inherits the destitution of hegemonic principles as a condition of discovery. Its truth is not dependent upon that genealogy. The obtaining articulated by modal coincidence was not created by the historical collapse of principles.

7.6 Vattimo: weakening as genealogical prohibition

Vattimo radicalises the Heideggerian overcoming of metaphysics through nihilism, hermeneutics, and the weakening of strong structures of being and truth (Vattimo 1988; 1997). His language of weak thought, weak ontology, and the nihilistic vocation of hermeneutics is crucial because it prevents the end of metaphysical foundations from becoming the occasion for installing another strong ultimate.

Yet precisely this commitment gives Vattimo's work a different function from the present project. Weak thought interprets the historical transmission, weakening, and event-character of being. It does not offer a successor categorial architecture specifying primitive ontological distinctions, formation relations, consequences, regional access conditions, and explicit error controls. Its refusal of strong theoretical closure is internal to its philosophical purpose.

Vattimo should therefore not be treated as a failed version of the present ontology. He supplies a genealogical prohibition: ontology after metaphysics cannot return as another strong structure or final foundation. Modal coincidence accepts that prohibition while declining to define itself merely as what comes after the weakened structures.

The further constructive question is:

How can determination remain positive and exact once strength no longer means ground?

The answer proposed here is a-metaphysical rather than merely post-metaphysical. Its positivity lies in the exactness of its regional distinctions. Its independence lies in the fact that those distinctions could be articulated even where metaphysics had never been installed as their condition or antagonist.

7.7 The exact inheritance: post, pre, and a-metaphysical

The historical figures discussed above belong to the genealogy through which the present ontology became thinkable. They do not determine its ontological position.

The distinction can be stated in three propositions:

1. Post-metaphysical by genealogy: the theory inherits the problems and prohibitions produced by the history and critique of metaphysics.
2. Pre-metaphysical by position: it articulates the obtaining prior to the metaphysical operation that duplicates it through ground.
3. A-metaphysical by constitution: its categories do not require metaphysics either as premise or as necessary negation.

This distinction prevents two opposite mistakes. The first would deny the theory's debts and present it as historically unconditioned. The second would reduce its validity to those debts and make metaphysics the permanent horizon from which it could never escape.

The exact relation is:

Metaphysics is the historical condition under which Ethical Ontology became discoverable, but not the ontological condition of what it discovers.

Hence:

It would not exist historically without metaphysics, but it could exist ontologically without it.

The first clause concerns the contingent history of philosophical discovery. The second concerns the structural independence of the ontology.

7.8 Personal identity

Contemporary personal-identity debates often ask what relation makes a person at one time identical with a person at another. Psychological continuity, bodily or biological continuity, narrative organisation, and reductionist accounts supply competing answers. Parfit's reductionism denies that identity requires a further fact beyond physical and psychological relations (Parfit 1984, Part III). Olson's animalism identifies us with human animals and locates persistence in biological continuity (Olson 1997). Ricoeur distinguishes *idem* from *ipse* and gives narrative identity and self-attestation a central role (Ricoeur 1992, Studies Five and Six). Zahavi defends a basic first-personal dimension of selfhood while resisting its reduction to social construction (Zahavi 2014).

Modal coincidence is not simply another persistence criterion. It asks a prior categorial question: what is the *who* whose persistence is at issue? Psychological, biological, narrative, and first-personal structures may all belong to the regional articulation of a finite human occurrence. None is the hidden bearer; none, detached from the concrete obtaining, is sufficient for numerical identity.

The theory agrees with reductionism that no additional substance is needed, but rejects the inference that all facts concerning *who* can therefore be exhausted by impersonal continuity relations. It agrees with animalism that embodiment and living continuity are constitutive in the finite-human region, but rejects the organism as a bearer to which *who*-status is added. It agrees with narrative theory that a life is historically articulated, but distinguishes narrative carriage from the occurrence it carries. Each criterion, moreover, consults descriptions in which the possessive has already done the ontological work — it is her body, her memory, and

her history that the criterion examines — warranting a sameness the criterion cannot manufacture, since its own descriptions presuppose it.

7.9 Social ontology

Social ontology shows that institutions can satisfy sophisticated conditions of agency, rationality, and responsibility. The present framework neither denies those achievements nor infers from them a collective who. The who-locus distinction allows robust institutional agency and answerability without positing a single lived subject behind the organisation.

This matters because the grammar of legal and political attribution frequently moves between person, office, organisation, and public identity. Modal coincidence requires each transition to be explicit. A locus can remain answerable across succession; a public form can continue; a coordinated practice can persist; none of these facts alone establishes numerical persistence of a who.

The a-metaphysical significance is exact: social unity need not be secured by a super-person standing behind coordinated acts. Institutional reality is not denied; it is positively determined through loci, routes, offices, records, and practices without being promoted into a hidden collective bearer.

8. Objections and Replies

8.1 “An a-metaphysical ontology is a contradiction”

If ontology asks what being is, while metaphysics is the discipline that answers that question, the expression may appear self-defeating.

The objection depends on identifying every ontological determination with metaphysical grounding. This article uses metaphysical more narrowly for explanatory structures that secure what obtains through a bearer, substrate, first principle, or more fundamental order. A-metaphysical ontology does not refuse the question of being. It refuses the inference that the question can be answered only by locating what stands beneath or beyond the occurrence, and it denies that metaphysics is necessary even as the permanent opposite through which ontology must define itself.

The programme is therefore not ontology minus determination. It is determination through obtaining rather than through ground.

8.2 “The article defines metaphysics too narrowly”

The history of metaphysics contains evental, relational, modal, processual, and anti-substantialist positions. It cannot be reduced to the bearer-property form.

That is correct. The article does not offer a complete historiography of metaphysics. It isolates one persistent architecture — explanatory duplication and archic grounding — because that architecture governs the local problem of who. The terms non-metaphysical and a-metaphysical are justified only within this declared scope. A fuller history would have to distinguish metaphysical projects that already resist the target identified here.

8.3 “Obtaining merely becomes a new ground”

The word obtaining may appear to name a universal process or ultimate event that replaces substance.

The calculus prohibits that reading. Obtaining is not introduced as an object-language term that bears properties or causes occurrences. It is a grammatical direction for ontological articulation: determine the phenomenon through how it obtains as this rather than through what stands beneath it. If obtaining were reified into a universal entity or principle, the a-metaphysical project would have failed by its own standard.

8.4 “The theory merely renames substance”

The objection is that the “whole obtaining” functions exactly as a substance while avoiding the word.

The reply is formal. A substance is ordinarily available as a term that bears properties, persists beneath alteration, or supplies identity independently of the manners through which it is articulated. The whole modal coincidence cannot enter those positions. It is not a term that possesses μ ; it is not ω stripped of manner; and it is not an entity behind the obtaining. The metanotation $\mathscr{W}_R$ abbreviates the judgement and is expressly barred from becoming an object-language bearer.

The theory could still fail if later applications treated $\mathscr{W}_R$ as a thing. That would be a violation of the calculus and evidence that metaphysical grammar had returned.

8.5 “The operator ‘obtains as’ is merely verbal”

If $\Downarrow_R$ is left uninterpreted, the formula may seem to redescribe the thesis rather than explain it.

The operator is intentionally primitive at this stage, but not empty. Its content is fixed negatively and inferentially: it excludes possession, inherence, instantiation by a prior bearer, external composition, ownness-as-component, and unrestricted substitution. It also yields consequences concerning recurrence, reconstruction, locus, public form, open verdicts, and the non-substitutability theorem. A fuller semantics remains future work, but the operator already disciplines a determinate field of valid and invalid transformations.

The closure theorem of §4.7 completes the reply. The demand that the operator be explained by something further must place its explanans somewhere: either as content characterisable without presupposing the target’s singularity or ownness — in which case it joins the transferable, duplicates the datum, installs a bearer, presupposes the sameness, or converts disclosure into production — or as articulation of the obtaining itself, in which case the demand has been met in the only form it can coherently take. The operator is not a name for an unsolved problem; it marks the position every solution must either occupy or fail to reach.

8.6 “The deictic operator is hidden haecceity”

If $\delta(\omega)$ simply means “this very individual,” the calculus may appear to assume what it must explain.

The operator does not explain identity by adding a primitive individual essence. It registers that the regional manner obtains as this occurrence and not as another. Deictic singularity is not a qualitative ground; it is the irreducible index under which the obtaining is encountered. The theory does not derive difference from a property of thisness. It denies that recurrence of all articulable manners provides a route from one occurrence to another.

8.7 “The theory provides no criterion of identity for whos”

A persistent expectation, inherited from the personal-identity literature, is that an ontology of persons must supply identity conditions: a relation such that a who at one time is identical with a who at another if and only if the relation holds. The present calculus supplies none, and a critic may treat the omission as a defect — an ontology that cannot say when $x = y$ has, on this view, said nothing.

The reply is that the demand for a reductive criterion of identity is the bearer-demand in its most sophisticated form. A criterion of the demanded kind must be stated in terms of transferable structures — continuity, connectedness, configuration, composition — because only transferables can appear on both sides of a biconditional. But the substitution results (§5.5, §6.2) show that transferables, at any degree of completeness up to qualitative indiscernibility, do not determine the identity of the who. A theory that nevertheless insisted on a transferable criterion would not have analysed who-identity; it would have replaced its subject-matter.

The calculus therefore treats the numerical distinctness of occurrences as primitive and regionally disclosed, not as derived from a deeper relation. This is a principled result, not an evasion: it is exactly what one should expect if the who is the obtaining-as-this rather than a bearer individuated by its contents. The theory still says a great deal about identity — it states what does not settle it (recurrence, duplication, reconstruction, carriage, locushood), what discloses it (founded categorial intuition under regional controls), and how claims about it are warranted, defeated, and corrected. What it refuses is the conversion of the this into a function of the such. Analytic precedent exists for identity facts that are primitive without being mysterious; what is distinctive here is the diagnosis of why the criterial demand fails for whos: the demand presupposes the bearer grammar that the formation rules prohibit. And the primitives so reached are termini of constitutive reduction, not termini of articulation: each remains regionally articulable, consequence-bearing, and exposed to trial. Irreducible does not mean unarticulated; underived does not mean unwarranted; primitive does not mean exempt.

8.8 “The access rule is circular”

If fulfilment means successful intuition of who, the rule appears empty.

The rule is schematic, not self-validating, and §5.5 shows the schema discharged in one region: admissible presentations, controls, evidence, and defeaters are specified independently of the verdict, and each can fail. A paper that merely wrote Ful_R without specifying these would not have established who-status. The formalism does not solve regional inquiry by symbolising it. It prevents the inquiry from hiding its evidential debts.

8.9 “Categorical intuition is mystical or infallible”

The intuition is founded on body, voice, gesture, history, relation, and public carriage; it is publicly warrantable and fallible. It is not a private flash, empathy without evidence, or perception of a soul. The term intuition indicates fulfilment in phenomenological usage, not immunity from criticism.

Not every deictic act is properly fulfilled. One can point to the body as an object, address a stereotype, confuse an office with its holder, identify a profile with a person, or project who-status onto a coordinated system. The claim is that non-objectual determinate access is possible, not that ordinary recognition is infallible.

8.10 “To reach the whole is to claim total knowledge”

The objection confuses categorical wholeness with total content. A physician may correctly reach this one as the patient without knowing every episode of her life; a friend may address the who while misunderstanding important possibilities; an adversary may correctly identify the claimant while distorting his history. Correct categorical access neither exhausts nor possesses the occurrence.

8.11 “Public warrant turns the who into a social construction”

Public warrant concerns the assessability of the access claim. Consensus does not create who-status, and social recognition is not sufficient for it. The theory distinguishes public carriage from the whole obtaining precisely to prevent the public from becoming ontologically constitutive by default.

8.12 “Regionality fragments ontology or protects preferred conclusions”

A region could become a device for insulating claims from criticism. The answer is that regionality increases rather than decreases evidential accountability. A region must specify its presentations, access conditions, controls, and inferential limits. A proposed region that cannot articulate these has not earned autonomy.

Regionality does not assert that each region has an unrelated being of its own. It withholds unrestricted transfer. The formal category may remain thinly univocal while the evidential and phenomenological conditions of its application differ. And the open-verdict principle (§6.7) prevents regionality from operating as covert exclusion: where disclosure is absent, the licensed status is open, not negative.

8.13 “Formalisation re-metaphysicalises the phenomenon”

Variables can indeed become disguised substances, and operators can become external relations among pre-given things. The calculus therefore includes anti-reification constraints as part of its formation rules. The variable ω is not a bare continuant; $\mathcal{W}_R$ is metanotation; δ is not haecceity; $\Downarrow_R$ is not an external link between independent entities; and ownness is not a component (22).

Formalisation remains risky. Its justification is not that notation is neutral, but that explicit syntax makes the points of metaphysical relapse visible and contestable. One further discipline

governs the whole: the calculus records results established argumentatively in the prose and the trials; it does not establish them by prohibiting an opponent's grammar. The constraints are the registration of arguments, not their substitute.

8.14 "The formalism is not yet a calculus"

In the strict logical sense, the objection is correct. The present article supplies a typed syntax, formation rules, inferential prohibitions, and consequence schemas; it does not yet supply a model theory or proof system.

The word calculus remains appropriate in a restricted sense if it names the disciplined transformations and prohibited inferences generated by the schema. The restriction is moreover principled rather than merely provisional: a standard model theory whose domain consisted of independently constituted objects would reinstate, as semantic machinery, exactly the bearer grammar the formation rules prohibit. Future work must determine whether a formal semantics can be developed without bearers as domain objects — for instance, with judgemental wholes rather than individuals as the basic evaluable units. Until then, the calculus claims only what it exhibits: a determinate field of valid and invalid transformations.

8.15 "The theory cannot establish identity across death"

The core theory establishes no theological conclusion. Within the finite-living region, irreversible interruption blocks restoration by natural reconstruction. A theological claim that the same who is given across genuine death is not equivalent to a claim of material, psychological, or narrative continuity. It belongs to a further claim-layer and requires its own access and doctrinal analysis. The calculus leaves that question open rather than silently deciding it.

8.16 "The strict criterion simply defines Schürmann and Vattimo out of ontology"

The criterion is not designed to deny the ontological importance of genealogy, hermeneutics, deconstruction, weakening, or anarchy. It distinguishes philosophical functions that are too often conflated.

A project may transform our understanding of being, expose the history of its principles, or show why strong ontological closure is impossible without itself supplying a successor ontology. Calling every such project an ontology erases the difference between preparing the possibility of ontological articulation and carrying out that articulation.

The threshold defended in §2.3 is deliberately minimal. It asks only that an ontology state positive distinctions, their formation relations, their consequences and prohibitions, their mode of access, and their conditions of error. A project that refuses this constructive task may be deeper than many ontologies; it is nevertheless performing another task.

Schürmann and Vattimo are therefore not excluded by stipulation. They are located according to the work their philosophies actually undertake. Their importance increases rather than decreases: they establish historically why an a-metaphysical ontology could not simply be another system of strong principles.

8.17 “The founding claim is historically excessive”

The article does not claim priority for anti-metaphysics, anti-substantialism, post-foundational thought, ontology without a highest being, categorial intuition, or positive ontology considered separately. Each has extensive precedents.

The founding claim concerns a stricter conjunction:

1. a positive categorial articulation satisfying the threshold in §2.3;
2. no bearer, substrate, highest genus, first principle, or explanatory duplication;
3. explicit formation rules and prohibited inferences;
4. regional modes of access, warrant, fallibility, and correction;
5. a demonstrated categorial application in the determination of who, including its differentia;
6. structural independence from metaphysics as both premise and necessary negation.

A historical candidate would need to satisfy this conjunction, not merely use the phrase non-metaphysical ontology, describe being after the end of metaphysical foundations, or reject substance. The claim is therefore contestable in the proper scholarly sense: it states the criteria by which it can be assessed.

Section 9 states the further and more important point: the weight of the claim lies in what the demonstration makes available, not in its position in a sequence. On those criteria, earlier projects tend to fall into three classes: positive ontologies that retain a fundamental ground; post-metaphysical critiques that do not supply a successor categorial grammar; and local ontological proposals whose categories remain indexed to the metaphysics they oppose. The present theory occupies the intersection that these alternatives leave open.

8.18 “If the theory arises from metaphysics, it remains post-metaphysical”

The inference confuses genealogy with ontological constitution. A theory may be historically discovered through the critique of a prior framework without making that framework a condition of its validity.

The present theory is post-metaphysical in the true historical sense: its vocabulary and problem-consciousness bear the inheritance of metaphysics and its destruction. But its categories do not state merely what remains after metaphysics. They articulate region, manner, occurrence, coincidence, who, locus, and founded access without requiring metaphysics as a premise.

Historical dependence therefore does not entail structural dependence:

$\text{ConditionOfDiscovery}(M, T) \not\Rightarrow \text{ConditionOfValidity}(M, T).$

Metaphysics explains why the theory was reached when and how it was. It does not ground what the theory articulates.

8.19 “Pre-metaphysical position is a nostalgic return”

The prefix pre- is structural, not chronological. The article does not seek a return to a supposedly innocent epoch before Greek metaphysics, nor does it claim that historical consciousness can erase its inheritance.

The position is prior only in the order of ontological articulation. The occurrence obtains before any interpretation declares it insufficient and installs a bearer or ground beneath it. To articulate that priority is not to travel backwards in history. It is to refuse an unnecessary second operation.

8.20 “A-metaphysical merely means anti-metaphysical”

An anti-metaphysical project remains organised by opposition. Its identity depends upon what it negates. The prefix a- is used here to mark independence rather than hostility.

The theory can interpret metaphysical systems, inherit their questions, and identify their recurrent duplications. None of those acts makes metaphysics a constituent of the ontology. Once the historical clarification has been made, the core categories can be stated without metaphysics appearing in their formation rules.

The stronger test is therefore counterfactual:

Could the ontology’s positive categories and judgements remain intelligible if the history of metaphysics were absent?

The answer claimed here is yes. The theory would lose the genealogy through which it was discovered, but not the obtaining it articulates.

8.21 “Who-status without exercised capacities inflates the category”

If the newborn, the dreamless sleeper, and the dementing elder are full whos, the category may seem to have been emptied of content: anything living would qualify, and the honorific would do no work.

The objection mistakes where the work is done. The category is not earned by capacities but by regional disclosure under controls — and the controls are demanding. The robot cleaner, with its learning, adaptation, and numerical distinctness, does not pass them; the burned canvas does not pass them; role, profile, record, and institution are excluded by the negative controls of §5.5. What §6.8 removes is only the requirement of occurrent exercise, and it removes it on the strength of a disclosed datum: the care that reaches this baby now, the reaching that finds the eldest as the signs scatter. The four-capacity analysis (§3.3) shows that no capacity-requirement can be reinstated without either failing the newborn or presupposing the occurrence it was meant to ground. The category is disciplined at the frontier by the regional trial (§6.6) and the open verdict (§6.7), not by a capacity threshold within regions already disclosed.

8.22 “The aletic path presupposes what it discloses”

A final methodological objection generalises the circularity charge: the whole of Section 3 approached its scenes as scenes of someones, so the ontology merely formalises an anthropology it assumed.

The reply is the methodological order of §3.4, now stated as a general principle. Prior regional disclosure is a condition of any inquiry whatever — no trial of anything proceeds except upon phenomena already encountered somehow. What converts encounter into evidence is not presuppositionlessness, which no method possesses, but revisability: the trial can restrict, defeat, or revise both the claim and the instrument, and in the cases run it demonstrably did all three (the feline restriction, the machine non-verdict, the canvas counter-verdict). The charge would be fatal only if the trial’s outcomes were fixed by its presuppositions. They were not: nothing in approaching the household as containing a cat-someone determined that the second cat would fail to restore the first, and nothing in approaching the gallery determined that the canvas would disclose no who. Access that can lose is access, not construction.

8.23 “The differentia is circular or empty”

The differentia invites a determinate objection: own means someone rather than merely something, and someone means an own obtaining — a circle; and once Existenz-structure is refused (§7.3), no content appears to distinguish own obtaining from mere obtaining.

The reply is that the differentia is disclosed, not defined, and the demand for a definitional content is the mistyped intention of §5.1 performed at the categorial level: a content would be one more such, transferable in principle, and would re-enter the closure theorem at its first horn. What the differentia has instead is exactly what a defined content could not have: a demonstrative minimal pair and failure conditions. The canvas and the ward are maximally matched — both singular, both non-restorable, both indelible in having-been — and they diverge in one respect, legible in the intentional form of the loss itself: a work destroyed against someone gone. The wider trial constellation — substitution, death, address, attribution, answerability — converges on the same divergence, and the disclosure can fail: a purported ownness-disclosure is defeated where it tracks role, status, possession, or convention rather than the who, where it disappears under reframing without regional resistance, or where structurally symmetrical cases receive unequal treatment without relevant reason. And the differentia now carries positive modal content in the regions tried: non-vicarious living — this life cannot be somebody else’s living — which is neither a possession-claim nor a behavioural test, but what the ward, the newborn, the sleeper, and the household disclosed. A differentia that can be defeated in application, and that has a positive regional articulation, is informative in the only sense this ontology recognises. The circle objection is thereby not answered but retyped — and the retyping follows the positive answer rather than replacing it.

8.24 “The coincidence is a groundable fact”

A grounding theorist may accept the formation rules and relocate the demand: it is a fact that the manner obtains as this occurrence, and facts can be grounded — by other facts, or through a sentential operator that adds no constituent.

The reply is fourfold, and it is argued independently of the calculus, which records rather than establishes it. If the ground offered is the fact that C itself, C is explained by itself. If it is a distinct fact φ , then φ must be characterisable without presupposing the thisness or ownness of C — and it thereby re-enters the closure of §4.7: transferable, duplicative, bearer-installing, presupposing, or access-confusing. If the grounding operator itself is said to carry the explanation, then its asymmetry and its relevance to this explanandum must themselves be explained without presupposing the target datum — and the explanans-position has merely moved, not emptied. And if the fact is finally declared autonomous — apt to be ungrounded, in the sense given such facts in the grounding literature (Dasgupta 2014) — then the demand has been withdrawn in the opponent's own vocabulary, and what remains contested is only whether the withdrawal is a brute exemption or a grammatical result. On that residual question the present theory has an account and the exemption does not: termination at modal articulation is non-arbitrary because no further constitutive explanans has been introduced to which the demand could coherently be reapplied. This is termination by withdrawal of the demand's presupposition, not by exemption of a final term — a difference in kind, and whether any grounding theory achieves the former is the confrontation's question, not its premise. Not every explanatory asymmetry is thereby indicted: priority becomes objectionable on this account only where it is converted into universal jurisdiction — one term made ultimate, applications authorised by conformity to it, resistant phenomena downgraded, and the promoted term exempted from the trials imposed on everything else.

8.25 “Ownness is Jemeinigkeit renamed”

The differentia may appear to be Heidegger's mineness with the German removed.

The datum is indeed Heidegger's, and §7.3 says so: who-being is non-interchangeably one's own. What is not Heidegger's is the categorial location and the reach. Heidegger binds mineness to Existenz by design — to having-to-be, to being-at-issue, to the authenticity pair — and the binding restricts mineness to the being for whom its being is a question. Ownness contests the binding: it is exercise-independent and avowal-independent, it does not flicker in dreamless sleep, it is present in the newborn before anything can be at issue for her, and it is not confined to beings with Existenz-structure. Mineness, on the present account, is the human-existential intensification of a wider ownness — the intensified case, not the category. The disagreement is therefore textually exact and empirically exposed: the newborn, the sleeper, and the feline region decide it, and they decide it against the restriction, not against the datum.

9. Original Contribution and Founding Claim

No element of the proposal should be isolated from its intellectual debts. Anti-substantialism is not new. The critique of metaphysical grounding is not new. Deixis is not new. Modal ontology is not new. Categorial intuition is not new. The distinction between numerical and qualitative identity is not new, nor is the analysis of institutions as agents or loci of responsibility. Schürmann and Vattimo, in different ways, are indispensable to understanding why ontology could not historically reappear as another hegemonic or strong foundational system.

The founding claim begins from the strict threshold established in §2.3. An ontology must positively articulate its primitive distinctions, formation relations, inferential consequences, prohibited transitions, modes of access, and conditions of error.

An a-metaphysical ontology must additionally satisfy two requirements:

1. it must not secure what obtains through a bearer, substrate, first principle, highest genus, or explanatory order beneath or beyond it;
2. its positive categories must remain intelligible without metaphysics serving as premise, ground, or necessary negation.

The second requirement distinguishes the present claim from a merely post-metaphysical position. A post-metaphysical theory may remain permanently indexed to the history it follows. An a-metaphysical ontology has a post-metaphysical genealogy while occupying a structurally prior and ontologically independent position.

On this criterion, the present project claims to found an a-metaphysical ontology in the strict constructive sense. One clarification forestalls a cheap paradox: to found is here to inaugurate an architecture, not to supply a ground. A city is founded without becoming its own foundation; the ontology has founding work, not foundations, and the verb carries the inaugural sense only. The claim does not rest upon the novelty of any isolated term. It concerns the integration of:

1. positive determination without ground: ontology articulates what obtains through its manner of obtaining as this, rather than through a bearer or archic principle;
2. genealogical and structural differentiation: the theory is post-metaphysical by history, pre-metaphysical by position, and a-metaphysical by constitution;
3. who as modal coincidence: the who is the manner obtaining as this occurrence;
4. anti-bearer formation: no substrate appears in the primitive grammar;
5. non-composition: manner and occurrence are distinguishable without becoming independent terms externally joined;
6. deictic categorial intuition: proper who-directed deixis fulfils the category rather than searching for a missing personal object;
7. foundedness: sensible, relational, historical, and public presentations route the access without becoming the who;
8. regional warrant: extension requires explicit presentations, controls, evidence, and defeaters;
9. public assessability and fallibility: access is criticisable without being socially constructed;
10. non-exhaustiveness: the categorial whole is reached without total possession of the life;
11. recurrence without identity: repeatability of manner does not provide a route between whos;
12. who-locus separation: institutional answerability does not entail collective who-hood;
13. non-restoration by reconstruction: reproduced structure does not by itself reopen a definitively interrupted finite occurrence;
14. negative controls with open verdicts: non-substitutability does not confer who-status, and non-disclosure licenses openness, not negation;
15. aletic priority: the determination is earned from the transparency of ordinary access and the substitution trial before it is stated formally, so that the ontology articulates a disclosed phenomenon rather than a stipulated one;

16. standing without occurrent exercise: who-status is a standing of the whole obtaining, not a function of exercised capacities;
17. the two permanences: the indelible having-been of the who is distinguished from the recurrence-availability of its manner;
18. ethos as mode of access: the ontology's determinations are disclosed through answerable inhabitation of the common, which is what the name Ethical Ontology records;
19. ownness as categorial differentia: being-this is region-neutral, being-own is what makes a this-region a who-region — disclosed by the trials' convergence, added as no component, and prohibited as a predicate of any aspect;
20. non-substitutability as theorem: from recurrence of manner, deictic distinctness, and the non-transferability of ownness, the substitution result follows within the grammar, while its converse control (19) stands unchanged.

The weight of this claim lies in what it makes available, not in where it stands in a sequence. The standing assumption — shared by the metaphysical tradition and by much of its critique — has been that positive determination requires ground, so that refusing ground condemns ontology to critique, genealogy, weakening, or silence. Once a single category has been positively determined without ground, under stated formation rules, access conditions, and error controls, that assumption is defeated by exhibition: not argued against, but shown unnecessary. And the floor so exhibited is distinguishable from a stipulated stopping point: it terminates the constitutive demand by withdrawing its presupposition — no further constituent has been introduced to which the demand could coherently be reapplied — not by exempting a final term from it. Whether the history of philosophy already contains a structure satisfying the conjunction above is a scholarly question, and §8.17 states exactly what a candidate would have to supply; if one exists, the present result is confirmed by precedent rather than diminished by it. What the demonstration establishes is availability, and availability is not lessened by having been available before.

This is a claim of architectural priority, not historical isolation. Heidegger breaks the categorial identification of who with present-at-hand thinghood. Husserl supplies the structure of founded categorial fulfilment. Chiurazzi develops the modal and syncategorematic field. Schürmann destitutes archic principles. Vattimo prevents post-metaphysical thought from reinstalling strength as foundation. These achievements belong to the conditions of discovery of the present ontology. They are not grounds of its truth.

The exact relation is:

Metaphysics $\in$ ConditionsOfDiscovery(EthicalOntology),

while:

Metaphysics $\notin$ ConditionsOfValidity(EthicalOntology).

The founding claim must also be limited precisely. This article does not complete an a-metaphysical ontology of every region. It establishes: the strict criterion distinguishing ontology from critique, genealogy, and hermeneutic preparation; the threefold position of the project as post-metaphysical by genealogy, pre-metaphysical by position, and a-metaphysical

by constitution; a general grammar of positive determination without explanatory duplication; a formal discipline preventing the return of bearer and ground; and one decisive categorial demonstration in the region of who, complete with its differentia. Other categories and regions must be earned separately. The article therefore founds a programme rather than closing a system.

The strongest exact formulation is:

Earlier post-metaphysical thought showed why ontology could no longer be grounded. A-metaphysical ontology shows that positive ontology did not need ground in the first place.

Or, in the formula that governs the project's inheritance:

Metaphysics is the historical condition under which Ethical Ontology became discoverable, but not the ontological condition of what it discovers.

A later theory may use different terms and symbols. Its proximity to modal coincidence should be assessed structurally rather than lexically: does it preserve these distinctions, their dependency order, and the same prohibited inferences? Structural resemblance alone does not prove historical borrowing. It does identify the theoretical architecture for which attribution is due when access or dependence is established.

10. Conclusion

The search for a who-object begins from a false alternative. Either the who is a thing that can be pointed out, or it is a hidden substance, elusive subject, narrative construction, or inaccessible remainder. Modal coincidence rejects the common grammar of these options.

The rejection belongs to a broader ontological programme. What obtains need not be secured by a bearer, substrate, essence, or first principle standing beneath it. Ontological determination can proceed through the manner in which what obtains obtains as this.

The term non-metaphysical names this refusal. The term a-metaphysical identifies the stronger result: the ontology does not depend upon metaphysics even as the necessary opposite through which it defines itself.

Its position is threefold:

post-metaphysical by genealogy, pre-metaphysical by structural position, a-metaphysical by ontological constitution.

It is post-metaphysical because its discovery inherits the history and critique of metaphysics. It is pre-metaphysical because it articulates the obtaining prior to the duplicative demand for ground. It is a-metaphysical because its categories could remain intelligible and valid without metaphysics having been installed.

The who is the first decisive demonstration. The who is neither behind the life nor added to it. It is the whole regional obtaining in which a manner obtains as this occurrence — own, and someone:

$R \vdash [\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)] : \text{WHO}.$

Proper deixis does not manufacture this singularity. Founded on sensible, relational, historical, and public presentation, it may be fulfilled as a categorial intuition of the modal coincidence:

$R \vdash a : \text{CatInt}(\text{WHO}).$

The resulting position is: ontological without metaphysical grounding; historically inherited without ontological dependence upon that inheritance; structurally prior without chronological nostalgia; determinate without thingification; formal without independent bearer variables; regional without relativism; open at its frontiers without enthusiasm; public without constructivism; veridical without infallibility; and whole without epistemic exhaustion.

The proposal can therefore be stated in six sentences:

Ontology in the strict sense requires positive categories, formation relations, consequences, access conditions, and error controls. A-metaphysical ontology provides that articulation without securing it through a ground beneath or beyond what obtains and without depending upon metaphysics as its necessary negation. Modal coincidence gives this grammar its first categorial form: the who is the regional manner obtaining as this occurrence. The categorial differentia of who is ownness: the whole modal coincidence obtaining as someone rather than merely something — in finite living, a life that cannot be somebody else's living — disclosed by the trials and added as no component. Proper deixis gives the corresponding access: a founded categorial intuition of that obtaining, not the discovery of a bearer behind it. Metaphysics is a condition of the theory's discovery, not a condition of the truth it discovers.

Modal coincidence is thus more than a local theory of personal identity. On the criterion defended here, it is the opening act of an a-metaphysical ontology in the strict constructive sense — and what that act exhibits is that positive ontology without ground is available.

The final historical settlement is:

Earlier post-metaphysical thought showed why ontology could no longer be grounded. Ethical Ontology shows that ontology did not need ground in the first place.

And the final positional settlement is:

The theory would not exist without metaphysics, but it could exist without it.

Appendix A. Notation

Symbol	Meaning
R	Region of presentation, access, evidence, and valid inference
p	Regionally available possibility
μ	Possibility articulated as manner
ω	Concrete occurrence within a region

Symbol	Meaning
$\delta(\omega)$	Occurrence deictically determined as this
$\Downarrow_R$	“Obtains as” within region R
$[\mu \Downarrow_R \delta(\omega)] : \text{WHO}$	Whole modal coincidence under the category who — regionally warranted as constitutively own
$\mathcal{W}_R(\mu, \omega)$	Metanotational abbreviation for the whole judgement; not an object-language bearer; licenses no identities between judged wholes
Own	Prohibited predicate: ownness attaches to no aspect (22)
non-vicarious	Finite-living articulation of ownness: this living cannot be another’s living (§3.6)
OwnWarr _R	Regionally adequate warrant for articulating the whole obtaining as constitutively own; conditions assertibility, never obtaining (24)
s	Sensible, relational, historical, linguistic, or public presentation
$\Pi_R(s, \omega)$	Presentation s routes access to occurrence ω
Found _R (a, s)	Act a is founded upon presentation s
$\mathfrak{d}_R^a(\omega)$	Deictic movement of act a toward occurrence ω
TermThing _R (a, s)	Act terminates at a thing-like bearer or substitute
Ctrl _R (a, ω)	Region-specific negative controls are passed
Ful _R (a, $\mathcal{W}_R$)	Act is regionally fulfilled as access to the categorial whole
Warr _R (a, $\mathcal{W}_R$)	Grounds of the fulfilment claim are publicly assessable
Corr _R (a, $\mathcal{W}_R$)	The categorial access is correct
CatWhole($\mathcal{W}_R$)	Occurrence reached under its whole categorial status
TotContent($\mathcal{W}_R$)	Indefinitely rich total content of the life
Loc(x) = ℓ	Answer for indexed act or claim x terminates at locus ℓ
Carries(f, $\mathcal{W}_R$)	Public form f carries access associated with the who
NonSubst _R (x)	x is non-substitutable within region R
Disclosed _R (WHO, ω)	Region R has positively disclosed who-status for ω

Symbol	Meaning
OccurrentExercise _R (ω , t)	Regional capacities are occurrently exercised by ω at t

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