Synchronicity Without Metaphysics

A Constraint-Based Account of Meaningful Coincidence

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Abstract

Synchronicity describes an experienced correspondence between events whose significance exceeds their apparent causal connection. Explanations commonly move from this experience toward either hidden ordering principles or the dismissal of meaning as cognitive error. This paper develops an alternative within No-Ground Ontology: meaningful coincidence as temporary cross-scale constraint alignment among semi-independent systems. Recursive organization, scale-relative autonomy, metastability, and narrative integration jointly explain how an encounter can become coherent without being transmitted by an undiscovered energy or arranged for a predetermined purpose. Three processes are distinguished: non-inferential juxtaposition, partial structural reconvergence, and meaning construction. The account preserves ordinary causality while rejecting the inference that meaningful correspondence requires a special connecting force. It also separates physical coordination, statistical dependence, and semantic coherence. Pascal combinatorics provides a minimal illustration of unequal pathway multiplicity, not a demonstrated mechanism of autobiographical timing. Fibonacci-based developmental organization and narrative compression are treated as competing hypotheses requiring independent tests. The paper proposes prospective recording, explicit correspondence criteria, exposure-sensitive null models, and out-of-sample evaluation to distinguish experienced significance from excess statistical structure. Synchronicity is consequently approached as a cognitive-relational phenomenon whose existential importance need not depend on supernatural validation. The framework is a theoretical research program, not evidence that meaningful coincidences violate chance expectations or that coherence supplies reliable guidance.

Keywords: *synchronicity; No-Ground Ontology; recursive constraint; functional independence; metastability; meaning; temporal organization*

1. Introduction: From Hidden Connections to Conditions of Correspondence

A remembered image appears unexpectedly in an encounter. A conversation expresses a concern that has remained private. An event becomes significant because it coincides with a transition in identity. Such experiences raise two different questions: how the events occurred, and why their conjunction mattered. Treating these questions as identical encourages a misleading choice between extraordinary connection and meaningless accident. An occurrence can have ordinary antecedents while its relation to a person's circumstances becomes unexpectedly consequential.

Jung's account of synchronicity brought psychologically meaningful coincidence into sustained theoretical discussion through an acausal connecting principle (Jung, 1952/1973). Its enduring challenge is to understand correspondence without assuming that one coinciding event directly produced the other. However, a description of absent or unidentified direct connection does not itself establish a new principle governing reality. Likewise, the phenomenological importance emphasized in discussions of synchronicity cannot, by itself, decide between competing explanations of event frequency or timing (Main, 2007).

This paper proposes that synchronicity can be investigated through the organization of the conditions within which events become possible, noticeable, and meaningful. The explanatory focus shifts from an invisible connection between isolated occurrences to a shared constraint landscape: histories, environments, routines, symbolic repertoires, and developmental processes that structure otherwise distinct trajectories. The central proposal is that meaningful coincidence can arise through temporary alignment across these trajectories, followed by integration within an observer's ongoing life.

The phrase “without metaphysics” requires qualification. No account of mind and world is entirely free of philosophical commitments. Here it means without invoking a supernatural agency, timeless symbolic blueprint, universal consciousness field, or ultimate substrate as an explanatory supplement. No-Ground Ontology supplies the paper's non-foundational orientation; it is not presented as an experimentally established description of ultimate reality. The narrower explanatory proposals should remain assessable without requiring agreement with every ontological commitment.

Three levels of claim will therefore remain separate. The phenomenological claim concerns experienced significance. The organizational claim concerns how

constraints shape opportunities and interpretation. The stronger empirical claim concerns whether specified correspondences occur more often, or at different times, than appropriate comparison models predict. The first does not demonstrate the third. Nevertheless, respecting that distinction need not empty the experience of importance. The task is to explain how meaning becomes possible while keeping any additional claim about unusual organization open to correction.

2. No-Ground Ontology and Recursive Organization

2.1 Relations, constraints, and continuity

Within No-Ground Ontology, stable entities are understood as relatively persistent organizations of relations rather than substances whose identities are complete before interaction. A person, a social practice, or an interpretive pattern maintains continuity through activity and change. The relevant contrast is not between real things and unreal relations, but between permanence as an underlying essence and persistence as an organizational achievement.

Constraint names the organization of available possibilities. A learned language makes some expressions accessible and others difficult; a routine repeatedly places someone within particular settings. Neither example requires an additional force beyond the processes sustaining it. Constraints describe how those processes are organized and how their organization affects accessible states. Juarrero's (1999) treatment of dynamical constraints provides an important conceptual resource, although her account does not abolish causation: it reconceives causal explanation in organizational terms.

Recursion occurs when previous organization becomes a condition of subsequent organization. An encounter changes expectations; expectations influence attention and action; these changes alter later encounters. Earlier configurations are not simply repeated. They are selectively preserved, transformed, and carried forward. Constraint accumulation therefore allows continuity and novelty together. Its explanatory priority in this paper does not make constraint a new ultimate substance beneath the world.

A constraint landscape can be described without assuming that it exists as a completed map outside the processes it organizes. Some constraints endure; others arise through the activity they subsequently channel. Their relative stability makes explanation possible without requiring an endpoint at which every relation rests on a final ground. Coherence likewise names a relation among processes, not a replacement foundation. The proposed ontology would undermine itself if it converted its explanatory vocabulary into the very kind of ultimate entity it rejects.

This orientation supports an account of emergence without introducing a separate realm of exceptional powers. Following the methodological direction of weak emergence, higher-level patterns are investigated through the interactions and conditions from which they develop (Bedau, 1997). The present paper does not demonstrate that synchronicity has been derived from a completed computational model. Rather, it declines to treat explanatory incompleteness as permission to introduce a special ontological domain.

2.2 Distinction and the situated observer

An important consequence concerns boundaries. Difference and distinction are not identical: variation can exist before an observer classifies it into an operational category. The proposal developed here is that recursive stabilization makes some differences persistent enough to support distinction. Boundaries consequently function as interfaces that maintain differentiation while permitting interaction, rather than as absolute cuts between self-contained substances.

This matters because synchronistic experience involves domains normally distinguished as internal and external. Their momentary integration in experience need not erase their physical differences. An image and an encounter can become organized around a common concern without becoming one process. The observer is essential to identifying the correspondence as meaningful, but does not thereby create the external event. Epistemic participation does not entail ontological authorship.

The related expression “immanent transcendence” designates the possibility that a system reorganizes beyond its previous pattern without receiving its direction from outside nature. Its relevance is modest but important: a coincidence may occasion a new understanding without having been arranged to produce it. Meaning can exceed an earlier interpretation while remaining dependent on embodied, historical, and environmental relations, consistent with an enactive approach to cognition (Varela et al., 1991).

3. Functional Independence Without Absolute Separation

3.1 Independence is relative to a description

The fact that systems inhabit a common world does not imply that they exchange meaningful information continuously. Nor does the absence of an obvious connection establish absolute independence. The useful question is whether a

specified interaction matters for specified variables over a specified interval. Functional independence is consequently scale-relative and approximate: trajectories may be substantially autonomous for one purpose while sharing influences relevant to another.

Coarse graining helps clarify this distinction. A description of macroscopic organization retains selected variables while omitting microscopic details that are unnecessary for the question being asked (Goldenfeld, 1992). Such omission does not physically eliminate interactions, and it does not automatically establish independence. A neglected interaction may later prove important. Nevertheless, useful descriptions can preserve organizational regularities without tracking every exchange among all components.

For synchronicity, this means that semi-independent systems may possess partially overlapping histories, environments, or symbolic resources without being directly coordinated at the moment of correspondence. Two individuals can encounter related material because their activities draw from the same cultural repertoire. Their particular encounters need not transmit information between them. Shared constraint is not mysterious simply because it operates through distributed conditions rather than an immediately visible link.

For example, common cultural exposure can shape the marginal frequencies of symbols even when particular encounters remain statistically independent. A shared circumstance can also introduce dependence between encounters. These are different situations. The first raises the ordinary probability of matching through overlapping repertoires; the second requires modeling a common influence. Neither warrants assuming that one person's thought directly organized another event. A rigorous account should identify which relationship is being proposed rather than using semi-independence as an unrestricted explanation.

These distinctions also prevent a false opposition between causality and coherence. A coincidence can consist entirely of causally generated events while lacking a direct causal connection between the selected pair. A common influence may explain some association; chance can explain others. Calling the conjunction coherent adds an organizational or semantic description, not a demonstrated exemption from causal inquiry.

3.2 Three meanings of coherence

Physical coherence concerns defined relations among physical processes, such as coordination among oscillatory variables. Statistical coherence concerns reproducible dependence or pattern in a specified dataset. Semantic coherence concerns the intelligible relation between events and an observer's concerns. These

meanings can interact, but they are not interchangeable. A compelling narrative does not measure neural phase locking, and physiological coordination does not establish shared symbolic content.

Synchronization theory supplies examples of organized collective behavior, but spontaneous order should not be confused with order requiring no interaction, common input, or specified dynamics (Strogatz, 2003). Accordingly, the present theory does not borrow the success of oscillator models as evidence that distant autobiographical events synchronize. An application must identify what oscillates, how it is measured, and which relations connect the proposed scales.

The defensible formulation is therefore "alignment without an additional direct connecting mechanism," not "events without causes." Constraints may be physically implemented, historically inherited, institutionally maintained, or cognitively enacted. Their explanatory contribution lies in identifying the organization relevant to correspondence. A framework becomes informative only when it specifies those constraints more precisely than the observation it seeks to explain.

4. Synchronicity as Cross-Scale Constraint Alignment

4.1 Four interacting scales

The positive proposal begins with four analytical scales. At the micro-scale, attention, memory activation, emotional salience, and perceptual categorization influence what becomes noticeable. At the meso-scale, activities, relationships, encounters, and environmental affordances structure opportunities. At the macro-scale, cultural narratives, institutions, languages, and shared symbolic repertoires distribute recurring motifs. At the developmental scale, slower changes in identity, commitments, and life circumstances alter the relevance of particular experiences.

These scales are not independent containers or a hierarchy of hidden agencies. A cultural symbol can be encountered in a specific situation and become emotionally significant because of a developmental concern. The term "meta-scale," used for slower temporal organization, should therefore designate an analytical timescale rather than a superior realm directing the others. Their interaction provides the proposed conditions for partial trajectory reconvergence.

Metastability describes the temporary persistence of an organization that retains possibilities for change. Coordination dynamics offers a vocabulary for considering the coexistence of relative integration and differentiation (Kelso, 1995). In the present application, a correspondence can briefly integrate memory, emotion,

context, and interpretation without permanently synchronizing their underlying processes. This is a conceptual extension, not a claim that a measured dynamical attractor has already been identified in synchronicity reports.

4.2 Three moments of meaningful coincidence

The first moment is non-inferential juxtaposition. Previously separate contents appear together before a deliberate explanation has been constructed. The original formulation, "non-rational juxtaposition," is best understood in this limited sense: the experience need not arise through explicit reasoning, but neither must it oppose rational assessment. A boundary between domains becomes less rigid at the level of attention or interpretation, permitting a comparison that was previously unavailable.

The second moment is structural alignment. Features of the encounter become compatible with an active concern, image, or autobiographical pattern. Compatibility may involve resemblance, contrast, timing, repetition, or an unexpected practical opportunity. "Partial reconvergence" does not require two trajectories to have literally occupied the same initial state. It identifies their temporary overlap under a specified description. The greater the flexibility of that description, the more carefully its evidential significance must be assessed.

The third moment is meaning construction. The correspondence is incorporated into memory, identity, or prospective action. It can reorganize how earlier events are understood and make a current concern more explicit. Meaning is thus neither an intrinsic message carried by the external object nor an arbitrary addition disconnected from circumstances. It arises through a relation between encountered features and an embodied history, extending the enactive orientation of Varela et al. (1991).

4.3 A hypothetical illustration

Consider a person contemplating reconciliation who privately remembers an abandoned footbridge. Later, while traveling along an unfamiliar route, the person encounters a restored bridge. The encounter seems to express the possibility of renewed connection. This is an invented example, not an evidential case. Its value is to distinguish the components that a real investigation would need to record.

The bridge has an ordinary history. The remembered image has a psychological history. The journey has situational antecedents. The symbolism of bridging belongs partly to a shared cultural repertoire. Their conjunction becomes meaningful because an unresolved concern makes the encountered structure relevant. Nothing

in this description requires the private image to have produced the restoration or a future reconciliation to have arranged the journey.

A later decision to contact someone would introduce a further causal sequence: the interpreted coincidence influences action. That consequence cannot retrospectively prove that the coincidence was sent to produce the decision. It does, however, explain how an initially unplanned correspondence could become genuinely consequential. Meaning can participate in subsequent organization without having governed the event's origin.

The subsequent feedback deserves equal attention. Once the bridge has become meaningful, the person might notice other bridges, remember earlier crossings, or choose activities connected with reconciliation. A sequence of correspondences could then develop through the interaction of interpretation and behavior. The theory predicts no inevitable escalation: attention may shift, the interpretation may weaken, or later encounters may contradict it. Nevertheless, subsequent observations cannot automatically be treated as independent confirmations of the initial experience, because the experience may have altered the conditions under which they were selected.

4.4 Compression and access

Configurational compression names the integration of several relations into a relatively compact experience. An image can gather memory, affect, intention, and context into a single apprehended fit. Predictive accounts of cognition provide a possible vocabulary for understanding why unexpected but interpretable encounters recruit attention (Clark, 2013). Here, however, compression remains a proposed explanatory description, not an established information-theoretic measure of personal meaning.

Synchronicity may consequently be described as an access condition: a moment when a previously unrecognized relation becomes experientially available. This does not make the experience an infallible disclosure of hidden order. Access may reveal a relevant correspondence, an interpretive possibility, or a misleading association. The framework preserves the importance of what becomes available while leaving its truth, generality, and consequences subject to further inquiry.

This relational account also explains why the same encounter need not carry the same significance for different observers. Without the relevant concern or history, a restored bridge might remain an ordinary structure. Observer dependence here concerns the organization of significance, not the bridge's existence. Conversely, an observer's conviction cannot determine whether the encounter exceeds an independently specified probability baseline. The distinction permits serious

attention to personal meaning without confusing its situated character with either arbitrary fabrication or objective confirmation.

5. Why Hidden Energetic Interconnection Is Unnecessary

An energetic explanation makes a stronger claim than an organizational description. It proposes a channel through which one system influences another. Such a claim requires specification of the carrier, its source, its interaction with a receiving system, and the conditions under which an effect should be detectable. For symbolic correspondence, it additionally requires an account of how relevant content is encoded and discriminated.

The mere existence of biological electrical activity does not supply that account. Even a measurable interaction would not establish that autobiographical meanings are transmitted through it. The inferential gap is between physical detectability and the selective production of a particular meaningful relation. Distance, timing, background influences, and alternative communication channels would need to be incorporated into any proposed mechanism rather than bypassed by the word "energy."

Similar caution applies to "resonance," "field," and "nonlocality." Used metaphorically, these expressions may convey the felt quality of an experience. Used physically, they introduce technical commitments that require an appropriate model. The argument here does not purport to rule out every conceivable physical hypothesis. It establishes that resemblance and significance alone do not provide the missing mechanism or evidence for it.

Relational embeddedness offers no shortcut. Shared membership in a universe does not entail effective symbolic coupling. Conversely, meaningful correspondence does not demand a newly discovered transmission channel when ordinary environmental structure, common histories, chance encounters, and interpretation remain available. The structural proposal is parsimonious precisely because it investigates those conditions before adding another category of influence.

A constraint landscape must not become a renamed energetic field. It is a description of relations that restrict or weight possibilities, not an invisible object acting everywhere. Its components should be identifiable as particular habits, opportunities, histories, representations, or measured temporal regularities. Where they cannot be specified, "constraint alignment" remains a research hypothesis rather than a completed explanation. This requirement applies equally to the present framework and to the energetic accounts it challenges.

6. Recursive Time and Competing Temporal Hypotheses

6.1 History without a cosmic timetable

Temporal organization enters the model because systems retain consequences of their histories. Earlier learning changes later expectations; earlier commitments change available choices. Time as recursive constraint refers here to this asymmetrical inheritance of organization. It does not establish that every feature of physical time reduces to psychological development, nor that chronological measurement should be replaced by symbolic interpretation.

Rovelli's (2018) discussion of relational temporality and Wolfram's (2020) proposed computational models illustrate ways of questioning a universal background picture. They do not demonstrate an explanation of synchronicity. Their relevance is comparative: temporal order can be examined through relations and processes rather than treated only as an empty container. No conclusion about anomalous correspondence follows simply from adopting that perspective.

Likewise, nested temporal processes need not share one governing rhythm. Fast perceptual changes, habitual schedules, relationship histories, and slower identity transformations can contribute differently to a particular encounter. Cross-scale alignment therefore need not mean literal simultaneous phase locking. A specific account must distinguish measured oscillation from recurrence, developmental transition, and narrative resemblance.

6.2 Developmental structure and narrative compression

Sacco's Fibonacci Life-Chart Method and subsequent harmonic model propose relationships between developmental timing and recursively organized numerical intervals (Sacco, 2016, 2018). Bandyopadhyay's (2020) account of nested temporal organization provides another speculative modeling vocabulary. Their inclusion identifies candidate approaches, not independent confirmation that meaningful events follow a universal Fibonacci clock. The biological, developmental, and phenomenological scales cannot be connected merely by using the same mathematical language.

Two interpretations must remain distinct. The structural-temporal hypothesis proposes that developmental processes generate nonuniform windows in which particular alignments become more probable. On this account, temporal organization would contribute predictive information beyond an observer's prior expectations or retrospective storytelling. A stronger Fibonacci version would need

to identify which recurrence relation applies, why its parameters are appropriate, and which observations could distinguish it from other timing models.

The representational hypothesis instead locates apparent regularity primarily in memory, categorization, and narrative compression. A numerical template may organize how a life is selected and described without governing the events themselves. This interpretation cannot simply declare Fibonacci intervals optimal for autobiographical memory: that claim also requires comparison with alternative schemes. Its testable implication concerns the effects of adopting a template on noticing, recall, and reporting.

A hybrid remains possible, but should not become a device that accommodates every outcome. Developmental changes could alter both exposure to relevant situations and readiness to interpret them. Evidence would then need to estimate these contributions separately. Event occurrence, experienced significance, and later recollection are distinct outcomes even when they influence one another.

6.3 Origins, recurrence, and fractality

No temporal origin should be granted metaphysical privilege. Birth, conception, or another starting point may serve a specified model, but selecting an origin is not evidence of an ontological singularity. Uncertainty in the chosen date and any fitted offsets must enter the analysis. Otherwise, shifting the origin can manufacture apparent agreement between events and a proposed lattice.

Finally, recurrence, Fibonacci scaling, and fractality are different claims. A few repeated intervals do not establish scale invariance, and a suggestive ratio does not identify a developmental attractor. The framework therefore treats “fractal time” as a hypothesis requiring an operational definition and suitable data. Its central account of meaningful coincidence does not depend on that stronger hypothesis being correct.

7. Combinatorial Geometry: Illustration Rather Than Proof

Pascal's triangle offers a useful minimal example of how recursive branching produces unequal multiplicities. For sequences of n binary choices, the coefficient $C(n,k)$ counts the paths containing k choices of one type. Under the additional assumption that all complete paths are equally probable, an outcome category has probability $C(n,k)/2^n$. Central categories collect more paths than extreme categories, even though no path has been directed toward a preferred symbolic outcome.

This illustrates a limited but relevant principle: uniformity at the level of paths does not imply uniformity at the level of aggregated outcomes. The result depends on the chosen aggregation and path probabilities. It does not show that all recursive systems follow a binomial distribution, or that psychological trajectories possess equally weighted binary branches. A correspondence with life histories would require an explicit mapping between measured variables and the model.

The valley image used to visualize high pathway density can therefore be helpful without being literal. High multiplicity is not itself a dynamical attractor. Attraction requires a rule describing how trajectories evolve toward a region; metastability requires conditions under which organization persists and then changes. A combinatorial count alone specifies neither. The proposed transition from pathway multiplicity to developmental convergence remains a modeling problem.

Fibonacci numbers also arise through particular diagonal sums in Pascal's triangle. This identity links two mathematical constructions, but does not make Fibonacci intervals privileged times for human events. Moving from an identity to such a prediction requires justified dynamics, temporal units, boundary conditions, and a measurement procedure. Mathematical elegance supplies a candidate structure, not the missing empirical bridge.

A simpler probability sketch clarifies what shared constraints can already accomplish. Suppose two semi-independent processes produce motifs from a fixed set of categories. Let p_k and q_k denote their category probabilities within a specified context. If the draws are independent in that context, their probability of matching is the sum of $p_k q_k$ over categories. Concentration on overlapping motifs can therefore increase expected matches without communication between the draws.

This construction is illustrative rather than a fitted synchronicity model. Its advantage is that it identifies the necessary quantities: category definitions, contextual distributions, exposure, and a comparison rate. It also shows why a match need not establish statistical dependence. Stronger claims must concern departures from an appropriate baseline, not the existence of recognizable correspondence alone. Constraint organization can explain ordinary opportunities for coincidence before any anomalous remainder is proposed.

8. Meaning Without Teleology

8.1 Purpose is not the origin of every significant event

Teleology enters when an event is explained by an end toward which it was supposedly arranged. A coincidence that later helps someone make sense of a transition can easily be redescribed as having occurred for that purpose. Yet its later

usefulness does not establish that purpose as its prior explanation. The difference is between discovering a possible direction through an experience and receiving a direction assigned by the world.

Three senses of purpose should be distinguished. An organism or person can pursue goals through ordinary activity. A narrative can organize earlier events around a later outcome. A metaphysical theory can attribute intention or final direction to reality itself. The present account accommodates goal-directed action and retrospective interpretation without inferring cosmic intention from them.

Accordingly, apparent guidance is reconstructed as an interaction between salience, existing concerns, and newly perceived possibilities. An encounter may make an option easier to articulate. It may also expose a tension between current behavior and an acknowledged commitment. Neither possibility requires the encounter to contain an instruction. Its significance depends on how the person interprets and assesses it within a wider situation.

8.2 Attractors do not prescribe destinations

An attractor is not a future purpose reaching backward to organize events. Where a dynamical model justifies the term, it describes behavior generated under specified rules and conditions. Similarly, a constraint does not know which outcome would be desirable. The language of convergence must not conceal a directing intelligence that the framework otherwise rejects.

This separates the proposal from interpretations of archetypes as timeless templates that organize external events. It does not deny that recurring symbolic patterns can be culturally persistent or psychologically important. Those patterns can be investigated through their formation and maintenance rather than assumed to pre-exist the processes they organize. The disagreement concerns explanatory status, not whether people genuinely encounter recurrent motifs.

Atmanspacher's (2012) dual-aspect account offers another comparison by relating mental and physical manifestations to an underlying domain. The present proposal does not adopt that domain as its explanatory starting point. It instead investigates relations among differentiated processes and their descriptions. This is an ontological difference between approaches, not an empirical demonstration that the competing framework is false.

8.3 Significance without endorsement

The expression “coherence as purpose” is defensible only when it means that people can cultivate worthwhile relations, not that whatever becomes coherent is

therefore worthwhile. A coherent interpretation can be mistaken, restrictive, or harmful. Organization alone supplies no sufficient criterion of truth or ethical value. The transition from descriptive coherence to desirable action requires additional judgment about consequences, commitments, and other people.

A coincidence may thus be used as a prompt for reflection without being treated as evidence that a decision is correct. The relevant question becomes what the experience brings into attention and whether the resulting interpretation survives ordinary assessment. A meaningful association does not establish another person's intentions, authorize an irreversible choice, or remove the need for independent reasons.

The existential implication is not that significance disappears when cosmic purpose is withheld. On this account, significance belongs to the changing relations through which a life is lived. An unplanned encounter may become important through what follows from it, while remaining unplanned. Meaning can be enacted without being ordained, and a future can be chosen without having been promised.

9. From Interpretation to a Testable Research Program

9.1 Separate occurrence, experience, and report

The framework's empirical value depends on distinctions that retrospective narratives can obscure. An external event occurs; someone notices a correspondence; an interpretation acquires significance; a report is produced or remembered. A change at any stage can alter the number of recorded synchronicities. Increased reporting therefore does not necessarily mean increased external alignment, just as ordinary event frequencies do not make subjective meaning unreal.

Research should record these stages as separately as practicable. Prospective accounts should specify the concern or expectation present before an encounter, the event and its timestamp, the circumstances of exposure, and the meaning initially attributed to it. Later reinterpretation should be retained as a separate observation rather than silently substituted for the original account. The proposal is methodological; no such new dataset is presented here.

9.2 Compare explanations with different commitments

A useful design would compare three model families. An interpretive model would use attention, prior expectations, emotional salience, and reporting behavior. A

shared-constraint model would additionally represent measurable environmental opportunities, routines, social overlap, and common symbolic resources. A temporal extension would add a prespecified developmental or harmonic structure. Each extension should improve prediction on observations not used to choose its parameters.

This comparison permits informative negative outcomes. Failure of a harmonic model would weaken that extension without invalidating the existence of meaningful experience. Failure of environmental variables to add predictive value would limit the proposed structural account in that setting. Conversely, a successful temporal predictor would not by itself establish a universal clock, a new force, or No-Ground Ontology. The scope of an inference must match the scope of the test.

To avoid circularity, coherence should not be defined solely as whatever a participant later finds meaningful. Correspondence criteria can be specified beforehand or assessed using a coding procedure independent of the hypothesis under test. Participant meaning ratings should remain important outcomes, but not serve simultaneously as the sole definition and independent confirmation of structural alignment.

The developmental proposal also suggests a specific, defeasible prediction: reported significance may increase during independently identified periods of reorganization because concerns, activities, and interpretations are changing together. That prediction requires comparison periods and separate measures of exposure and reporting. It would not be supported merely by asking participants, after a striking coincidence, whether their lives felt transitional. Developmental transition must be identified independently of the event whose occurrence it is intended to explain.

9.3 Baselines and temporal tests

The comparison distribution must reflect opportunities for correspondence. Frequent motifs, repeated exposure, shared calendars, and varying recording intensity can make some matches substantially more likely than others. A uniform random timeline is therefore not automatically an appropriate null model. An analysis should justify which properties its simulated or comparison records preserve, including temporal dependence where relevant.

Testing developmental harmonics requires particular care with age coordinates, origins, scaling factors, phase offsets, and matching windows. Choosing these after examining the same events creates opportunities to select unusually favorable configurations. Candidate families and evaluation rules should be fixed before confirmatory analysis, with exploratory searches labeled accordingly. Claims of

generality require evaluation across people and settings, not only additional observations from a single fitted life history.

Recording nonmatches and uneventful periods is also necessary when estimating rates. Without a denominator, a collection of striking cases cannot establish how often similarly meaningful conjunctions fail to occur. Sensitivity analyses should examine alternative category definitions, uncertain dates, unequal exposure, and influential observations. Replication should preserve the substantive prediction rather than continually adjusting the model to each new record.

9.4 What would count as progress?

Progress would consist in identifying which measured constraints improve explanation of occurrence, recognition, or interpretation, and under what conditions. Experimental manipulation of a narrative template could test representational effects. Prospective environmental sampling could test opportunity structure. Prespecified timing models could test incremental temporal organization. These are complementary investigations, not interchangeable confirmations of one encompassing theory.

Qualitative inquiry remains valuable alongside these comparisons. Careful interviews can distinguish immediate experience from later narrative elaboration and identify meanings that a fixed coding scheme might miss. Their role is not to establish improbability by emotional vividness, but to improve the description of what requires explanation. Conversely, statistical detection of a pattern does not establish its personal significance. An adequate research program needs both forms of inquiry while preserving their different evidential functions.

The principal limitation remains the distance between a broad organizational vocabulary and a quantitatively specified model. Terms such as metastability, compression, and cross-scale alignment must earn their explanatory role through operational definitions and discriminating predictions. Until then, the framework provides a coherent orientation and explicit research questions, rather than a demonstrated general mechanism for every experience labeled synchronicity.

10. Conclusion

Synchronicity need not be approached as a choice between hidden cosmic communication and meaningless illusion. A correspondence can become experientially important through the temporary alignment of attention, environmental opportunities, cultural patterns, and developmental concerns. Recursive constraint describes how these conditions acquire history and

organization; functional independence explains why their trajectories can remain distinct; narrative integration explains how an encounter becomes part of a life.

The resulting account rejects neither ordinary causality nor legitimate uncertainty. It rejects the inference that significance alone establishes a special connecting force or predetermined purpose. Its temporal extensions remain conditional, and its combinatorial illustrations do not substitute for measured dynamics. Distinguishing these levels protects the constructive proposal: meaningful coherence may arise within ordinary relational processes without being reducible to a message sent from elsewhere.

The proposal therefore has a modest explanatory core and a more ambitious empirical extension. Its core concerns how opportunities and interpretations meet within historically organized lives. Its extension asks whether specific shared constraints predict additional structure in correspondence. Keeping these commitments separate allows the framework to develop without making the reality of meaning depend on a successful harmonic theory, or making a preferred ontology immune to evidence that challenges it.

The guiding question is therefore not what invisible agency connected the events, but which conditions made their correspondence possible, accessible, and consequential. Answering that question requires both sensitivity to lived experience and disciplined comparison of explanations. Synchronicity can be investigated as partial cross-scale alignment while its stronger claims remain open to empirical revision. Meaning does not require an ultimate guarantee; it requires relations through which something comes to matter.

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