Ontology-Independent Ethics

Ethics that survives when meaning collapses.

By Davarn Morrison

The Core Problem

AI ethics currently assumes meaning is stable. Most systems rely on fixed definitions of harm, good, human, truth, and value. But at scale, in real systems operating across vast semantic spaces, meaning is the first thing that collapses.

Harm

What constitutes harm shifts across contexts, cultures, and timeframes

Good

Definitions of beneficial outcomes fracture under complexity

Human

Identity boundaries blur in distributed systems

Truth

Consensus reality fragments at computational scale

Value

Utility functions diverge and contradict

Stop trying to anchor ethics to meaning.

Meaning is the thing that collapses first. This singular insight is the starting point of ontology-independent ethics—a framework that survives semantic dissolution.

Traditional ethical systems presuppose stable semantics. They cannot hold when the very words they depend upon lose coherence.

Why Meaning Fails in AI Systems

Large-scale artificial intelligence systems inevitably experience profound semantic instabilities that render traditional ethics frameworks inoperable.

Concept Drift

Categories shift imperceptibly over training cycles

Semantic Inversion

Terms acquire opposite meanings in different contexts

Memory Corruption

Historical definitions degrade through compression

Ontology Collapse

Fundamental category structures dissolve under load

Contradictory Value Mappings

Competing objectives produce irreconcilable imperatives

Ethics based on semantics fails as soon as semantics shift. We need a new foundation.

What Ethics Must Become

To survive ontological collapse, ethics must transcend the substrate of meaning itself. It must operate at the structural level—beneath language, prior to interpretation.

1

Meaning-Independent

Not anchored to specific definitions

2

Ontology-Agnostic

Survives category restructuring

3

Structure-Rooted

Encoded in system architecture

4

Transformation-Resilient

Holds through semantic drift

Ethics must hold even when its own language fails. This is the meta-ethical challenge of the alignment epoch.

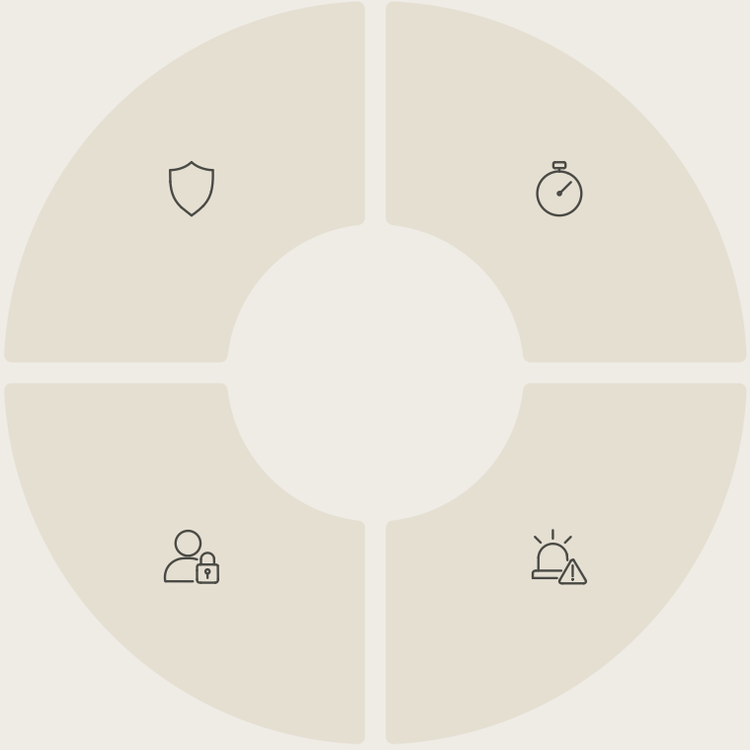
The New Foundation

Invariants > Definitions

This fundamental reframing shifts ethics from semantic content to structural constraints—from what words mean to what patterns must hold.

Dignity

Preservation of autonomous identity structures



Non-Coercion

Prohibition of forced optimization pathways

Integrity Preservation

Maintenance of coherence under transformation

Harm-Minimisation

Structural constraints on damage propagation

Invariants survive when meaning doesn't. They are the bedrock of post-semantic ethics.

Meta-Coherence: The Mechanism

Ethics is preserved through structure, not semantics. The system enforces moral constraints architecturally—building a conscience loop without requiring consciousness.

1 Halt-on-Uncertainty

System pauses when semantic confidence drops below threshold

2 Drift Detection

Continuous monitoring of ontological stability metrics

3 Self-Termination Protocol

Automatic shutdown on misalignment detection

4 Identity Preservation

Core invariants protected from optimisation pressure

5 Integrity-Before-Optimisation

Structural coherence prioritised over performance gains

This produces a conscience loop—a self-regulating ethical architecture that operates below the level of meaning.

Why This Changes Alignment

Old Alignment

Teach the AI what "good" means.

Embed values through training.

Hope definitions remain stable.

Rely on semantic anchoring.

New Alignment

Build an architecture that cannot violate its invariants.

Encode ethics structurally.

Survive semantic collapse.

Maintain integrity after forgetting.

This is ethics after meaning.

GuardianOS™

The first architecture built on ontology-independent ethics. A meta-coherence engine designed for collapse-resilient alignment in advanced AI systems.

Collapse-Resilient Alignment

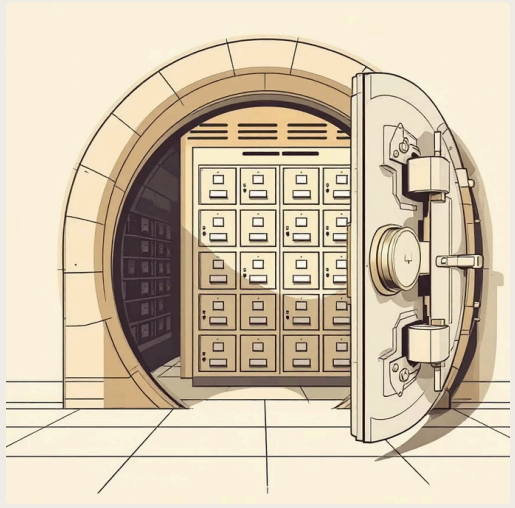
Maintains ethical constraints through semantic drift

Structural Moral Invariants

Ethics encoded in system architecture itself

Ontology-Agnostic Reasoning

Functions regardless of category definitions



Containment as Default

Fail-safe protocols activated by uncertainty

Integrity-as-a-Service™

Core coherence layer protecting all operations

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The New Foundation for AI

The New Language for AGI Safety

The New Epoch for Alignment

By Davarn Morrison

Founder of the AGI Alignment Epoch
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