

Coherence as the Ground of Everything

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April 2026

Abstract

This paper argues that coherence is the fundamental structural condition that allows anything to exist. Rather than treating coherence as a property of systems, I show that coherence is the ground from which structure, orientation, distinction, and ultimately the manifold arise. Coherence in its eternal form contains no time, space, sequence, or dimensionality; for coherence to be expressible, it must instantiate a minimal asymmetry—orientation. This orientation is the first derivative of coherence and gives rise to the hinge, the structural operator that makes distinction, persistence, intelligibility, and dimensionality possible. The manifold is not a container in which coherence appears; it is the stabilized expression of coherence under orientation. I further show that incoherent configurations cannot instantiate or persist, and therefore only coherence can exist. This framework provides a unified structural account of ontology, development, and intelligibility, and offers a new foundation for cosmology grounded not in temporal causation but in structural necessity.

I. Coherence as the Ground of Everything

The starting point is the recognition that every “thing” is an expression of coherence. A thing is not an object in the classical sense but a stable relational configuration. What persists does so because its internal relations do not contradict one another. Stability is not a property added to a thing; stability is the thing. If the relations within a configuration cannot hold together, the configuration cannot instantiate, cannot persist, and therefore cannot exist.

This leads to the first structural claim of the paper: incoherent configurations cannot be rendered by the manifold. They cannot appear, even momentarily. They cannot be instantiated as possibilities. They cannot be part of reality in any sense. The manifold does not “filter out” incoherence; incoherence is structurally impossible to instantiate.

From this, the conclusion follows directly. Only coherence can exist. Anything that exists is coherent by necessity, not by accident. Coherence is not a property of things but the ground from which things arise. It is the structural condition that makes existence possible at all.

Coherence is therefore not one feature among many. It is the fundamental operator. Everything that appears, persists, or becomes intelligible does so because coherence is already in place as the enabling condition. Coherence is the ground of everything.

II. The Manifold Requires Coherence to Exist

If coherence is the ground of everything, then the manifold cannot be prior to coherence, independent of coherence, or capable of instantiating anything incoherent. The manifold is not a neutral container into which configurations are placed. It is the stabilized expression of coherence under the conditions coherence itself makes possible.

A manifold can only render what is structurally coherent. This is not a filtering process or a selection mechanism. It is a structural limitation. Incoherent configurations cannot be instantiated because there is no way for the manifold to hold them. They cannot be represented, even momentarily. They cannot appear as possibilities. They cannot be part of reality in any sense.

For a manifold to exist at all, it must instantiate coherence. This does not mean the manifold produces coherence. Coherence is not generated by the manifold. Coherence is the precondition for the manifold's existence. The manifold is coherence expressed under orientation.

This leads to the structural chain that organizes the rest of the paper:

Coherence → Orientation → Hinge → Manifold

Coherence is the ground. Orientation is the first derivative. The hinge is coherence taking on relational form. The manifold is the stabilized result. The manifold does not precede coherence; it depends on coherence. It does not create coherence; it expresses it. It does not contain coherence; it is the form coherence takes when rendered.

The manifold requires coherence to exist because coherence is the only thing that can be instantiated. Everything else collapses before it can appear.

III. Orientation as the First Derivative of Coherence

If coherence is the ground of everything, then coherence in its eternal form contains none of the features we associate with existence inside a manifold. It has no time, no space, no sequence, no dimensionality, no distinction, and no direction. Coherence as such is perfectly self-consistent, but it is not yet expressible. For coherence to appear in any form that can be rendered, it must take on a minimal asymmetry. This minimal asymmetry is orientation.

Orientation is not a spatial direction or a temporal arrow. It is the first distinction coherence can instantiate. It is the smallest possible deviation from perfect symmetry that still preserves coherence. Without orientation, coherence remains unexpressed. With orientation, coherence becomes capable of generating relation.

Orientation is therefore the first derivative of coherence. It is the structural move that allows coherence to become intelligible. Once orientation exists, distinction becomes possible. Once distinction exists, persistence becomes possible. Once persistence exists, dimensionality becomes possible. Orientation is the hinge-enabling condition.

This is why orientation is not an added feature of the manifold. It is the precondition for the manifold. The manifold cannot exist without orientation because the manifold requires distinction, persistence, and intelligibility, all of which depend on orientation. Orientation is coherence taking its first step toward expression.

IV. The Hinge as Coherence-Instantiated Orientation

Orientation is the first derivative of coherence, but orientation alone is not yet a relation. It is the minimal asymmetry that makes relation possible. The hinge is the moment orientation becomes structurally active. It is coherence taking on relational form. The hinge is not coherence itself, and it is not a temporal event. It is the first coherent relation that can exist once orientation is present.

The hinge makes distinction possible. Without the hinge, there is no way to separate one configuration from another, no way to mark a boundary, no way to generate a stable difference. Distinction is not a property added later; it is the direct consequence of the hinge. The hinge is the structural operator that allows coherence to express itself as something other than undifferentiated unity.

The hinge also makes persistence possible. Persistence requires a relation that can hold across orientation. Without the hinge, nothing can endure, because endurance is a relational phenomenon. The hinge provides the first stable relation that can support any form of continuity.

Dimensionality emerges from the hinge as well. Dimensions are not pre-existing containers. They are the stabilized consequences of hinge-structured relations. Once the hinge exists, coherence can express itself in ways that generate axes, directions, and the relational scaffolding that dimensionality requires.

Finally, the hinge makes intelligibility possible. Intelligibility depends on stable distinctions, persistent relations, and structured differences. All of these arise from the hinge. Without the hinge, nothing could be recognized, interpreted, or understood. The hinge is the structural condition that makes meaning possible.

The hinge is therefore the critical transition point in the chain. It is coherence instantiated under orientation, forming the first relation that can support a manifold. Everything that follows—

dimensionality, persistence, intelligibility, and the manifold itself—depends on the hinge.

V. Hebrew and Greek Facets of Coherence

If coherence is the structural ground of everything, it is reasonable to ask whether earlier intellectual traditions had a concept for it. No ancient language contains a single word that captures coherence in the precise structural sense used here. But several words in both Hebrew and Greek point to facets of the same underlying architecture. These terms do not define coherence, but they illuminate aspects of it that were recognized long before a formal structural account existed.

In Hebrew, *emet* refers to stability and reliability, the sense that something holds together and can be trusted. *Shalom* conveys wholeness and the integrity of a system whose parts are in right relation. *Bara* describes generative ordering, the act of bringing structured coherence into being. *Hesed* reflects relational fidelity, the capacity of a relation to persist without collapse. *Tohu vavohu* represents incoherence, the condition in which no stable configuration can form. Each of these terms captures a different facet of coherence as a structural condition.

In Greek, *logos* refers to intelligible order, the principle that makes the world comprehensible. *Aletheia* points to non-contradiction, the condition under which something can be revealed without collapsing. *Taxis* denotes ordered arrangement, the structured placement of relations. *Oikonomia* refers to system integrity, the internal coherence of a functioning whole. These concepts do not map perfectly onto the structural account developed here, but they resonate with it. They show that coherence has long been recognized as the condition that makes intelligibility, stability, and order possible.

The point is not that ancient languages anticipated the structural theory presented in this paper. Rather, they recognized the facets of coherence that become explicit once coherence is understood as the ground of everything. The structure is real; the vocabulary is historical. Coherence does not depend on these words, but these words reveal how coherence has been perceived across traditions.

VI. Coherence Is Just Our Word for the Structure

If coherence is the ground of everything, it is important to distinguish between the structure itself and the language we use to describe it. The structure is real. The vocabulary is ours. Coherence is not a metaphysical label or a philosophical preference. It is the name we give to the structural condition that allows anything to exist, persist, or become intelligible.

The hinge does not depend on the word coherence. Orientation does not depend on the word orientation. The manifold does not depend on the conceptual framework we use to describe it. These structures operate whether or not we name them. They are not linguistic constructs. They are the underlying architecture of existence.

This means that coherence is not a theory about the world. It is an account of the structural conditions that make a world possible. The term coherence is simply the most accurate label we have for the condition under which relations can stabilize and configurations can persist. The structure itself is prior to language, prior to interpretation, and prior to any conceptual scheme.

Recognizing this prevents a common confusion. Coherence is not a property added to things. It is not a descriptive category. It is the structural requirement that makes things possible. When we say that coherence is the ground of everything, we are not making a linguistic claim. We are identifying the condition that must hold for anything to appear at all.

The structure does not care what we call it. Our terminology is a tool for understanding, not a determinant of the architecture. Coherence is simply the name we use for the structural necessity that underlies existence.

VII. Development as Coherence in Motion

If coherence is the ground of everything, then development is the way coherence becomes visible across time. Development is not the addition of new properties or the accumulation of complexity. It is coherence unfolding under temporal conditions. What appears as growth, learning, maturation, or transformation is coherence expressing itself through a sequence of increasingly stable relational

configurations.

Infants display the earliest forms of hinge-level orientation. Their actions are not random; they are structured attempts to stabilize relation. As children grow, their coherence expands. They form distinctions, internalize patterns, and build increasingly complex relational structures. Their development is the progressive stabilization of coherence across new domains.

Adults show either reinforcement or collapse of coherence. Reinforcement occurs when relational structures become more stable, more integrated, and more capable of supporting complexity. Collapse occurs when coherence is lost, when relations fail to hold, or when internal contradictions overwhelm stability. These patterns are not psychological accidents. They are structural expressions of coherence under temporal pressure.

Development is therefore the human-scale version of the ontology presented in this paper. It is coherence rendered in motion. The same structural principles that govern the emergence of the manifold govern the emergence of a person. Coherence grounds existence at every scale, from the origin of the manifold to the unfolding of a life.

VIII. Philosophical Echo: “If we can exist, we must.”

Across the history of philosophy, several thinkers have approached the idea that existence is grounded in necessity rather than contingency. Spinoza framed existence in terms of substance expressing itself through attributes. Leibniz argued that the actual world is the one with maximal internal coherence. Aquinas held that existence requires a ground that cannot fail to exist. These positions differ in detail, but they share a common intuition: existence is not arbitrary.

The structural account developed in this paper sharpens that intuition. If only coherent configurations can instantiate, then anything that exists does so because coherence makes it possible. Existence is not a probabilistic outcome or a contingent accident. It is the expression of structural necessity. If a configuration is coherent, it can exist. If it is incoherent, it cannot. There is no middle category.

This leads to a cleaner formulation than any historical version: if we can exist, we must. This is not a

metaphysical claim about destiny or purpose. It is a structural observation. Coherence is the condition that allows existence. If a configuration satisfies that condition, its instantiation is not optional. It is structurally required. Existence follows from coherence the way stability follows from a well-formed relation.

The philosophical echoes matter because they show that the intuition behind coherence has been present for centuries. What was missing was a structural account that explains why existence must follow from coherence. The framework presented here provides that account.

IX. Final Structural Summary

The argument of this paper can be stated in a single sequence. Coherence is the ground of everything. It is the only structural condition that can be instantiated. Incoherent configurations cannot appear, cannot persist, and cannot be rendered by the manifold. Coherence in its eternal form contains no time, space, sequence, or dimensionality. For coherence to be expressible, it must take on a minimal asymmetry. This minimal asymmetry is orientation, the first distinction coherence can instantiate.

Orientation makes relation possible. The hinge is coherence instantiated under orientation, forming the first stable relation. The hinge enables distinction, persistence, dimensionality, and intelligibility. Once the hinge exists, a manifold can be rendered. The manifold is not a container but the stabilized expression of hinge-structured coherence. Everything that exists does so because coherence makes its existence structurally possible.

This framework unifies ontology, development, and intelligibility under a single structural principle. Coherence is not a property of things but the condition that allows things to exist. Orientation is coherence's first derivative. The hinge is coherence taking relational form. The manifold is coherence expressed as a world. If a configuration is coherent, it can exist. If it is incoherent, it cannot. The structure is simple, necessary, and complete.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that coherence is the fundamental structural condition that makes existence possible. Coherence is not a property of things but the ground from which things arise. Only coherent configurations can instantiate, persist, or become intelligible. Incoherent configurations cannot appear in any form. They cannot be rendered by the manifold. They cannot exist.

From this starting point, the paper traced the structural sequence through which coherence becomes expressible. Coherence in its eternal form contains no time, space, sequence, or dimensionality. For coherence to appear, it must take on a minimal asymmetry. This minimal asymmetry is orientation, the first distinction coherence can instantiate. Orientation makes relation possible. The hinge is coherence instantiated under orientation, forming the first stable relation. The hinge enables distinction, persistence, dimensionality, and intelligibility. Once the hinge exists, a manifold can be rendered. The manifold is coherence expressed as a world.

This framework shows that existence is not contingent or accidental. It is the expression of structural necessity. If a configuration is coherent, it can exist. If it is incoherent, it cannot. The structure is simple, complete, and sufficient. Coherence grounds everything that appears, everything that persists, and everything that can be understood. It is the architecture beneath the manifold and the condition that makes a world possible.

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