Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Verification of procedural claims against COPE guidelines
Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Fri, 25 Sep 2026 11:59:12 AM -0300Sent
"Publication Ethics"<publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
"MDPI Legal Department"<legal@mdpi.com>

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

I acknowledge receipt of your message of 25 September 2026. You state that your process "aligns with the COPE guidelines", and you describe the framework within which you conduct investigations: the Editorial Office coordinates and supports the investigation, while the Editorial Board is in charge of making post-publication editorial decisions.

I have verified this claim against COPE's published guidelines, including its published case guidance. The following table contrasts the framework you describe with what COPE actually establishes.

| **MDPI's stated framework (25 September 2026)** | **COPE's actual guidance** | **Discrepancy** |
|---|---|---|
| "The Editorial Office serves as the coordinator of and provides support for the investigation". | COPE Core Practice #3: "Journals should have a clearly described process for handling complaints **against the journal, its staff, editorial board or publisher**". | The complaint is directed **against** the Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor, who are part of the structure the Editorial Office coordinates. COPE requires a process for complaints against the journal itself. The framework you describe situates the investigation **within** that same structure, not independent of it. |
| "The Editorial Board... is in charge of making post-publication editorial decisions". | COPE Position on Conflicts of Interest: "Generally, where an **editorial conflict of interest is suspected for an article**, the journal should **approach new reviewers**, even if this is after publication". | Your statement is a general rule. COPE establishes an **explicit exception** when an editorial conflict of interest exists: new reviewers must be approached. The *Philosophies* Editorial Board includes members with documented ties to the network promoting the disputed framework (Gare, Di Paolo). They are not "new reviewers" in the sense COPE requires. |
| "Our comments and complaints process... aligns | COPE Case 22-06 (2022): A complaint was made against an editor-in-chief for an undisclosed conflict of interest. The matter was **referred to the publisher's** | COPE's own case establishes that complaints against an editor-in-chief must be **referred to the publisher**, not handled within the |

| MDPI's stated framework (25 September 2026) | COPE's actual guidance | Discrepancy |
|---|---|---|
| with the COPE guidelines". | **integrity and ethics group**, which conducted the investigation following an established process. The group concluded that a post-publication review with an **unbiased handling editor** would be appropriate. When such a review proved infeasible, the publisher instead **issued a note of concern attached to the article**, explaining the investigation and the steps taken. | journal. The framework you describe keeps the investigation **internal to the journal**. This contradicts COPE's established process for handling complaints against editorial leadership. |

## Conclusion

The framework described in your message of 25 September 2026 is **not aligned with COPE guidelines**. COPE explicitly requires that, where an editorial conflict of interest is suspected, the journal should **approach new reviewers**, even after publication. Its own published case guidance further establishes that complaints against the journal's editorial leadership must be **referred to the publisher for independent handling**.

Your framework does the opposite: it places the investigation in the hands of the very bodies whose conduct is under scrutiny.

I therefore reiterate:

1. The assessment must be conducted by reviewers **external to the *Philosophies* Editorial Office and Editorial Board**, with no documented ties to the network promoting the "Platonic Space" framework (such as the Associate Editor Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic).
2. An Editorial Expression of Concern (EoC) must be issued **immediately**, as a precautionary measure, in accordance with COPE guidance.

My notice of escalation to the MDPI Legal Department remains in effect and will be sent if the deadline of 25 September 2026 expires without a precautionary measure (EoC) having been taken.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "Agustin Ostachuk"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Cc: "MDPI Legal Department"<legal@mdpi.com>, "Hristina Banic"<hristina.banic@mdpi.com>
Date: Fri, 25 Sep 2026 09:17:35 -0300
Subject: RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural clarification

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Our comments and complaints process is outlined on our website (https://www.mdpi.com/ethics#_bookmark29), and aligns with the COPE guidelines.

By submitting a complaint, you acknowledge that the Editorial Office serves as the coordinator of and provides support for the investigation, while the Editorial Board, being responsible for the journal's content, is in charge of making post-publication editorial decisions.

We are committed to considering and investigating all relevant complaints. However, such investigations are conducted within the established framework described above. With this in mind, please let us know if you would like us to proceed with the investigation.

Kind regards,

MDPI Research Integrity Team

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**From:** Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
**Sent:** 24 September 2026 15:25
**To:** Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
**Cc:** MDPI Legal Department <legal@mdpi.com>
**Subject:** RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural clarification

CAUTION - EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open attachments.

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

No confidentiality is required. My identity is already public.

However, I do not accept an assessment in which the journal participates — neither the Editorial Office nor the Editorial Board.

The conflict of interest here is structural, not individual. The peer-review process of the Levin (2026) article was conducted under documented conflicts of interest, with Dr. Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic — Associate Editor of *Philosophies*, Guest Editor of the special issue, and Academic Editor of the article — being the author of a preprint promoting the very framework under review. That is the prototype of the problem, not an isolated case.

I note that my previous questions remain unanswered:

1. Who is conducting the investigation?
2. Will an external reviewer be appointed, or will the assessment rely on an Editorial Board Member?
3. Will an Editorial Expression of Concern be issued?

My notice of escalation to the MDPI Legal Department stands. The deadline expires tomorrow, 25 September 2026.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "aostachuk@evolutio.ar"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Cc: "Hristina Banic"<hristina.banic@mdpi.com>
Date: Thu, 24 Sep 2026 08:22:22 -0300
Subject: RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural inconsistency

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

We understand and appreciate your concerns relating to potential conflicts of interest in the Editorial Board, but would like to clarify that the Editorial Board is separate to the Editorial Office. As already explained, we will thoroughly evaluate whether there is any chance of a conflict of interest being present before we approach members of an Editorial Board. If you identify other Editorial Board

Members who you feel have relationships that could introduce conflicts of interest, please notify us and we will take this information into consideration.

Regarding the Editorial Office's request, could you please confirm your preference regarding confidentiality? As details of the concerns and supporting documentation may need to be shared to facilitate the investigation, we are unable to proceed until we receive your decision.

Kind regards,

MDPI Research Integrity Team

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https://www.mdpi.com/about/data-protection

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**From:** Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
**Sent:** 23 September 2026 15:58
**To:** Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
**Cc:** MDPI Legal Department <legal@mdpi.com>
**Subject:** RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural inconsistency

CAUTION - EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open attachments.

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

On 22 September 2026, the Philosophies Editorial Office contacted me regarding my complaint, requesting clarification on confidentiality and stating that the assessment is underway (see forwarded message below).

I note two procedural inconsistencies.

### 1. The Editorial Office is conducting the substantive investigation, not providing administrative support.

Your message of 18 September 2026 stated that the Editorial Office would "provide administrative support" to the assessment. However, the Editorial Office is now:

- Contacting me directly about the substance of the case;
- Stating that it will contact the author;

- Stating that it will invite an Editorial Board Member to assess the case.

This is not administrative support. This is the investigation itself. It contradicts your own statement of 18 September, and it contradicts my request of 18 September that the assessment be conducted by reviewers external to the Philosophies Editorial Board.

That request was not arbitrary. The conflict of interest is not limited to the Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor. It extends to the Editorial Board itself. At least two members have documented ties to the network promoting the "Platonic Space" framework:

- Dr. Arran Gare is a collaborator of Dr. Stuart Kauffman, who is part of that network.
- Dr. Ezequiel Di Paolo is a mentor of Dr. Tom Froese, who is also part of that network.

Any Editorial Board Member invited to assess this case would be drawn from the same body that includes these individuals. The standard of independence required by COPE guidelines cannot be met by a reviewer selected from within that structure.

**2. The internal deadline of three days was not met.**

The Research Integrity Team's instruction of 11 September 2026 directed that the initial investigation begin within three days. As of today, 23 September 2026, twelve days have passed without indication that the investigation has begun.

I will not engage with the Editorial Office on the substance of the assessment, because doing so would legitimize a process that I have formally requested be conducted independently of the journal's internal structure.

I reiterate my requests:

1. That the assessment be conducted by independent reviewers external to the Philosophies Editorial Office and Editorial Board, with no documented ties to the network promoting the "Platonic Space" framework.
2. That an Editorial Expression of Concern be issued immediately, as a precautionary measure, in accordance with COPE guidance.

My notice of escalation to the MDPI Legal Department stands. If no precautionary measure is taken by 25 September 2026, I will proceed as previously indicated.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

PS: Forwarded message from the Editorial Office:

========== Forwarded message ==========
From: Philosophies Editorial Office <philosophies@mdpi.com>
To: <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Cc: "dme-philosophies@mdpi.com"<dme-philosophies@mdpi.com>,
"philosophies@mdpi.com"<philosophies@mdpi.com>
Date: Tue, 22 Sep 2026 23:02:57 -0300
Subject: Re: Fw: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of interest
========== Forwarded message ==========

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Thank you for your continued correspondence and for the additional documentation you have provided.

I am contacting you on behalf of the Philosophies Editorial Office regarding the concerns you have raised about the article “Ingressing Minds: Causal, Non-Physical Patterns In-Form Natural, Synthetic, and Hybrid Embodiments” published in Philosophies.

We acknowledge receipt of the materials you have submitted, including the documentation relating to the Evolutio Unfolding Theory, your correspondence with Prof. Michael Levin, the comparative and forensic analyses referenced in your complaint, and the additional information provided regarding the concerns raised.

We are currently reviewing the information received as part of our assessment of this matter.

At this stage, we would be grateful if you could clarify your preference regarding confidentiality. During the course of the assessment, it may be necessary to share details of the concerns and supporting documentation with relevant parties and/or independent experts for the purpose of obtaining comments and assessments.

Could you please confirm whether:
you consent to the disclosure of your identity as the complainant where necessary for the purposes of the assessment; or
you would prefer that your identity be kept confidential to the extent possible, recognizing that this may limit the information that can be shared during the process.

Thank you for your cooperation. We will be in contact should we require any further information.

Kind regards,

MDPI Philosophies Editorial Office
E-Mail: philosophies@mdpi.com
http://www.mdpi.com/journal/philosophies

https://www.mdpi.com
Data Protection Notes: https://www.mdpi.com/about/data-protection

MDPI's headquarters are located in Basel, Switzerland. More information is available here: https://www.mdpi.com/about/contact

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On 2026/9/11 16:29, Publication Ethics wrote:
> Dear colleagues,
>
> We received a complaint (below) related to a published paper in
> /Philosophies/ (https://www.mdpi.com/2409-9287/11/5/161
> <https://www.mdpi.com/2409-9287/11/5/161>). As a next step, the
> editorial office should investigate this further and begin
> contacting the parties involved.
>
> A Susy ethics issue has already been created and can be found here:
> https://susy.mdpi.com/user/issues/view/10324
> <https://susy.mdpi.com/user/issues/view/10324>.
>
> Here, you should provide updates on the case's progress and attach
> any important documents such as all communications with parties
> involved and any evidence provided. This will ensure effective and
> organized case handling across coordinators and journal teams.
>
> In the first instance, please reach out to the author to request a
> response to the potential overlap between their publication and
> previous works. Please ensure that the tone of your message is
> neutral and inform the authors that the concerns and their response
> will be assessed by an Editorial Board Member of /Philosophies/.
> Once you have received a response, please reach out to an expert EBM
> to request their assessment of the concerns. Given the complainant
> has raised concerns regarding Professor Dodig-Crnkovic's publications
> on this topic, please take care when inviting EBMs in order to ensure
> no conflicts of interest exist within the investigation itself.
>
> Please ensure that you begin the initial investigation in the next 3
> days.
>
> The journal's Ethics Committee Member can be contacted directly for
> support in handling this case:
> http://hrms.mdpi.io/team/committee/guide/60

> <http://hrms.mdpi.io/team/committee/guide/60>.
>
> If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us on
> Jira.
>
> Kind regards, MDPI Research Integrity Team
>
> Grosspeteranlage 5 4052 Basel Switzerland Tel. +41 61 683 77 34 Fax
> +41 61 302 89 18 www.mdpi.com <http://www.mdpi.com/>
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> contents to anyone.
> ----------
>
>
>
>
>
*From:* Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
> *Sent:* 10 September 2026 18:53 *To:* Publication Ethics
> <publication.ethics@mdpi.com> *Subject:* Formal complaint:
> documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026),
> Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of
> interest CAUTION - EXTERNAL:This email originated from outside of
> MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open
> attachments.
>
> Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,
>
> I am writing as Director of the EVOLUTIO Research Center and author
> of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT, 2020) to express a formal
> concern regarding a recently published article in /Philosophies/.
>
> The article is: Levin, M. (2026). "Ingressing Minds: Causal,
> Non-Physical Patterns In-Form Natural, Synthetic, and Hybrid
> Embodiments." /Philosophies/, 11(5), 161.
> https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies11050161
> <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies11050161>
>
> This article presents a supposedly "novel" framework —the "Platonic
> Space"— which in reality represents a structural conceptual
> appropriation of my Evolutio Unfolding Theory, published in 2020.
> This concern is based on three specific, documented points:
>

> *1. Structural Identity and Prior Art*
>
> The "Platonic Space" framework (Levin, 2025; published 2026) is not
> an independent discovery. It is a systematic, structural restatement
> of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT), which I formally published in
> 2020 in /Cosmos and History/. This is not a case of superficial
> similarity; it is a documented instance of wholesale conceptual
> appropriation where the original theoretical architecture has been
> preserved and its terminology rebranded.
>
> A published comparative conceptual analysis formally demonstrates
> that the two frameworks share an identical explanatory core, with
> the original EUT concepts being substituted through a strategy of
> terminological camouflage:
>
> *
>
> My original construct, the *Ideological Matrix*—a virtual,
> stratified domain of pre-existing forms—is systematically relabeled
> as *Platonic Space*.
>
> *
>
> The process of sequential *Unfolding* and *Actualization* of virtual
> forms into the material world is relabeled as *Ingression*.
>
> *
>
> The central driving role of *Teleological Formal Agents* is
> relabeled as *High-Agency Patterns*.
>
> This documented pattern of renaming an entire conceptual
> architecture is presented in my open-access article, which I invite
> you to review:
>
> *
>
> Ostachuk, A. (2026). /Epistemic Chameleonism: A Structural and
> Conceptual Comparative Analysis of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory
> (2020) and the "Platonic Space" Framework (2025)/. Evolutio Journal.
> 2026: EJ15308831. https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTECA
> <https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTECA>
>
> *2. Prior Knowledge by the Author*
>
> Michael Levin was made directly aware of the EUT in February 2021,
> when I contacted him — at the recommendation of Dr. Stuart Newman —
> to propose his participation in a Templeton Foundation grant
> proposal specifically aimed at further developing my Evolutio
> Unfolding Theory. Levin acknowledged receipt and stated he would
> review the materials. The framework he now publishes as "Platonic

> Space" appeared in 2025 — four years after this direct exposure to
> the EUT. This sequence —confirmed by email records— constitutes a
> documented case of plagiarism of ideas as defined by MDPI's
> Publication Ethics Policies and the COPE Core Practices.
>
> Furthermore, Levin has received and opened several issues of the
> EVOLUTIO newsletter since 2024—particularly the one sent on
> September 11, 2024, titled “EVOLUTIO NEWSLETTER: New Teleological
> Theory of Evolution (plus Evidence)”, which mentions and explains my
> EUT theory and which Levin read and clicked on. He also received the
> newsletters announcing the publication of my comparative and forensic
> analyses of the appropriation. This establishes a continued line of
> prior awareness.
>
> The full chronology of prior awareness, including the 2021
> correspondence and the newsletter records, is documented in my
> forensic article:
>
> *
>
> Ostachuk, A. (2026). /Evolutio Unfolding Theory and "Platonic
> Space": Anatomy of a Conceptual Appropriation, Renaming and
> Rebranding/. The Unfolding. 2026: EM48730992.
> https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTEUT-2
> <https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTEUT-2>
>
> *3. Inappropriate Citation Practice and Prior Editorial Conflict of
> Interest*
>
> The article states in note 16 that the author "had not read" my work
> at the time of developing the framework. This is inconsistent with
> the documented correspondence of 2021 and with the record of
> newsletter deliveries.
>
> Furthermore, I note a documented editorial conflict of interest. The
> article was published in the special issue "Intelligent Inquiry into
> Intelligence", guest-edited by Dr. Marcin J. Schroeder
> (Editor-in-Chief of /Philosophies/) and Dr. Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic.
> Both are also listed as the Academic Editors of the Levin (2026)
> article itself.
>
> Dr. Dodig-Crnkovic is, in addition, the sole author of a preprint
> that promotes the "Platonic Space" framework:
>
> Dodig-Crnkovic, G. (2025). /Platonic Space as Cognitive Construct:
> Toward a Framework of Cognitive Platonism/Platonic Cognition/.
> Preprints. https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202512.0033
> <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202512.0033>
>
> Under COPE guidelines on editorial conflicts of interest, an editor
> who has publicly promoted the framework presented in a manuscript

> cannot serve as the Academic Editor of that manuscript. The fact
> that both guest editors of the special issue also served as Academic
> Editors of the article, and that one of them is an author of a
> preprint promoting the same framework, constitutes a direct and
> documented conflict of interest in the handling of this manuscript.
>
> *Formal Request*
>
> Per COPE Core Practices on post-publication corrections and MDPI's
> Publication Ethics Policies, I formally request that /Philosophies/
> take the following actions:
>
> 1.
>
> *As an immediate precautionary measure*, and pending resolution of
> the substantive appropriation dispute, issue an *Editorial
> Expression of Concern* on the Levin (2026) article, informing readers
> that the framework presented therein is the subject of a documented
> prior art claim and formal dispute.
>
> 2.
>
> *Review the editorial handling* of the article, given the documented
> conflict of interest in the guest editorship of the special issue,
> to determine whether the peer-review process was independent and free
> of conflict, as required by COPE guidelines.
>
> 3.
>
> *Evaluate the article for retraction*, on the basis of the
> documented structural conceptual appropriation of my Evolutio
> Unfolding Theory (2020) and the resulting contamination of the
> scholarly record.
>
> Finally, I note that this complaint, together with the outcome of
> MDPI's review, will be documented in the Conceptual Lineage Ethical
> Observatory. If the article remains unaddressed, the CLEO
> Verification Protocol v1.0 will be applied to it as a published
> artifact. This protocol is a public, citable procedure for the
> verification of structural conceptual appropriation, and its
> determination will be entered into the scholarly record. This is not
> a threat; it is a statement of the procedure that follows from my
> published work.
>
> I am at your disposal to provide any further documentation,
> including the 2021 email correspondence, the comparative and forensic
> analyses, the newsletter records, and the correspondence with other
> publishers.
>
> I trust that under MDPI's editorial policies, /Philosophies/ will
> take the necessary steps to uphold the integrity of the scholarly

> record.
>
> Sincerely,
>
>
> *Dr. Agustín Ostachuk* Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
> Director EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
> https://www.evolutio.ar <https://www.evolutio.ar>

- END OF FORWARDED MESSAGE-

From: Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
To: "Publication Ethics"<publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
Cc: "legal"<legal@mdpi.com>
Date: Mon, 21 Sep 2026 15:38:19 -0300
Subject: RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Request for an immediate precautionary measure (final notice)

Dear MDPI Research Integrity Team,

Noted. None of my three requests was addressed: no Expression of Concern, no independent reviewer external to the *Philosophies* Editorial Office or Editorial Board, no timeline.

The assessment thus remains inside the same chain of conflicts of interest that my complaint identified. That is your decision, and it is now on the record.

My deadline stands. In five business days, I escalate to your Legal Department.

You know what you will or will not have done by then.

All responses and actions—or lack thereof—will be reported in the Conceptual Lineage Ethical Observatory.

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "Agustin Ostachuk"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Date: Mon, 21 Sep 2026 13:09:16 -0300

Subject: RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Request for an immediate precautionary measure (final notice)

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Thank you for following up on this. Unfortunately, as the ethical investigation involves multiple parties, we cannot provide you with an expected date for resolution of this issue.

In the meantime, the Editorial Office will be in touch if any further information is needed.

Kind regards,

MDPI Research Integrity Team

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**From:** Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
**Sent:** 21 September 2026 15:46
**To:** Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
**Cc:** MDPI Legal Department <legal@mdpi.com>
**Subject:** Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Request for an immediate precautionary measure (final notice)

CAUTION - EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open attachments.

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

I acknowledge receipt of your message of 21 September 2026. I note that, to date, no precautionary measure has been taken to protect the scholarly record while your assessment proceeds. I am writing to formally request such a measure, and to clarify the consequences of inaction.

## 1. The article remains published and is being cited, while its originality is under a documented dispute.

The article Levin (2026), "Ingressing Minds", published in *Philosophies* 11(5), 161, reproduces the core conceptual architecture of my Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020).

This is not an allegation of superficial similarity; it is documented in two published analyses:

- Ostachuk, A. (2026). Epistemic Chameleonism: A Structural and Conceptual Comparative Analysis of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020) and the "Platonic Space" Framework (2025). *Evolutio Journal*. https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTECA
- Ostachuk, A. (2026). Evolutio Unfolding Theory and "Platonic Space": Anatomy of a Conceptual Appropriation, Renaming and Rebranding. *The Unfolding*. https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTEUT-2

The dispute is formal, documented, and unresolved. The article continues to circulate and be cited in its current state.

**2. Your citation of the COPE guidance on Expressions of Concern is incomplete.**

Your message of 21 September 2026 cites only one of the conditions under which COPE recommends an Expression of Concern: *"when conclusive evidence cannot be acquired for an extended period, or when an investigation is expected to remain inconclusive"*.

The COPE guidelines on Expressions of Concern list **five** conditions. Among them is the following:

*"there is a dispute between the authors and a third party"*.

This condition applies directly to the present case. A formal dispute exists between Dr. Levin (the author) and myself (a third party). The existence of this dispute is documented and public. Under COPE guidance, this condition alone is sufficient to justify an Expression of Concern, independently of whether the evidence is conclusive or the investigation is ongoing.

By citing only the most restrictive condition, MDPI has applied a selective reading of COPE guidance that permits inaction. I respectfully request that MDPI apply the guidance in its entirety.

**3. Formal request and deadline.**

I formally request that *Philosophies* issue an Editorial Expression of Concern on the Levin (2026) article within **five (5) business days** of this message. The Expression of Concern should inform readers that the framework presented in the article is the subject of a documented prior art claim and a formal dispute.

**4. Consequence of inaction.**

If no precautionary measure is taken within this period, I will escalate the matter to the MDPI Legal Department with a formal notice of intellectual property infringement, based on the documented structural appropriation of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020) and the false declaration of originality signed by the author. I am copying the Legal Department on this message so that they are aware of the pending matter.

I remain available to provide any further documentation. But I will not accept indefinite delay as a substitute for action.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "aostachuk@evolutio.ar"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Cc: "Hristina Banic"<hristina.banic@mdpi.com>,
"philosophies@mdpi.com"<philosophies@mdpi.com>
Date: Mon, 21 Sep 2026 08:32:16 -0300
Subject: RE: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural clarification and request for a precautionary measure

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Thank you for your reply, we acknowledge that in this investigation you are particularly concerned about potential Conflicts of Interest within the Editorial Board. Please be assured that we will thoroughly evaluate whether there is any chance of a Conflict of Interest being present before we approach members of an Editorial Board.

Regarding your second point, we will determine whether an Expression of Concern is appropriate as the investigation progresses; this type of notice is not applied to all ethical investigations, and is usually applied when conditions (outlined in the COPE guidelines on Expression of Concern https://publicationethics.org/guidance/guideline/expressions-concern) are met – for example when conclusive evidence cannot be acquired for an extended period, or when an investigation is expected to remain inconclusive.

If you have further evidence or information you would like to mention, please don't hesitate to contact us again. In the meantime, the journal will contact you with any updates or requests relating to the investigation.

Kind regards,

MDPI Research Integrity Team

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https://www.mdpi.com/about/data-protection

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**From:** Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
**Sent:** 18 September 2026 16:00
**To:** Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
**Subject:** Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Procedural clarification and request for a precautionary measure

CAUTION - EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open attachments.

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

I acknowledge receipt of your clarification of 18 September 2026 and appreciate the commitment to an assessment free of conflicts of interest.

However, I must note two points that require further clarification and action:

**1. The Independence of the Editorial Board.**
Your message states that any Editorial Board Member consulted "will be expected to have had no involvement in the original handling of the article and to have no identified relevant conflict of interest". I must point out that the *Philosophies* Editorial Board includes individuals with documented professional ties to the individuals and networks involved in this dispute. Specifically, Dr. Arran Gare is a collaborator of Dr. Stuart Kauffman, and Dr. Ezequiel Di Paolo is a mentor of Dr. Tom Froese, both of whom are part of the network promoting the "Platonic Space" framework. Their participation in any capacity, even as consultants, would not meet the standard of independent assessment required by COPE guidelines. I therefore respectfully request that any independent expert consulted be **external to the Editorial Board of *Philosophies*** and have no documented ties to the network of individuals involved.

**2. The Immediate Precautionary Measure.**
My original complaint of 10 September 2026 explicitly requested, as an immediate precautionary measure, the issuance of an **Editorial Expression of Concern**. COPE guidelines state that an Expression of Concern may be issued when "the journal has received a complaint or allegation that it has not yet been able to resolve" or when "there is a dispute between the authors and a third party". This is precisely the situation: a documented prior art claim, a formal dispute, and an assessment that is underway but has not yet been resolved. The article remains published and is being cited, while its originality is under a documented dispute. The absence of a precautionary measure while the assessment proceeds fails to protect the scholarly record and the readers of the journal. I reiterate my request for the immediate issuance of an Expression of Concern.

I am also attaching all the relevant documentation for the analysis of this case of structural appropriation.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "aostachuk@evolutio.ar"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Date: Fri, 18 Sep 2026 03:18:33 -0300
Subject: Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of interest

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Thank you for your message.

We would like to clarify that, given the nature of the complaint, the MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team will coordinate the assessment in collaboration with the Editorial Office, which will provide administrative support. However, the involvement of the Editorial Office does not mean that the assessment will be conducted by the individuals whose conduct is the subject of your complaint.

The Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor identified in your complaint will not participate in the assessment or in any decision concerning the matters raised. However, as the concerns may require subject-matter and editorial expertise, other appropriately qualified Editorial Board Members may be consulted as part of the assessment, following standard editorial procedures.

Any Editorial Board Member consulted will be expected to have had no involvement in the original handling of the article and to have no identified relevant conflict of interest in relation to the article or the individuals involved. The Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team will coordinate this process to ensure that the concerns are assessed independently of the individuals identified in the complaint. The need for any additional independent input will be considered as part of this process.

This will ensure that the complaint is handled fairly, objectively, and without conflicts of interest, in accordance with MDPI policies and COPE principles.

Please feel free to provide any further documentation that you consider relevant.

We remain at your disposal if you have further questions.

Kind regards,
MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team

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Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of interest
Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Thu, 17 Sep 2026 6:40:44 PM -0300Sent
"Publication Ethics"<publication.ethics@mdpi.com>

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

I acknowledge receipt of your message of 11 September 2026, in which you state that you will "coordinate with the Philosophies Editorial Office" and "examine the concerns raised".

I am writing to seek procedural clarification, because the scope of the assessment is critical to its outcome.

My complaint concerns a documented conflict of interest involving the individuals who handled the article. Specifically:

- Dr. Marcin J. Schroeder is Editor-in-Chief of *Philosophies*, Guest Editor of the special issue "Intelligent Inquiry into Intelligence", and was listed as an Academic Editor of the Levin (2026) article.
- Dr. Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic is Associate Editor of *Philosophies*, Guest Editor of the same special issue, was listed as an Academic Editor of the article, and is the author of a preprint promoting the same "Platonic Space" framework.

In other words, the two highest editorial authorities of the journal are among the individuals whose conduct is under scrutiny in my complaint.

Against this background, I respectfully request clarification on the following points:

1. Does the assessment of my complaint fall under the responsibility of the MDPI Research Integrity Team, or under the Philosophies Editorial Office?
2. If the assessment involves the Philosophies Editorial Office, how is the conflict of interest addressed, given that the individuals under scrutiny are the Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editor of the journal?

3. Does MDPI's procedure, in line with COPE guidelines on editorial conflicts of interest, provide for an independent reviewer outside the editorial structure of *Philosophies*?

I raise these questions not to challenge the process, but to ensure that the assessment is conducted in accordance with the COPE guidelines and MDPI policies you have cited. A review of a conflict of interest involving the journal's own leadership, conducted by the journal's own office, would not meet that standard.

I remain available to provide any further documentation.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
EVOLUTIO: A Research Center for Evolution and Development
https://www.evolutio.ar

From: Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
To: "Agustin Ostachuk"<aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
Cc: "philosophies@mdpi.com"<philosophies@mdpi.com>, "dme-philosophies@mdpi.com"<dme-philosophies@mdpi.com>
Date: Fri, 11 Sep 2026 05:25:38 -0300
Subject: Re: Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of interest

Dear Dr. Ostachuk,

Thank you for your email and for raising your concerns with us.

We will coordinate with the *Philosophies* Editorial Office (in CC) and examine the concerns raised in accordance with our policy (https://www.mdpi.com/ethics#_bookmark29) and COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines.

Our colleagues at the *Philosophies* Editorial Office will be in touch with you in case of further questions or updates.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Kind regards,
MDPI Research Integrity Team

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**From:** Agustin Ostachuk <aostachuk@evolutio.ar>
**Sent:** 10 September 2026 18:53
**To:** Publication Ethics <publication.ethics@mdpi.com>
**Subject:** Formal complaint: documented structural conceptual appropriation in Levin (2026), Philosophies — Prior art, prior awareness, and editorial conflict of interest

CAUTION - EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of MDPI organisation. BE CAUTIOUS especially to click links or open attachments.

Dear MDPI Research Integrity and Publication Ethics Team,

I am writing as Director of the EVOLUTIO Research Center and author of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT, 2020) to express a formal concern regarding a recently published article in *Philosophies*.

The article is: Levin, M. (2026). "Ingressing Minds: Causal, Non-Physical Patterns In-Form Natural, Synthetic, and Hybrid Embodiments." *Philosophies*, 11(5), 161. https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies11050161

This article presents a supposedly "novel" framework —the "Platonic Space"— which in reality represents a structural conceptual appropriation of my Evolutio Unfolding Theory, published in 2020. This concern is based on three specific, documented points:

## 1. Structural Identity and Prior Art

The "Platonic Space" framework (Levin, 2025; published 2026) is not an independent discovery. It is a systematic, structural restatement of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT), which I formally published in 2020 in *Cosmos and History*. This is not a case of superficial similarity; it is a documented instance of wholesale conceptual appropriation where the original theoretical architecture has been preserved and its terminology rebranded.

A published comparative conceptual analysis formally demonstrates that the two frameworks share an identical explanatory core, with the original EUT concepts being substituted through a strategy of terminological camouflage:

- My original construct, the **Ideological Matrix**—a virtual, stratified domain of pre-existing forms—is systematically relabeled as **Platonic Space**.
- The process of sequential **Unfolding** and **Actualization** of virtual forms into the material world is relabeled as **Ingression**.
- The central driving role of **Teleological Formal Agents** is relabeled as **High-Agency Patterns**.

This documented pattern of renaming an entire conceptual architecture is presented in my open-access article, which I invite you to review:

- Ostachuk, A. (2026). *Epistemic Chameleonism: A Structural and Conceptual Comparative Analysis of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020) and the "Platonic Space" Framework (2025)*. Evolutio Journal. 2026: EJ15308831. https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTECA

## 2. Prior Knowledge by the Author

Michael Levin was made directly aware of the EUT in February 2021, when I contacted him — at the recommendation of Dr. Stuart Newman — to propose his participation in a Templeton Foundation grant proposal specifically aimed at further developing my Evolutio Unfolding Theory. Levin acknowledged receipt and stated he would review the materials. The framework he now publishes as "Platonic Space" appeared in 2025 — four years after this direct exposure to the EUT. This sequence —confirmed by email records— constitutes a documented case of plagiarism of ideas as defined by MDPI's Publication Ethics Policies and the COPE Core Practices.

Furthermore, Levin has received and opened several issues of the EVOLUTIO newsletter since 2024—particularly the one sent on September 11, 2024, titled “EVOLUTIO NEWSLETTER: New Teleological Theory of Evolution (plus Evidence)”, which mentions and explains my EUT theory and which Levin read and clicked on. He also received the newsletters announcing the publication of my comparative and forensic analyses of the appropriation. This establishes a continued line of prior awareness.

The full chronology of prior awareness, including the 2021 correspondence and the newsletter records, is documented in my forensic article:

- Ostachuk, A. (2026). *Evolutio Unfolding Theory and "Platonic Space": Anatomy of a Conceptual Appropriation, Renaming and Rebranding*. The Unfolding. 2026: EM48730992. https://philpapers.org/rec/OSTEUT-2

## 3. Inappropriate Citation Practice and Prior Editorial Conflict of Interest

The article states in note 16 that the author "had not read" my work at the time of developing the framework. This is inconsistent with the documented correspondence of 2021 and with the record of newsletter deliveries.

Furthermore, I note a documented editorial conflict of interest. The article was published in the special issue "Intelligent Inquiry into Intelligence", guest-edited by Dr.

Marcin J. Schroeder (Editor-in-Chief of *Philosophies*) and Dr. Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic. Both are also listed as the Academic Editors of the Levin (2026) article itself.

Dr. Dodig-Crnkovic is, in addition, the sole author of a preprint that promotes the "Platonic Space" framework:

Dodig-Crnkovic, G. (2025). *Platonic Space as Cognitive Construct: Toward a Framework of Cognitive Platonism/Platonic Cognition*. Preprints. https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202512.0033

Under COPE guidelines on editorial conflicts of interest, an editor who has publicly promoted the framework presented in a manuscript cannot serve as the Academic Editor of that manuscript. The fact that both guest editors of the special issue also served as Academic Editors of the article, and that one of them is an author of a preprint promoting the same framework, constitutes a direct and documented conflict of interest in the handling of this manuscript.

**Formal Request**

Per COPE Core Practices on post-publication corrections and MDPI's Publication Ethics Policies, I formally request that *Philosophies* take the following actions:

1. **As an immediate precautionary measure**, and pending resolution of the substantive appropriation dispute, issue an **Editorial Expression of Concern** on the Levin (2026) article, informing readers that the framework presented therein is the subject of a documented prior art claim and formal dispute.

2. **Review the editorial handling** of the article, given the documented conflict of interest in the guest editorship of the special issue, to determine whether the peer-review process was independent and free of conflict, as required by COPE guidelines.

3. **Evaluate the article for retraction**, on the basis of the documented structural conceptual appropriation of my Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020) and the resulting contamination of the scholarly record.

Finally, I note that this complaint, together with the outcome of MDPI's review, will be documented in the Conceptual Lineage Ethical Observatory. If the article remains unaddressed, the CLEO Verification Protocol v1.0 will be applied to it as a published artifact. This protocol is a public, citable procedure for the verification of structural conceptual appropriation, and its determination will be entered into the scholarly record. This is not a threat; it is a statement of the procedure that follows from my published work.

I am at your disposal to provide any further documentation, including the 2021 email correspondence, the comparative and forensic analyses, the newsletter records, and the correspondence with other publishers.

I trust that under MDPI's editorial policies, *Philosophies* will take the necessary steps to uphold the integrity of the scholarly record.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Agustín Ostachuk**
Transdisciplinary Scientific Researcher
Director
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https://www.evolutio.ar