

CATEGORIAL METAPHYSICS

ANIL MITRA ©SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

[HOME](#)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Categories in The Way of Being

Brief reviews of historical systems

The main systems

Category mistakes

Metaphysics in The Way of Being relevant to developing categories

Categories in this work vs the historical systems

Overview of the development to follow

Generating the categories

THE CATEGORIAL METAPHYSICS (WITH COSMOLOGY)

Plan, needs

To do

Information

Categories

High level categories: experiential being and non being

Intermediate level categories: form and formation

Low level categories: cosmoeses and worlds

Fundamental beings

Conceptual sources

Our world

Generic

All

Cosmology

UNITION

CATEGORIAL METAPHYSICS

INTRODUCTION

Categories in The Way of Being

In metaphysics, a *category* is a fundamental form of predication — a way something can be said of beings at a level just below the bare assertion “it is a being.” From [Categories](#) ([Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)), one way of putting this is to say “A system of categories is a complete list of highest kinds or genera.” Some historical systems of

categories deviate from this in that multiple levels are at least implicitly recognized.

In developing *The Way of Being* (TWB) and its metaphysics (the real metaphysics: TM), I initially used the term *dimensions* for structures that played a similar role. It is more effective, however, to adopt the established term *category*, and to review its historical dimensions, while recognizing that the present framework differs from received systems in several important ways.

The following reviews will be useful.

Brief reviews of historical systems

This section presents a very brief review that is relevant to categories in TWB; it is not intended as definitive or comprehensive.

The main systems

Aristotle's categories were intended to be of being (i.e., of the real), derived from language, logic, and metaphysics, and, yet were rather ad hoc. From doubt about our ability to know the real in itself, Kant's system was about concepts we project onto the real, which he argued to have an essential faithfulness to the real (if incomplete and imprecise), and was based in the language of a limited ontological system, for use, e.g., in the limited logic of the syllogism, and therefore had the appearance of being non ad hoc. Husserl categorial system offered a synthesis of Aristotle's and Kant's—by relating categories of meaning (concepts) to categories of what is meant (objects) and, further,

distinguished categories of form (e.g., as in syntax) from categories of material content.

Roman Ingarden added to form, and content, a third dimension: existential categories. From the Stanford Encyclopedia article, “The highest existential categories on Ingarden’s list are the real (spatiotemporal being), the ideal (abstract), the absolute (completely independent, atemporal), and purely intentional (consciousness-dependent).”

Category mistakes

This section not part of the main development, which is why it is not written as a major subsection of [the categorial metaphysics \(with cosmology\)](#). It is included (i) as relevant to one historical line of development (ii) as a demonstration of the power of the real metaphysics (TM).

The concept of a category mistake

From skepticism about the possibility of categories that are faithful to the form of the world, some contemporary philosophers avoid categories altogether, focusing instead on identifying and eliminating category mistakes. In TWB, the construction of TM — especially the analysis of experience — already incorporates a systematic *defusion* of several significant historical category errors and confusion.

Assertion 1. ‘Category differences’ are a twentieth century idea based in (i) doubting that we can have a realist and complete system of categories (ii) that confusion and error arise by conflating different

categories, e.g., thinking that having mental activity implies that mind is a separate substance or thing.

Examples of defusion of category mistakes

While it has not been named earlier in this work, it is present, and some examples are avoidance of:

1. From as-if substance to universal substance and from form to particular substance (avoids confusion of projection and the real).
2. From concept – relation – object as a unity to mind – relation – matter as objective of being (avoids projection of a nominal split to a split of the real).
3. Content and method as essentially distinct (avoids projection of a pragmatic and efficient distinction to an absolute distinction).
4. Temporal distinction among beings (or worlds or beings-and-words) as absolute (avoids projection of birth and death and boundaries among beings to the ultimate).
5. Limits of our experience as absolute limits, and the related trivial but frequent error of conflation of possibility and necessity (similar to the previous point).
6. A tacit tendency (i) from ideology, to not explicitly recognize some levels of description altogether, e.g., from false empiricism to avoid abstraction from concrete particulars to abstract frameworks, or from idealism, to not see that the concept-object, i.e., subjectivity or as-if mind and objectivity or as-if matter are two sides of experience (avoidance of the blindness of some ideologies) (ii) conflate levels of description in received systems as absolute, e.g., to ignore or not see that there are real and higher levels, the

ignoring of which stunts metaphysics and realization (avoidance of received confusion of levels, and so to avoidance of 'living' only in the mundane world).

Metaphysics in The Way of Being relevant to developing categories

The real metaphysics, TM, developed and demonstrated in previous chapters, has the following features relevant to the categories in this work.

It synthesizes 'experience of' and 'the experienced' as twin interactive or related sides of experience that constitute the general being (or existent or object) as the concept-object (this begins a fusion of metaphysics and epistemology).

At a level of abstraction (removal from a concept of features subject to distortion), it develops an ultimate metaphysics, TM, which shows the universe and all beings to be the realization of ultimate possibility (this continues the fusion of metaphysics and epistemology).

Beings are experiential and the universe is an experiential (relational) field, provided that the concept of experience is extended to the root of being, where it is elementary and lacks the richness in terms of form, content, and intensity of experience of world and self at our level and higher.

Lower levels of being, local or less abstract or both, are also in concept-object form, where the concept is not perfectly faithful to the object, but need not be for such perfection is at best in process for beings while

limited and, yet the join of the highest and lower levels, TM, is perfect relative to the in process value of being on a path of knowledge and realization in, for, and from this world (this completes fusion of metaphysics and epistemology via ethics).

Thus TM is founded in experience (at multiple levels of abstraction) and reason about the same (doubt is acknowledged and addressed earlier in TWB), and claims above regarding its perfection are well founded. TM is a synthesis of experience (empirical), reason, content and method (metanalysis), the abstract and the concrete (appropriately interpreted), and, finally the union of metaphysics – epistemology – value.

Categories in this work vs the historical systems

First, categories here occur explicitly at **multiple levels**. This is important: the levels have mutual interactions (are mutually informative and, as far as regarded as distinct, they are interactive), which improves their articulation, individually, and as an entire system. At the highest level — the level of *being* — beings are *concept-objects*, as established earlier. At this level, there is only one category: the concept-object itself, which, in addition to manifest beings, accommodates both contingently and necessarily nonexistent beings. This resolves the familiar paradox of nonexistent objects by giving them a legitimate, non-contradictory mode of being.

This highest level is a split level—the level of being itself as experiential being, not a traditional categorial level, and the level of the traditional categories, a level just below that of being.

Second, traditional expectations of **completeness** and **uniqueness** do not apply straightforwardly. Without an ultimate metaphysics, completeness cannot be guaranteed. In TWB, however, *The Real Metaphysics* (TM) provides an in-principle completeness at the higher levels. Uniqueness is not required; multiple categorial organizations may be equally valid within TM's constraints.

Third, whereas received systems derive categories from perception, language, logic, or metaphysical intuition, and combinations — often in ad hoc or specialized ways — TM supplies a **foundational basis**. Just below the concept-object, categories are defined in terms of the variables and structural elements of *possible* logics, not merely the logics already developed.

Fourth, two additional levels — an intermediate level of **form with formation**, and below form, **the cosmos or world** (especially our cosmos and world) — are included. In traditional metaphysics, these lower levels are excluded because they are imprecise and therefore epistemically suspect. In TWB, their imprecision allows perfection in a value sense: it is precisely what allows realization of the ultimate in, for, and from our world. This does not imply that epistemology should be downplayed or abandoned; rather, for certain purposes of TWB, the interaction of epistemology and value — long recognized in philosophy — here fuses

them as one. These levels inherit higher-level categories and, by analogy, suggest forms for the higher levels. TM ensures that such analogical inheritance must occur, is one mechanism of formation, and has both probability and significance.

Thus **value** is not just informative or another category; rather, metaphysics and ethics (and epistemology) are fused. The fusion is not absolute: there is fusion at the highest level because at that level, ultimate realization is given by metaphysics (TM), but local ethics as the ethics of action in our world retains significance while it is significantly informed by – nested within – the ultimate ethic.

Fifth, received systems typically distinguish between categories of what is real and categories of the concepts we project onto the real. These are different but related in their intent to be about the world (Husserl's thought recognizes both and relates their structures). **In TWB, the real and the projected converge** in the concept-object. Naming a being without specifying structure identifies nothing; projection alone invites skepticism. The concept-object, situated within TM, avoids both problems.

Finally, as forms of what can be said validly, traditional categorial systems are not intended to be predictive. Here, categories are embedded within TM and therefore constitute the language of a **categorial metaphysics** — one that aims to do for metaphysics what

physics does for the physical world. Each categorial level is associated with one or more *dynamics* and *paradigms* of form and behavior. Indeed, the field and particle theories of physics supply dynamics at the level of our world and, by analogy, at higher levels. Similarly, theories of biological formation from the physical elements—abiogenesis and evolution—provide other kinds of analogy, particularly incremental formation via variation and selection, which, in particular, is analogical for the formation of manifest beings, e.g., cosmoses, from the void.

Overview of the development to follow

This discussion will proceed from the highest categorial level, where being is approached as concept-object, through the intermediate level of form and formation, then to cosmos and world, and finally to the all-encompassing categorial scheme in which the levels are gathered together. In development, of course, the process was not linear, but cycled through the levels and the scheme iteratively.

Generating the categories

Generating the categories

General—for each level

Use this then eliminate (it's already there above)

To generate the system, we use the foregoing discussion and the following template for the categorial levels:

1. **Fundamental being** or existent and proxy being(s).
2. **Conceptual source** (i.e., theory of being or particular kind of being).

3. **Category or categories – fundamental**; and **sub-categories**, special cases, or particular forms.
4. **Ethics** – higher, our world, and personal.
5. **Dynamic(s)** and **paradigms**.
 - a. Essential at the given level.
 - b. Inherited
 - i. From higher levels, of necessity but incomplete at the given level,
 - ii. From below, by analogy; however, by TM, instances are necessary, and indicative of population (probabilistically) and significance (experientially)

All

Experiential hierarchy, to be placed separately from the categorial levels—or at the highest or ‘all’—because it spans all levels.

Mutuality among the levels—use this topic from [categories and cosmology.docm](#).

THE CATEGORIAL METAPHYSICS (WITH COSMOLOGY)

Plan, needs

To do

Elements

~~Aristotle, Kant, Husserl, Ingarden~~

Sections

~~Intro, Template~~

~~Seq— all, high, inter, world~~

Categories (definitions)

~~Import the definitions.~~

Generating the categories

Use this then eliminate (it's already there above)

To generate the system, we use the foregoing discussion and the following template for the categorial levels:

General—for each level

Fundamental being or existent and proxy being(s).

Conceptual source (i.e., theory of being or particular kind of being).

Category or categories – fundamental; and **sub-categories**, special cases, or particular forms.

Ethics – higher, our world, and personal.

Dynamic(s) and **paradigms**.

1. From the conceptual source at the given level.
2. Inherited.
 - a. From higher levels, of necessity but incomplete at the given level,

- b. From below, by analogy; however, by TM, instances are necessary, and indicative of population (probabilistically) and significance (experientially)

All

Experiential hierarchy, to be placed separately from the categorial levels—or at the highest or ‘all’—because it spans all levels.

Mutuality among the levels—use this topic from [categories and cosmology.docm](#).

High level: experiential being and nonbeing

Intermediate: form and formation

Lower: cosmos or world

Ours

Mechanism, increment, causation, indeterminism, sameness, difference, spacetime, identity, property, physics > size, shape, position in space and time, change / motion, quality; agentive > acting upon / acted on.

Generic

From ours, therefore placed after it (cycle through)

All

Cosmology

Unition; if I do it here, may transfer to “pathways”

Edit

~~Combine me and cp~~

General

~~Think~~

~~Review for ideas~~

Information

Sources to use for content, especially the details, e.g., on social categories...

j 2026

categories and cosmology.docm

the way of being - axiomatic.docm

little manual.docm

society.docm

the way of being - master.docm

Categories

Definition 1. A CATEGORY is a valid form of fact—or aspect of such a

form—at some level of abstraction or generality (and facts are neither concepts nor objects but concept-objects).

Definition 2. A CATEGORIAL SYSTEM is (i) a complete system of categories at a given level of abstraction (it is not possible for limited beings to develop complete systems at all levels), enhanced by patterns (limited data sets for the level that capture the whole) and constitute understanding and enable projection (e.g., across space and time) or (ii) a complete system of categories at all levels.

Definition 3. A PARADIGM or DYNAMIC (as the term is used in this work) is system of understanding for a class of beings (up to all being), which includes methods of argument and means of transformation such as technology—particularly technology of exploration, being, and intelligence—and unition or yoga (defined below).

Definition 4. A CATEGORIAL METAPHYSICS is a synthesis of categorial systems at a comprehensive range of levels that constitute effective understanding of the universe and enable effective action and negotiation in and of it. It therefore includes paradigms and dynamics. Particularly, the lower levels include the sciences.

High level categories: experiential being and non being

This section should establish the most general categorial level: being as concept-object, including both actual and nonactual beings without generating the paradox of nonexistent objects.

Fundamental being or existent: *the being* (or *a being*) as a concept-relation-object; details—

- i. We will contract the description 'concept-relation-object' to 'concept-object'; this is more than a convenience—it says that concept and object are bound together; similarly, in intending more than just binding but intentional wrapping together, we introduce further contraction to, e.g., 'conject'.
- ii. Precise when the abstraction is at the level of being-as-being or any level with sufficient abstraction, in the sense that concept and object may be decoupled such that the concept is perfectly faithful to the object (at levels where abstraction is not sufficient to allow this, the decoupling may allow approximate decoupling and faithfulness, which may be adequate for some local but generally not universal purposes).
- iii. It includes the case of beings that are nonexistent in the sense that an intended object is contingently or necessarily absent as well as the pure concept in which case there is no intended object (these cases will also obtain at lower levels).
- iv. The whole – part – null (or zero) beings in relation to any being including the universe ('mereology').

Project 1. Mereology.

- v. Note that with abstraction, contra Heidegger, being is a being; and, also, contra-Heidegger, being is shallow, and that in shallowness lies the conceptual power of the present conception. Further, depth lies within being but is not of being (as being).

Proxy existent: a being decoupled from the concept (which is still present, but implicit), which is precise where the given level of abstraction allows decoupling. At lower levels this proxy may be adequate – sometimes with great precision – for some purposes. The proxy existent is that of beings in the abstract, i.e., as seen from “nowhere”, allowable in that at this highest level, concept and object are decouplable (at lower levels, the decoupling is imprecise but may be pragmatic or locally adaptive).

Conceptual source—IM (value decouple-able from metaphysics in that ultimate realization is given, and the coupling enters regarding questions of effective and quality shared living in the world – itself and toward the ultimate); universe as an experiential-relational field.

Category or categories – fundamental; and **sub-categories**, special cases, or particular forms.

Fundamental category and its form (i.e., form of the category): as for the fundamental existent, the concept-object (proxy: the **object**).

Note: the concept-object may be defused as concept and object, but the concept is not necessarily that of higher experience.

Some particular forms of the category:

- i. The ‘bare’ concept-object form (or atomic fact, i.e., atomic in the sense that the form has no structure, either at all, or that the structure is relevant to the deliberations being considered). Its dynamic is the propositional or sentence calculus.

- ii. The case in which the form of the object is the subject-predicate (here 'subject' is the object minus predicates or properties and does not have the sense of being subjective). Its dynamics are the predicate calculi.
- iii. Other forms arising in logics (including non-symbolic logics)

Lower level forms

- iv. Not strictly a logical form—the varieties of forms in the lower levels, which are the logical, with further extra-logical form, e.g., the forms of science, especially, symmetry, stability, and formation – incremental, saltation, and transient. Particularly, the Aristotelian categories arising from physics and ordinary perception may be recognized—as-if substance (but not substance), of perception – quantity, quality, relation (one and multiple place predicates), and possession (what it has); from physics – position, location in time, orientation, shape (as well as subjective aspects such as posture); and agency (doing to vs done to),

Why do we include these forms here? It depends on the criteria being used—if we include only what is given by logic rather than allowed, they would not be here; if we include only what is known to be precisely known, they would not be here. They are discussed here (a) to clarify criteria of inclusion (ii) for their significance in relation to the logical forms—these forms are of significant duration which, compensates for their population count relative to the merely logical forms. Further, where these

forms are such that they give rise to beings with 'higher' experience, they are the forms with significance.

Ethics – realization of peak being; to be inherited by worlds with experiential beings with choice and agency and intertwined with their 'local' ethic.

Fundamental ethic: from IM, acceptance and modulation of experiential process (cognition, feeling – especially pleasure and pain, choice, agency...) on the way to peak being (it is implicit that at our level, the process is shared, and that this is one source of ethics at our level).

Dynamic(s) and paradigms:

1. From the conceptual source, IM (as the highest level there is no inheritance from above).
2. Inherited from below, as indicated above, by analogy; however, by TM, instances are necessary, and indicative of population (probabilistically) and significance (experientially).

Intermediate level categories: form and formation

Note: formation is seen as part of form and therefore, 'form and formation' could be contracted to 'form'.

Fundamental being and process: form and formation in general (of cosmoeses, worlds, and beings), in ranges of robustness and significance. Form and formation may be particulate (discrete), a continuum (of various levels), or both. Thus particles and fields are allowed as are incremental selection and saltation.

Conceptual source—theory of formation from the void, either by increment from one near symmetric and so near stable state to another (higher probability because the process is via state to nearby accessible state) or saltation (less likely but possible and therefore occasional); derived by analogy from our world, but necessary from TM.

Fundamental category—form and formation, over and above those of the high level.

Fundamental categorial process: transient; **emphasizes**: formation as increment, selection of near symmetry for relative stability, from simplicity to complexity, from complexity to self-reference and intelligence. Sub-cases

1. **Formation without heredity**—generally transient and low in robustness and significance.
2. **Formation with heredity**—
 - a. **Vertical heredity**—beings with micro-coded and inherited coding, but no direct inheritance of form. *Paradigm of emergence*— dominated by incremental variation and selection but single step origins possible and real.
 - b. **Horizontal heredity**—form is propagated in the field of relational being. It may occur, given a region, e.g., a cosmos or pre-cosmos, of interacting elements, an emerged form in a sub-region may propagate because, from common origins, the entire region is receptive to the form emerged in the sub-region.

Vertical vs horizontal heredity—it appears that formation begins without heredity, that horizontal heredity dominates at simpler levels (e.g., physical), while vertical heredity may be essential for complex forms with significance, which also have horizontal heredity, e.g., of populations.

- c. **Mixed heredity**—if heredity means influence, then where one kind appears paradigmatic, the other kind may also be present.

Ethics—emergence and cultivation of higher level experience: perception, consciousness, and agency.

Dynamic(s) and paradigms.

1. Inherited from ‘above’—a single step or a few steps: transient formation of near symmetric, stable forms (SSF)—as allowed and required by IM, improbable (argument above), the realization of Bertrand Russell’s thought that it is possible that our world was constructed a moment ago, complete with memories and signatures as-if of ‘the past’.

Note: this is interesting as it is equivalent to solipsism as realism—perhaps the experience you are experiencing is just a transient and micro flash (possibly preceded and followed by similar flashes). Though there are arguments against this interpretation of solipsism, they depend on a base assumption of a normal interpretation of ‘our reality’. It is further interesting, that this interpretation of solipsism suggests (i) IM (ii) that possible if unlikely immediate futures of our world are nothingness / destruction / fantastic / immediate rise to peak being.

2. Inherited from our world and cosmos by analogy but necessary by TM: incremental variation and selection; origin of, not just in space and time, but of identity (recognizable or at least conceptualizable beings)-spacetime; origins mechanism and causation (FP as cause of causation) with indeterminism for worlds; origin of physics and the natural classes (categories).

Note: while form and its recognition (object-concept) have origin beginning in the top level, their conceptualization has source in minds of beings in our world, the lower level.

3. Formation by incremental variation and select from SSF to SSF... dominates #a (probably).
4. Selection for significance by experiential beings—not guaranteed for any given world but necessary for some worlds and accessible to our being by communication via or across the void or voids. May come to dominate significant population in the universe.

Examples

1. Most inclusive base level – the void as primitive (see high level above)
2. Intermediate base level for cosmos formation – proto cosmos and evolution of cosmoses
3. Base level for life in our world – physical, chemical, and geological elements with cosmological and solar input.

Low level categories: cosmoses and worlds

This section should locate the categorial scheme within cosmos and world, showing how inherited higher-level categories are realized with the imprecision, value, and practical sufficiency proper to our world.

The plan for this section is different from that of the previous two. It begins with a brief mention of inherited categories. The remaining discussion is in two parts (i) our cosmos / world for which the focus is specific—fundamental beings, specific conceptual sources or theories, and ethics (ii) a generic cosmos / world for which the focus is categories, dynamics and paradigms, and ethics.

Fundamental beings

Though it is sometimes natural to first think of the physical level, we recognize levels and sublevels.

1. Natural—
 - a. Physical,
 - b. Complexity, reproduction, and life—especially animal including human being.
 - c. Psyche or mind
 - i. Place of being, meaning, and value (though not source),
 - ii. Map of the universe.
2. Social—
 - a. Society,
 - b. Culture,
 - c. Technology.

Conceptual sources

Begin with theories > paradigms > general worlds????????????????

Physical theories—field, atoms, as matter; matter and its behavior as in quantum, relativistic, statistical, and condensed matter theories; chemistry and nuclear physics.

Complexity, reproduction, and life—**functional** chemistry of complex compounds, principles of biological organisms and ecosystems; **origins and evolution**—emergence of complexity, evolution by variation of hereditary factors and selection; **classification of living beings**—**domain** (relatively recent, recognized by some biologists: archaea, bacteria, and eukarya—devised by Carl Woese, Otto Kandler and Mark Wheelis in 1990); **kingdom** (originally plant and animal, today five or six are commonly recognized, but some recognize as many as eight), **phylum, class, order, family, genus, species** (as well as finer divisions, beginning just below the species: subspecies, variety, and form, which recognize minor differences, without introducing new species, which is, in any case, not recognized as a perfectly definite concept).

Introduce link to section on experience in the next paragraph.

Psyche—the focus here shall not be on ‘psychology’, of which some general aspects were considered in the earlier division on experience. Rather, our concerns are as follows. **As-if substance**: from concept-object, via TM, to universe as an experiential field, with our world as approximately a substance world: matter – complexity – life – mind – society. Consequently the emergence of (as-if) high-level matter and

mind is not substance emergence but emergence of form. **Elementary and immanent**: sameness, difference, elementary language with grammar, logic as the grammar of compound facts (propositions), refinement, and formal languages and logic. **Fundamental dynamic of experience as world** (universe)— recognition of difference, change or duration; identity, extension (size), duration of beings; property (shape, quality).

Society—see sources in this document. While there are many kinds of society (see categories and cosmology for them), the focus is on (i) human society (ii) societies in the abstract (iii) metaphysics of society.

Category or categories – fundamental; and **sub-categories**, special cases, or particular forms.

Ethics – higher, our world, and personal.

Dynamic(s) and **paradigms**.

1. From the conceptual source at the given level.
2. Inherited.
 - a. From higher levels, of necessity but incomplete at the given level,
 - b. From below, by analogy; however, by TM, instances are necessary, and indicative of population (probabilistically) and significance (experientially)

Our world

We mention dynamics, paradigms, from our world as sources for generic worlds and some of the lower Aristotelian categories.

Of identity—sameness, difference, identity, and from there to extension and duration (i.e., space-time-being), and for objects: place in spacetime, size, shape, motion, quality, and (beyond mechanism) to agency (acting, acting on, being acted upon).

Physical law—mechanism, causation, mechanistic law (e.g., Newtonian, Maxwellian, Einsteinian—special and general), statistical law (thermophysics).

Generic

All

This section should gather the preceding levels into an inclusive account of all categories, clarifying how the hierarchy functions as a predictive and realizational metaphysics rather than merely a received inventory of kinds.

Mention sub-categories and some examples.

Cosmology

How is this a categorial metaphysics?

1. The developments of the work,
2. Finding finer grained 'levels', working them, (seeking to) integrate them,
3. The cosmology.

UNITION

Will use unition / yoga rather than just unition (i) to see if the term fits (for others and myself) and, if so, (ii) to familiarize myself and readers with the term.

A separate chapter or in 'topics' or in 'pathways'; if kept here, should it be the final part or before cosmology?

How is this part of the categorial metaphysics?

Buddhism, Christianity