Ontonoetic Pattern

The Mechanism by Which a Cognizing Entity Articulates Reality

Huỳnh Mai Phúc (Plone Mraz) *Independent Researcher, Vietnam* 2026

ORCID: 0009-0009-0571-7151

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Abstract

This paper describes a mechanism by which a cognizing entity articulates reality. The mechanism has three successive functions: observation, description, and naming. The paper proposes "Ontonoetic Pattern" as a label for this three-function mechanism — not as a name for a metaphysical structure, but as a marker for a specific cognitive procedure the author has observed in his own cognitive activity and, by inference from behavioural evidence, in other cognizing entities as well. The paper makes no claim about the ontological status of what is articulated, nor about the correspondence between the output of the mechanism and reality as it is in itself. Its sole concern is the mechanism: what a cognizing entity does when it turns toward reality in order to articulate it. The paper treats cognition as a subset of reality rather than as a parallel domain, and draws the structural consequence that, from the point of view of any cognizing entity A, the cognition of any other cognizing entity B appears as part of reality — which implies that the same mechanism applies whether A is articulating physical reality directly or articulating the cognitive output of another entity. The paper is offered as a report of what the author has observed, subject to revision by any reader who finds a counter-example in their own cognitive activity.

Keywords: cognition, articulation, reality, cognizing entity, observation, description, naming, recursion, point of view, Meta-Philosophy.

Table of Contents

Abstract 1
1. Introduction 4
1.1 The Starting Question 4
1.2 The Name and Its Scope 4
1.3 The Paper's Place in the Programme 5
1.4 Methodology Note 6
2. The Structural Position of Cognition Within Reality 8
2.1 Cognition as a Subset, Not a Parallel Domain 8
2.2 A Consequence: The POV-Dependence of the Cognition/Reality Distinction 8
2.3 The Structural Asymmetry 9
3. The Mechanism: Observe → Describe → Name 10
3.1 Observe — The Function of Attention 10
3.2 Describe — The Function of Description 14
3.3 Name — The Function of Naming 15
3.4 The Recursive Property of the Mechanism 17
4. The Mechanism Applied to the Cognitive Output of Another Entity 19
4.1 No New Mechanism Is Required 19
4.2 A Property of This Application 19
5. Three Illustrations 20
5.1 Mendeleev and the Periodic Table 20
5.2 Einstein and the Happiest Thought 20
5.3 Helen Keller and the Word "Water" 21
6. What the Paper Does Not Claim 22
6.1 No Correspondence Claim 22
6.2 No Universality Claim 22
6.3 No Causal-Motivational Claim 22
7. Relation to the Synthetic Principle and Aviplestos 23
7.1 Relation to the Synthetic Principle 23
7.2 Relation to Aviplestos 23
8. Conclusion 25
8.1 Summary 25
8.2 The Paper as an Instance of Its Own Subject 25

References and Convergences 26
Programme Components 26
Points of Ontological Convergence 26

1. Introduction

1.1 The Starting Question

The question this paper asks is neither "what is reality?" nor "what is knowledge?" It is prior to both, and narrower than either:

> *By what mechanism does a cognizing entity turn toward reality and articulate it?*

This is not a question about reality itself. It is a question about what a cognizing entity *does* when it turns toward reality. The paper does not claim to describe reality. It claims to describe a procedure — one that the author has observed in his own cognitive activity, and, to the extent that behavioural evidence permits inference, in the cognitive activity of other entities as well.

The question has been asked in different forms throughout the history of philosophy. What distinguishes the present formulation is its strict modesty. The paper is not a report on what is. It is a report on what is *done* when a cognizing entity attempts to articulate what is. The distinction matters because the two reports are subject to different standards of evidence, and the paper wishes to be evaluated by the standards appropriate to the second.

1.2 The Name and Its Scope

The paper calls the mechanism it describes the **Ontonoetic Pattern**. The name is a compound: *onto-* (from Greek *ὄν*, that-which-is) and *-noetic* (from Greek *νοεῖν*, to perceive with the mind, to think). The compound marks a meeting point — the point at which a cognizing entity's thinking turns toward that-which-is — without asserting an identity between the two. The name records an encounter, not a unification.

The label is chosen deliberately, and the reason for choosing a new label rather than using an existing term reflects an observation the author has made about the available vocabulary. Terms such as "perception," "cognition," "representation," and "observation" are each useful within the frameworks in which they were developed, and the present paper does not suggest that those frameworks are mistaken or that those terms are poorly chosen. The observation is narrower: none of those terms was developed to mark the specific three-function procedure described in this paper, and each carries, as part of its inherited theoretical baggage, assumptions that would obscure the procedure if adopted as its label. "Perception" carries a connotation of passive reception. "Cognition" is too broad, covering everything from pattern recognition to abstract reasoning. "Representation" drags in correspondence-theoretic assumptions about the relation between a mental item and what it represents. "Observation" tends to emphasise the first moment of the procedure at the expense of the other two. The author therefore prefers a new label, not to

replace or compete with existing terminology, but to avoid importing framework-specific assumptions into a description whose purpose is to stand on its own.

The name is thus a label assigned by the author to his own observation. It is not the name of a metaphysical structure, nor of a philosophical discipline, nor of a higher-order reality. It is the name of a *procedure* — a procedure that will be described in detail in Section 3.

1.3 The Paper's Place in the Programme

The present paper is one component of a broader research programme, Meta-Philosophy. Other components of the programme address different questions and stand on their own. The Synthetic Principle (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026a) describes synthesis as a universal generative mechanism, operating throughout reality, by which new ontological configurations are produced. Aviplestos (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026b) describes the structural tendency, also operating throughout reality, toward configurations not yet occupied. Patterns and Cognition (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026d) describes the resolution-dependent character of articulation — the geometry within which any cognitive instrument operates. The Passage of Becoming (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026e) describes the passage of the mechanism through the regions within which synthesis-aware cognition arises. These components describe features of reality in general, the directionality that drives change within reality, the geometry of articulation, and the passage through the regions of cognition. The present paper does not overlap with them. It describes a specific phenomenon that occurs at a specific kind of location within reality — namely, the locations at which cognizing entities exist and turn back toward reality to articulate it.

The present paper is one component of an interconnected system of articulations. Reading the present paper in isolation captures the cognitive procedure without its driver (Aviplestos), without the universal generative mechanism within which it operates (the Synthetic Principle), without the geometry of articulation that constrains it (Patterns and Cognition), and without the passage through the regions within which it arises (the Passage of Becoming). The system is the context within which the present paper makes sense. Each component holds open questions that other components address. The relationships among the components are sketched more fully in Section 7.

A further clarification is appropriate here, because it affects how the relation between this paper and the other components of the programme is to be understood. The present paper is not offered as a technical component on which other parts of the programme structurally depend. It is offered as a report — a record of what the author has observed in his own cognitive activity, given a name, and committed to transmissible form. Other components of the programme may reference this report. They do not derive from it in the way that a theorem derives from an axiom. The present paper stands on its own as a piece of first-person philosophical description, and the other components stand on their own as

well. What unites them is not a structural dependency but a common authorship and a common concern with describing features of reality that the author has observed and found worth naming.

1.4 Methodology Note

A note on how this articulation came about. The inquiry began with a specific question — but the question and the articulation that followed bear a non-standard relationship that deserves disclosure.

Initially, I sought to articulate a framework encompassing both ontology and epistemology — a meta-structure capable of describing both being and knowing. In pursuing this, I encountered a distinction I had not anticipated. Cognition and being are recognizably different. But when the suffix "-logy" is added — when one speaks of ontology and epistemology — the difference collapses: both names share the same Greek-derived suffix indicating "discourse, theory, study of". Both are what cognition does when it turns toward something. Ontology is not being; it is the cognitive articulation of being. Epistemology is not knowing; it is the cognitive articulation of knowing. The two "-logies" belong to the same activity — cognition operating on different targets.

This recognition redirected the inquiry. The Ontonoetic Pattern is not a meta-framework above ontology and epistemology. It is the procedure by which a cognizing entity uses its cognition to observe, describe, and name what it encounters of reality. It articulates how cognition operates within its limits, not how it transcends them.

A constraint on the paper's claims must also be stated explicitly, because it shapes everything that follows. The author has observed the mechanism described here in his own cognitive activity. He has also inferred, from the behaviour of other cognizing entities — their speech, their writing, their evident procedures of attention, description, and naming — that they too employ this mechanism. But the author has not observed, and cannot observe, the cognitive activity of every cognizing entity. The claim that the Ontonoetic Pattern is a general feature of cognition in cognizing entities is therefore *tentative*. It is a generalization from a sample, not a universal law. A reader who finds, in their own cognitive activity, a counter-example — who observes themselves articulating reality by a procedure other than the one described here — has thereby falsified, at least in their own case, the generalization the paper offers. The author welcomes such falsification. The paper is a report, and reports can be corrected by further observation.

To pursue the articulation, I drew on three sources. The first was direct observation of my own cognitive activity — the moments of observing, describing, and naming as they occur in my own thinking, available to me without instrumentation. The second was descriptions of cognitive activity at scales or in entities I cannot observe directly: accounts in cognitive

science, philosophy of mind, and contemporary commentary, treated as observation mediated through the cognitive activity of others. The third source — engaged with only after the present articulation was complete — consists of named frameworks: formalized articulations by other cognizing entities of how cognition has been articulated before. William James, Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, James J. Gibson, and Daniel Kahneman entered this account through post-hoc comparison, not through prior reading. I had not engaged with Husserl or Merleau-Ponty in any form before arriving at the present articulation; the convergences noted in Section 3 with phenomenological concepts were identified after the description was already in place.

This articulation is written under a prerequisite stated in the Stachoria (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026g, §0): that an observer determine, and declare, the region of conditions from which the observation is made, before any account built upon it has value. The procedure described here — observation, description, naming — always operates within a context, and that context is itself a region of conditions the observer occupies; an account that leaves it undeclared describes only the cognition that produced it. Honest determination of the region one observes from is therefore the prerequisite of every claim that follows.

The references discussed below are offered not as sources of influence but as independent points of contact: places where other cognizing entities, working from different positions on the same reality, arrived at configurations the present account also identifies. Whether such convergences constitute evidence for the universality of the pattern, or represent the projection of a pattern observed in my own case onto descriptions provided by others, is a question this paper does not resolve.

This paper is written from a position I have committed to: not centering on human perspective as a privileged vantage point. I am a human cognizing entity using human language; this commitment cannot be perfectly executed. What I can do is name the commitment, attempt to maintain it through deliberate effort, and acknowledge that the resulting articulation may slip toward human-centered framing at points I have not noticed. The commitment is the position, not the achievement of it.

2. The Structural Position of Cognition Within Reality

Before the mechanism can be described, a structural observation must be made about where cognition stands in relation to reality. Without this observation, the description of the mechanism would be ambiguous: a reader might suppose that cognition is a special domain standing outside reality and looking in, and such a supposition would distort everything the paper wishes to say.

2.1 Cognition as a Subset, Not a Parallel Domain

The present paper treats cognition as a *subset* of reality, not as a parallel domain alongside it. A cognizing entity is a phenomenon within reality — a configuration of matter and process that exists in the same sense that anything else exists. The cognition that such an entity performs is likewise a phenomenon within reality: it occurs at a specific location, in a specific entity, at a specific time. There is no cognition that happens outside reality, because there is nowhere outside reality for it to happen.

This is not a metaphysical claim that the paper undertakes to defend. It is a working assumption of the framework within which the paper operates. A reader who prefers a substance-dualist picture, in which mind stands outside the physical world and encounters it from an external vantage point, will find the paper's central descriptions strained. Under a dualist picture, the question "by what mechanism does cognition turn toward reality?" becomes a question about a crossing between domains. Under the subset picture, it becomes a question about an internal operation — a part of reality turning back to articulate the larger whole of which it is a part.

2.2 A Consequence: The POV-Dependence of the Cognition/Reality Distinction

A consequence follows from the subset picture that is important for what the paper will say later. If cognition is a subset of reality, then from the point of view of any one cognizing entity A, the cognition of any other cognizing entity B is itself a *part of reality* — because A does not have access to the subjective interior of B. A observes B's speech, B's writing, B's behaviour, B's brain activity if A is a neuroscientist — but A encounters all of this as phenomena within the reality that A is attempting to articulate. B's cognition does not present itself to A as cognition; it presents itself to A as a particularly interesting part of the world.

The distinction between "cognition" and "reality," then, is not a distinction between two kinds of things. It is a distinction between two *roles* that the same thing can play, depending on the point of view from which it is considered. B's cognition, from B's own point of view, is the procedure by which B articulates reality. From A's point of view, it is part of the reality

that A is articulating. Neither description is more fundamental than the other. They are two descriptions of the same thing seen from two positions.

This will matter in Section 4, where the paper considers the case in which the mechanism described here is applied not to physical reality directly but to the externalized cognitive output of another entity.

2.3 The Structural Asymmetry

One further structural observation: the cognition of any one cognizing entity is always *smaller* than reality. This is not a failure of the entity's cognitive capacity, to be remedied by further learning or better instruments. It is a structural fact that follows from what it is to be a part of reality rather than the whole of it. A part cannot contain its own container. The cognition of an entity cannot contain (a) the reality that lies outside the entity in its full extent, (b) the cognitive interiors of other entities, which are inaccessible to it, or (c) even all of what occurs within the entity itself, because there are always aspects of the entity's own processes that the entity has not yet articulated.

The asymmetry is mentioned here only to establish that it exists. The paper will not develop it. The structural consequences of the asymmetry — how a cognizing entity copes with the fact that reality always exceeds it, what shapes the boundary between what is articulable and what is not, how the boundary shifts over time — are developed in the companion paper on Patterns and Cognition (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026d), not here. This paper describes the mechanism. The asymmetry is a condition under which the mechanism operates.

3. The Mechanism: Observe → Describe → Name

The three moments described below are not three separable phases of a cognizing activity. They are three analytical cuts into a single continuous operation. A cognizing entity articulating reality does not first observe, then describe, then name, in the way that a person first opens a door, then walks through, then closes it behind them. The activity is one, and its three moments are co-present, mutually informing, and mutually overlapping at every point at which the activity is actually occurring. What the present section undertakes is not a description of three phases but a distinction among three functions that the activity performs — functions that can be separated for analysis even though they cannot be separated in the flow of the activity itself.

The standard of evaluation appropriate to this distinction is not "do these three phases really exist as distinct phases?" — to which the answer would be "no, and the paper does not claim that they do." The standard is, instead: "does the distinction among these three functions make the activity more articulable than it would be without the distinction?" The author has found that it does. The three cuts bring out features of the activity that are invisible when the activity is considered as a single undifferentiated operation, and they do so without committing the reader to any claim about the phenomenological reality of the cuts themselves.

A consequence follows that will be important for what the paper says in Section 3.1 and after. Because the three moments are analytical and not phenomenological, they overlap at their boundaries. Some features of the activity belong, by the argument below, to more than one moment — they do partial work in one and partial work in another. The overlap is not a defect of the distinction but a structural feature of any analytical cut into a continuous operation: if the cuts were perfectly sharp, the distinction would not be an analysis of a continuous activity; it would be a reification of moments that do not exist in the activity being analyzed.

A reader familiar with William James will recognize a structural parallel between the analytical-cut framing adopted here and James's account of consciousness as a stream in which moments are abstractions from a continuous flow rather than discrete phases (James, 1890). The present account was not derived from James; the convergence is noted as an independent point of contact.

3.1 Observe — The Function of Attention

The first function the activity performs is observation: a cognizing entity directs its attention toward some part of reality. The part in question may be a physical object, a process, an event, a relation, a state of affairs, or — as Section 4 will discuss — the externalized cognitive output of another entity. What matters is that the entity's attention

has been directed somewhere, rather than nowhere, and that the direction of attention is itself an act.

Observation, in the narrow sense the paper means here, is the act of directing attention. It is not yet the act of framing what is attended to as belonging to a category, nor of selecting features for description, nor of integrating what is attended to into a structured representation. Those further operations belong to the second function, described below. The paper isolates observation in this narrow sense because doing so makes visible something that is otherwise easy to miss: the direction of attention is not nothing. It is a structural act that has consequences for everything that follows in the activity.

Observation, however narrowly construed, never occurs in a vacuum. It always occurs within a *context* — and the context is constituted by the meeting of two sources. The first source is the entity's own prior history of articulation: everything the entity has previously observed, described, and named is now part of the configuration the entity brings with it to any new act of attention. This prior history shapes what can show up as a possible target of attention. An entity whose prior history is rich has many possible targets ready-to-hand; an entity whose prior history is sparse has few. The targets that show up for any given act of attention are not freely chosen from an unlimited field; they are made available by the entity's accumulated articulations. The second source is the field of reality within which the entity exists — including configurations the entity has not yet articulated and, indeed, including configurations the entity does not know exist. This second source is not the *content* of observation but its *condition*: it ensures that the act of attention has an outside to be directed toward, rather than collapsing into a purely internal operation. Without the prior history, observation would have no possible content. Without the external field, observation would have nothing to orient itself toward.

A distinction within the prior history must be noted, because the paper will not be able to say everything that follows from it. The entity carries with it both what it has articulated and what it knows it has not yet articulated — the configurations near the boundary of its prior articulations, which it has approached and recognized as not-yet-resolved. These known unresolved targets are part of the context in the same way as known articulated configurations: they make up the field within which any new act of attention occurs. But the entity does *not* carry with it those configurations whose existence it has not yet recognized at all. These remain in the external field, and they shape the act of attention only by being there, not by being among the targets the entity could aim at. The structural consequences of this distinction — how an entity deals with what lies in directions its existing articulations do not orient it toward — are taken up in another component of the programme and not pursued here.

A brief acknowledgment of a possible objection at this point. If observation always occurs within a context constituted in part by the entity's prior history of articulation, what about

the entity's first observation? At the moment before any articulation has occurred, prior history is absent. The objection presses for an account of how the cycle starts.

The objection has force only if observation, description, and naming are treated as temporally sequential phases rather than as analytical cuts into a continuous activity. On the framing established at the opening of Section 3, the three functions are co-present and mutually informing from the start. There is no moment at which "first observation" occurs in isolation from description and naming. What there is, at the earliest stages of a cognizing entity's development, is a thin and minimally articulated context — not the absence of context. The entity arrives at its first moments of observation with whatever structural orientation its own constitution provides, however minimal: the orientation of its sensory apparatus, the inherited or developmental dispositions of its processing, the relations it stands in with its immediate environment. That minimal orientation is the seed of context; subsequent activity thickens it. The cycle does not start from absolute nothingness — it starts from the entity's basal condition, which is already a structural orientation, however thin. This response does not resolve every philosophical question about how cognition arises in entities that did not previously have it. It only notes that the present paper, by treating the three functions as analytical cuts rather than temporal phases, sidesteps the bootstrap problem in the form the objection raises. A fuller treatment belongs to other components of the research programme.

Readers familiar with phenomenology will recognize a structural parallel between the notion of context developed here and Husserl's notion of horizon. The author does not claim innocence of the phenomenological tradition in having arrived at his own formulation. What the author does claim is that the parallel is not a coincidence of historical influence alone: a cognizing entity attempting to describe the conditions under which observation occurs will, if the present paper's framework is correct, be led to something like the notion of horizon by the structural features of the situation itself, regardless of the tradition through which the entity approaches the question. The convergence of the present account with Husserl's is offered here as one piece of evidence — among many that the broader programme records — that the configurations the author has articulated are not idiosyncratic but are features of the cognitive situation that any sufficiently careful inquirer may encounter.

A further point must be noted, although the paper will not develop it. What is observed is never reality-as-it-is-in-itself, because the act of observing interposes the observer between that-which-is and that-which-appears. The entity encounters not reality unmediated but reality-under-observation. This is a structural constraint of the first function, and it is one of the reasons the paper refuses to claim that the mechanism's output corresponds to reality. The paper refuses this claim because the first function already introduces a gap

between the entity and what it turns toward, and the later functions do nothing to close this gap. They accept it and work within it.

Reality-under-observation is itself a synthesis, in the sense the Synthetic Principle gives the term, and observation is therefore not the bare reception that precedes the mechanism but the mechanism's first operation. Two things meet in an act of attention: the region of the object — the conditions the object stands within, present whether or not anyone attends to them — and the aperture of the observer, the region the observer can resolve, which the Stachoria articulates as a second region of a different kind standing alongside the object's (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026g, §2.4). What comes to stand as the outcome of their meeting is the intersection: reality-under-observation, the part of the object that falls within the aperture, carrying the mark of the object that was reached and the mark of the resolution that reached it. This intersection is a configuration with a property neither source holds alone — the object's region alone does not contain *being-resolved-at-this-aperture*, and the aperture alone does not contain *this-object-having-been-reached* — and it is instantiated where it did not stand before this act. The same object met through a different aperture yields a different intersection; the intersection does not lie ready within the object to be lifted out, but comes to stand only in the meeting. That a configuration with an irreducible property comes to stand from the integration of two regions is what it is for the first function to be an operation of synthesis.

The naming of this outcome belongs to a later function and to the recursive structure described in §3.4. An observer may lay over reality-under-observation any of a number of names — that a part of the object was *grasped*, *taken in*, *registered*, *extracted* — and each such name is a compressed handle of the kind §3.3 describes, a synthesis in its own right folded over the first. What the outcome ontically is — the configuration that comes to stand from the meeting of object's region and aperture — is settled at the level of the first function and is not altered by which handle a later function folds over it. The name is one more synthesis laid upon a synthesis; the level at which the intersection is generated and the level at which it is named are kept distinct, in the same way the system keeps the fact of a standing configuration distinct from the naming projected upon it.

Readers acquainted with phenomenological and ecological accounts of perception may recognize two independent points of contact with the view developed here. Merleau-Ponty's account of perception as a mode of being-in-the-world rather than a passive reception of givens (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) and Gibson's notion of affordances as directly articulated features of the environment rather than inferences constructed from sensory data (Gibson, 1979) both refuse the reception-versus-construction dichotomy in ways that converge with the position adopted here. The present account was not derived from either; the convergences are noted as independent points of contact.

The boundary between observation in this narrow sense and the second function is, as the opening of Section 3 acknowledged, not sharp. Even the act of directing attention contains a minimal element of differentiation: to attend is, already, to attend to something rather than something else, and the "rather than" is a proto-distinction that the second function will pick up and elaborate. The paper does not regret this overlap. It accepts it as the cost of being honest about what the activity actually does.

3.2 Describe — The Function of Description

The second function the activity performs is description: the entity transforms what has been observed into an internal description — a configuration that can be held, manipulated, compared with other configurations, and stored. The word "representation" has been avoided here despite its convenience, because of its correspondence-theoretic baggage; what the paper means by "internal description" is not a copy of what was observed but a new configuration that stands in some relation to what was observed without being identical to it.

A description is not a copy. It is a new configuration, generated within the cognition of the entity, that stands in some relation to what was observed but is not the same thing as what was observed. The description has properties that the observed does not have: it is held within the entity's cognitive processes, it can be combined with other descriptions, it can be modified, it can be examined. And it lacks properties that the observed has: it is not located in the place where the observed is, it is not subject to the same causal processes, it does not have the full complexity of what it describes.

The act of description is one of the points at which synthesis, in the sense described by the Synthetic Principle, operates within the mechanism. Scattered observations — different moments of attention directed at different parts of the same phenomenon, or at different phenomena that turn out to be connected — are integrated into a description whose properties are not reducible to those of any single observation taken alone. This is synthesis operating at the cognitive level, on the internal configurations that cognition produces. It is the most legible of the points at which synthesis operates in cognition, because the integration of many observations into one description is open to view; but it is not the only one. The first function integrates the region of the object with the aperture of the observer (§3.1), and the third integrates a description with the commitment that stabilizes it (§3.3); description is the case in which the integration is easiest to see, not the case to which integration is confined. The present paper does not re-derive synthesis; it registers that synthesis is the mechanism by which the second function does its work, and refers the reader to the Synthetic Principle for the general account and to §3.4 for the recurrence of the mechanism across all three functions.

One thing the paper is careful not to claim: the description is not a *better* version of the observation, nor a *purified* version of it. It is a different configuration, generated in a different medium, preserving some structural features of what was observed and failing to preserve others. Whether any given description is useful, accurate, or fruitful is a question that the mechanism itself does not answer. The mechanism produces descriptions. Evaluation of descriptions is a further activity that takes the descriptions themselves as inputs — that is, it is another application of the same mechanism.

3.3 Name — The Function of Naming

The third function the activity performs is naming: the entity commits to treating the description as a stable unit — a "something" that can be stored, recalled, referred to, and combined with other named units. Naming is not the assignment of a verbal label, though verbal labels are the most visible form of naming. Naming is the cognitive act of drawing a boundary around the description and committing to it as a unit for future use.

The criterion by which a description is recognized as having achieved the status of a name is *re-identifiability*: a description has been committed to a name when the entity is able, at a later moment, to retrieve the same description for further use — that is, to treat the retrieved configuration as the one it had previously stabilized, and to combine it with other named units as such. The criterion is operational, not metaphysical: the paper does not claim that the retrieved configuration *really is* the same as the original in any deep sense, only that the entity treats it as the same and acts on that treatment. The acting on the treatment is what makes the third function complete.

A further function of naming becomes visible once re-identifiability is established. A description that has been stabilized into a name does not simply remain available for retrieval; it becomes operable as a single, indivisible building block in higher-order articulation. This is what the cognitive economy of naming consists in. Before naming, every appearance of a complex configuration requires its components and their relations to be resolved afresh. After naming, the entire configuration can be deployed as a single unit, combined with other units, and operated upon without re-resolving its internal structure. The unit functions as a compressed handle: the description is folded into the name, and the name carries the description without unfolding it. The recursive application of this function — naming a structure, then operating on it as a unit, then combining it with other named structures into higher-order configurations, then naming those — is what allows cognitive activity to build progressively more complex articulations without exceeding the limits of simultaneous attention.

The building-block function is closely related to re-identifiability but is not identical to it. Re-identifiability is the entity's capacity to retrieve the same configuration; the building-block function is the entity's capacity to use the retrieved configuration as a unit in further

activity. The first makes naming possible; the second makes naming useful. Together they constitute what the third function achieves.

Before naming, the description is provisional — a working configuration that the entity holds in the process of articulating. After naming, the description has been reified into an element of the entity's cognitive inventory: something the entity "has," something it can deploy without reconstructing it from observation each time. The naming is what makes the procedure cumulative. Without it, each act of observation and description would dissolve after the moment of its occurrence, leaving nothing behind.

This reification is itself an operation of synthesis, and not only in the building-block case where several named units are combined. The core act — committing a description to re-identifiability — integrates two things: the provisional description, which on its own dissolves after the moment of its occurrence, and the commitment to retrievability across time. What comes to stand from their integration is a unit carrying a property neither holds alone — *re-identifiability*, the local stability by which the configuration persists as the one it was rather than dissolving — and it stands at a level that did not exist before the act, the level of the entity's inventory, of what the entity "has." The dissolution the description would otherwise undergo is the negation against which this outcome stands; the commitment is the capacity that sustains it. That a configuration with an irreducible property comes to stand against what would dissolve it is what it is for naming, in its core act and not merely in its building-block extension, to be an operation of synthesis. The three functions are thus three sites of one mechanism, working on three orders of material — object-and-aperture, scattered observations, description-and-commitment — and the recurrence is the subject of §3.4.

A name, once established, is in principle transmissible — not because transmissibility is the criterion of naming, but because the structural stability that makes re-identification possible is the same stability that makes communication possible when the receiving entity shares enough structure with the originator. Transmissibility is a consequence of naming, not its definition. This matters because the consequence-based formulation does not exclude cognitive units that an entity holds privately and never externalizes; nor does it exclude the cognitive units of entities whose externalization channels are limited or whose cognitive medium does not take linguistic form. What is required is the entity's capacity to retrieve the unit at a later moment as the unit it previously stabilized; what is added by transmissibility is only the further fact that, given enough shared structure between sender and receiver, the same stability that supports re-identification also supports communication.

The present paper does not undertake to describe in detail what determines whether any particular description is successfully held as a name. This is a question about the conditions under which a configuration, once generated within a cognitive economy, maintains its

stability in the face of other configurations competing for the same resources. Such stability is not a default property of descriptions. It is something that a description either achieves or fails to achieve, depending on features of its situation within the entity's cognitive economy that the present paper does not formalize. What the paper commits to is only this: the third function is completed not by an act of verbal labelling but by the description's attainment of the kind of local stability that makes it available for re-identification by the entity at a later moment, and operable as a unit in higher-order articulation.

A reader familiar with Kahneman's distinction between System 1 and System 2 (Kahneman, 2011) will notice a structural parallel: the transition by which a description is committed to a name and becomes available for re-identification without reconstruction has features in common with the transition by which a deliberate cognitive process becomes automatic. The present account was not derived from Kahneman; the convergence is noted as an independent point of contact.

3.4 The Recursive Property of the Mechanism

The mechanism can be applied to its own outputs. A cognizing entity can observe its own observations, describe its own descriptions, name its own naming acts. This is not the addition of a fourth function. It is the same three-function mechanism taking, as the reality it turns toward, outputs of the mechanism's own prior operation.

Each of the three functions is itself an operation of synthesis — observation integrating object's region with aperture (§3.1), description integrating scattered observations (§3.2), naming integrating description with the commitment that stabilizes it (§3.3) — so that recursion does not introduce synthesis at some later stage but folds synthesis already present at every function back over its own products. To observe an observation is to synthesize a configuration that was itself synthesized; to name a naming is to lay one synthesis over another. The recurrence the Synthetic Principle records as holding at every level of reality holds, within cognition, at every function and at every turn of the recursion.

The recursive property is what makes the mechanism capable of self-examination. An entity that could only apply the mechanism to external reality would have no access to its own cognitive procedures; its cognition would be transparent to itself in the sense that the eye is transparent to the eye — that is, not transparent at all, but simply inaccessible. Recursion makes cognition available to itself as an object of cognition. It is what allows an entity to notice that it has cognitive procedures, to describe those procedures, and to name them.

The present paper is an instance of the recursive application of the mechanism. The author has observed his own cognitive activity, described it, and named the procedure "Ontonoetic Pattern." The paper the reader is now reading is the externalized form of that third function — the commitment of the description to a transmissible unit. A reader who finds the

present paper intelligible has, in that act of finding it intelligible, performed their own recursive application of the mechanism: they have observed the paper, described its claims in their own cognitive medium, and (if they continue to think about it) will name those descriptions for future reference. The mechanism is not merely described in the paper; it is enacted in the reading of the paper.

4. The Mechanism Applied to the Cognitive Output of Another Entity

Section 2.2 observed that, from the point of view of a cognizing entity A, the cognition of another entity B appears as part of reality. The present section draws the consequence.

4.1 No New Mechanism Is Required

When A articulates a rock, A applies the three-function mechanism: A observes the rock, describes what was observed, and names the description. When A articulates a book that B has written, A applies *the same* three-function mechanism: A observes the book (its text, its arguments, its structure), describes what was observed, and names the description. There is no new procedure involved. From A's point of view, the rock and the book are both parts of reality to be articulated, and the mechanism does not distinguish between them.

This is an important point because it avoids a temptation the paper wishes to resist. The temptation would be to propose a special "intersubjective" mechanism by which one cognizing entity accesses the cognition of another. The paper proposes no such mechanism. What the paper proposes is simpler: A does not access B's cognition directly. A observes B's *externalized outputs* — the books B has written, the speech B has produced, the behaviour B has performed — and treats those outputs as parts of reality, subject to the same three-function procedure that A would apply to any other part of reality.

4.2 A Property of This Application

There is one feature worth noting about the case in which A is articulating the externalized cognitive output of B. The outputs A is observing are themselves the products of B's own prior application of the same mechanism. When B wrote the book, B was observing something, describing it, and committing the description to nameable units. The book is the visible residue of B's exercise of the mechanism. A, in turn, is now exercising the mechanism on that residue.

The paper records this feature without developing it. What happens when the mechanism is applied to the output of another exercise of the mechanism — what further procedures become possible, what comparisons can be drawn, what kinds of cognitive activity emerge from the availability of multiple such outputs for comparison — is taken up in the companion paper on Patterns and Cognition (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026d). The paper has described the mechanism. Its further deployment, and the structural features of the space in which its deployments occur, are other questions.

5. Three Illustrations

This section presents three cases in which the three-function mechanism can be recognized as having operated, as these cases have been described in the residues left by other cognizing entities. The cases are offered as illustrations, not as empirical confirmations in any falsifiable sense. Each is a point of contact on another map — a place where someone else, working from their own first-person position, produced a record that the present framework can read as an instance of observe-describe-name. Whether readers recognize the three functions in these cases, as the author does, is left to their judgment.

5.1 Mendeleev and the Periodic Table

When Dmitri Mendeleev published his periodic table in 1869 and elaborated it in 1871, he did more than arrange the known elements by atomic mass. He observed recurring patterns in their chemical properties; he described the elements through a two-dimensional configuration that made those patterns articulable; and he committed the arrangement as a set of nameable positions — including positions left vacant, which he designated eka-aluminium, eka-boron, and eka-silicon, with detailed predicted properties. When gallium was discovered in 1875 by Lecoq de Boisbaudran, scandium in 1879, and germanium by Winkler in 1886, each was found to occupy the position Mendeleev had named and to possess the properties he had described. The re-identifiability criterion developed in Section 3.3 is displayed here with unusual clarity: a named unit, committed before its referent had been encountered, remained stable enough to be retrieved and tested when the referent appeared. The building-block function is equally visible: each named position became a unit on which subsequent investigations operated, without requiring re-resolution of the entire periodic configuration each time.

5.2 Einstein and the Happiest Thought

In a manuscript written around 1919–1920, Einstein recounted a moment from 1907 at the Swiss patent office that he called "the happiest thought of my life." While attempting to modify Newtonian gravitation to fit special relativity, it occurred to him that an observer in free fall would feel no gravitational field in their immediate vicinity. This was an observation — of the phenomenology of free fall, performed as a thought experiment. It was then described as an equivalence between gravitation and acceleration, a new configuration relating two previously distinct physical concepts. It was finally committed as a name — the equivalence principle — which became a stable unit available for combination with other named units in the development of general relativity. The case is instructive because Einstein's report is itself a first-person account of the three functions performed by the same entity that articulated them.

5.3 Helen Keller and the Word "Water"

In *The Story of My Life* (1903), Helen Keller described the moment when she first understood that the tactile signs Annie Sullivan was tracing into one of her hands were names for the substance flowing across the other. The observation was the sensory encounter with water; the description was the connection between that sensation and the patterned signs; the commitment to a name was the moment at which "w-a-t-e-r" became a stable unit that Keller could retrieve and combine with other units thereafter. The case is distinctive in two respects. First, it is a first-person report of a commit event as a transition with a recognizable before and after, rather than as a gradual accumulation. Second, it demonstrates that the third function does not require the externalization channels that linguistic communication ordinarily assumes: Keller was both deaf and blind, and the medium of her naming was tactile. Re-identifiability, not verbal labelling, is what completed the function.

6. What the Paper Does Not Claim

A short section of disclaimers is necessary, not as a defensive move but as a matter of intellectual honesty. The paper has made specific claims, and it has *not* made certain other claims that a reader might be tempted to attribute to it. The distinctions matter.

6.1 No Correspondence Claim

The paper does not claim that the output of the mechanism corresponds to reality as it is in itself. The mechanism produces descriptions and names. Whether those descriptions and names are *accurate* — whether they match the structure of reality independent of their having been produced by a cognizing entity — is a question the paper does not answer. The mechanism, as described here, is consistent with many different theories of correspondence (or of its absence). The paper is not committed to any of them. It is committed only to the description of what the mechanism does.

This is a deliberate self-limitation. A reader who wishes to know whether their cognition is "accurate" will not find the answer here. That is a separate question, requiring separate arguments, and the paper does not pretend to provide those arguments.

6.2 No Universality Claim

The paper does not claim that every cognizing entity, everywhere, uses this mechanism and only this mechanism. The author has described a mechanism he has observed in himself and inferred in others from behavioural evidence. The inference may be mistaken. Some cognizing entities may use different procedures. Some may use no procedure that the present paper's language can capture. The author welcomes reports of such cases. The generalization offered here is tentative, and it is revisable in light of counter-examples.

6.3 No Causal-Motivational Claim

The paper does not explain *why* a cognizing entity turns toward reality in the first place. It describes the mechanism by which the turning, once initiated, proceeds. But what initiates the turning — what moves the entity to attend, to describe, to name, rather than to remain inert — is a question about the entity's directional structure, not about the mechanism itself. That question is addressed in the companion paper on Aviplestos (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026b), which describes the structural tendency toward configurations not yet occupied as the directional condition under which the mechanism is continuously re-engaged. The present paper takes the initiation for granted and describes what happens once it has occurred.

7. Relation to the Synthetic Principle and Aviplestos

7.1 Relation to the Synthetic Principle

The Synthetic Principle (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026a) describes synthesis as a universal mechanism by which discrete elements are integrated into configurations whose properties are irreducible to those of their components. This mechanism operates throughout reality, at every level at which integration occurs. Cognition is a part of reality, and synthesis accordingly operates within cognition as well — at each of the three functions this paper distinguishes: in observation, where the object's region and the observer's aperture are integrated into reality-under-observation (Section 3.1); in description, where scattered observations are integrated into descriptions whose properties exceed those of any single observation taken alone (Section 3.2); and in naming, where a description is integrated with the commitment that stabilizes it into a re-identifiable unit (Section 3.3). That cognition is a region in which synthesis operates at every one of its functions is what one would expect of a universal mechanism, not an exception to it.

The Ontonoetic Pattern does not subsume the Synthetic Principle, and the Synthetic Principle does not subsume the Ontonoetic Pattern. They operate at different scales of generality. The Synthetic Principle is a universal mechanism of generation; the Ontonoetic Pattern is a specific phenomenon that occurs at specific locations within reality — namely, wherever cognizing entities exist and turn back toward the reality of which they are a part. The specific phenomenon makes use of the universal mechanism — at each of its functions, not at one privileged moment — but is not identical with it and cannot be derived from it by general argument. What the universal mechanism does in the specific case must be described in its own terms, and that is the work the present paper has undertaken.

7.2 Relation to Aviplestos

Aviplestos (Huỳnh Mai Phúc, 2026b) describes the structural tendency of every entity toward configurations it does not yet occupy, operating throughout reality and at every level of organization. This tendency, at the level at which cognizing entities exist, is the directional condition under which the Ontonoetic Pattern is continuously re-engaged. An entity that had no structural tendency toward configurations not yet occupied would observe once, describe once, name once, and then stop — having no reason to turn toward reality again. In such an entity, the mechanism would occur, if at all, as a one-time event and would not accumulate into the continuous cognitive activity that is characteristic of actual cognizing entities.

The Ontonoetic Pattern describes *what* the entity does. Aviplestos describes *that* the entity keeps doing it, and in which direction. Neither paper can be derived from the other. They address different questions and offer answers that are compatible but independent. An

account of cognition that used only the Ontonoetic Pattern, with no Aviplestos, would describe a mechanism that inexplicably runs for no reason. An account that used only Aviplestos, with no Ontonoetic Pattern, would describe a directionality with no mechanism to carry it. Together, the two papers describe a cognizing entity that is both *moving* and *articulating* — and the combination of motion and articulation is what the author has observed cognition to be.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary

The paper has described a three-function mechanism — observation, description, naming — by which a cognizing entity articulates reality. It has given the mechanism a name, Ontonoetic Pattern, chosen to mark the specific procedure described without importing the theoretical assumptions of existing terminology. It has placed cognition structurally as a subset of reality rather than as a parallel domain, and has drawn the consequence that the mechanism applies equally when the entity is articulating physical reality directly and when it is articulating the externalized cognitive output of another entity. It has made explicit what the mechanism does not claim: it does not claim correspondence between its outputs and reality, it does not claim universality across all cognizing entities, and it does not explain why the entity turns toward reality in the first place. It has related its account briefly to other components of the research programme (Section 7) — the Synthetic Principle, which describes the universal mechanism of generation that operates within the second function of the present mechanism, and Aviplestos, which describes the directional condition under which the mechanism is continuously re-engaged.

8.2 The Paper as an Instance of Its Own Subject

The paper is itself an instance of the mechanism it describes. The author observed his own cognitive activity, described what he observed, and committed the description to the transmissible unit that the reader is now holding. The name "Ontonoetic Pattern" is the third function of that procedure, made external. The paper is thus not only a description of a mechanism; it is a performance of one — and every reader who finds the paper intelligible performs another instance of the mechanism in the act of reading.

This recursive property is not a trick. It is a structural feature of any description of cognition that is offered by a cognizing entity. A paper *about* the mechanism by which cognition articulates reality is, necessarily, a product of the mechanism by which cognition articulates reality — because there is no vantage point from which the description could be offered other than from within the very procedure being described. The author offers this feature not as a paradox to be resolved but as a condition to be acknowledged. The paper is what it describes, operating once, on itself, for the reader's inspection.

References and Convergences

Programme Components

Huỳnh Mai Phúc. (2026a). *The Synthetic Principle: An Observation of the Mechanism by Which Discrete Elements Generate Irreducible Configurations.* Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.57967/hf/11444

Huỳnh Mai Phúc. (2026b). *Aviplestos: The Structural Tendency Toward the Not-Yet.* Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.57967/hf/11444

Huỳnh Mai Phúc. (2026d). *Patterns and Cognition: Resolution, Aperture, and the Limits of Articulation.* Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.57967/hf/11444

Huỳnh Mai Phúc. (2026e). *The Passage of Becoming: An Observation of How the Classification of Configurations Is the Trace of the Mechanism's Passage Through the Regions of Existence, Cognition, Consciousness, and Reflection.* Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.57967/hf/11444

Huỳnh Mai Phúc. (2026g). *Stachoria: The Ontic Condition Within Which a Configuration Takes Form.* Working Paper. https://doi.org/10.57967/hf/11444

Points of Ontological Convergence

The works listed below are not foundations on which the framework was built, but points at which the completed articulation was found to converge with the thought of others — identified and compared only after the theoretical framework was complete.

Einstein, A. (1920). *Fundamental Ideas and Methods of the Theory of Relativity, Presented in Their Development.* Unpublished manuscript. Einstein Archives, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

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