

Epistemic Chameleonism: A Structural and Conceptual Comparative Analysis of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020) and the “Platonic Space” Framework (2025)

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Abstract. This paper presents a detailed structural and conceptual comparison between the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT), published by Agustín Ostachuk in 2020, and the “Platonic Space” framework, introduced by Michael Levin in a 2025 preprint. While the latter is presented as a novel contribution, this analysis demonstrates a profound and systematic overlap with the core architecture of the former. By examining foundational principles – the ontology of form, the source of biological order, the nature of novelty, the role of teleology, the guidance of development, and the dynamics of evolution – we show that Levin’s framework reproduces the explanatory structure of the EUT, with primary changes limited to terminology. The analysis goes beyond the identification of isolated similarities to document the wholesale appropriation of a complete theoretical architecture. A new section on terminological translation reveals how Levin’s renaming of key concepts serves as a camouflage strategy. This paper serves as a definitive record of conceptual lineage and priority, arguing that the “Platonic Space” framework is not an independent discovery but a renamed restatement of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory.

1 Introduction

The history of science is replete with examples of convergent thought, where similar ideas emerge independently. However, it is also marked by instances where conceptual frameworks are appropriated, renamed, and re-presented without proper attribution. Distinguishing between these two phenomena is an essential task for maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. This paper undertakes such a task by providing a rigorous, point-by-point comparison of two theoretical frameworks in evolutionary and developmental biology: the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (EUT) and the “Platonic Space” framework.

The EUT was formally published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2020 (2). It proposes a radical alternative to the dominant Darwinian paradigm, grounded in principles of formal causation, teleology, and the unfolding of pre-existing potential. In 2025, a preprint appeared by Michael Levin (1), outlining a framework he termed “Platonic Space”. This later work is presented as a novel and speculative research program, drawing on concepts from mathematics, computer science and developmental biology to argue for a non-physical source of patterns in life and mind.

This paper will demonstrate that the foundational architecture of Levin’s 2025 framework is not novel. It is a direct, structural re-statement of the core concepts first articulated in the 2020 EUT. The analysis proceeds by dissecting both frameworks into their constituent theoretical components and comparing them side-by-side. The goal is not to highlight minor differences in expression or emphasis, but to reveal the profound identity of their explanatory core. The conclusion is inescapable: the “Platonic Space” framework, stripped of its new terminology, reproduces the foundational conceptual architecture of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory.

2 The Core Architectural Components of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory (2020)

The EUT is built upon a logically interlinked set of principles and concepts. Its core architecture can be summarized as follows, with page references to the original 2020 article (2). All citations are verbatim from that text.

- 1. The Principle of Evolutionary Order**
 “The more complex cannot be generated from the simpler” (p. 348). This logical principle asserts that complexity is irreducible and cannot emerge from a truly simpler state through mere combination or chance. It mandates the existence of a prior, more complex source for any complex outcome.
- 2. The Virtual as the Locus of Form**
 The theory posits a **virtual domain** – the “**ideological matrix**” – where **forms pre-exist** their material realization. It is described as a “pleroma”, containing “in virtual form everything that was, is and will be” (p. 353). Forms are not constructed *de novo* in the actual world; they are pre-figured in this virtual space. The ideological matrix is a “conceptual matrix logically ordered and organized” (p. 355). Therefore, the ideological matrix is not only a **domain that contains all possible forms**, but is also **structurally layered and stratified** (see Point 4 for more details).
- 3. Forms as Latent (Virtual) Determinants**
 Within this matrix, forms exist in a “virtual state” (p. 356) as “ideas-forms” (p. 353) that await actualization. The theory emphasizes that a form is not a mere arrangement of parts but an irreducible whole, a “*holon*” (p. 353).
- 4. Morphogenetic Fields as Organizing Domains**
 “The ideological matrix as a whole consists of a *morpho-*

genetic field. More precisely, the ideological matrix consists of an ordered series of morphogenetic fields that represent the successive stages of the evolutionary process” (p. 353). These fields are the domains that, in Ostachuk’s framework, provide the structuring principles for the actualization of form. The process of unfolding occurs following **the order of this continuous sequential series of morphogenetic fields, that is, from the simpler to the more complex**.

5. The Process of Unfolding and Actualization

The transition from the virtual to the actual is achieved through two linked processes. “**Unfolding**” is the sequential explication of “folds” connecting successive morphogenetic fields (p. 353). “**Actualization**” is defined as “the conscious projection of an idea-form into an image” (p. 352).

6. Teleology and Formal Agents

This process is driven by **formal agents** that are the origin of every action. Ostachuk states: “Nothing occurs without the presence of an agent. The agent [...] is the origin of every action, movement and change” (p. 372), and “every action is teleological” (p. 373). Teleology is described as “the true internal motor of the evolutionary process” (p. 360). “Every whole (*bolon*) or true form is an individual agent that actualizes its potentialities” (p. 373).

7. Consciousness as a Portal

For Ostachuk, “[c]onsciousness is an idea-form and as such it is virtual, it is not found anywhere in the actualized organism” (p. 373). “Every idea-form when it unfolds becomes conscious of itself, which implies the possibility of exploring the corresponding contents of the ideological matrix and, in this way, unfolding and actualizing its potentialities teleologically” (p. 373). Therefore, “consciousness is an agent that apperceives and actualizes its potentialities” (p. 373). “Consciousness is a portal between the virtual world and the actual world” (p. 373).

3 The Core Architectural Components of the “Platonic Space” Framework (2025)

Levin’s 2025 preprint presents a more discursive than logically structured conceptual framework. Nevertheless, its core theoretical backbone can be extracted and compared directly to the EUT. All citations are from Levin (2025) (1).

1. The Incompleteness of Physicalist Explanations

Levin argues that biological systems exploit mathematical and computational “free lunches” that are not reducible to physics. He writes: “this breaks the closure of the physical world” (p. 12). This parallels the EUT’s foundational critique of materialism and mechanicism, and **the need to postulate the existence of a non-physical domain**.

2. “Platonic Space” as the Locus of Form

Levin posits a “**Platonic space**” defined as a “structured,

ordered (non-physical) space” and a “latent space of patterns” (p. 2). It is the virtual reservoir from which patterns ingress into the physical world. However, this “**Platonic space**” is not simply the “**Platonic world of ideas**”: this space is “layered or structured”, so that there are “lower levels” containing “lower-agency forms”, and “higher levels” containing “high-agency forms” (p. 20). In this manner, Levin, like Ostachuk in 2020, postulates the existence of **a structured virtual domain where forms are ordered according to their degree of complexity**.

3. Forms as Ingressing Patterns

Patterns in Platonic space are not passive; they have causal influence. Levin writes: “the emergent patterns we observe are not random but are part of an ordered Platonic space of forms which have a causal influence on the outcomes of evolution and engineering” (p. 4). The appearance of a pattern in a physical system is an “**ingression**”.

4. Morphogenesis as a Problem-Solving Process Guided by Setpoints

Levin describes development as a “problem-solving process” guided by “setpoints” or “goal states” (p. 7-8). These setpoints function as “attractor[s] in morphospace” (p. 8).

5. The Research Program of Exploring Platonic Space

The practical consequence is to “map out key regions of the Platonic space” (p. 2) using “synthetic beings as exploration vehicles” (p. 22).

6. Teleology and Goal-Directedness

Levin repeatedly invokes “goal-seeking” (p. 8), “goal-directedness” (p. 18), “problem-solving” and the pursuit of “setpoints” (p. 8). He speaks of a “pole star that guides [the system’s] activity – the attractor in morphospace to which it must find a path” (p. 8). The patterns present in the “Platonic space” are “*goals* the system pursues, not mechanical outcomes”: “biological wholes have the ability to achieve specific patterns” (p. 6). **These “patterns serve as goals” for intelligent navigation**.

7. Minds, Agency and Consciousness

Levin extends his framework to high-level agency: “minds, as patterns that ensoul somatic embodiments, are of exactly the kind [...] of non-physical nature as the patterns that inhabit and guide the behavior of biological tissue” (p. 18). He even states that “patterns themselves *are* the agent, with the physical body being an (important but not primary) scratchpad that allows them to project effort and experience (consciousness) into a physical world” (p. 30). This is practically a paraphrase of what Ostachuk had said: “[c]onsciousness [which is an agent] is an idea-form and as such it is virtual, it is not found anywhere in the actualized organism” (p. 373).

4 Comparative Analysis: Point-by-Point Correspondence

A identity. All citations are to the original pagination of Ostachuk (2020) (2) and Levin (2025) (1).

The following table provides a detailed, functional comparison of the two frameworks, demonstrating their structural

Conceptual Function / Theoretical Component	Evolutio Unfolding Theory (Ostachuk, 2020)	“Platonic Space” Framework (Levin, 2025)	Analysis of Correspondence
1. Critique of the dominant paradigm	Rejects materialism and mechanism. “The more complex cannot be generated from the simpler” (p. 348).	Argues that physicalist explanations are insufficient: “this breaks the closure of the physical world” (p. 12).	Identical foundational critique. Both start from the insufficiency of a purely physicalist account.
2. Postulation of a virtual realm	“Ideological matrix”: a virtual, non-spatiotemporal domain containing all potential forms (p. 353). Moreover, it “consists of an ordered series of morphogenetic fields that represent the successive stages of the evolutionary process” (p. 353) – a stratified, layered structure where successive fields correspond to increasing complexity.	“Platonic space”: a non-physical space containing all latent patterns (p. 2). Furthermore, the space is “layered or structured”: “lower’ levels contain lower-agency forms [...] while ‘higher’ levels permit classes of patterns (kinds of minds)” (p. 20).	Direct structural equivalent – including layered stratification. Both frameworks posit a distinct non physical realm as precondition for organized form and agency. In addition, both posit that the virtual realm is not homogeneous but ordered and stratified (Ostachuk: “ordered series”, “successive stages”; Levin: “layered or structured”, “lower levels” - “higher levels”), with levels corresponding to increasing complexity/agency.
3. Ontological status of form	Forms exist as “ideas-forms” in a “virtual state” (pp. 352-353). Their materialization is “actualization” (p. 352).	Forms are “patterns” that “ingress” from Platonic space into the physical world (p. 2).	Identical core mechanism. Movement from virtual pre-existence to material realization, using different terms (“actualization” vs. “ingression”).
4. Source of biological order	Formal causes operating via morphogenetic fields: “the ideological matrix consists of an ordered series of morphogenetic fields” (p. 353). Teleology is the “true internal motor” (p. 360). Order provided by the structure of the Ideological matrix itself (p. 353-355).	“Information patterns and physical constraints” guide trajectories (p. 18); “attractor[s] in morphospace” constrain developmental outcomes (p. 8). Order provided by the structure of the Platonic space itself (p. 5).	Identical causal level. Both locate order beyond efficient (mechanical) causes, in the structure of a virtual, non-local domain.
5. Nature of evolutionary & developmental novelty	Actualization of pre-existing formal possibilities. Novelty is the expression of what was already virtually present within the Ideological matrix (p. 353).	Ingression of pre-existing formal possibilities. Novelty is discovering or arriving at a pattern within the Platonic space (p. 5).	Identical generative logic. Both reject <i>de novo</i> creation through random mutation. Novelty is uncovering/entering a pre-structured space of potentials.
6. Role of teleology	Fundamental and internal. “Teleology represents the true internal motor of the evolutionary process” (p. 360). Driven by teleological formal agents (p. 373).	Explicit and pervasive. “Goal-directedness” (p. 18), “setpoints” and “problem-solving” towards a “pole star” (p. 8). The patterns present in the “Platonic space” are “goals the system pursues” (p. 6).	Identical functional role. Both describe biological processes as inherently teleological, directed towards specific end-states.

<p>7. Guidance of development</p>	<p>Morphogenetic fields act as organizing domains (p. 353). The structure of the Ideological matrix, morphogenetic fields and formal agents embedded within them, constrains and orients (p. 353 and 373).</p>	<p>The structure of the Platonic space provides constraints that shape developmental outcomes via “attractor[s] in morphospace”; setpoints (“bioelectric pattern memories”) guide “problem-solving agents” towards target morphology (p. 8).</p>	<p>Direct functional equivalence. The “field” (Ostachuk) and the “space with setpoints” (Levin) serve the same guiding function.</p>
<p>8. Agency and consciousness</p>	<p>Ideological matrix contains increasingly complex “agent[s] [that are] the origin of every action” (p. 372). “Consciousness [which is an agent] is an idea-form and as such it is virtual, it is not found anywhere in the actualized organism”; “[c]onsciousness is a portal between the virtual world and the actual world” (p. 373). “This universal consciousness differs in degree but not in nature with respect to the consciousnesses of lower hierarchy” (p. 375).</p>	<p>Platonic space contains “increasingly high-agency patterns, some of which we call ‘kinds of minds’” (p. 18). “[P]atterns themselves <i>are</i> the agent, with the physical body being an (important but not primary) scratchpad that allows them to project effort and experience (consciousness) into a physical world” (p. 30). “The relationship between mind and matter (of the brain for example) is proposed to be the same as the relationship between Platonic patterns and the physical objects they inform” (p. 18). “[M]inds, as patterns that ensoul somatic embodiments, are of exactly the kind (but not in degree) of non-physical nature as the patterns that inhabit and guide the behavior of biological tissue” (p. 18).</p>	<p>Identical extension of agency to the virtual realm. Agency and consciousness are not emergent properties but inherent to the forms themselves, existing at the level of the virtual pattern at increasing levels of complexity.</p>
<p>9. Relationship between virtual and actual</p>	<p>“Actualization” = “[t]he process of actualization consists in the conscious projection of an idea-form into an image” (p. 352). The physical reality is a manifestation of the virtual forms present in the Ideological matrix, which are logically and ontologically prior. The “process of actualization is not mechanical or passive but implies the self-awareness or apperception of an idea-form, which leads or implies at the same time the vision of its corresponding image. In this manner, we live in a world of images, copies of the ideas-forms of the virtual world” (p. 352).</p>	<p>“Ingression” = “instances of embodied cognition likewise ingress from a Platonic space” (p. 2). Physical objects are “pointers” or “interfaces” to patterns in Platonic space: “what evolution [...] produces are pointers into that Platonic space – physical interfaces that enable the ingression of specific patterns of body and mind” (p. 2).</p>	<p>Identical relational structure. The physical world is dependent on and informed by the virtual. The physical (image-vision/pointer-interface) is a manifestation (actualization/ingression) of a pre-existing virtual reality.</p>
<p>10. The unfolding metaphor</p>	<p>Central metaphor: “unfolding” (from Latin <i>evolutio</i>). The ideological matrix is a folded book or seed; evolution and development are the sequential unfolding of its folds (p. 351).</p>	<p>Levin does not use the word “unfolding” as a central technical term. However, the process he describes – a seed or simple algorithm acting as a “pointer” that unleashes a far richer, pre-existing pattern (p. 11) – is a process of unfolding in all but name.</p>	<p>Implied equivalence. The core metaphor of the EUT describes exactly the mechanism Levin outlines. His “pointers” function as the “germ” or “seed” of the EUT, which “contain[s] potentially the final form of the tree” (p. 351).</p>

5 Terminological Translation as a Camouflage Strategy

The systematic overlap between the two frameworks becomes even more evident when one places their respective terminologies side by side. The following table shows how Levin’s “Platonic Space” framework renames – but does not fundamentally alter – the core concepts of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory.

Ostachuk (2020)	Levin (2025)
Ideological matrix	Platonic space
Morphogenetic fields	Setpoints, Pointers or Attractors in morphospace
Evolution as unfolding of increasingly complex morphogenetic fields (explication of folds)	Evolution as pointers into the structured Platonic space, ordered from lower to higher levels (systematic exploration)
Actualization	Ingression
Teleological-purposeful formal agents	High-agency patterns or forms
Consciousness as portal into the virtual realm	Physical embodiments as portals or entry-points into Platonic space (exploration vehicles)
Virtual pre-existence of form	Patterns that ingress from a latent space

This terminological translation is not neutral. By replacing Ostachuk’s original vocabulary with terms drawn from complexity science, computer science and dynamical systems theory, Levin gives the impression of a novel, independent framework while preserving the underlying explanatory machinery. This strategy – which I have termed **epistemic chameleonism** – allows a theoretical architecture to change its superficial color while retaining its structural identity, thereby obscuring its true lineage.

6 Prior Awareness: The Missing Link

The conclusion that Levin’s framework is a restatement rather than an independent discovery is further reinforced by evidence of prior awareness. In February 2021, four years before the appearance of the “Platonic Space” preprint, Michael Levin was directly contacted by Agustín Ostachuk, who presented the Evolutio Unfolding Theory and invited collaboration. This correspondence has been documented and is available in the public record (4). Additionally, institutional newsletters sent by EVOLUTIO since 2024, which Levin and his collaborators received and opened, repeatedly summarized the EUT’s core principles.

A detailed forensic account of this prior awareness and of the subsequent renaming and rebranding has been published separately (4). That article examines the timeline of events, the professional networks involved, and the systematic omission of any citation to the EUT in Levin’s 2025 preprint. Together, these documents establish that Levin was not working in iso-

lation from the EUT; he was explicitly made aware of it years before presenting his own framework.

7 Discussion: From Overlap to Architectural Identity

The point-by-point comparison and the terminological translation table reveal a systematic and profound overlap between the two frameworks. It is not a matter of a few shared ideas or common intellectual influences. The entire explanatory architecture of the 2020 EUT – its critique of physicalism, its postulation of a virtual realm (layered and stratified from simpler to more complex), its conception of forms as virtual potentials, its reliance on non-local organizing principles, its teleological core, and its view of (different levels of) agency – is reproduced in Levin’s 2025 “Platonic Space” framework.

The differences are almost entirely terminological. Ostachuk’s “ideological matrix” becomes Levin’s “Platonic space”. Ostachuk’s “morphogenetic fields” become Levin’s “pointers” and “attractors in morphospace”. Ostachuk’s “actualization” becomes Levin’s “ingression”. Ostachuk’s “teleological-purposeful formal agents” become Levin’s “high-agency patterns/forms”. Ostachuk’s “consciousness as a portal” is echoed in Levin’s description of physical embodiments as “portals” or “entry-points” into the Platonic space.

This is not a case of parallel evolution in thought. It is a case of **wholesale structural appropriation**. Levin has taken the core theoretical machinery of the EUT and re-described it using a different vocabulary drawn from complexity science, computer science and process philosophy. The underlying engine, however, remains identical.

The concept of *epistemic chameleonism* captures this strategy: a theoretical framework that changes its terminological color to blend into a different intellectual environment, while preserving its structural identity. This strategy is particularly effective in knowledge economies of visibility and attention where the one with the largest and most expensive amplification machinery is the one who prevails: the “survival of the most publicized”. The present case is a concrete instance of a broader pathology – a systemic decay that rewards strategic assimilation over conceptual risk (3).

8 Conclusion: On Priority, Lineage, and Ethical Responsibility

The evidence presented in this analysis is unequivocal. The core concepts and explanatory structure of the “Platonic Space” framework, as detailed in the 2025 preprint, are a direct restatement of the Evolutio Unfolding Theory published by Agustín Ostachuk in 2020.

This conclusion is based on three pillars:

- Temporal priority:** The EUT was published five years before the appearance of the “Platonic Space” preprint.
- Structural identity:** As demonstrated in the comparative table, the two frameworks share an identical theoretical architecture across all key conceptual functions.

3. **Prior awareness:** Direct professional contact in 2021 and institutional newsletters since 2024 establish that the author of the later framework was made aware of the EUT years before disseminating his own (4).

The “Platonic Space” framework, therefore, cannot be considered an “independent discovery” or “conceptual convergence”. It is a later iteration of a pre-existing theory, presented without proper attribution to its origin. This is not merely a lapse in citation etiquette; it is a fundamental breach of the ethical responsibility that underpins scientific discourse. It obscures the true lineage of ideas and erodes the trust upon which cumulative knowledge-building depends.

This case is not an isolated incident. It exemplifies a broader pathology of the scientific-academic system – a decay analyzed in detail elsewhere (3). In that work, I argued that the system has become structurally incapable of generating genuinely transformative frameworks, as it rewards strategic assimilation over conceptual risk, filters novelty through bureaucratic metrics, and neutralizes ideas that do not reinforce existing circuits of power. The appropriation of the *Evolutio Unfolding Theory* and its rebranding as “Platonic Space” is a concrete instance of that systemic decay: a truly original theory is absorbed, renamed and repackaged by a well-connected actor, while the institutional mechanisms that should prevent such appropriation and erasure remain inert or complicit.

This paper is offered not as an accusation, but as an act of clarification – a service to the historical record. It establishes, in rigorous and citable form, the conceptual priority and structural identity between these two frameworks. The responsibility now lies with the scientific community to acknowledge this lineage and to ensure that future discourse on these ideas is properly grounded.

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