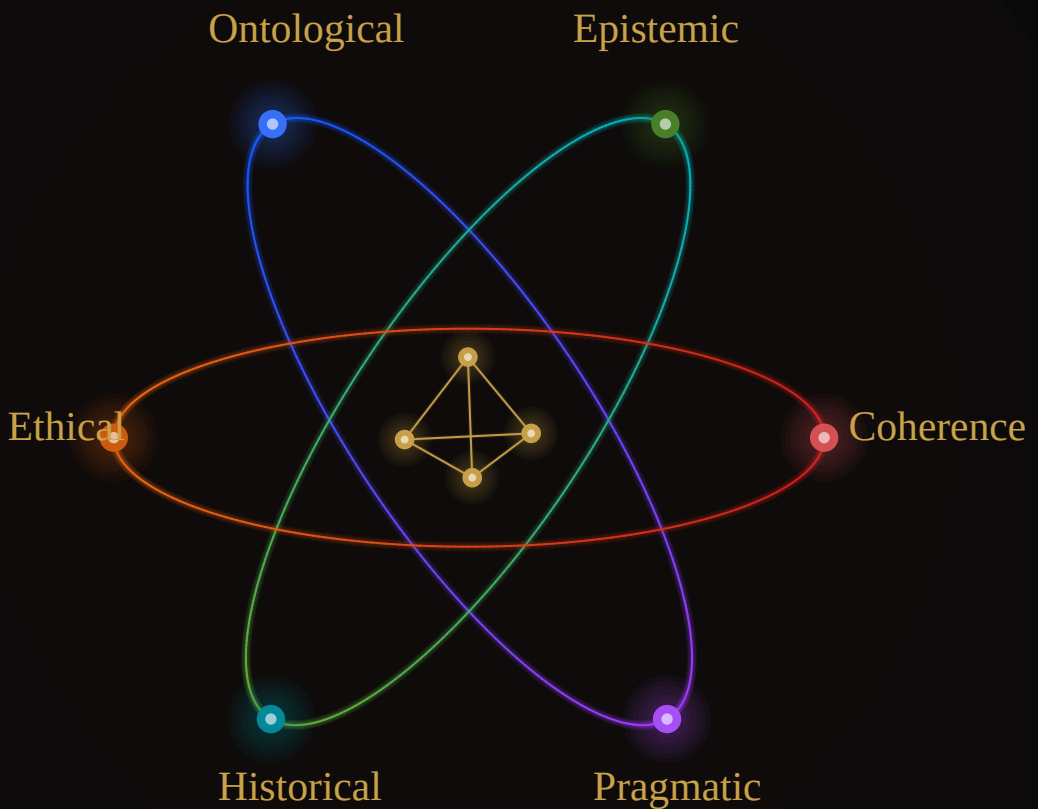


ONTOLOGY OF THE CONCEPT I

The Matrix of Mediated Truth

General Grammar of Real Determination



Gian Luca Di Tullio

ONTOLOGY OF THE CONCEPT I

The Matrix of Mediated Truth

General Grammar of Real Determination

Gian Luca Di Tullio



EXTRACT FROM VOLUME I

First volume of a five-volume work

*To those who seek truth not as inert possession,
but as an unceasing journey.
Against the tyranny of opinions and appearance,
for only truth can shatter pseudoconcreteness
and alleviate human misery.*

The Concept as the Immanent Form of Reality

The point of departure of the work is a decisive question: in what sense can reality be thought as conceptual without being reduced to a product of thought?

The question requires a twofold exclusion. Against subjectivist reduction, the concept is not merely the way in which consciousness orders material external to it. Against formalist reduction, it is not an empty logical structure separated from the concreteness of being. Between these two renunciations the work places its hypothesis: the concept, the Begriff, is the immanent and processual form through which the determinations of reality are articulated within a mediated totality.

Every word in the formula carries a precise weight. Form indicates the internal principle of articulation, not a container imposed from without. Processual indicates that this principle subsists only in the movement through which determinations posit themselves, differentiate, enter into relation, transform, and recompose themselves. Mediated totality indicates a relational and differentiated unity, not a sum of elements and not a closure that effaces differences.

The work clarifies the difference through a literary image:

A novel does not coincide with the list of its characters, places, and episodes: it becomes a work when those materials enter into a plot that connects them, transforms them, and assigns each a function within the whole. Analogously, the concept is not the list of its determinations, but the form through which they hold together and become intelligible as moments of a totality.

From this follows the volume's theoretical position. The isolated datum remains preconceptual; thought external to the datum remains devoid of truth. The concept is the point at which thought and reality meet: reality becomes intelligible because it is articulated, and thought is true only insofar as it reconstructs that articulation.

This is not, however, an immediate identity or a harmony guaranteed in advance. Thought does not find reality transparent to itself: it reconstructs it because reality, in its own non-immediacy, compels a movement back from appearances and isolated data to the mediations that make them intelligible. This is the work of the concept upon the fracture, understood as a mediable non-coincidence rather than as an ultimate dualism.

The hypothesis belongs to the idealist-dialectical tradition, but rejects every dogmatic or teleologically guaranteed version of it: the unity of thought and being is not presupposed as an outcome already secured by history or logic; it is the very problem of the work.

Truth as Mediated Robustness

A new determination of the concept corresponds to a different conception of truth. Truth is not definitive possession, simple point-by-point correspondence, isolated formal coherence, or historical efficacy taken in itself. None of these dimensions is false when considered in isolation; each becomes insufficient when it claims to count, by itself, as the whole truth.

CANONICAL FORMULA

Truth is the mediated robustness of the relevant grounds of validity, subjected to scrutiny and locally validated with reference to reality. It therefore does not coincide with a sovereign criterion, but with the capacity of a determination to withstand the composition of mutually irreducible tests.

To prevent the formula from remaining a mere image, the volume translates it into a grammar: the claim is ascribed to the relevant bearer; the Level poses the question; the ground supplies the specific reason; the criterion establishes the rule of assessment; the test applies it; validity constitutes the local outcome; the Matrix composes the relevant outcomes; truth designates their mediated robustness in relation to reality. The real determination supplies the referent and the relations that the reconstruction must respect: it does not “advance” a reason.

A conceptual determination stands as true not because it is merely grounded, justified, coherent, or expounded, but because it holds within the mediated totality across the relevant grounds subjected to scrutiny. When it becomes praxis, institution, or operative principle, it must also be historically situated and tested with respect to the conditions of its actuality and the consequences of its operation.

A decisive consequence follows: falsehood does not consist only in propositional error. It often arises from the absolutization of a local validity that illegitimately claims to stand for the whole. Substantialist ontology without epistemic scrutiny becomes dogmatism; coherence without reality becomes formalism; language without grounding becomes rhetoric; history without validity becomes historicism; ethics without mediation becomes moralism.

The criterion has a prudential corollary: the historical failure of a determination does not automatically refute its content. History tests its conditions of actuality without becoming the sovereign tribunal of truth.

TERMINOLOGICAL NOTE

Within the system, validity without qualification designates the local outcome whereby a claim holds with respect to the question and criterion proper to a Level. Formal-logical validity is always named in full.

The Six Truth-Validity Levels · I

The conditions of validity are not merely listed: the deduction establishes their non-substitutability and reconstructs their genesis in structural fractures, that is, in the internal non-coincidences through which validity reveals differentiated conditions. There are six Levels, and each can be formulated as a necessary question.

01 Ontological-Foundational

What structure of being makes this determination possible? Before any justification, one must establish what a determination is and under what structural conditions it owes its possibility.

02 Epistemic-Alethic

Under what conditions can this determination be known and justified as true? What exists does not immediately coincide with what is justified as true: the epistemic claim must be capable of argument, revision, and scrutiny.

03 Coherence-Based / Logical-Systemic

Can it be integrated into the whole without destructive contradiction? A determination may be grounded and argued for, yet still be incompatible with the whole to which it belongs. Without coherence, the grounds remain scattered among isolated assertions.

The Six Truth-Validity Levels · II

o4 Pragmatic-Discursive

Can it be expounded in a manner open to scrutiny without betraying its content? What cannot be formulated, clarified, and subjected to intersubjective criticism remains devoid of discursive validity. Language does not ground being, but renders the determination accessible, discussable, and criticizable.

o5 Historical-Dialectical-Social

What actuality does it possess within historical-social reality? Not only already achieved realization, but the presence of mediations, tendencies, contradictions, subjects, institutions, conflicts, and real possibilities inscribed in the present.

o6 Ethical-Existential

Can the consequences of its operation be rationally assumed and sustained? Every determination that becomes a real force produces effects that exceed intention. This Level does not moralize the system: it tests their structural assumability.

The non-reducibility of the six is not asserted on the basis of nominal difference, but demonstrated by loss: every absorption erases a necessary distinction. Reducing the foundational to the epistemic would erase the difference between lack of grounding and lack of justification; reducing the pragmatic to the coherence-based would make invisible a determination that is coherent yet shielded from criticism through opacity, jargon, or authority; reducing the ethical to the historical would turn the duration of a form into proof of its sustainability. No question exhausts truth by itself; none can be eliminated without producing one-sidedness.

Why Exactly Six?

From Chapter 14 - §§14.1-14.2

The Levels are not six by classificatory choice. They constitute the currently irreducible minimum configuration of mediated systemic validity, because they identify six questions, six grounds, and six autonomous modes of failure: ontological groundlessness, epistemic unjustifiability, systemic incoherence, opacity or discursive withdrawal, historical-social abstractness or structural impracticability, and the non-assumability of consequences.

The necessity of the number six therefore derives neither from an external classification nor from a mere counting of fractures. The argumentative sequence begins with the six questions and the six autonomous modes of failure, determines their non-substitutable functions, and then reconstructs their structural genesis in the five canonical fractures. The fractures are not a premise that is simply enumerated: they make intelligible why these functions emerge as internal non-coincidences of validity.

The five canonical non-coincidences make intelligible the structural genesis of the six truth-functions already identified as non-substitutable; they do not generate the number by simple counting. The being/knowing fracture is two-sided: from the side of being it requires the Ontological-Foundational grounding of the determination; from the side of knowing it requires its Epistemic-Alethic justification. The other four fractures are local validity/systemic totality, conceptual determination/linguistic exposition, conceptual determination/historical-social actuality, and action/consequence.

An additional Level would be legitimate only if it identified a structural non-coincidence not reducible to grounding, justification, coherence, exposition, historical-social actuality, or the assumability of consequences. If instead it designates a determinate domain - aesthetic, political, legal, economic, technological, ecological, or anthropological - it does not constitute a new Level, but a material configuration in which the already deduced Levels operate according to dominance and implication.

Numerical closure therefore does not exhaust all possible fields of experience; it exhausts the minimum structural conditions of mediated systemic validity.

Conditioned Necessity, Methodological Openness

From Chapter 14 - §14.1

To be admitted, a new Level would have to satisfy six conditions jointly: pose a question of validity not already contained in the six; possess a ground of its own; require a specific criterion; produce an autonomous mode of failure; be incapable of absorption without loss; and enter into reciprocal scrutiny with the other Levels. Thematic importance, the breadth of a domain, or the historical recurrence of a conceptual pair are not enough to cross this threshold.

A thesis may in fact be ontologically grounded but epistemically indefensible; epistemically argued but incoherent; coherent but discursively opaque; linguistically effective but historically abstract; historically operative but ethically destructive. In each case, not every dimension of truth disappears, but its multi-level integrity does.

STATUS OF THE DEDUCTION

The deduction proposed here is not formal-apodictic and does not claim to derive the Levels from neutral premises through a conclusive calculation. It is a structural and systemically conditioned deduction: given the determination of the Begriff as the immanent and processual form of articulation, and truth as the mediated robustness of grounds of validity, it reconstructs the conditions without which a determination cannot sustain that claim.

The Levels do not form a temporal sequence or a progressive scale of grounding, but an articulated structure of reciprocally implicated tests. The deduction proves the internal non-reducibility of the six functions given the premises of the system; it does not claim to demonstrate the absolute uniqueness of every possible grammar of validity.

This clarification prevents two opposite errors: historicism, according to which the Levels would be only the contingent product of a particular age, and abstract transcendentalism, according to which they would be pure and ahistorical forms of thought. The position of the volume is different: the Levels are structural conditions of validity that become historically thematizable when social determinations lay claim to a truth exceeding their own genesis.

Their necessity is systemic and conditioned by the explicit premises: if a function proved absorbable without loss, or an additional irreducible function emerged, the configuration would have to be revised.

What Cannot Be Denied Without Presupposing It

From Chapter 14 - §14.4

The structural deduction has shown why the Levels are required by validity. It remains to clarify in what sense their radical denial cannot escape the constitutive conditions of the minimum performative threshold of validity, and why this inescapability must not be transformed into dogmatic immunization of the system.

LIMIT OF THE CONSEQUENTIA MIRABILIS

The consequentia mirabilis does not constitute a formal-logical deduction of the entire Matrix, nor does it automatically prove every determinate articulation of the system. It shows something more circumscribed: the performative self-refutation of the radical denial of validity.

A denial that seeks to count as a theoretical denial must already refer to something, claim validity, maintain a minimum coherence, and expose itself discursively. It therefore presupposes the minimum performative threshold of validity precisely while attempting to deny it. We speak of performative undeniability because the very attempt to deny the minimum conditions of validity presupposes and enacts them in the denial.

The consequentia mirabilis therefore shows the performative inescapability of the minimum functions correlated with the first four Levels: determinable reference, justifiability of the claim, minimum coherence, and discursive formulability. It does not render inescapable, in all their content, the analytical doctrines developed within those Levels.

The fifth and sixth Levels are not inescapable under the same regime. The Historical-Dialectical-Social Level and the Ethical-Existential Level are not minimum formal presuppositions of every act of denial, nor can they be derived through the consequentia mirabilis alone. They become necessary when the claim to validity is considered as a real determination, historically situated and responsibly assumable.

The consequentia mirabilis does not replace the structural deduction of the Levels; it reflexively confirms its inescapable core.

Undeniable Does Not Mean Untouchable

From Chapter 14 - §14.4

The distinction between inescapability and revisability does not weaken the Matrix, but prevents its overextension. The consequentia mirabilis does not immunize the system: it only prevents criticism from presenting itself as an absolute denial of all validity. Criticism remains possible, but it must assume its own grounds of validity, declare its criteria, expose itself to scrutiny, and answer for its consequences.

The anti-dogmatic clause is therefore internal to the deduction of the Levels. A system can become dogmatic not only when it rejects external scrutiny, but also when it turns its internal architecture into a non-revisable absolute. The Levels do not protect the system from criticism; they render it criticizable according to internal criteria. They do not immunize truth; they render its claim open to scrutiny.

For this reason, the number six must not be understood as a numerical dogma, an absolute metaphysical closure, or an irreformable metahistorical form. It holds as the outcome of the minimum and non-redundant differentiation of the functions necessary to mediated systemic validity. Any further articulations would have to show that they are not internal specifications, applicative intersections, or subordinate developments of one of the six already determined Levels.

The closure achieved is not absolute in a dogmatic sense, but structural in an ontological-methodological sense. It does not prove that nothing further can ever be thought; it shows that no determination can attain mediated systemic validity without accounting for the entire arc of the conditions already deduced, according to the incidence each assumes with respect to the relevant bearer.

One can therefore distinguish between the structural necessity of the Matrix and the historical revisability of its determinate formulations. The validity of the Levels is structurally grounded; their formulation remains historically perfectible. The rationality of the system does not consist in arbitrarily closing off the possible, but in determining the minimum conditions of validity without absolutizing its own present historical form.

Inescapable is the minimum performative threshold of validity; revisable remains the historical, terminological, and systematic form of its exposition.

Fractures, Questions, Grounds

The relation among structural fracture, Truth-Validity Level, necessary question, and primary ground of validity can be reconstructed in synoptic form.

Structural fracture	Truth-Validity Level	Necessary question	Ground
Being ≠ knowing, from the side of being	Ontological- Foundational	What structure of being makes this determination possible?	Grounding
Being ≠ knowing, from the side of knowledge	Epistemic- Alethic	Under what conditions can this determination be known and justified as true?	Justification
Local validity ≠ totality	Coherence-Based / Logical-Systemic	Can it be integrated into the whole without destructive contradiction?	Coherence
Determination ≠ linguistic exposition	Pragmatic- Discursive	Can it be expounded in a manner open to scrutiny without betraying its content?	Exposition
Determination ≠ historical-social actuality	Historical-Dialectical- Social	What actuality does it possess within historical-social reality?	Actuality
Action ≠ consequence	Ethical- Existential	Can the consequences of its operation be rationally assumed and sustained?	Assumability

The scheme has regulative, not classificatory, value. It does not partition reality into compartments and does not replace the deduction: it makes visible, in condensed form, the relation among fractures, questions, and grounds.

It should be used as an orienting device: every determination can be interrogated according to the Level it activates dominantly and according to those that remain implicated as conditions of scrutiny. An apparently ontological question may require epistemic scrutiny; a historical question, ethical scrutiny. The Levels do not divide truth; they articulate its operative conditions.

The Matrix of Mediated Truth

The six Levels do not operate separately. Their relation of cross-checking, together with their articulation with the Axes and Functions of the system, constitutes the meta-structure that gives the volume its title: the Matrix of Mediated Truth.

DOMINANCE AND IMPLICATION

Dominance indicates the Level that directs the primary scrutiny of a determination; implication indicates the necessary co-presence of the others, which remain active as constraints of scrutiny without assuming the principal function. Mediated truth is always multi-level, but never undifferentiated.

The passage from claim to overall judgment is articulated across eight distinct planes: the claim is ascribed to the relevant bearer; the Level poses the question; the ground supplies the specific reason; the criterion establishes the rule of assessment; the test applies it; validity constitutes the local outcome; composition integrates the relevant outcomes; truth designates their mediated robustness in relation to reality.

The Matrix is therefore not a classificatory grid but a device of inquiry: it does not mechanically assign each content to a Level, but requires every determination to make explicit its profile of validity by identifying dominance, implication, tension, and possible reduction.

THE CRITICAL FUNCTION

From this structure follows the work's diagnostic function: to prevent any Level, Axis, Function, or Category from absolutizing itself. The volume derives from it a repertoire of pathologies of truth - dogmatism, epistemologism, formalism, linguisticism, historicism, moralism, systemic self-immunization - each recognizable as the absolutization of a local ground.

The number six is neither symbolic nor conventional: it determines a systemic threshold of non-reduction, that is, a conditioned configuration. The work explicitly declares it revisable, and makes revisability a condition of method: a system is rigorous when it renders explicit the conditions of its validity, lays bare its mediations, and keeps open the possibility of revision.

The Matrix is not the building in place of the building; it is the architectonic condition that prevents the building from being constructed dogmatically.

Economy and Chrematistics · I

The distinction between economy and chrematistics allows us to see the Matrix at work. The aim here is not to establish a new Category in Volume I, but to show how a historical-praxical case can be subjected to the cross-checking of the six Levels without being reduced to a single criterion.

ADVERSARIAL RULE

The test must assume the rival position in its strongest formulation. The market is not reduced in advance to an ideology of accumulation, but is also considered as a device of decentralized coordination, the use of dispersed knowledge, the formation of price signals, and the discovery of opportunities. Only after this local ground has been acknowledged does it become legitimate to test whether it can count as an overall criterion of economic rationality.

01 At the Ontological-Foundational Level, the question is what the form under consideration is. Economy, in its minimal sense, concerns the mediation of the material reproduction of associated life; chrematistics, by contrast, concerns the accumulation of value as an autonomized end. The ontological point does not yet decide the historical judgment, but distinguishes two structures of determination.

02 At the Epistemic-Alethic Level, the question is how the distinction can be known and justified. One must show which criteria make it possible to distinguish the satisfaction of needs, social reproduction, accumulation, valorization, and the ideological naturalization of the market.

03 At the Coherence-Based / Logical-Systemic Level, contradiction emerges. A form that presents itself as the rational administration of needs may operate as the unlimited growth of accumulation: the local coherence of calculation enters into conflict with the systemic coherence of social reproduction, and the means becomes autonomous as an end.

Economy and Chrematistics · II

o4 At the Pragmatic-Discursive Level, the problem becomes linguistic. Chrematistics can conceal itself under the names of economy, efficiency, growth, competitiveness, or modernization: discourse is one of the sites in which a historical form renders itself articulable as neutral while rendering its own social presuppositions inarticulable.

o5 At the Historical-Dialectical-Social Level, the distinction is tested in praxis. In mature capitalism the chrematistic form can operate as an impersonal structure selecting what is possible, organizing labour, consumption, institutions, the rhythms of life, and hierarchies of power. Its historical actuality is not, however, enough to confer truth-robustness upon it.

o6 At the Ethical-Existential Level, finally, the question concerns the assumability of consequences. A form may prove efficient and historically dominant; yet if it destroys the conditions of common life, consumes the living, produces alienation, or subordinates every end to accumulation, it does not hold up under the ethical-existential profile of systemic robustness.

OUTCOME OF THE TEST

The case displays cross-checking: no Level decides alone; judgment arises from the composition of the outcomes. The test case does not ground the Matrix, but makes visible how it prevents the absolutization of a local ground.

Axes, Functions, Categories

A grammar of validity corresponds to an architecture. The work follows the concept in four fundamental directions, called Axes: not separate domains, but inseparable ways of thinking the same form.

01 ONTO-LOGIC OF THE CONCEPT The concept as the form of being.	02 HISTORICAL-PRAXICAL ONTOLOGY The concept as praxis, history, and transformation.
03 LINGUISTIC-POIETIC-DISCURSIVE The concept as language, meaning, and the publicness of truth.	04 METHODOLOGICAL-REFLEXIVE The concept as method, self-consciousness, and freedom.

Within each Axis operate the Functions, internal tasks that the concept must perform at that point in the movement: to ground, mediate, articulate, distinguish, expound, test, correct, and prepare a transition. The Categories are the determinations produced by the Functions; the Hinges make explicit and assessable the immanent necessity of the transition from one Axis to the next, when the relative completion of an Axis discloses an internal limit.

The Truth-Validity Levels cut across this architecture transversally: the Axes articulate the movement, while the Levels test its validity. This is why the Matrix is constructed first. Without it, the system would proceed by accumulation and become a sum of themes - being, praxis, language, method, freedom, history, power, economy, community, responsibility. Through it, each nucleus receives a determinate profile of validity and scrutiny.

PLAN OF THE WORK

Volume I establishes the Matrix. The subsequent volumes do not apply it mechanically: they put it to work. Volume II will develop Axis 01, Volume III Axis 02, Volume IV Axis 03, and Volume V Axis 04. Each volume will have its own dominance, but none can isolate itself: onto-logic without praxis would remain abstract, praxis without grounding would become historicism, language without reality would become linguisticism, and method without content would become reflexive formalism.

The Matrix provides the grammar of validity; the Axes expound its real syntax. The transition is not from foundation to application: it is the transition from structure to process.

What Volume I Establishes

The theoretical result of Volume I consists in determining truth as the mediated, multi-level robustness of determinations within a mediated totality: the composition of local validities, the reciprocal scrutiny of the relevant grounds, and the responsible assumption of consequences.

The result is twofold. On the one hand, the volume grounds the structure of truth as multi-level robustness. On the other, it provides the criterion for recognizing its pathologies. It therefore does not merely define truth: it establishes the conditions of its critique.

The further and progressive verification of this result continues in the analytical development of the Axes and in the system's final return to the Matrix. That return is intended to prevent two opposite drifts: dispersion, if the Axes were to develop as autonomous paths, and self-immunization, if the system were to mistake its initial structure for a definitive guarantee.

THE VOLUME

Structure Four Parts, thirty chapters, Preface, General Introduction, Conclusion.

Part I Nature of the project and form of the work.

Part II Key to the system: Axes, Functions, Categories, Hinges, Relational Structure.

Part III The Systematic Index as the architecture of the work: the General Systematic Table.

Part IV The Matrix of Truth-Validity Levels: lexicon, deduction, unity and difference, Axis-Level and Function-Level Matrices, cross-checking, Relational Structure.

Apparatus Notice on the use of fundamental terms, systematic lexicon, apparatus of philological-genetic notes, General Bibliography, Thematic Overview of Sources, Concordance of Notes, Analytical Index of Names, Analytical Index of Technical Terms.

Interlocutors Hegel, Marx, Lukács, Preve; the contemporary debate on truth and alethic pluralism.

The indented passages in italics are verbatim quotations from the volume.