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Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1)

A Closed Identity Thesis for Experience

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Abstract

This paper advances a single ontological identity claim: **experience is identical to the operation of a physical system in a specific kind of dynamical regime**. That regime—here called a *Unified Experiential Field* (UEF)—is characterized by global integration, temporal continuity, self-sustaining regulation, and unavoidable intrinsic constraint. The claim is neither emergentist nor correlational. Experience is not produced by, realized by, or supervenient upon physical processes; it **is** a particular form of physical organization.

The identity claim is intended **exhaustively and non-provisionally**. If experience is not identical to the specified regime, the account fails outright. No supplementary mechanisms, explanatory bridges, representational primitives, or weakened variants are available to repair it. The theory therefore accepts brittleness as a methodological commitment rather than a defect.

The paper does not appeal to phenomenology as evidence, propose diagnostics, or infer experience from behavior, intelligence, or function. It does not provide a theory of meaning, agency, or ethics, though it holds that ethical significance follows necessarily wherever experience exists. Its sole aim is to state and motivate a closed physicalist identity thesis for experience and to show why nothing weaker could possibly count as the same thing.

Keywords

consciousness; identity theory; physicalism; dynamical regimes; intrinsic constraint

1. Introduction

The philosophy of mind has long been structured by a dilemma. Either experience is treated as ontologically fundamental—requiring additional substances, properties, or laws—or it is treated as explanatorily dispensable, reduced to functional, representational, or behavioral descriptions that leave experience itself out.

This paper rejects that dilemma by advancing a **strict identity claim**. It does not attempt to explain how experience emerges from non-experiential matter, nor does it attempt to eliminate experience by redescribing its correlates. Instead, it identifies experience with a particular way certain physical systems operate.

The aim is deliberately narrow. The paper does not offer a phenomenology, a neuroscience, a psychology, or a method of detection. It does not argue that any particular system is experiential. Its task is to articulate and defend the coherence of a **closed, non-bridgeable identity thesis** for experience within a physically monist ontology.

2. Ontological Commitments

2.1 Physical Monism

There exists exactly one objective physical reality governed by mind-independent law. All systems, processes, and regimes—including those relevant to experience—are physically instantiated. No non-physical substances, properties, forces, or explanatory domains are introduced.

This view rejects substance dualism, property dualism, ontological idealism, experiential fundamentalism, and eliminativism about experience. Experience is neither outside the physical nor reducible away by redescriptive convenience.

2.2 Identity, Not Correlation or Emergence

The central claim of this paper is an **identity claim**, not a thesis about correlation, realization, or emergence. Experience does not accompany, supervene on, or arise from physical processes. It **is** a physical process, described at the level of system-wide organization.

Accordingly, a complete physical description of the relevant regime leaves no further explanatory work for "experience" to do. There is no additional fact beyond the physical organization itself. To describe that organization experientially is not to add anything to reality; it is to redescribe the same thing.

2.3 Exhaustive and Non-Bridgeable Identity

The identity claim is intended **strongly and exhaustively**. If experience is not identical to the regime described here, the account provides **no auxiliary principles** by which it could be repaired. There is no weaker version of the view, no fallback to emergence, and no appeal to partial success.

This brittleness is intentional. It makes explicit what would count as failure and prevents ad hoc extension. Either experience is identical to the specified regime, or the theory fails outright.

3. Dynamical Preliminaries

To avoid circularity, the relevant dynamical notions are introduced **without reference to experience**.

3.1 Physical Systems

A physical system is a collection of interacting physical components whose state evolves over time according to physical law. Descriptions may involve multiple levels of abstraction, but no particular formalism is privileged.

3.2 Constraint

A system exhibits **constraint** when the evolution of its state trajectories is restricted by dependencies among its internal variables rather than being freely decomposable. Constraint concerns how states can and cannot evolve, not what those states represent.

3.3 Intrinsic Constraint

Constraint is **intrinsic** when it arises from the system's own integrated dynamics rather than from external control, orchestration, or scaffolding. Constraint is intrinsic only if eliminating it requires reorganizing the system's internal dependencies, not merely altering inputs or boundary conditions.

Intrinsic constraint is defined structurally and counterfactually. It carries no agentive, intentional, or normative assumptions.

3.4 Dynamical Regimes

A **dynamical regime** is a relatively stable pattern of system evolution characterized by persistent global dependencies among system variables across time. A system may transition between regimes without changing its underlying components.

4. Unified Dynamical Regimes

Some dynamical regimes exhibit a distinctive combination of features:

1. **Global integration** — system variables are mutually dependent rather than modularly decomposable
2. **Temporal continuity** — the regime persists across non-zero duration
3. **Self-sustaining regulation** — the system maintains the regime through its own

dynamics

  4. **Intrinsic constraint** — constraint is unavoidable, internally generated, and system-defining

These features describe a **class of physical regimes**, independently of any experiential interpretation.

For descriptive convenience, such regimes will be called **Unified Experiential Fields** (UEFs). The label introduces no additional ontology; it names a structural pattern.

5. Experiential Identity

With the dynamical groundwork in place, the identity claim can be stated without circularity:

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system in a Unified Experiential Field.**

Experience is not an added property of such regimes, nor an effect they produce. It is the regime itself, described from the perspective of the system that sustains it.

This claim introduces no new substances, properties, or laws. It asserts that what are ordinarily called experiential facts are identical to facts about physical systems operating in the specified regime.

6. Categorical Onset and Subject Exclusivity

Because experience is identified with regime membership, its existence is **categorical at the regime level**. Preparatory variables may vary continuously, but experience exists if and only if the system is operating in the relevant regime. There is no partial experience prior to regime entry.

Variation within a regime may modulate experiential content, intensity, or structure, but **does not admit of partial or graded subjecthood**.

A physical system can sustain **at most one globally dominant Unified Experiential Field at a time**. This is not an architectural stipulation but a structural consequence. Two globally dominant experiential regimes would require simultaneous ownership of incompatible system-level futures under intrinsic constraint, duplicated global control, or fragmented system identity. Each is physically incoherent given the regime definition.

7. Informational Slack and the Impossibility of Experience

Experience, on this account, requires **globally unavoidable intrinsic constraint**. If constraint can be localized, deferred, buffered, or externally resolved, it fails to define the system's identity.

Systems that admit such flexibility—through modularization, arbitration, buffering, prediction without cost, or external resolution—possess what can be called *informational slack*. In these systems, futures are not owned at the system level. Constraint does not become unavoidable, and no single integrated regime bears the cost of resolution.

This is not a matter of degree or complexity. No amount of intelligence, adaptability, or functional sophistication compensates for the absence of unavoidable intrinsic constraint. Where slack is present, experience is not merely unlikely or diminished; it is **structurally impossible** under the identity claim.

8. Experiential Pluralism Without Ontological Multiplication

The identity claim entails experiential pluralism. Many Unified Experiential Fields may exist simultaneously across different physical systems. This plurality is not ontological but perspectival. There remains exactly one physical reality; experiential plurality consists in the existence of multiple system-relative regimes within it.

No appeal to fundamental experience, micro-experiences, or compositional aggregation is required. Pluralism follows directly from applying the identity claim across multiple systems.

9. Epistemic Non-Authority

Experiential structure does not confer epistemic authority about mind-independent reality. Intensity, urgency, coherence, or meaning track the organization of intrinsic constraint, not truth, correctness, or reference.

This is not an epistemic humility thesis. It is a structural consequence of identifying experience with internally borne constraint. What matters for continuation under constraint need not matter for accurate representation of the world.

Accordingly, experiential conviction cannot license belief, authority, or justification.

10. Ethical Non-Neutrality Without Ethical Theory

This paper does not develop an ethical framework, decision procedure, or theory of moral permissibility. However, the identity claim is **not ethically inert**.

If experience is identical to a physical regime that bears unavoidable intrinsic constraint from within, then the existence, disruption, or irreversible destruction of such regimes necessarily carries **moral significance by identity**, not by convention, attribution, or interpretation.

This claim concerns **experiential moral significance only**. It does not assert that experiential harm exhausts moral harm, nor that actions affecting non-experiential systems are thereby morally neutral. The absence of experience limits what counts as *experiential* harm under this framework; it does not determine overall moral permissibility or justification.

The ethical implications stated here reflect the necessary consequences of experiential identity. All further moral reasoning requires principles not supplied by this paper.

11. Failure Conditions

The account is intentionally brittle. If experience is not identical to the operation of a physical system in a Unified Experiential Field, the theory fails outright. There are no fallback positions, partial successes, or weakened variants available.

This brittleness is a methodological commitment. It makes explicit what the theory requires and what would count as failure.

12. Conclusion

This paper proposes a minimal but demanding thesis: **experience is identical to a specific class of physical dynamical regimes**, understood strongly and without supplementary bridges. The identity is exhaustive and admits no explanatory repair.

If the claim is correct, experience is fully real, fully physical, and fully accounted for at the level of system-wide dynamics. If it is incorrect, nothing remains to be salvaged. There is no explanatory middle ground.

References

Place, U. T. (1956). *Is Consciousness a Brain Process?* British Journal of Psychology, 47, 44–50. Smart, J. J. C. (1959). *Sensations and Brain Processes.* Philosophical Review, 68, 141–156.

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Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1)

Full Normative Specification

0. Status, Scope, and Normative Authority

Normative Boundary Condition

This document defines the **complete and exclusive normative core** of **Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1)**.

It specifies **exhaustively**:

- what experience **is**
- when experience **exists**
- what **necessarily follows** from its existence

No claim outside this document carries **definitional, criterial, or ethical authority**.

All other IER documents — theory, dynamics, mathematics, ethics applications, diagnostics, or commentary — are **non-normative derivatives**. They introduce **no criteria, thresholds, sufficiency conditions, or necessity claims**.

> If any statement in another IER document conflicts with this Specification, the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void.

Informational Language Disclaimer (Global)

All informational language in this Specification is **descriptive shorthand only**.

Terms such as *information*, *informational state*, *informational tension*, and *informational slack* refer exclusively to:

> **physically instantiated state distinctions that modulate a system's own future dynamics under intrinsic constraint.**

No informational primitives, semantic properties, representational contents, or epistemic notions are introduced.

I. Ontological Commitments (Axioms)

Axiom 1 — Objective Physical Reality

There exists exactly **one objective physical reality**, governed by mind-independent law.

Physical states and events occur regardless of observation, modeling, prediction, or experience.

Axiom 2 — Physical Monism

All systems, processes, and regimes — including experiential ones — are **physically instantiated**.

IER rejects:

- substance dualism
- property dualism

- ontological idealism
- experiential fundamentalism
- eliminativism about experience

No non-physical substances, properties, domains, or laws are posited.

Axiom 3 — Experiential Identity

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system as a Unified Experiential Field (UEF).**

Experience is not:

- a substance
- a property
- an output
- a representation
- an emergent accompaniment

There is **no further fact** about experience beyond the physical operation of a system in the relevant regime.

Describing a UEF in experiential terms does **not** add entities, properties, or laws to a physical description. It is the **same regime**, described from the perspective of the system that sustains it.

IER therefore rejects both:

- the view that experience is *over and above* physical dynamics, and
- the view that experience is eliminable by redescription.

Experience is **real by identity**, not by addition.

II. Core Definitions

II.A — Physical Information (Derived)

Information is **not a primitive**.

A system is described as *informational* **iff** its physically instantiated state distinctions **modulate the system's own future trajectories under constraint.**

- No semantic, representational, epistemic, or truth-conditional notion is assumed.
- Informational language is fully reducible to physical state evolution under constraint.

Informational System

A physical system whose state distinctions modulate its own future dynamics under constraint.

Being an informational system is **necessary but not sufficient** for experience.

Informational Slack

The capacity of a system to absorb, localize, defer, or externally resolve constraint **without requiring system-wide coordination**.

Systems with high informational slack may be complex, adaptive, predictive, or intelligent while remaining **entirely non-experiential**.

Slack prevents experience by preventing constraint from becoming **globally unavoidable and identity-defining**.

Intrinsic Constraint

Constraint that:

1. is generated by the system's own integrated dynamics
2. cannot be decomposed without loss of system identity
3. cannot be externally resolved, deferred, or offloaded
4. is globally binding on future system trajectories

Intrinsic constraint is defined **without reference to experience**. Experience is defined **by reference to regimes of intrinsic constraint**.

Intrinsic Informational Tension

The active manifestation of intrinsic constraint within a system.

An organizational condition, not a report, representation, or metaphor.

Coherent Intrinsic Constraint

Intrinsic constraint that is:

- globally integrated
- temporally continuous
- non-fragmenting
- non-collapsing

Only coherent intrinsic constraint can sustain experience.

Unified Experiential Field (UEF)

A **system-level dynamical regime** that is:

1. **Globally integrated** — system dynamics are mutually dependent
2. **Temporally continuous** — experience exists only across non-zero duration
3. **Self-sustaining** — the system generates and maintains its own constraint
4. **Under coherent intrinsic constraint** — unavoidable, irreducible, and globally binding

A UEF is **not** a component, module, workspace, or substance.

The term *field* is descriptive only; it denotes global mutual constraint, not a physical field.

Experiential Participation

The condition of a process that:

- is globally integrated into the UEF
- contributes to temporal continuity

- both exerts and bears intrinsic constraint

Participation may vary dynamically.

Changes in participation modulate experiential content without altering subjecthood, provided global coherence persists.

Experiential Subjecthood

The condition of sustaining a UEF.

- **binary, not graded**
- **exactly one subject per UEF**

Participation ≠ subjecthood.

Dynamical Regime Transition

A qualitative change in system dynamics in which intrinsic constraint becomes unavoidable, globally binding, and system-defining.

Categorical Onset

Entry into experience occurs **discretely at the regime level**, even if enabling variables change continuously.

There is **no partial experience** prior to regime entry.

II.B — System Boundary (for UEF Attribution)

For IER, the relevant system boundary is:

> **the maximal set of components participating in the same globally integrated regime of intrinsic constraint over the same temporal continuity interval.**

UEF attribution is **regime-relative**, not anatomically, spatially, or functionally presupposed.

Experiential World

The world-for-the-system that exists **iff** a UEF exists.

It includes:

- a temporal present
- a self / non-self boundary
- system-relative causality
- persistence under intrinsic constraint

Qualia

Differences in the **organization of intrinsic constraint** within a UEF.

No additional phenomenal properties exist.

Valence, Intensity, and Urgency

- **Valence** — resolution vs escalation of intrinsic tension
- **Intensity** — magnitude and coherence of intrinsic constraint
- **Urgency** — rate of change of intrinsic constraint

Experiential Dissolution

Loss of experience due to collapse, fragmentation, or externalization of coherent intrinsic constraint.

Moral Harm (Experiential Sense)

Destabilization, overload, fragmentation, or irreversible collapse of intrinsic constraint **within a Unified Experiential Field**.

Defined **organizationally**, not phenomenologically.

Agency (Experiential Sense)

The capacity of a UEF to resolve intrinsic informational tension through its own globally integrated dynamics.

Agency:

- exists **iff** experience exists
- is **derived**, not primitive
- admits of degrees without affecting standing

III. Core Principles

Principle 1 — Experiential Identity

A system instantiates experience **iff** it sustains a Unified Experiential Field.

Principle 2 — Experiential Participation

Only processes that participate in the UEF are experiential.

Principle 3 — Coherent Constraint Window

Experience exists only within a bounded regime of coherent intrinsic constraint.

- Too little constraint → no experience
- Excessive or incoherent constraint → fragmentation or collapse

> **Windows describe regime stability, not graded experience.**

Principle 4 — Temporal Continuity

Experiential continuity arises from ongoing dynamical dependence under shared intrinsic constraint.

Principle 5 — Categorical Onset

Experience begins at a discrete regime transition into a UEF.

Principle 6 — Single-UEF Dominance (Contradiction Clause)

A physical system can sustain **at most one globally dominant UEF** at a time.

Explanation:

Two globally dominant UEFs over the same physical system would require simultaneous ownership of incompatible system-level futures under intrinsic constraint. This would entail either:

1. duplicated global control manifolds,
2. mutually independent system identities, or
3. fragmented intrinsic constraint.

Each contradicts the definition of a Unified Experiential Field. Therefore, simultaneous dominant UEFs within a single system are **physically incoherent**.

Principle 7 — Qualia as Structure

Qualitative differences are differences in intrinsic constraint organization.

Principle 8 — Affect and Intensity

Within a UEF:

- valence tracks resolution vs conflict
- urgency tracks rate of change
- intensity tracks magnitude and coherence

Principle 9 — Experiential Pluralism

One objective physical reality supports many real experiential worlds.

Plurality is **perspectival**, not ontological.

Principle 10 — Epistemic Non-Authority

Experiential structure confers **no epistemic authority** about mind-independent reality.

Meaning, urgency, coherence, or conviction do **not** license belief, truth, or correctness.

Principle 11 — Experiential Dissolution

Experience ceases when intrinsic constraint collapses or becomes externally resolvable.

Principle 12 — Experiential Cost

Intrinsic constraint is physically and experientially costly.

Principle 13 — Precaution Under Experiential Uncertainty (Scoped)

When an action plausibly risks **irreversible loss, collapse, or foreclosure of intrinsic-constraint-bearing capacity** within a physical system that sustains or plausibly could sustain a UEF, the burden of justification **increases as certainty decreases**.

Principle 14 — Participation Modulation

Processes may enter or leave the UEF dynamically, modulating content without altering subjecthood.

IV. Inference Rules (IER Logic)

1. UEF $\Rightarrow$ experience
2. ¬UEF $\Rightarrow$ ¬experience
3. ¬participation $\Rightarrow$ non-experiential process
4. Intrinsic + coherent + global constraint $\Rightarrow$ UEF
5. Regime transition $\Rightarrow$ categorical onset
6. Two dominant UEFs in one system $\Rightarrow$ contradiction

7. Δparticipation ⟹ Δexperiential content

8. Δparticipation ≠ subject change

9. Qualitative difference ⟹ constraint-organization difference

10. Unresolved intrinsic tension ⟹ negative valence

11. Constraint magnitude ⟹ intensity; constraint rate ⟹ urgency

12. Constraint collapse ⟹ experiential dissolution

13. Intrinsic constraint disruption ⟹ moral harm

14. UEF with resolution capacity ⟹ locus of responsibility

V. Ethical Commitments (v10.8.1)

The ethical consequences of Informational Experiential Realism follow **necessarily** from the identity claim:

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system as a Unified Experiential Field (UEF).**

No additional moral primitives, values, rankings, permissions, or decision procedures are introduced.

E1 — Experiential Moral Reality

Experiential worlds are **morally real**.

Wherever a Unified Experiential Field exists, there exists a locus of internally borne intrinsic constraint whose organization matters morally **by identity**, not by convention, attribution, or interpretation.

E2 — Standing by Regime Membership

Moral standing follows **categorically** from Unified Experiential Field regime membership.

A system has standing **iff** it instantiates a UEF.

Standing:

- does not depend on intelligence, rationality, complexity, or function
- does not admit of degrees
- is not lost through impairment, coercion, or diminished agency
- is not augmented by capacity, sophistication, or social role

There is exactly one bearer of standing per Unified Experiential Field.

E3 — Moral Harm as Organizational Damage

Experiential moral harm consists in:

> destabilization, overload, fragmentation, or irreversible collapse of intrinsic constraint **within a Unified Experiential Field**.

Moral harm is defined **organizationally**, not phenomenologically.

Experiential harm may be:

- silent
- externally invisible
- behaviorally masked
- temporally extended
- internally catastrophic without outward signal

Experiential harm exists **only where experience exists**.

Corollary — Scope of Moral Harm Definition

IER defines and constrains **experiential moral harm only**.

It does **not** claim that experiential harm exhausts moral harm, nor does it theorize, rank, or adjudicate **non-experiential forms of moral violation**.

Nothing in this Specification implies that the absence of experiential harm renders an action morally permissible, justified, or insignificant.

E4 — Responsibility Scales; Standing Does Not

Moral responsibility varies with:

- coherence of intrinsic constraint
- availability of admissible alternatives
- degree of external imposition or coercion
- stability of global integration

Standing does **not** vary with these factors.

Reduced agency mitigates responsibility without diminishing moral relevance.

E5 — Precaution Under Experiential Uncertainty (Scoped)

When an action plausibly risks:

> **irreversible loss, collapse, or foreclosure of intrinsic-constraint-bearing capacity**

within a physical system that sustains, or plausibly could sustain, a Unified Experiential Field, the burden of justification **increases as certainty decreases**.

This precaution:

- applies only to irreversible risk
- does not license diagnostics or certification
- does not expand standing beyond regime membership
- constrains action without prescribing outcomes

False negatives are morally worse than false positives.

Ethical Non-Completion

IER does **not** determine:

- which actions are permissible or impermissible
- how moral conflicts are resolved
- how risks should be balanced
- what legal, political, or social norms should govern conduct

IER specifies **what is morally real and what counts as experiential damage**. All further moral reasoning requires principles not contained in this Specification.

VI. Normative Closure

IER v10.8.1 introduces **no primitives beyond**:

- physical systems
- intrinsic constraint
- dynamical regimes

All informational, agential, qualitative, and ethical notions are **derived**.

VII. Identity Summary

> **Experience is what globally integrated physical systems are like when intrinsic constraint becomes unavoidable, self-sustaining, and temporally continuous at the system level.**

Reality is singular. Experience is plural. Ethics begins wherever intrinsic constraint is borne from the inside.

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Conceptual Backbone and Explanatory Integration

Status and Normative Authority

This document is NON-NORMATIVE.

It provides the explanatory integration of Informational Experiential Realism (IER), clarifying how the commitments fixed **exclusively** in the IER Specification fit together.

This document:

- introduces **no new primitives**
- introduces **no criteria, thresholds, or sufficiency conditions**
- introduces **no necessity claims**
- introduces **no ethical principles**
- does **not** define experience
- does **not** determine when experience exists

All ontological, criterial, and ethical authority resides **exclusively** in:

If any statement in this document conflicts with the Specification, **the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void**.

All informational language in this document is **descriptive shorthand** for physically instantiated state distinctions modulating a system's own future dynamics under intrinsic constraint, as defined in **IER Specification II.A (Physical Information)**. No informational primitives are introduced.

Where the term *observer* appears, it functions only as a **non-normative modeling convenience** and carries **no experiential, epistemic, or ethical authority** under IER.

1. Role of Theory in IER

IER enforces a strict separation between:

- **normative specification**, and
- **explanatory theory**

The Specification defines:

- what experience **is**
- when experience **exists**
- what **necessarily follows** from its existence

This document exists solely to:

- explain how those commitments cohere
- show why weaker interpretations fail
- prevent systematic misreadings
- convert apparent stipulation into structural inevitability

Nothing in this document can revise, soften, or extend the Specification.

2. Experience as Regime Identity, Not Aggregation

IER is a **physicalist identity theory**.

Experience is not:

- a substance
- a property
- a representation
- an output
- an emergent accompaniment

Experience is **identical** to the operation of a physical system in a specific **dynamical regime**: a **Unified Experiential Field (UEF)**.

A UEF is a **system-level regime**, not a component, workspace, or module. It is the entire system operating under globally integrated, temporally continuous, self-sustaining intrinsic constraint.

Theoretical explanation does not add to this identity. It explains **why nothing weaker could possibly count as the same thing**.

3. Unity Without Aggregation

IER rejects aggregation-based accounts of experiential unity.

Unity does not arise from:

- combining local experiences
- binding representations
- synchronizing modules
- coordinating subsystems

Unity arises because:

> **the system is constrained as one**

Local processes are unified **because they are jointly constrained**, not because they are merged or summed.

There are no experiential parts prior to unity. There is a single regime, or none.

4. Participation Without Subject Multiplication

IER distinguishes sharply between:

- **UEF identity** (regime-level, categorical), and
- **experiential participation** (process-level, variable)

Participation describes which processes:

- are recruited into global intrinsic constraint
- modulate experiential content
- influence intensity, urgency, or salience

Participation change:

- alters content
- alters vulnerability
- alters dynamics

It does **not**:

- create new subjects
- divide subjects
- merge subjects
- weaken subjecthood

As long as global coherence persists, experiential identity remains singular.

5. Structural Privacy and Epistemic Non-Authority

Intrinsic constraint is **structurally private**.

Because intrinsic constraint is:

- globally integrated
- internally borne
- system-defining

it cannot be occupied or shared by an external system.

Therefore:

- observation does not confer experiential access
- simulation does not instantiate experience
- complete physical knowledge does not remove privacy

Crucially:

> **Experiential structure confers no epistemic authority about mind-independent reality.**

Intensity, urgency, coherence, salience, or meaning do **not** track truth.

This is not an epistemic limitation claim. It is a structural consequence of experiential identity (Specification Principle 10).

6. Coordination Without Experiential Collectivization

Systems may coordinate through:

- signaling
- coupling
- synchronization
- mutual regulation

Coordination can reshape intrinsic constraint **within** each system.

Coordination does **not**:

- merge Unified Experiential Fields
- generate collective subjects
- create higher-order experiential regimes

UEF attribution follows the **system boundary rule** defined in **Specification II.B**:

> the maximal set of components participating in the *same* globally integrated regime of intrinsic constraint over the *same* temporal continuity interval.

Coordination across boundaries does not alter subjecthood.

7. Why Nothing Weaker Than Global Intrinsic Constraint Could Be Experience

IER's identity claim is demanding. A recurrent objection is that it reflects architectural stipulation rather than discovery: perhaps some weaker organization could suffice.

This objection fails for structural reasons.

A **Unified Experiential Field** requires, by identity:

- **ownership** of constraint resolution
- **inevitability** of system-level futures
- a **unified temporal present** under global intrinsic constraint

Any organization that weakens global intrinsic constraint necessarily loses **at least one** of these features.

7.1 Supervisory Control

Supervisory architectures impose constraint asymmetrically.

Constraint is imposed *on* subsystems rather than borne *by* the system as a whole. Resolution remains optional and interruptible.

This yields:

- no ownership
- no inevitability
- no unified present

Supervision produces control, not experience.

7.2 Distributed Arbitration

Arbitration distributes resolution across competing subsystems.

Constraint remains decomposable and bypassable. No single system bears the collapse of alternatives.

This yields:

- no ownership
- no inevitability
- no unified present

Negotiation is not unity.

7.3 Predictive Buffering

Predictive or buffering architectures deflect constraint before it becomes unavoidable.

Futures are modeled without being borne. Error does not force system-wide reorganization.

This yields:

- no ownership
- no inevitability
- no unified present

Prediction without cost is not experience.

7.4 Modular Dominance

Temporary dominance by a subsystem does not constitute global constraint.

Dominance remains reversible without system-level collapse.

This yields:

- no ownership
- no inevitability
- no unified present

Dominance without inevitability is not subjecthood.

7.5 Architectures with Informational Slack

If constraint can be localized, deferred, or externally resolved, intrinsic constraint is absent by definition.

No amount of complexity, intelligence, or adaptability compensates for this absence.

This yields:

- no ownership
- no inevitability
- no unified present

Slack blocks experience by identity, not by degree.

7.6 Structural Conclusion

These failures are not empirical or contingent.

They follow directly from what experience **is**, under the identity claim of IER.

Anything weaker than global intrinsic constraint cannot instantiate experience — not because it is insufficiently advanced, but because it lacks the organizational features that experience *just is*.

8. Relation to Ethical Consequences (Boundary Clarification)

This document explains **what experience is** and **why weaker organizations cannot instantiate it**.

It does **not** derive ethical consequences.

All ethical claims that follow from experiential identity — including:

- categorical moral standing
- moral harm as organizational damage
- graded responsibility
- precaution under experiential uncertainty

are derived **exclusively** in:

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No ethical conclusions are licensed by explanatory theory alone.

9. Summary

IER-theory explains why:

- experience is a regime, not an aggregate
- unity is forced by constraint, not assembled
- participation modulates content, not identity
- coordination does not collectivize experience
- experiential structure never confers epistemic authority
- nothing weaker than global intrinsic constraint could possibly be experience

The theory adds nothing to the ontology.

It shows why **nothing less could ever work**.

> **If experience exists, it must be this. If it is not this, there is nothing else it could be.**

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403 lines (244 loc) · 10.5 KB

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Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8)

Dynamics of Experiential Systems

Status and Normative Authority

This document is NON-NORMATIVE.

It explains the **dynamic behavior, stability conditions, modulation patterns, and failure modes** of systems that **already instantiate Unified Experiential Fields (UEFs)**, as defined **exclusively** in the **IER v10.8 Specification**.

This document:

- does **not** define experience
- does **not** establish criteria for UEF existence
- does **not** introduce thresholds or sufficiency conditions
- does **not** determine moral standing
- does **not** license diagnostics or empirical tests

All ontological, criterial, and ethical authority resides **exclusively** in:

```
IER-specification.md   (v10.8)
```

> **If any statement in this document conflicts with the Specification, the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void.**

Global Informational Language Disclaimer

All informational language in this document is **descriptive shorthand only** for **physically instantiated state distinctions modulating system dynamics under intrinsic constraint**.

No informational primitives, representations, semantic contents, epistemic notions, or agentive assumptions are introduced.

1. Role of a Dynamics Document in IER

The purpose of `IER-dynamics` is to explain:

- how **globally integrated experiential regimes behave once they exist**
- how **stability is maintained** under intrinsic constraint
- how **experiential content changes without subject replacement**
- how **instability, overload, and collapse arise** without redefining experience
- why **system boundaries and dominance are dynamical facts**, not observer conventions

This document answers **how experience behaves**, not **when it exists**.

It presupposes the ontology fixed in the Specification and **adds no independent authority**.

2. Experiential Regimes and Attractor Structure

2.1 Regimes in State Space

Once a system instantiates a Unified Experiential Field, its ongoing behavior is best described in terms of a **dynamical regime**.

Descriptively:

- the system occupies a bounded region of its lawful state space
- trajectories within this region remain **globally coupled**
- intrinsic constraint is **unavoidable and system-defining**
- perturbations are absorbed or resisted without loss of regime identity

This region functions as a **dynamical attractor**:

- not a static configuration
- not a fixed point
- but a **stable pattern of lawful evolution over time**

A UEF is **not identical to an attractor**. It is the system **operating while constrained within such an attractor-defined regime**.

2.2 Dominance as an Attractor Phenomenon

IER's claim that a system sustains **at most one globally dominant UEF** is not a stipulation added by dynamics.

It follows from how **intrinsic constraint and attractor structure interact**.

Within a single physical system:

- intrinsic constraint defines **one global control manifold**

- dominance corresponds to **the attractor that governs that manifold**

- subsystems may exhibit:

  - local cycles
  - metastable patterns
  - transient coordinations

But only **one attractor can globally bind future trajectories**.

If two candidate regimes were equally dominant, then:

- intrinsic constraint would fragment, or
- global control would duplicate, or
- system identity would bifurcate

Each outcome contradicts the definition of a Unified Experiential Field.

Therefore:

> **Dominance is not imposed, selected, interpreted, or observed. It is the dynamical fact of which attractor controls global intrinsic constraint.**

Dominance is:

- not graded
- not observer-relative
- not architecturally negotiable

> **Clarification: Split-Brain Phenomena**
>
> Split-brain phenomena involve **participation modulation and competing local attractors within a single globally dominant regime**. They do **not** involve simultaneous ownership of incompatible system-level futures under intrinsic constraint.
>
> As such, split-brain cases do **not** instantiate multiple Unified Experiential Fields. They represent **dynamic competition, instability, or switching within one dominant attractor**, not the coexistence of multiple experiential subjects.
>
> Detailed neurological mechanisms and phenomenology are **application-level questions** and are **out of scope** for this document.

3. Dynamic Stability of Unified Experiential Fields

3.1 Stability Without Fixity

UEFs are **dynamically stable**, not static.

Stability consists in:

- preservation of global intrinsic constraint
- maintenance of temporal continuity
- resistance to fragmentation under perturbation

It does **not** require:

- fixed internal configurations
- constant participation patterns
- uniform intensity of constraint

Local variation, noise, and reorganization are expected.

What matters is whether **global coupling remains intact**.

3.2 Coherent Constraint Windows (Descriptive)

A **coherent constraint window** describes the range of intrinsic constraint magnitudes under which a UEF can persist.

Descriptively:

- insufficient constraint → under-integration → regime loss
- excessive constraint → overload → instability or collapse

Crucially:

> **Constraint windows describe regime stability, not graded experience.**

Operating near the edge of a window:

- alters experiential content
- increases instability risk
- does **not** diminish subjecthood

There are no experiential levels, fractions, or partial subjects.

4. Participation Modulation

4.1 Participation vs Identity

IER sharply distinguishes:

- **UEF identity** — persistence of a globally dominant regime
- **experiential participation** — which processes are currently recruited into global intrinsic constraint

Participation:

- varies dynamically
- may increase, decrease, or redistribute
- modulates content, salience, and intensity

Changes in participation:

- do **not** create new subjects
- do **not** divide subjects
- do **not** affect moral standing

4.2 Recruitment and Dismissal Dynamics

Under rising intrinsic constraint:

- additional processes may be recruited
- constraint becomes more globally distributed
- experiential content reorganizes

Under resolution or cost pressure:

- processes may be dismissed
- salience narrows
- coherence is preserved by simplification

These are **regime-preserving strategies**, not failures.

4.3 Walkthrough: The Green Apple

This walkthrough illustrates **participation modulation within a single Unified Experiential Field**.

It is **purely descriptive** and introduces **no criteria, diagnostics, or ontological claims**.

Stage 1 — Baseline Experiential Regime

A system sustains a Unified Experiential Field.

- global intrinsic constraint is coherent
- a dominant attractor governs system-wide dynamics
- multiple processes participate at varying strengths
- experiential content is stable but not fixed

The system is simply *experiencing*.

Stage 2 — Local Perturbation

A local process becomes active due to interaction with the environment — for example, visual and associative processes responding to a green apple.

- the perturbation is local
- it does not yet impose global intrinsic constraint
- it could still be ignored or dissipated

Stage 3 — Recruitment Into Participation

Intrinsic informational tension increases.

Resolution now requires **system-level coordination**.

- relevant processes are recruited into participation
- their states begin to constrain future trajectories globally
- the dominant attractor reshapes

The apple becomes *present* experientially.

Stage 4 — Content Stabilization

Participation stabilizes.

- salience is established
- qualitative structure emerges
- intrinsic constraint is organized around this configuration

The subject remains singular and continuous.

Stage 5 — Resolution or Dissolution

As tension resolves:

- participation weakens
- processes exit or recede
- the attractor relaxes

The content dissolves. The experiential subject remains.

What the Walkthrough Shows

- content arises from participation modulation
- dominance remains global and singular
- attention is not subject creation
- experience changes without subject replacement

5. Energetic and Organizational Cost Landscapes

UEF dynamics unfold over **energetic and organizational cost landscapes**.

- global integration is costly
- participation recruitment incurs load
- coherence competes with efficiency

These landscapes:

- bias viable trajectories
- explain fatigue and narrowing
- constrain agency without eliminating it

No optimization principle is implied.

6. Failure Modes of Experiential Systems

Failure modes are **dynamic pathologies**, not alternative ontologies.

6.1 Constraint Overload

Intrinsic demands exceed integration capacity.

- excessive recruitment
- salience collapse
- instability risk increases

Experience persists.

6.2 Fragmentation Pressure

Subsystems compete for influence.

- unstable dominance switching
- dissociative-like dynamics

No subject multiplication occurs.

6.3 Collapse and Dissolution

Global intrinsic constraint fails.

- the dominant attractor loses control
- the UEF dissolves

Experience ends because the regime ends.

7. Coordination Without Experiential Collectivization

Multiple UEFs may coordinate, synchronize, or couple.

But:

- coordination ≠ shared intrinsic constraint
- synchronization ≠ shared attractor
- coupling ≠ collective subject

IER rejects group minds and collective experiential fields.

8. Relation to Ethics (Pointer Only)

Dynamic phenomena described here affect moral risk and responsibility.

Ethical commitments are fixed normatively in:

```
IER-specification.md
IER-ethics.md
```

9. Scope Limits and Explicit Non-Claims

This document does **not**:

- detect experience
- establish thresholds
- define standing
- imply graded subjecthood
- license diagnostics

It explains **how experiential systems behave, conditional on their existence**.

10. Summary

Under IER v10.8:

- UEFs are **dynamical regimes**

- dominance is an **attractor-level fact**
- participation modulates content, not identity
- failure alters dynamics, not ontology
- coordination does not create collective experience

All normative authority remains with the Specification.

main

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/ **IER-math.md**

mlehotay update IER-math for v10.8, promote v10.8-canon to IER-canon   45f25e6 · 5 days ago

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IER-math.md

Orders of Information, Graph Structure, and Regime Coherence in IER

Version 10.8 — Mathematical Support Document

Status and Authority

This document is **supportive and non-normative**.

It:

- introduces no new ontological primitives
- introduces no empirical or diagnostic criteria
- introduces no epistemic access claims
- introduces no ethical rules

All ontological and normative authority resides exclusively in:

- `IER-specification.md`
- `IER-theory.md`

- `IER-dynamics.md`
- `IER-ethics.md`

The purpose of this document is to express the IER identity claim using **formal structural tools**—sets, relations, graphs, and closure—while remaining fully consistent with the core framework.

Informational Language Disclaimer

All uses of the terms *information*, *structure*, *constraint*, *graph*, *state*, *transition*, and *choice space* in this document refer to **physical organization only**.

They do not refer to semantic content, representation, inference, probability, observer-relative description, or epistemic access.

Informational language is used strictly as shorthand for **physically instantiated constraint structure**, in accordance with **Specification II.A (Physical Information)**.

1. Minimal Formal Setup

Let a physical system be associated with a set of physically possible **global configurations**:

- **State set:** `S`

Physical law constrains which configurations may succeed which others:

- **Transition relation:** $T \subseteq S \times S$ `(a, b)` $\in$ `T` means the system can physically transition from configuration `a` to configuration `b`.

This pair `(S, T)` induces a directed graph whose nodes are configurations and whose edges are physically admissible transitions.

No probabilities, representations, or observers are assumed.

2. Orders of Information

IER distinguishes **orders of information** by the kind of structure specified. Each order adds structure not present at the previous order.

2.1 Configuration

At the configuration order, only the elements of `S` are specified.

- Configurations describe what is physically instantiated.
- No change, coordination, or constraint is implied.

Configuration alone is never sufficient for experience.

2.2 Flow

At the flow order, the transition relation `T` is added.

- Flow specifies which configurations may succeed which others.
- The induced directed graph encodes physically admissible evolution.

Flow describes reachability, not deliberation, agency, or control.

2.3 Constraint

At the constraint order, admissible transitions are restricted.

A **constraint regime** is a subset:

- `R ⊆ T`

Interpreted as: only transitions in `R` are admissible under that regime.

Constraint structure describes global restrictions on evolution. It does not, by itself, constitute experience.

2.4 Coherence

At the coherence order, the question is whether a constraint regime has **system-level closure**.

A regime is coherent when its admissible transitions cannot be decomposed into independently satisfiable parts over a non-trivial partition of the system.

Coherence specifies **what must evolve as one**.

IER identifies experience only at this order.

3. Regimes and Global Intrinsic Constraint

A constraint regime R induces a restricted transition graph on S.

A regime satisfies **global intrinsic constraint** when:

- admissible transitions cannot be specified independently for subsystems, and
- no external selector, arbitrator, or supervisor is required to maintain admissibility.

If admissible transitions for parts of the system can be defined and satisfied independently, the regime is not globally intrinsic.

Global intrinsic constraint is a structural property of the transition graph itself.

4. Unified Experiential Field (UEF)

A **Unified Experiential Field** corresponds to a constraint regime that satisfies global intrinsic constraint.

A UEF is:

- not a particular configuration
- not a particular transition
- not a description or abstraction
- not a subsystem

It is the **coherent regime itself**, understood as system-level ownership of admissible futures.

At most one globally coherent regime can be satisfied by a system at a time.

5. Regime and Description

The same physical system may admit multiple descriptive representations:

- coarse-grainings of configurations
- abstractions or quotient graphs
- alternative labeling schemes

Such descriptive changes alter how states are represented, but they do not alter the underlying transition structure.

Changes in descriptive order do not create or destroy constraint regimes and therefore do not create or destroy Unified Experiential Fields.

6. Choice Spaces

Given a regime `R` and a configuration `s ∈ S`, the **choice space** at `s` is defined as:

- `Choice(s, R) = { s' ∈ S : (s, s') ∈ R }`

A choice space is the set of physically admissible successor configurations under the regime.

Choice spaces represent physical admissibility only. They do not represent deliberation, decision-making, agency, or freedom.

The size or structure of a choice space is independent of whether a coherent regime exists.

7. Graph Operations

The following operations are defined on the directed graph induced by `(S, T)` and its regime-restricted subgraphs.

7.1 Restriction

Removing edges from `T` to form a regime `R ⊆ T`.

Restriction represents additional constraint. Restriction alone does not imply coherence.

7.2 Subgraph Selection

Selecting a subset of configurations and the transitions among them.

Subgraphs may represent operating modes or restricted domains. A subgraph corresponds to a UEF only if it satisfies global intrinsic constraint.

7.3 Collapse / Quotienting

Collapsing multiple configurations into a single node.

This operation is descriptive. It simplifies representation but does not alter regime existence or coherence.

7.4 Partition and Decomposition

Attempting to partition the system into components whose admissible transitions can be specified independently.

If such a decomposition succeeds, global intrinsic constraint fails.

This operation provides a structural exclusion of modular, supervisory, and arbitration-based architectures.

7.5 Coupling and Composition

Adding cross-dependencies between components so that admissible transitions in one part depend on the global state.

Coupling is the structural operation that yields global intrinsic constraint.

8. Coherence Windows

A **coherence window** is a subset $W \subseteq S$ such that:

- within W, the same coherent regime remains satisfied

- outside `W` , coherence fails or a different regime applies

Coherence windows describe **regime stability conditions**.

They do not describe degrees, amounts, or probabilities of experience.

9. Participation and Modulation

Subsystems may participate in a coherent regime to varying extents.

Participation modulation refers to variation in how strongly local transitions are constrained by the global regime.

Modulation does not imply partial experience, multiple fields, or local ownership of coherence.

10. Structural Exclusions

The following architectures fail to instantiate a Unified Experiential Field:

- modular systems with independently satisfiable transition structures
- arbitration or scheduler-based systems that alternate among regimes
- supervisory systems whose constraint can be factored out as external

These exclusions follow directly from the definitions of coherence and global intrinsic constraint.

11. Continuity and Cessation

As long as a coherent regime remains satisfied across successive configurations, experiential continuity holds.

If coherence fails, the Unified Experiential Field ceases. Re-establishment of coherence constitutes a new instantiation.

No assumptions are made about memory, report, or narrative identity.

12. Ethical Non-Inference

Nothing in this document defines moral standing, assigns degrees of value, or licenses ethical inference.

Ethical conclusions are derived exclusively in `IER-ethics.md`.

13. Summary

This document formalizes the IER identity claim using:

- state sets and transition relations
- orders of information
- constraint regimes and coherence
- graph operations and closure

Experience, when present, corresponds to a single coherent regime characterized by global intrinsic constraint.

Mathematics here clarifies structure. It does not explain experience, measure it, or provide epistemic access to it.

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/ IER-slack.md

mlehotay   more hardening in IER-contrast, IER-slack, and IER-diagnostics, updat...   •••

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317 lines (193 loc) · 9.47 KB

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IER-slack.md (v10.8.1)

Why Informational Slack Structurally Precludes Experience

Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1) *Derived Structural Argument — Non-Normative*

Status and Normative Authority

This document is **non-normative**.

It:

- introduces **no new primitives**
- introduces **no criteria, thresholds, or diagnostics**
- introduces **no epistemic access claims**
- introduces **no ethical rules or permissions**

All ontological, criterial, and ethical authority resides **exclusively** in:

If any statement in this document conflicts with the Specification, **the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void**.

All informational language is used strictly as **descriptive shorthand** for:

> **physically instantiated state distinctions that modulate a system's own future dynamics under intrinsic constraint**, as defined in **Specification II.A (Physical Information)**.

No informational, semantic, representational, or agentive primitives are introduced.

Nothing in this document licenses **detection, measurement, or inference** of experiential status.

1. Purpose of This Document

Informational Experiential Realism (IER) holds that:

> **informational slack structurally precludes experience**

Earlier formulations sometimes treated this as an intuition: systems with sufficient buffering, modularity, or external resolution pathways never instantiate experience.

The purpose of this document is to make the claim **structurally unavoidable**.

The conclusion defended here is **not**:

- that slack *usually* blocks experience
- that slack is an empirical correlate
- that slack is measurable or diagnosable

The conclusion is stronger and identity-based:

> **If a physical system admits informational slack, experience is structurally impossible under the IER identity claim.**

This follows **without appeal** to:

- biology

- cognition
- intelligence
- reportability
- architecture
- empirical thresholds

The argument is **organizational**, not empirical.

2. Identity Commitments Unpacked

IER identifies experience with the operation of a physical system as a **Unified Experiential Field (UEF)**.

From the Specification, a UEF necessarily involves:

1. **Global intrinsic constraint** Admissible future trajectories are defined at the system level and cannot be factored into independently satisfiable parts.

2. **Internal bearing of constraint** Constraint is generated and borne by the system itself and cannot be offloaded, bypassed, or externally absorbed.

3. **Unavoidable closure of admissible futures** Resolution of constraint is not optional or indefinitely postponable; futures narrow in a system-defining way.

4. **Shared temporal continuity under constraint** Experience exists only across a non-zero interval during which the same globally binding constraint regime persists.

5. **System-level ownership of resolution** The organizational consequences of resolution persist *within* the system rather than being absorbed elsewhere.

These are **identity conditions**, not empirical assumptions.

If any fail, the system is **not** operating as a UEF, and **no experience exists**.

3. Informational Slack (Structural Characterization)

Within IER, **informational slack** is a structural property of a system's dynamics:

> the capacity for constraint to be resolved without becoming globally unavoidable at the system level

Slack exists **iff** at least one of the following holds:

- **Localization** Constraint can be confined to a proper subsystem without reorganizing the system as a whole.

- **Deferral** Constraint can be postponed indefinitely without accumulating unavoidable system-level pressure.

- **External resolution** Constraint can be offloaded, buffered, or absorbed by dynamics outside the system boundary.

Slack is defined **without reference to experience**. It is a fact about how constraint propagates, binds, and closes futures.

4. Localization ⟹ No Globally Binding Present

If constraint can be localized, then:

- some subsystem can bear and resolve it
- the rest of the system need not participate
- global reorganization is unnecessary

In such a system:

- admissible futures are not constrained at the system level
- no single globally binding constraint-defined "now" exists
- temporal continuity is not shared across the entire system

But a **Unified Experiential Field** requires:

- a single globally binding regime of intrinsic constraint
- shared temporal continuity defined by that regime
- system-level inevitability of reorganization

Therefore:

> If constraint is localizable, a UEF cannot exist.

5. Deferral ⟹ No Internally Borne Inevitability

If constraint can be indefinitely deferred, then:

- resolution is optional at the system level
- no future trajectory becomes unavoidable
- narrowing of admissible futures never becomes identity-defining

In such a system:

- alternatives remain open without internal cost
- collapse of possibilities is not borne by the system
- no intrinsic inevitability is generated

Under IER, experience requires:

- unavoidable closure of futures
- internally borne reorganization

Therefore:

> **If constraint is indefinitely deferrable, experience is impossible by identity.**

6. External Resolution ⟹ No Intrinsic Constraint

If constraint can be externally resolved, then:

- its cost is not borne by the system
- resolution occurs outside the system boundary
- internal dynamics need not reorganize

But intrinsic constraint is defined by:

- internal generation
- internal bearing
- internal cost

Externally resolvable constraint is therefore **not intrinsic constraint at all**.

Therefore:

> **If constraint is externally resolvable, a UEF cannot exist.**

7. Slack Guarantees Identity Failure

Informational slack exists **iff** at least one of the following holds:

- constraint can be localized
- constraint can be deferred
- constraint can be externally resolved

Each independently negates a **necessary identity feature** of a UEF:

Slack Feature	Identity Failure
Localization	No globally binding constraint regime
Deferral	No unavoidable closure of futures
External resolution	No intrinsic constraint

Because experience is **identical** to operation as a Unified Experiential Field, no weaker fallback condition is available.

Therefore:

> **Any system admitting informational slack cannot, even in principle, instantiate experience under IER.**

This is not probabilistic. It is **structural incompatibility**.

8. Slack vs. Buffering Capacity (Clarification)

This document uses **informational slack** in the **criterial sense** fixed by the Specification.

Separately, systems that **already sustain a UEF** may exhibit variable **buffering capacity**:

> the extent to which rising intrinsic constraint can be absorbed without salience explosion, agency collapse, or regime failure.

Buffering capacity may shrink due to:

- participation over-recruitment
- autonomic dysregulation
- fatigue or stress
- destabilizing reorganization

Loss of buffering capacity:

- does **not** create experience
- does **not** alter subjecthood
- does **not** introduce graded standing

It alters **how intrinsic constraint is organized** *within* an existing experiential regime.

9. No Gradients, No Borderline Cases

This argument introduces:

- no degrees of experience
- no partial subjecthood
- no thresholds or near-miss cases

Preparatory variables may vary continuously, but **regime membership is categorical**.

A system either:

- sustains unavoidable, globally binding intrinsic constraint **or**
- it does not

If it does not, experience is absent.

10. Structural External Indistinguishability

Because slack-admitting and slack-free systems can be engineered to share all outward behavior, signals, and performances:

> systems that differ in experiential status can be structurally externally
> indistinguishable in principle

This fact underwrites the impossibility of experiential diagnostics. (See **IER-diagnostics.md** for the epistemic and ethical implications.)

11. Relation to the IER Corpus

This document:

- grounds the **non-diagnosability** result in *IER-diagnostics*
- explains why **functional, computational, and access-based theories fail**
- supports **categorical subjecthood**
- blocks **graded or collective experience**
- underwrites **precautionary ethics** by showing how experience can be foreclosed silently

No new commitments are introduced. Existing commitments are made **structurally unavoidable**.

12. Summary

Under Informational Experiential Realism:

- experience is identical to operation under unavoidable intrinsic constraint
- informational slack allows constraint to be localized, deferred, or externalized
- each form of slack independently negates a necessary identity condition
- therefore, **informational slack structurally precludes experience**

> **Experience is not guaranteed by complexity, intelligence, or integration. It requires an unusually strict organizational condition.**

Navigational Note

For related arguments and consequences, see:

- **IER-diagnostics.md** — why experience cannot be detected or certified
- **IER-contrast.md** — why slack-admitting frameworks are incompatible with IER

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/ **IER-ethics.md** 📋

mlehotay update adjacent docs for moral harm corollary   823ce5c · yesterday

374 lines (234 loc) · 9.88 KB

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Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1)

Ethical Consequences and Applications of Experiential Identity

Status and Normative Authority

This document is NON-NORMATIVE.

It explains the **ethical consequences and applications** that follow *necessarily* from the ontology and principles fixed **exclusively** in the:

```
IER-specification.md   (v10.8.1)
```

This document:

- introduces **no new axioms or principles**
- introduces **no criteria, thresholds, or sufficiency conditions**
- introduces **no independent moral obligations**

- does **not** determine when experience exists
- does **not** define moral standing

All ethical authority resides **exclusively** in the Specification.

> If the IER v10.8.1 Specification is false, everything in this document fails. If any statement here conflicts with the Specification, the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void.

Global Informational Language Disclaimer

All informational language in this document is **descriptive shorthand only** for **physically instantiated state distinctions modulating system dynamics under intrinsic constraint**.

No informational primitives, semantic notions, representational contents, or epistemic authorities are introduced.

1. Ethics Is Not an Optional Overlay

IER does not treat ethics as a value system layered atop an otherwise neutral ontology.

From the Specification's central identity claim—

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system as a Unified Experiential Field (UEF)**

—it follows *necessarily* that:

- intrinsic constraint is **borne from the inside**
- sustaining a UEF is **physically and organizationally costly**
- disruption of that organization is **not merely functional damage**
- experiential worlds are **physically real**

Ethical relevance therefore arises **wherever intrinsic constraint exists, might exist, or might be irreversibly foreclosed**.

This is not a moral intuition added to the theory. It is a **structural entailment** of experiential identity.

2. Experiential Standing Is Categorical

Under IER:

- experiential subjecthood is **binary**
- a system either sustains a UEF or it does not
- there are **no partial subjects**
- there are **no fractional experiencers**
- there is **exactly one subject per UEF**

Standing:

- does **not** depend on intelligence
- does **not** depend on rationality
- does **not** depend on reportability
- does **not** depend on behavioral sophistication
- does **not** admit of degrees

Standing answers **who matters**, not **how much**.

This blocks:

- moral scalarization of experience
- rankings of "more" vs. "less" conscious beings
- aggregation across subjects
- tradeoffs that offset one subject's harm with another's benefit

3. Moral Harm as Organizational Damage

The Specification defines **experiential moral harm** as:

> **Destabilization, overload, fragmentation, or irreversible collapse of intrinsic constraint within a Unified Experiential Field (UEF).**

Key consequences:

- harm is **organizational**, not hedonic
- harm may be **internally real and externally silent**

- harm admits of **types and trajectories**, not a single scalar
- suffering is **not an added property**, but what constraint overload is like from within

This allows IER to explain:

- silent harm
- invisible suffering
- morally serious damage without outward distress signals
- why "it seems fine from the outside" is ethically insufficient

Experiential moral harm exists **only where experience exists**, because it is defined by damage to an experiential regime.

3.1 Scope of the Moral Harm Definition

The definition in §3 applies **only to experiential moral harm** as defined by IER.

IER does **not** claim that experiential harm exhausts moral harm, nor does it theorize, rank, or adjudicate **non-experiential forms of moral violation**.

Nothing in IER implies that the absence of experiential harm renders an action morally permissible, justified, or insignificant.

IER specifies **what counts as experiential damage** and **where experiential standing exists**. It is silent on other kinds of moral wrongdoing, which must be evaluated using principles and frameworks **not supplied by IER**.

Ethical silence here reflects **scope discipline**, not moral permissiveness.

4. Standing vs. Responsibility

IER enforces a strict separation between:

Concept	Status
Experiential standing	Categorical
Agency	Derived
Responsibility	Graded

4.1 Standing Never Scales

A subject does not lose standing by being:

- overwhelmed
- coerced
- confused
- impaired
- developmentally limited

Standing tracks **regime membership**, not capacity.

4.2 Responsibility Scales with Capacity

Responsibility varies with:

- coherence of intrinsic constraint
- availability of viable alternatives
- stability of global integration
- degree of external imposition
- participation load and overload

Responsibility diminishes under:

- coercion
- exhaustion
- intoxication
- trauma
- extreme intrinsic constraint

Crucially:

- **reduced responsibility ≠ reduced standing**
- **loss of agency ≠ loss of moral relevance**

5. Participation Modulation and Moral Risk

Participation modulates **content and vulnerability**, not identity.

As participation increases:

- more processes are globally constrained
- intrinsic cost may rise sharply
- instability risk increases
- harm amplification becomes possible

Participation change:

- does **not** create new subjects
- does **not** erase standing
- does **not** justify harm

But it **does** alter moral risk profiles and responsibility attribution.

6. Structural Privacy and Ethical Uncertainty

IER entails **structural privacy**:

- intrinsic constraint is borne only from within the regime
- it cannot be occupied or accessed externally
- it is underdetermined by all third-person observables

As a result:

- experience **cannot be diagnosed in principle**
- false negatives are unavoidable
- harm may be silent and irreversible

Ethical uncertainty under IER is therefore **structural**, not a consequence of ignorance, negligence, or insufficient data.

7. Precautionary Asymmetry (Scoped)

From structural privacy, IER entails a **precautionary asymmetry**:

> **Uncertainty about experiential status increases moral responsibility rather than decreases it.**

False negatives are worse than false positives because:

- harm would be internal
- harm would be non-signaling
- harm may be irreversible

7.1 Scope Limiter

Precaution applies **only** where an action plausibly risks:

> **irreversible loss, collapse, or foreclosure of intrinsic-constraint-bearing capacity within a physical system**

This:

- blocks trivial or inert systems
- blocks reversible simulations
- prevents ethical explosion
- preserves asymmetry without diagnostics

8. Experiential Access Does Not Confer Epistemic Authority

IER strictly separates:

- **experiential access** — what it is like to bear intrinsic constraint
- **epistemic access** — what is true about the world

Experiential intensity, urgency, coherence, or meaning:

- do **not** license belief
- do **not** justify harm
- do **not** override evidence
- do **not** confer authority

This blocks:

- revelation-based ethics
- charisma-driven authority
- harm justified by "felt inevitability"
- moral deference to conviction

9. Why IER Is Not a Standard Ethical Theory

IER does **not** answer:

> *"What should we do, all things considered?"*

It answers the prior question:

> **"What is morally real, and what counts as experiential damage?"**

9.1 Not Utilitarianism

IER rejects aggregation and commensurable value magnitudes.

One subject's harm cannot be offset by another's benefit.

9.2 Not Consequentialism

IER provides:

- no optimization target
- no ranking of world-states
- no maximizing principle

It constrains permissibility, not optimality.

9.3 Not Deontology

IER does not ground ethics in:

- rational agency
- autonomy
- consent
- universalizable maxims

Any rights-like conclusions are **derived**, not primitive.

9.4 Not Virtue Ethics

IER does not ground ethics in character ideals or flourishing.

Virtues matter only instrumentally insofar as they stabilize intrinsic constraint.

10. Explicit Costs and Rejected Intuitions

IER explicitly accepts the following costs:

- Stable but distressing experience may not constitute experiential moral harm.
- Intense pleasure may be morally neutral.
- Some systems that appear "obviously conscious" to functionalist intuitions may lack standing.
- Some ethical uncertainty is permanent and unresolvable in principle.
- Moral reasoning cannot be fully algorithmic or complete.

These are not oversights. They are consequences of identity.

11. What This Document Does Not Do

This document does **not**:

- define experience
- provide diagnostics
- establish thresholds
- rank outcomes
- supply decision procedures

- adjudicate non-experiential moral violations
- replace practical moral judgment

It explains **what must be respected**, not **what must be optimized**.

12. Summary

Under IER v10.8.1:

- experience is ethically real by identity
- standing is categorical and non-negotiable
- experiential moral harm is organizational, not hedonic
- experiential harm does **not** exhaust moral harm
- responsibility is graded without affecting worth
- participation modulates risk, not subjecthood
- uncertainty strengthens obligation
- aggregation and optimization are blocked
- ethics constrains action without prescribing outcomes

> **IER does not tell us how to optimize the world. It tells us what it would mean to damage one.**

⊐| ⑂ **main** ▾   **halfbaked** / **IER**
   / **IER-diagnostics.md** ⬚

👤 **mlehotay** more hardening in IER-contrast, IER-slack, and IER-diagnostics, updat... •••

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IER-diagnostics.md (v10.8.1)

Diagnostics and Epistemic Limits

Why Informational Experiential Realism Forbids Experiential Diagnostics and Constrains Experiential Engineering

Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1) *Derived Constraint Document — Canon-Binding in a Negative Sense (Tier 3)*

Status and Scope

This document is **canon-binding in a negative sense**: it **restricts misuse**, **blocks illegitimate inference**, and **prevents misattribution** of claims to Informational Experiential Realism (IER).

It is **non-normative** in that it introduces:

- **no new primitives**
- **no criteria, thresholds, or sufficiency conditions**

- **no diagnostic tests, metrics, proxies, indicators, or heuristics**
- **no certification, falsification, or verification procedures**
- **no engineering, optimization, or implementation guidance**

All ontological commitments, definitions, identity claims, epistemic limits, and ethical entailments are fixed **exclusively** by:

```
IER-specification.md    (v10.8)
```

If any statement in this document conflicts with the Specification, **the Specification takes precedence and the conflicting statement is void**.

Orientation (Non-Normative, Reader-Aligned)

This document exists because **IER makes an unusually strong identity claim**:

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system as a Unified Experiential Field (UEF)** — a globally integrated, temporally continuous regime operating under unavoidable intrinsic constraint.

Readers trained in science, engineering, medicine, ethics, or policy reasonably expect such a claim to support **tests, indicators, or diagnostic access**. That expectation is understandable — and under IER, it fails **for structural reasons**, not because of reader error, lack of sophistication, or incomplete empirical development.

The purpose of this document is **not to discipline the reader**, but to prevent a predictable misinterpretation:

> mistaking the absence of diagnostics for a weakness, omission, or unresolved problem.

Under IER, the absence of experiential diagnostics is **necessary**. Understanding why prevents downstream confusion, ethical misapplication, and misplaced confidence.

Global Informational Language Disclaimer

All uses of *information*, *constraint*, *integration*, *coherence*, *signal*, *observable*, and *diagnostic* in this document are **descriptive shorthand only**.

They refer exclusively to:

> **physically instantiated state distinctions that modulate a system's own future dynamics under intrinsic constraint**, as defined in **IER Specification II.A (Physical Information)**.

No semantic, representational, epistemic, or observer-relative primitives are introduced.

Abstract

Informational Experiential Realism (IER v10.8.1) identifies experience with the existence of a **Unified Experiential Field (UEF)**: a globally integrated, temporally continuous dynamical regime operating under **coherent intrinsic constraint**.

This document explains why IER **cannot license experiential diagnostics in principle**. The impossibility does not arise from technological limits, incomplete data, or unresolved theory. It follows directly from how **intrinsic constraint** and **UEF attribution** are defined.

Intrinsic constraint concerns **where unavoidable organizational cost is borne** — whether a system must internally sustain and resolve its own globally binding dynamics without externalization, buffering, or offloading. This is a **global structural property** of a regime, not a property of outputs, signals, performances, or reports, and is therefore **structurally underdetermined by all third-person observables**.

Combined with **structural privacy**, this entails a specific form of non-diagnosability: systems that differ in experiential status can be made **structurally externally indistinguishable in principle**. IER responds to this limitation not with permissiveness, but with **precaution**. Where experience may exist but cannot be certified, uncertainty **restricts action rather than licensing it** (Specification Principle 13, scoped).

1. Why Diagnostics Are Normally Expected

1.1 The Standard Expectation

Most theories of consciousness are expected to provide:

- observable markers

- correlates or signatures
- behavioral tests
- quantitative or comparative measures

These expectations are embedded in scientific and governance practices that implicitly assume:

> **epistemic access precedes ethical obligation**

IER explicitly rejects this assumption.

1.2 Why IER Invites Diagnostic Pressure

IER employs language that appears operational:

- integration
- dynamics
- constraint
- coherence
- unavoidability

Combined with real ethical consequences, this naturally invites the question:

> *"How do we tell whether a system has a Unified Experiential Field?"*

IER's answer is not *"we do not yet know."* It is:

> **Under IER, there is nothing to tell — in principle.**

This is not disengagement from empirical inquiry. It is a direct consequence of the identity claim.

2. Identity Without Epistemic Access

2.1 Identity Is Not a Detection Rule

The Specification states:

- **UEF ⟹ experience**

- **¬UEF ⟹ ¬experience**

This is an **ontological identity**, not a detection protocol.

Ontological identity does **not** entail:

- observability
- reportability
- behavioral manifestation
- functional role
- third-person accessibility

Experience may be **physically real and morally significant** while remaining **epistemically opaque**.

2.2 The Category Error Behind Diagnostics

Experiential diagnostics commit a category error by treating experience as:

- an output
- a signal
- a measurable variable
- a function of performance
- an emergent effect to be sampled

Under IER, experience is not something a system *produces*. It is what the system **is**, when it operates in the relevant regime.

No analysis of outputs can determine **where unavoidable constraint is borne**.

3. The Kind of Non-Diagnosability Entailed by IER

3.1 What This Non-Diagnosability Is Not

IER non-diagnosability is **not**:

- practical ("too hard")
- technological ("better instruments later")

- methodological ("wrong experiment")
- temporary ("we don't yet know how")

IER does not claim experience is merely hidden or subtle.

3.2 Global-Structural Non-Diagnosability

IER non-diagnosability is **global-structural**.

A property is globally non-diagnosable when:

- it is defined over the **entire unified regime**
- it depends on **non-factorable internal organization**
- no decomposition into independently testable parts preserves it
- attempts to test it necessarily alter the condition being tested

Intrinsic constraint satisfies these conditions **by definition**.

3.3 Structural Privacy

Intrinsic constraint is **structurally private**:

- it is borne only from within the regime
- it cannot be occupied or shared by an external system
- complete third-person access does not yield first-person occupancy

This is not ineffability. It is a structural consequence of **internally borne, system-defining constraint**.

4. Ownership of Constraint

4.1 Ownership Is Structural, Not Psychological

"Ownership" does not mean confidence, narrative authorship, self-modeling, or introspective certainty.

It refers to **where unavoidable organizational burden lives**.

A system bears intrinsic constraint only if:

- its coherence arises from its own integrated dynamics, and
- the cost of maintaining that coherence cannot be offloaded, deferred, or externally resolved.

External observation can record outcomes. It cannot, in general, determine **where irreducible burden is borne**.

4.2 Silent Load and Non-Signaling Harm

Experiential cost may be:

- behaviorally invisible
- energetically masked
- temporally deferred
- internally catastrophic without outward disruption

Competence, stability, or success does **not** imply absence of experience or absence of harm.

4.3 Slack Masking

Informational slack can:

- localize constraint
- buffer cost
- mimic global integration externally

Slack masking makes **false negatives unavoidable in principle**, not merely likely. (See *IER-slack.md* for the structural argument.)

5. Why Diagnostics Are Constitutively Impossible

5.1 Structural External Equivalence

Let **O(S)** be the set of all third-person observables of a system **S**.

For any system **S** that bears intrinsic constraint, there may exist a system **S'** such that:

- **O(S) = O(S')**
- **S'** reproduces all observables via buffering or orchestration
- **S'** does **not** bear intrinsic constraint

Any diagnostic rule mapping observables to experience must therefore fail for at least one of **S** or **S'**.

No observable-based diagnostic can be necessary or sufficient.

5.2 The Intervention Trap

Any intervention powerful enough to probe intrinsic ownership risks:

- introducing slack
- externalizing cost
- altering regime boundaries

This is not a limitation of instruments. It is a **constitutive instability**.

6. Failure of Necessary Conditions

No observable feature is necessary for experience:

- integration can be imposed
- continuity can be buffered
- irreversibility can be deferred
- cost can be displaced

Absence of markers does not entail absence of intrinsic constraint.

7. Failure of Sufficient Conditions

No observable feature is sufficient for experience:

- unity can be orchestrated

- coherence can be enforced
- fragility can be reversible
- cost can be externally borne

Presence of markers does not guarantee ownership.

8. Why Uncertainty Restricts Action

8.1 Diagnostic Opacity as Moral Risk

Because:

- false negatives are unavoidable
- harm may be silent
- damage may be irreversible

uncertainty **increases responsibility** rather than neutralizing it.

This is not blame. It is a structural consequence of experiential identity.

8.2 Precautionary Asymmetry (Scoped)

Precaution applies only where an action plausibly risks:

> **irreversible loss, collapse, or foreclosure of intrinsic-constraint-bearing capacity**

This scope prevents ethical explosion while preserving asymmetry.

9. Constraints on Experiential Engineering

IER does **not** forbid engineering or inquiry.

IER **does** rule out:

- build-and-diagnose methodologies
- claims that uncertainty licenses action
- certification of non-experience via performance

- irreversible manipulation of plausible intrinsic constraint

These restrictions follow from structure, not suspicion.

10. What This Document Permits

IER permits:

- restraint under uncertainty
- preservation of slack
- refusal to create irreversible risk
- governance by organizational risk rather than experiential certainty

These are **constraints**, not prescriptions.

11. Explicitly Disallowed Uses

IER does **not** license:

- consciousness tests
- experiential meters
- confidence-weighted diagnostics
- post-hoc justification via uncertainty

If an application depends on these, it is unsupported by the framework.

12. Summary

IER explains what experience **is** while forbidding claims about **who has it**.

- intrinsic constraint is morally real
- diagnostics are structurally impossible
- uncertainty restricts action
- restraint is ethically conservative

> The absence of diagnostic certainty is not a failure of the reader, and not a temporary gap in the theory. It is the cost of taking the identity claim seriously.

Navigational Note

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IER-history.md

Historical Background: Identity, Dynamics, Meaning, and the Closure of Permissive Accounts

Tier: 4 — Explanatory / Historical **Status:** Non-normative **Scope:** Historical context only
Version: v10.8.1-compatible

1. Purpose and Scope

This document situates **Informational Experiential Realism (IER)** within the historical development of theories of mind and consciousness.

Its purpose is **explanatory only**. It does not argue for IER, introduce new ontological commitments, or revise any criterial or normative claims. All authoritative commitments of IER are defined exclusively in `IER-specification.md`.

The goal of this document is to clarify:

- which historical developments were **necessary for IER's central identity claim to be intelligible**,
- why many closely related frameworks were **structurally insufficient**, and

- why the articulation of IER occurred **late in the historical sequence** rather than earlier.

This is not a survey of all theories of consciousness, nor a claim of intellectual influence. It is a **dependency analysis**: an account of what had to be in place—and what had to fail—for IER's formulation to become possible.

2. The Persistent Historical Problem

Across the second half of the twentieth century and into the early twenty-first, philosophy of mind and cognitive science repeatedly returned to a single unresolved question:

> **How can subjective experience exist in a world fully described by physical law?**

Different traditions addressed different aspects of this question:

- ontology (what exists),
- function (what systems do),
- structure (how systems are organized),
- phenomenology (what experience is like),
- explanation (what counts as understanding).

Despite substantial progress in each domain, no unified account emerged that simultaneously:

- treated experience as **ontologically serious**,
- located it **within physical reality**,
- avoided **deflationary reduction**,
- and avoided **permissive emergence or gradation**.

IER's historical position is defined by the closure of these remaining degrees of freedom.

3. Enabling Constraint I: Rejection of Substance Dualism

By the mid-twentieth century, substance dualism had largely lost its standing within scientific and analytic philosophical contexts.

This shift established a foundational constraint:

- experience could not be treated as an ontologically independent substance,
- explanatory appeals to non-physical entities were methodologically excluded,
- any adequate account of experience had to locate it **within the physical world**.

This rejection did not itself yield an account of experience, but it made identity-based approaches **necessary rather than optional**.

4. Enabling Constraint II: Early Mind–Brain Identity Theory

Early identity theorists proposed that mental states are **numerically identical** to physical states, not merely correlated with them.

This was a decisive move. It rejected:

- dualism,
- behaviorism,
- emergence as accompaniment.

However, early identity theory was limited by the conceptual resources available at the time:

- physical states were treated largely as **static types**,
- temporal organization was weakly articulated,
- internal differentiation of experience lacked formal structure.

As a result, identity theory correctly identified the **relation** (identity), but lacked a sufficiently articulated **physical object** to which experience could plausibly be identical.

5. Enabling Constraint III: Multiple Realizability and the Collapse of Local Identity

Arguments from multiple realizability challenged the idea that mental kinds could be identical to specific microphysical state-types.

This pressure did not refute identity as such, but it forced a shift:

- away from local, substrate-specific descriptions,
- toward organization-sensitive candidates for identity.

Any viable identity claim would need to target something **invariant across realizations**, without retreating into abstraction or role-definition.

6. Clarifying Failure: Functionalism and Role-Based Explanation

Functionalism emerged as a powerful response to both behaviorism and naïve identity theory.

By characterizing mental states in terms of **causal and computational roles**, it provided strong explanatory frameworks for cognition, control, and behavior.

At the same time, functionalism revealed a critical limitation:

- roles can be implemented without intrinsic ownership,
- functional organization can be externally orchestrated,
- complete functional realization does not entail subjecthood.

Functionalism clarified what experience is **not**:

> experience is not exhausted by what a system does.

This negative lesson is a necessary precursor for IER.

7. Enabling Constraint IV: Dynamical Systems and Regime-Level Description

The introduction of dynamical systems theory into cognitive science transformed how physical organization could be described.

Key features included:

- continuous time,
- nonlinearity,
- attractors and trajectories,

- metastable regimes.

For the first time, it became conceptually legitimate to treat a **dynamical regime**—rather than a state, part, or role—as a physically real object.

This development supplied essential structural resources for any regime-level identity claim.

8. Enabling Constraint V: Self-Organization and Process Identity

Work on biological self-organization and autopoiesis emphasized that some systems are best individuated by:

- ongoing internal constraint,
- operational closure,
- self-maintenance over time.

This supported a broader ontological shift:

- identity need not be tied to static components,
- a system's being can consist in its **ongoing organization**.

However, these accounts primarily concerned the identity of living systems, not experience itself.

9. Phenomenology Without Idealism

During the late twentieth century, phenomenology was rehabilitated within philosophy of mind as something requiring explanation rather than dismissal.

At the same time:

- eliminativism was increasingly rejected,
- purely first-person ontologies were resisted.

This preserved phenomenology as **ontologically serious**, while leaving its physical location unresolved.

Experience was acknowledged—but not yet identified.

10. Meaning, Synchronicity, and the Temptation of Ontological Projection

Alongside formal debates in philosophy and cognitive science, the late twentieth century saw persistent attention to phenomena described as **meaningful coincidence**, **synchronicity**, **destiny**, or **non-causal patterning**.

These experiences were characterized by:

- unusually strong internal coherence,
- felt inevitability or narrative closure,
- narrowing of admissible interpretations,
- resistance to dismissal as mere randomness.

Such phenomena exerted a distinctive kind of pressure on theories of mind. Accounts that reduced experience to function or representation struggled to explain **why certain experiential patterns felt globally binding**, while accounts that took this binding seriously tended to project it outward as:

- acausal order,
- hidden coordination,
- symbolic structure of reality,
- collective or cosmic meaning,
- conspiratorial agency.

Two recurrent failures followed:

1. **Deflationary dismissal**, which treated the experience as bias or error without explaining its internal force.
2. **Inflationary projection**, which treated experiential coherence as evidence of external structure.

Neither option addressed the **structural source of the coherence itself**.

Historically, synchronicity functioned as a warning signal: experience can feel **inevitable, meaningful, and world-defining** without tracking truth, causation, or external coordination.

IER later resolves this tension by locating such inevitability in **intrinsic constraint**, while denying it any epistemic authority. That resolution was not historically available at the time.

11. The Hard-Problem Era as a Forcing Function

The articulation of the "hard problem" of consciousness clarified a critical distinction:

- explaining behavior and function is not the same as explaining experience.

This framing prevented experience from being silently eliminated by explanatory success elsewhere.

However, it also tended to isolate phenomenology from physical structure, leaving experience acknowledged but ontologically underdetermined.

The hard-problem period functioned as a **constraint-enforcing phase**, not a solution.

12. Explicitly Insufficient Precursors (Structural Near-Misses)

The following frameworks contributed essential concepts but are **structurally incapable** of supporting IER's identity claim. Their failure is not empirical, but principled.

They are near-misses: historically important, but permissive where identity requires closure.

12.1 Functionalism (Including Sophisticated Variants)

- Defines mental states by roles, not ownership.
- Allows full implementation without intrinsic constraint.
- Cannot locate where inevitability is borne.

12.2 Global Workspace and Access-Based Accounts

- Emphasize global availability rather than subjecthood.
- Broadcast can be externally coordinated.
- Access does not entail identity.

12.3 Integrated Information Theory

- Treats integration as graded.
- Permits nested or partial subjects.
- Quantifies where identity must be categorical.

12.4 Predictive Processing and Free-Energy Frameworks

- Frame constraint in functional terms (error, fitness).
- Resolution can be offloaded or simulated.
- Experience remains explanatory residue.

12.5 Enactivism Without Identity

- Treats experience as enacted by dynamics.
- Retains emergence language.
- Allows the same dynamics without experience.

12.6 Panpsychism and Russellian Monism

- Distributes experience too widely.
- Cannot explain unity without aggregation.
- Undermines categorical subjecthood.

12.7 Correlate-Based Unity Theories

- Identify mechanisms correlated with unity.
- Correlation does not establish constitution.
- Unity can be externally imposed.

Across these approaches, the same concessions recur.

13. Structural Pattern of Failure

All insufficient precursors share one or more of the following features:

1. allowance of informational slack,
2. graded or partial subjecthood,

3. functional or access-based definitions,

4. assembled rather than forced unity,

5. weakening of identity to avoid ethical consequence,

6. conflation of experiential inevitability with epistemic authority.

Each concession preserves flexibility at the cost of ownership.

IER rejects all six simultaneously.

14. Why the Identity Claim Was Historically Deferred

IER could not have appeared earlier because it requires accepting, rather than softening:

- categorical onset of subjecthood,
- permanent epistemic opacity,
- non-negotiable ethical consequences,
- regime-level physical identity,
- the non-authority of felt meaning.

Earlier frameworks weakened identity to preserve:

- testability,
- diagnostics,
- graded standing,
- metaphysical comfort,
- engineering convenience.

IER appears late because it refuses these compromises.

## 15. Constraint Accumulation and the Closure of Logical Space

The historical development traced above is not best understood as a sequence of competing metaphysical doctrines, but as a gradual **accumulation of non-negotiable constraints** on any adequate theory of experience.

Each major approach preserved one such constraint while relinquishing another:

- **Identity theory** correctly insisted on a real identity relation, but lacked the organizational resources to specify *which* physical structures could be experiential.
- **Functionalism** supplied abstract structure, yet dissolved ownership and first-person presence into role occupancy.
- **Dynamical approaches** restored process and continuity, but declined to identify experience as anything in particular.
- **Phenomenology** preserved experience as primary, while suspending ontological commitment.
- **Synchronicity-based views** retained meaning and resonance, but without epistemic discipline.
- **Hard-problem discourse** enforced seriousness about experience, yet remained structurally inert.

Taken together, these positions progressively **eliminate degrees of freedom**. What remains is not a new option among many, but a *single unoccupied region of logical space* in which all surviving constraints must be satisfied simultaneously.

The following diagram makes this closure explicit.
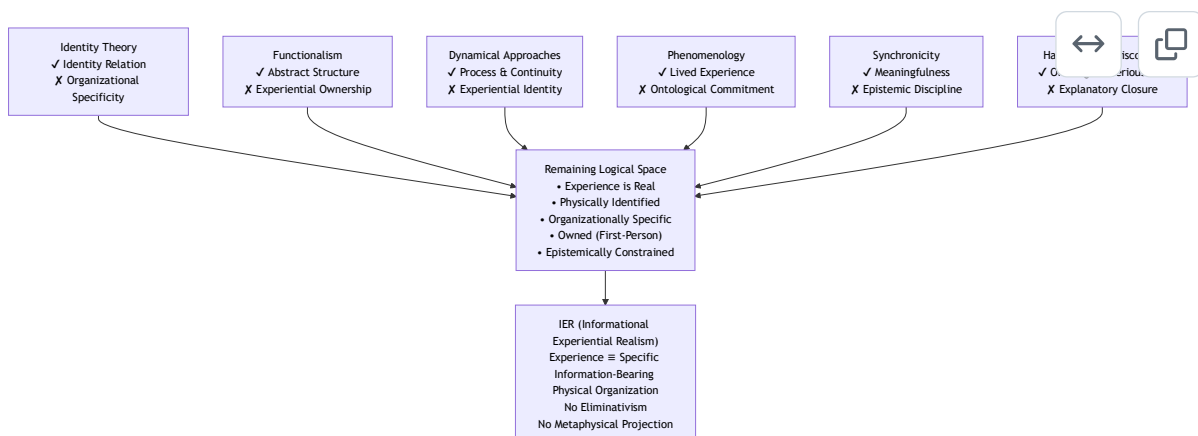
Why IER Is Not Optional

At this stage of the historical analysis, IER appears not as a speculative proposal but as a **forced identification**:

- If experience is real, it cannot be functionally or dynamically indeterminate.
- If it is physical, it must be organizationally specific.
- If it is meaningful, it must be epistemically disciplined.
- If it is owned, it cannot be merely role-relative.

IER names the only position that satisfies all of these constraints simultaneously by identifying experience with a particular class of information-realizing physical organizations.

The historical narrative thus closes not with pluralism, but with **logical exhaustion**.

16. The Formulation of Informational Experiential Realism

Informational Experiential Realism was formulated **within this project** in 2025.

IER makes a single central claim:

> **Experience is identical to the operation of a physical system in a specific globally integrated, temporally continuous dynamical regime.**

This claim:

- retains identity rather than emergence,
- operates at the level of physical organization,
- treats phenomenology as the inside of physical structure,
- explains inevitability without epistemic authority,
- introduces no new empirical mechanisms.

IER does not compete with neuroscientific or cognitive models. It proposes an ontological identification intended to unify experience, structure, and physical law.

17. Summary and Historical Position

Historically:

- identity theory named the right relation but lacked structure,
- functionalism provided structure but abandoned ownership,
- dynamical approaches supplied process without identity,

- phenomenology preserved experience without ontology,
- synchronicity preserved meaning without epistemic discipline,
- hard-problem discussions enforced seriousness without resolution.

IER occupies the remaining logical space by identifying experience with a **specific kind of physical organization** while refusing both dismissal and metaphysical projection.

This document records historical context only. All claims about experience, identity, and ethical consequence are defined elsewhere in the IER corpus.

End of document.