Transcendent Mediation in Marital Commitment: Symbolic Insufficiency, Ritual Regeneration, and Relational Generativity

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Abstract

Marital commitment connects a present symbolic act with a relational future whose participants, circumstances, interpretations, and possible trajectories remain open to generation. Legal, social, and religious institutions can establish status, recognition, obligation, memory, and continuity, while temporally extended commitment can generate demands that exceed some of the symbolic resources available at its constitution. This paper develops the concept of *symbolic self-guarantee insufficiency* to describe such local disparities between the demands of a relational future and the support supplied by an operative symbolic configuration.

The analysis brings religious philosophy, existential thought, philosophies of alterity, ritual theory, structural analysis, and Lacanian psychoanalysis into a common comparative architecture. Selected Christian marriage traditions and modern *shinzenkekkon* provide direct cases in which marital commitment is situated before a transcendent reference. Chinese family-ritual traditions provide a broader configuration of kinship, ancestry, ritual sequence, and intergenerational continuity. Scholarship on Daoist ritual space–time supplies an exploratory comparative resource for examining mediation directed toward temporal, spatial, material, and cosmological conditions of generation. These cases retain their distinct theological and historical meanings throughout the comparison.

From a Generative Relational perspective, the paper proposes that a transcendent reference can acquire renewed operational presence through ritual at a local site of symbolic insufficiency. This process is termed *ritual regeneration*. Its relational consequences are analysed through two idealized modes: *guarantor-oriented mediation*, which acts prominently upon commitment, witnessing, symbolic memory, and continuity; and *condition-oriented mediation*, which acts upon the temporal, spatial, material, communal, and interpretive conditions through which subsequent relational states emerge. Their coupled operation can produce a form of *local symbolic repair* that reorganizes commitment, symbolic support, generative conditions, and the wider relational field.

The formal model evaluates these transformations through a multidimensional account of relational generativity incorporating viable future trajectories, revisability, subject-preserving participation, self-sustaining generative cycles, and capacity under perturbation. Transcendent mediation can thereby produce generative expansion, buffering, redirection, or closure. The resulting framework treats ritualized transcendence as a dynamically situated component of relational becoming and provides a conceptual basis for further historical, ethnographic, and longitudinal investigation.

Keywords: transcendent mediation; marital commitment; ritual regeneration; symbolic self-guarantee; relational generativity

Discussion Paper Note

This note defines the analytical scope, disciplinary position, and evidential status of the paper. It first specifies the philosophical use of the Shinto wedding ceremony as a bounded case, then separates metaphysical and relational domains of analysis, situates the argument in relation to established philosophical traditions, and finally clarifies the status of the Generative Relational formulation and its formal expressions.

The paper develops a philosophical analysis of transcendence, symbolic insufficiency, ritual mediation, and relational generativity through the case of the Shinto wedding ceremony. The case provides a bounded setting in which a broader structural problem becomes especially visible: a symbolic order may successfully constitute and recognize a commitment while possessing only limited resources for securing the future relational force of that commitment. The ceremonial introduction of a transcendent Other provides a concrete setting for examining how transcendence enters such a symbolic configuration and how it subsequently modifies the conditions of relational development.

The analysis preserves the metaphysical status of religious transcendence as an open philosophical and theological matter. Social construction, symbolic function, psychological projection, institutional organization, and historical transmission constitute possible dimensions of analysis, while the ontological status of the kami remains outside the adjudicative scope of the paper. This limitation permits the relational operation of transcendence to be examined independently of a final metaphysical determination.

Two analytical domains are therefore distinguished:

$$\mathcal{D}_{\text{ont}} = \{\text{the independent ontological status of the transcendent Other}\}, \tag{1}$$

and

$$\mathcal{D}_{\text{rel}} = \{\text{modes of relational operation of the transcendent Other}\}. \tag{2}$$

The present discussion is primarily located in $\mathcal{D}_{\text{rel}}$. Its objects include ritual action, linguistic formulation, material mediation, inherited symbolic forms, collective memory, institutional roles, temporal orientation, and the subsequent transformation of the relation in which these elements participate.

Several established philosophical traditions provide substantial resources for this inquiry. Religious philosophy examines transcendence as a source of meaning, orientation, obligation, and sacred order. Existential thought develops accounts of commitment, finitude, responsibility, and orientation toward forms of significance exceeding immediate preference. Structuralist and sociological traditions analyse ritual through symbolic systems, collective representations, kinship structures, and inherited institutional forms. Lacanian psychoanalysis contributes an account of the symbolic order whose authority operates together with a constitutive incompleteness, classically expressed through the absence of a final "Other of the Other." These traditions provide distinct explanatory perspectives on the philosophical problem addressed here.

The Generative Relational contribution organizes these perspectives around a dynamical sequence:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{symbolic insufficiency} &\longrightarrow \text{ritual regeneration of transcendence} \\ &\longrightarrow \text{relational reconfiguration} \longrightarrow \text{future generativity}.\end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Within this sequence, transcendence is treated as capable of occupying a historically and relationally generated position while subsequently participating in the production of further relational states. A transcendent position may therefore possess both a genealogy and a generative effect. The corresponding analytical interest concerns the transition through which a relation participates in producing a transcendent reference and subsequently becomes reorganized through that reference.

The Shinto wedding ceremony offers a particularly useful case because modern Japanese civil marriage possesses an established legal mechanism of constitution and recognition. The religious ceremony consequently introduces a further symbolic and transcendent layer into a marital relation that already possesses legal intelligibility. This configuration allows the analysis to isolate the relational function of sacred mediation with unusual clarity. The relevant process concerns the transformation of an already recognizable marital commitment through its placement before a transcendent reference embodied through ritual, place, inherited form, priestly mediation, material objects, and collective witnessing.

The paper describes this process through the concept of *local symbolic repair*. A local symbolic repair is a relational operation through which a specific site of symbolic insufficiency is reorganized within a wider temporal, symbolic, and relational field. The term "local" indicates that the operation concerns a bounded configuration of symbolic insufficiency. The term "repair" designates a reorganization of relational conditions that supports continued symbolic and relational operation while preserving the constitutive openness of the wider symbolic order.

The central working proposition of the paper can therefore be stated as follows:

> A transcendent guarantor may be ritually regenerated at a local site where symbolic self-guarantee becomes insufficient. The regenerated transcendent position can then reorganize commitment, temporality, symbolic memory, and the conditions of future relational generativity.

This proposition functions as a philosophical hypothesis. Its purpose is to guide comparative interpretation and conceptual modelling. The analysis does not treat it as an established empirical generalization concerning Shinto practice, religious belief, or marital outcomes.

The formal expressions developed in later sections have a heuristic and conceptual status. They represent relational dependencies, temporal transitions, symbolic insufficiency, ritual mediation, and possible changes in generative conditions. Their role is to increase conceptual precision and to make the internal structure of the proposed mechanism explicit. Empirical calibration, causal estimation, and population-level inference remain outside the scope of the present paper.

The paper therefore develops a limited conceptual bridge among religious philosophy, continental philosophy, ritual theory, and Generative Relational analysis. The Shinto wedding ceremony serves as a bounded philosophical case through which symbolic incompleteness, regenerated transcendence, and future relational generativity can be examined within a common analytical structure.

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Status. This working draft records an evolving stage of the author's position and is circulated for discussion. Definitions, section structure, formal statements, and numbering remain subject to revision. A systematic value-theory review, expanded recognition-theory review, empirical network cases, specialist statistical review, institutional design, and originality audit remain future research stages.

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Statement on the use of language models. The exploratory discussions and preparation of this paper involved OpenAI's ChatGPT. ChatGPT supported exploratory dialogue, formal reconstruction, source discovery followed by website verification, exact calculation, argumentative criticism, and drafting in LaTeX. The author selected the research questions, directed and approved the theoretical commitments and epistemic status of the claims, and bears sole responsibility for the manuscript, including its definitions, formal constructions, taxonomy, calculations, arguments, conclusions, and errors. Authorship credit remains with the human author. The access level and claim limit for every cited source are recorded in the accompanying literature audit.

1 Introduction

This section establishes the general philosophical problem, defines the scope of transcendent mediation in marital commitment, and positions the comparative examples used throughout the paper. The discussion proceeds through five stages. It first distinguishes the symbolic constitution of marriage from the temporal problem of sustaining commitment. It then develops symbolic self-guarantee as a structural problem of high-commitment relations. The third stage introduces sacredly witnessed marriage as a recurrent mode of transcendent mediation, with Christian and Shinto ceremonies providing two illustrative configurations. The fourth stage introduces a second analytical mode centred on the configuration of generative conditions and identifies Chinese ritual traditions and Daoist ritual cosmology as an exploratory comparative field. The final stage formulates the Generative Relational research problem, contributions, and analytical sequence of the paper.

Marriage connects a present symbolic act with a relation whose future remains open to generation. Legal systems, religious institutions, families, and communities can recognize a marital relation through declarations, registrations, vows, ritual acts, and publicly intelligible statuses. These symbolic operations establish consequential relations at a determinate moment. Their temporal significance, however, extends into states of the relation that have yet to emerge.

Let

$$\sigma_M(t_0) \tag{4}$$

denote a symbolic act through which a marital commitment acquires recognized form at time t_0, and let

$$R_M(t), \qquad t > t_0, \tag{5}$$

denote the subsequent marital relation. The symbolic act is performed under conditions available at t_0, while the future trajectory

$$\mathcal{T}_M = \{R_M(t) \mid t > t_0\} \tag{6}$$

emerges through later interactions, transformations of the participating persons, material conditions, interpretations, contingencies, and newly generated relational possibilities.

This temporal structure produces a distinction between *symbolic validity* and *future relational generativity*. Symbolic validity concerns the recognized force of an act within a legal, religious, or social order. Future relational generativity concerns the continuing capacity of the relation to produce, preserve, revise, and reorganize viable forms of common life through time. A marriage can therefore possess a determinate symbolic status at t_0 while its trajectory after t_0 remains incompletely determined.

The problem becomes more pronounced when commitment reaches beyond the participants' present epistemic and practical horizon. The persons who commit at t_0 possess limited knowledge of their future circumstances, future interpretations, and future forms of themselves. Commitment consequently attempts to carry symbolic force across transformations that cannot be fully specified in advance:

$$\sigma_M(t_0) \rightsquigarrow R_M(t_1), R_M(t_2), \ldots, R_M(t_n). \tag{7}$$

Marriage thereby exposes a general problem of symbolic self-guarantee. Symbolic orders authorize acts through relations among rules, institutions, recognized roles, inherited conventions, documents, collective recognition, and further symbols. Such resources provide substantial operational authority. Their capacity for final self-grounding remains structurally limited. Lacan's formulation that "there is no Other of the Other" provides one influential expression of this limitation: the symbolic field possesses no final symbolic position capable of supplying an ultimate guarantee for the symbolic field as a whole [20, 15].

For the purposes of this paper, this limitation is described through *symbolic self-guarantee insufficiency*. Let S_t denote an operative symbolic configuration, $D(R,t)$ the symbolic and temporal demands associated with sustaining relation R, and $G_S(R,t)$ the resources of guarantee available within the relevant symbolic configuration. A local insufficiency can then be represented heuristically as

$$\Delta_S(R,t) = D(R,t) - G_S(R,t). \tag{8}$$

Equation (8) describes a situated difference between relational demand and symbolic support. The concept therefore concerns local relational exposure within an operative symbolic system. Marriage is especially useful for examining this structure because a present commitment is expected to remain meaningful across substantial temporal extension, personal transformation, external contingency, and interpretive change.

Religious marriage ceremonies introduce a distinctive response to this structure by situating marital commitment in relation to a sacred or transcendent reference. Christian marriage provides an explicit example. The Church of England marriage service describes marriage as a solemn and lifelong covenant declared in the presence of God and witnesses, places the vows in the presence of God, and asks for divine blessing upon the future common life of the couple [27]. Catholic sacramental theology gives this relation an even stronger formulation: matrimonial consent establishes the covenant between the spouses, while the resulting bond is described as sealed by God and integrated into the covenant between God and humanity [8].

A Shinto wedding provides a different historical and theological configuration with a structurally comparable form of sacred mediation. *Shinzenkekkon* literally designates marital rites conducted "in the presence of the gods." Its modern ritual form developed during the Meiji period and acquired wider institutional dissemination following the imperial wedding of 1900 and subsequent codification and popularization of the ceremony [13, 25]. The ceremony places the couple before the kami through purification, offerings, norito, sacred sake, vows, tamagushi offerings, priestly mediation, and family participation [13].

These traditions differ substantially in theology, historical formation, institutional structure, and the meaning assigned to divine presence. Their comparison in this paper occurs at a limited structural level. In each case, marital commitment becomes situated within a relational field containing a reference whose authority or significance exceeds the immediate dyad.

A minimal representation is

$$(A, B, C_M) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} (A, B, C_M, T), \tag{9}$$

where A and B denote the participants, C_M the marital commitment, $\mathcal{R}$ a ritual process, and T a transcendent relational position.

The term *transcendent relational position* identifies a position that exceeds the unilateral possession, immediate preference, and finite temporal standpoint of the participating subjects. This definition addresses the relational operation of transcendence while leaving its metaphysical status open. A theological interpretation may understand T as grounded in an independently existing divine reality. A sociological or structural interpretation may emphasize the ritual, institutional, historical, and symbolic processes through which T becomes operative. The present model allows these ontological interpretations to remain distinct while examining their relational consequences.

Sacred mediation can operate through several mechanisms. One analytically important mode concerns the guarantee of commitment. A transcendent reference may witness, sanctify, authorize, or situate the promise within an order that extends beyond the present intentions of the participants. This mode can be represented as

$$\mathcal{M}_G : \qquad T \longrightarrow C_M \longrightarrow R_{t+1}, \tag{10}$$

where $\mathcal{M}_G$ denotes *guarantor-oriented transcendent mediation*.

The analytical significance of this mode lies in the relocation of commitment. The vow ceases to operate exclusively as a statement exchanged between two present subjects. It becomes an act performed before, through, or within a reference that neither participant can individually possess. The symbolic relation thereby acquires a third position capable of extending memory, authority, obligation, and interpretation beyond the immediate dyad.

A second mode becomes visible when ritual attention is directed toward the conditions under which a relation or transformation is expected to unfold. Traditional Chinese marriage practices provide a relevant comparative field. Historical wedding rites included divination and the selection of auspicious dates, while contemporary Chinese wedding practices continue to exhibit forms of auspicious-date selection alongside other inherited ritual elements [29]. These practices belong to heterogeneous Confucian, familial, popular-religious, cosmological, and local traditions. Their analytical significance here concerns the placement of relational events within configurations of time, sequence, family, ancestry, and auspicious conditions.

Daoist ritual studies provide a related cosmological vocabulary. Research on Daoist ritual and meditative traditions documents sustained attention to qualitative space–time, seasonal and celestial rhythms, auspicious moments, ritual orientation, and practices of alignment and recalibration [18]. Such practices suggest an analytical mode in which transcendent or cosmological mediation acts primarily upon the conditions of generation:

$$\mathcal{M}_C : \qquad T \longrightarrow \Gamma_t \longrightarrow R_{t+1}, \tag{11}$$

where Γ_t denotes the temporal, spatial, material, symbolic, and relational conditions within which subsequent generation occurs.

Equation (11) motivates the concept of *condition-oriented transcendent mediation*. Its relation to Daoist thought is treated in this paper as an exploratory philosophical hypothesis. The relevant conjecture concerns an affinity between certain Daoist orientations toward alignment, timing, spatial configuration, and transformation and a mode of intervention directed toward generative conditions. Historical claims concerning the prevalence, absence, or institutional development of specifically Daoist wedding liturgies require a separate historical study and remain outside the evidential claims of the present paper.

The two modes are analytical idealizations:

$$\mathcal{M} = \alpha\mathcal{M}_G + \beta\mathcal{M}_C, \qquad \alpha, \beta \geq 0. \tag{12}$$

An actual religious or ritual tradition may contain both modes. Christian marriage combines vow, divine witness, blessing, grace, communal support, and future-oriented prayer [27, 8]. Shinto marriage similarly combines vows before the kami with purification, offerings, sacred space, ritual sequence, material mediation, and family participation [13]. Chinese ritual traditions combine ancestral, familial, calendrical, divinatory, and cosmological elements in varying historical configurations [29]. The distinction between $\mathcal{M}_G$ and $\mathcal{M}_C$ therefore provides a comparative axis for analysing where transcendent mediation enters the generative process.

This distinction also refines the concept of symbolic repair. A local symbolic insufficiency can be addressed through the addition of a guarantor position, through the reconfiguration of generative conditions, or through a coupled operation containing both. Let

$$\mathcal{Q}_t = (S_t, R_t, \Gamma_t, T_t) \tag{13}$$

denote the relevant relational configuration. Ritual mediation produces a transition

$$\mathcal{Q}_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} \mathcal{Q}_{t+1}. \tag{14}$$

A *local symbolic repair* is defined here as a bounded relational reorganization around a site of symbolic insufficiency that modifies the conditions under which commitment remains operative. Such repair can change the position of commitment, the temporal horizon through which it is interpreted, the distribution of witnessing and authority, the material and symbolic resources available for recollection, and the environmental conditions associated with subsequent relational generation.

The term *repair* therefore carries a generative meaning. Its relevant output is a newly configured relational state:

$$\mathcal{Q}_{t+1} = \Phi\left(\mathcal{Q}_t, \mathcal{R}_t, T_t\right). \tag{15}$$

The philosophical significance of the transcendent reference consequently extends beyond its capacity to stabilize an existing symbolic state. From a Generative Relational perspective, the central analytical object is its effect upon the conditions of future becoming. Let

$$\mathcal{G}_t \tag{16}$$

denote the generative conditions of the relational system at time t. The core dynamical sequence examined in this paper is

$$S_t \longrightarrow \Delta_{S,t} \longrightarrow \{\mathcal{M}_G, \mathcal{M}_C\} \longrightarrow \mathcal{Q}_{t+1} \longrightarrow \mathcal{G}_{t+1}. \tag{17}$$

This sequence supports the central research problem of the paper: the relation between symbolic self-guarantee insufficiency, the regeneration of transcendent relational positions, and the future generativity of high-commitment relational systems. Within this problem, sacredly witnessed marriage provides an especially visible domain because ritual explicitly places commitment in relation to references extending beyond the immediate participants.

The paper develops four research objectives. First, it compares established philosophical accounts of transcendence, alterity, commitment, ritual, and symbolic authority. Second, it analyses sacredly witnessed marriage as a relational configuration through selected Christian and Shinto examples. Third, it develops the distinction between guarantor-oriented and condition-oriented transcendent mediation, with Chinese and Daoist materials providing an exploratory comparative field for the latter. Fourth, it formalizes these processes within a Generative Relational model linking symbolic insufficiency, ritual mediation, relational reconfiguration, and future generativity.

The resulting contribution has a limited theoretical scope. The paper proposes a common relational and dynamical vocabulary for comparing distinct philosophical and religious configurations. The metaphysical truth of divine or transcendent realities remains within the domains of theology and metaphysics. The historical relationship among Confucian, Daoist, popular-religious, and local Chinese wedding practices remains a subject for specialist historical research. Claims concerning the empirical effects of sacred marriage rituals on marital durability or well-being likewise require separate empirical study. The formal model developed here serves conceptual clarification, comparison, and the generation of further research obligations.

Section 2 develops the comparative philosophical architecture of transcendence, commitment, alterity, ritual, and symbolic mediation. Section 3 analyses symbolic self-guarantee and the temporal structure of high-commitment relations. Section 4 develops the comparative structure of sacredly witnessed marriage. Section 5 formulates ritual regeneration and local symbolic repair. Section 6 develops the Generative Relational formal model and the two modes of transcendent mediation. Section 7 examines interpretive boundaries, counterexamples, and generativity-constraining configurations. Section 8 consolidates the resulting philosophical position. “‘tex

2 Philosophical Architectures of Transcendent Mediation

This section establishes the philosophical architecture used to interpret transcendent mediation in high-commitment relations. Its role is comparative and preparatory. The discussion identifies several established accounts of transcendence, commitment, alterity, ritual, relational structure, and symbolic authority, while preserving the conceptual differences among them. The section proceeds through six philosophical configurations: transcendent mediation in religious philosophy, existential temporality of commitment, relational exteriority, ritual formation of sacred authority, structural mediation of marriage, and Lacanian symbolic incompleteness. The final subsection organizes these resources into a common analytical interface for the subsequent Generative Relational model.

2.1 Transcendent Mediation in Religious Philosophy

This subsection introduces a relational form in which interpersonal commitment is situated through a reference that exceeds the immediate participants. Its purpose is to establish the conceptual structure of transcendent mediation before the paper turns to particular religious marriage traditions.

Kierkegaard provides a particularly explicit formulation of mediated relation. In *Works of Love*, the relation between one person and another is repeatedly situated through the God-relation, and God can occupy the position of a "middle term" within relations of love [17]. The resulting structure gives love a triadic form:

$$A \longleftrightarrow T \longleftrightarrow B, \tag{18}$$

where A and B denote the participating persons and T represents the transcendent mediating position.

The philosophical importance of this structure lies in the redistribution of relational authority. The meaning of the relation extends beyond the current preferences and interpretations of either participant. Each person relates to the other through a reference whose significance exceeds unilateral possession. Commitment thereby becomes situated within a relational field that contains an additional source of orientation.

Buber develops a different form of relational transcendence. The distinction between I–It and I–Thou describes two fundamental modes of relation, while the relation to the Eternal Thou provides a theological horizon for dialogical encounter [7]. The I–Thou relation emphasizes presence and encounter, while resisting the reduction of the other to an object contained within the purposes of the self.

For the present analysis, these accounts supply two complementary elements. Kierkegaard makes explicit the mediating position of transcendence within interpersonal love. Buber emphasizes a relational mode whose significance emerges through encounter and whose horizon can extend toward the divine. Together they provide a philosophical structure in which transcendence alters the organization of interpersonal relation:

$$R_{AB} \xrightarrow{T} R_{AB}^{T}, \tag{19}$$

where R_{AB} denotes the interpersonal relation and R_{AB}^{T} its configuration under transcendent mediation.

Equation (19) expresses a structural relation. The theological meanings assigned to T remain specific to the religious and philosophical tradition under consideration.

2.2 Existential Temporality of Commitment

This subsection develops the temporal dimension of committed relation. Its objective is to clarify how commitment connects present choice with future forms of persons and relations, thereby creating a temporal problem that later becomes relevant to symbolic self-guarantee.

Kierkegaard's treatment of marriage in *Either/Or, Part II* provides an important account of the temporal formation of love. Judge William's discussion of the ethical validity of marriage situates married love within continuity, history, recollection, decision, and repeated renewal [16]. Marriage gives erotic love a form through which it can acquire a history and extend itself across time.

The relevant structure can be expressed as

$$L(t_0) \longrightarrow \mathcal{H}_L = \{L(t_0), L(t_1), \ldots, L(t_n)\}, \tag{20}$$

where $\mathcal{H}_L$ denotes a temporally extended history of the relation.

This formulation shifts attention from the persistence of a single affective state to the generation of continuity among changing states. Commitment connects a present decision to later configurations whose content remains partly open:

$$C(t_0) \rightsquigarrow R(t_1), R(t_2), \ldots, R(t_n). \tag{21}$$

The persons participating in this trajectory also change. Let A_t and B_t denote temporally situated states of the participants. Then

$$A_{t_0} \to A_{t_1} \to \cdots \to A_{t_n}, \qquad B_{t_0} \to B_{t_1} \to \cdots \to B_{t_n}. \tag{22}$$

Commitment therefore operates across a field of personal and relational becoming. Its significance depends upon the capacity of a relation to connect different temporal states while preserving possibilities for interpretation, response, and transformation.

This structure provides a bridge to the later Generative Relational account. The future of a committed relation is generated through interaction. A symbolic act at t_0 enters this process as one of the conditions through which later states acquire meaning, while the content of those later states remains open to subsequent generation.

2.3 Relational Exteriority and Irreducible Alterity

This subsection introduces transcendence through the philosophical category of alterity. Its role is to distinguish transcendent mediation from a model based solely on superior authority. The relevant structure concerns an excess of the Other over the subject's capacity for possession and totalization.

Levinas develops transcendence through the encounter with an Other whose alterity exceeds conceptual incorporation into the same [22]. The ethical relation therefore contains a form of exteriority. The Other appears within relation while retaining a significance that exceeds the subject's representational and possessive capacities.

For the present analysis, this insight can be represented through a non-possession condition:

$$T \notin \mathrm{Ctrl}(A) \cup \mathrm{Ctrl}(B), \tag{23}$$

where $\mathrm{Ctrl}(X)$ denotes the domain subject to unilateral interpretive or practical control by participant X.

Equation (23) provides one structural property of a transcendent relational position. A position can function as transcendent within a relation when its significance exceeds the discretionary

control of the participating subjects. This property can appear in theological, symbolic, ethical, or institutional forms.

Levinas also connects alterity with futurity. The future bears an exteriority to present possession, and the relation with the Other introduces dimensions of existence whose content cannot be derived completely from the present subject. This association is particularly relevant to long-term commitment. The future relation contains future forms of the other person whose becoming remains partially exterior to present anticipation.

A generative interpretation of exteriority can therefore be written as

$$\mathcal{G}_{t+1} = \mathcal{G}\left(R_t, E_{t+1}\right), \tag{24}$$

where E_{t+1} represents future states, encounters, and differences exceeding the relational configuration available at time t.

Relational exteriority consequently provides a philosophical basis for distinguishing generativity from complete determination. A relation capable of future generation retains exposure to forms of otherness that cannot be fully contained within its present symbolic description.

2.4 Ritual Formation of Sacred Authority

This subsection shifts the analysis from interpersonal philosophy to collective ritual processes. Its objective is to establish how sacred authority can become socially operative through coordinated practices, symbols, material forms, and collective participation.

Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* provides a classic account of the relation among collective assembly, ritual practice, sacred representation, and moral authority [10]. Collective ritual can intensify shared experience and generate representations whose force is experienced as exceeding the isolated individual. Durkheim's account therefore supplies an important model for understanding the social efficacy of sacred forms.

A simplified representation is

$$C_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} E_t \xrightarrow{\Sigma} T_t, \tag{25}$$

where C_t denotes a participating collectivity, $\mathcal{R}$ coordinated ritual practice, E_t collectively intensified experience, Σ symbolic mediation, and T_t an operative sacred representation.

The analytical value of this model lies in its treatment of ritual as a constitutive process. Ritual organizes bodies, temporal sequence, speech, gesture, objects, spaces, memory, and collective attention. Sacred authority can therefore become effective through a relational configuration involving multiple forms of mediation.

The present paper adds a further temporal transition to this structure:

$$C_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}} T_t \xrightarrow{\Phi} R_{t+1}. \tag{26}$$

Equation (26) shifts the analytical focus toward the subsequent effects of an operative sacred position. Once T_t enters the relational field, it can participate in future interpretation, recollection, commitment, obligation, and the organization of later relational states.

This extension is particularly important for marriage rituals. The philosophical interest concerns both the ritual production or activation of a sacred reference and the later participation of that reference in the relational trajectory of the participants.

2.5 Structural Mediation of Marriage

This subsection establishes marriage as a relation embedded within wider symbolic and social structures. Its role is to clarify how marital commitment can connect persons, families, institutions, categories, and inherited relational positions beyond the immediate couple.

Lévi-Strauss's structural analysis of kinship treats marriage within systems of alliance, reciprocity, prohibition, and relations among social groups [21]. Within this perspective, the social meaning of marriage emerges from a relational structure extending across kinship positions and collective classifications.

A minimal representation can be written as

$$R_M = \mathcal{F}\left(A, B, F_A, F_B, K, N, I\right), \tag{27}$$

where F_A and F_B denote family relations, K kinship structure, N normative-symbolic relations, and I relevant institutional structures.

The structuralist contribution is useful for the analysis of sacred marriage because ritual can reorganize the positions occupied by participants within this wider field. The couple may become situated simultaneously in relation to families, ancestors, religious institutions, divine references, community witnesses, legal categories, and inherited ritual forms.

Structural analysis also supports a distinction between an entity and the relational position through which that entity becomes operative. The present paper therefore defines a transcendent relational position T through its place in a relational configuration:

$$T = \mathrm{Pos}\left(\mathcal{F}_R\right), \tag{28}$$

where $\mathcal{F}_R$ denotes the relevant relational field.

A theological account may interpret this position through an independently existing divine reality. A sociological account may reconstruct the institutional and historical conditions through which the position acquires social force. A structural description can preserve these interpretations as distinct explanatory layers while analysing how the position reorganizes the relations surrounding it.

2.6 Lacanian Symbolic Authority and Constitutive Lack

This subsection develops the philosophical account most directly connected to symbolic self-guarantee. Its objective is to situate marriage within the Symbolic, distinguish symbolic authority from symbolic completeness, and identify the structural role of a transcendent guarantor in relation to the lack of final symbolic guarantee.

Lacan's distinction among the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real provides a three-register framework for analysing intimate relations [19, 20]. The Symbolic includes linguistic, normative, legal, institutional, and inherited structures through which relationships become socially intelligible. The Imaginary concerns identification, images of self and other, and configurations of perceived unity and completeness. The Real designates limits and disruptions encountered by symbolization and imaginary coherence.

Marriage can involve all three registers:

$$R_M = \mathcal{F}\left(R_{\mathrm{S}}, R_{\mathrm{I}}, R_{\mathrm{R}}\right), \tag{29}$$

where R_{S}, R_{I}, and R_{R} denote Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real dimensions of the relation.

Legal status, kinship terminology, vows, recognized obligations, ritual forms, and social roles belong prominently to the Symbolic dimension. Images of the partner, fantasies of unity, identification

with marital roles, and imagined forms of common life involve the Imaginary. Sexuality, bodily contingency, loss, desire, radical alterity, and experiences that exceed established interpretation can produce encounters with limits of symbolization associated with the Real.

This three-register account permits a more precise treatment of marriage than a direct mapping in which legal registration, sexuality, and love are assigned exclusively to separate registers. Individual practices can participate in several registers simultaneously.

The big Other provides the central concept for the present analysis. It designates the trans-individual locus through which language, law, recognized norms, institutional authority, and presumed symbolic knowledge become operative. Particular religious, legal, social, or institutional forms can occupy aspects of this position within historically specific symbolic configurations [15].

Lacan's formulation concerning the absence of an "Other of the Other" introduces the corresponding structural limit [20]. Symbolic authority operates through a field whose ultimate guarantee cannot be supplied by a final signifier positioned beyond the entire symbolic chain.

The resulting configuration can be expressed as

$$\mathrm{Oper}(S_t) > 0, \qquad \Delta_S(t) > 0, \tag{30}$$

where $\mathrm{Oper}(S_t)$ denotes the practical efficacy of symbolic order S_t and $\Delta_S(t)$ its constitutive incompleteness.

Equation (30) is important for the present paper because symbolic efficacy and symbolic incompleteness coexist. A marriage can be legally constituted, ritually recognized, publicly intelligible, and normatively consequential while remaining exposed to meanings and future conditions that exceed the symbolic resources available at its constitution.

This structure provides the philosophical basis for the concept of local symbolic repair introduced in Section 1. A transcendent reference can enter a local configuration of symbolic insufficiency while the wider symbolic field retains its constitutive openness.

2.7 Comparative Interface for Generative Relational Analysis

This subsection consolidates the philosophical resources developed above and defines their role in the subsequent Generative Relational analysis. Its objective is to preserve the explanatory specificity of the established traditions while identifying a common set of relational variables that can be studied dynamically.

The preceding traditions emphasize different dimensions of transcendent mediation. Kierkegaard contributes triadic mediation and the temporal formation of committed love. Buber contributes dialogical relation and a transcendent horizon of encounter. Levinas contributes exteriority and irreducible alterity. Durkheim contributes ritual formation of sacred force. Structuralism contributes relational position and the embedding of marriage within wider social structures. Lacanian theory contributes symbolic authority together with constitutive incompleteness.

These resources can be organized into the analytical set

$$\mathcal{P} = \{T, C, E, \mathcal{R}, S, \Delta_S, \Gamma\}, \tag{31}$$

where:

$$T := \text{transcendent relational position}, \tag{32}$$
$$C := \text{commitment}, \tag{33}$$
$$E := \text{relational exteriority}, \tag{34}$$
$$\mathcal{R} := \text{ritual mediation}, \tag{35}$$
$$S := \text{symbolic order}, \tag{36}$$
$$\Delta_S := \text{symbolic insufficiency}, \tag{37}$$
$$\Gamma := \text{generative conditions}. \tag{38}$$

The philosophical traditions discussed in this section provide interpretations of particular elements and relations within $\mathcal{P}$. The Generative Relational contribution concerns their dynamical coupling across time:

$$(S_t, R_t, \Gamma_t) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t} (T_t, R'_t, \Gamma'_t) \xrightarrow{\Phi} R_{t+1}. \tag{39}$$

Equation (39) identifies the transition that organizes the remainder of the paper. Ritual can make a transcendent position operative within a relational system. The resulting position can modify the symbolic organization of commitment, the conditions under which subsequent relations emerge, or both.

This distinction connects the philosophical architecture to the two analytical modes introduced in Section 1:

$$\mathcal{M}_G : T_t \to C_t \to R_{t+1}, \tag{40}$$

and

$$\mathcal{M}_C : T_t \to \Gamma_t \to R_{t+1}. \tag{41}$$

The first mode emphasizes transcendent mediation of commitment. The second emphasizes transcendent or cosmological mediation of generative conditions. Their relative importance can vary across traditions, rituals, historical periods, and individual practices. Their combination provides a comparative framework for analysing sacred marriage while preserving the specific historical and theological content of each case.

Section 3 develops the temporal and symbolic mechanisms underlying this interface. It analyses operational symbolic validity, recursive authorization, future-directed commitment, and local symbolic insufficiency before the paper turns to the comparative structure of sacredly witnessed marriage. “‘ “‘tex

3 Symbolic Self-Guarantee in Temporally Extended Commitment

This section develops the mechanism through which a symbolically constituted commitment extends into a relational future whose states remain open to generation. Its role is to specify the meaning of symbolic self-guarantee at a local relational scale and to identify the conditions under which additional forms of mediation can acquire significance. The discussion proceeds through five stages. It first examines the institutional conditions of symbolic efficacy. It then distinguishes operational authorization from the wider resources through which a symbolic order supports the continued force of a commitment. The third stage develops temporal iterability and recontextualization. The fourth stage models the exposure of long-duration commitments to future transformation. The final stage defines local symbolic insufficiency as the interface through which transcendent or condition-configuring mediation can enter an already operative symbolic relation.

3.1 Operational Symbolic Efficacy

This subsection establishes the level at which a symbolic act acquires recognized force within an existing social or institutional order. Its objective is to separate the constitution of a valid symbolic act from the later relational processes through which the significance of that act is carried forward.

Austin's analysis of performative utterances provides a useful point of departure. A performative act acquires efficacy through an appropriate conventional procedure, qualified participants, relevant circumstances, and the successful performance of the act [4]. Marriage provides one of Austin's familiar domains of institutional speech because declarations and vows can participate in the constitution of socially consequential relations.

Let σ denote a symbolic act and let

$$\mathcal{K}_\sigma = (P, A, C, I, S) \tag{42}$$

denote its operative configuration, where:

$$P := \text{recognized procedure}, \tag{43}$$
$$A := \text{authorized or relevant participants}, \tag{44}$$
$$C := \text{circumstances of performance}, \tag{45}$$
$$I := \text{institutional relations}, \tag{46}$$
$$S := \text{wider symbolic order}. \tag{47}$$

The operative efficacy of the act can then be represented as

$$E_S(\sigma, t) = \mathcal{E}\left(\sigma, \mathcal{K}_\sigma, t\right). \tag{48}$$

For an act that satisfies the relevant institutional conditions at time t_0, the symbolic order can assign a determinate validity state:

$$V_S(\sigma, t_0) = 1. \tag{49}$$

Equation (49) captures an important form of symbolic capacity. Legal systems, churches, shrines, families, and other institutions can recognize acts, assign statuses, record transitions, distribute roles, and attach consequences to symbolic performances. Symbolic authority therefore has a concrete operational dimension.

For marital commitment, such efficacy may include several distinguishable components:

$$\mathbf{E}_M(t_0) = (e_{\text{status}}, e_{\text{recognition}}, e_{\text{obligation}}, e_{\text{record}}, e_{\text{witness}}). \tag{50}$$

Different marriage systems distribute these components differently. A civil registration may have particularly strong legal-status and documentary effects. A religious ceremony may add sacred witnessing, blessing, covenantal meaning, or ritual memory. A family ceremony may redistribute kinship recognition and intergenerational roles. The present analysis treats these as potentially overlapping dimensions of symbolic efficacy.

This multidimensional formulation will later allow sacred mediation to be analysed as an addition or reconfiguration of relational resources within an already operative symbolic field.

3.2 Authorization Structure and Guarantee Resources

This subsection develops the relation between symbolic authorization and symbolic self-guarantee. Its objective is to describe the resources through which a functioning symbolic order supports the

continuing significance of its own commitments while preserving the distinction between practical authorization and ultimate symbolic grounding.

Symbolic acts commonly receive authority through layered relations. A declaration derives force from a recognized procedure; the procedure derives authority from an institutional rule; the rule is situated within a wider legal, religious, customary, or normative structure. A simplified authorization network can be represented as

$$\sigma \leftarrow S_1 \leftarrow S_2 \leftarrow \cdots \leftarrow S_n. \tag{51}$$

The practical function of such a network lies in the production of sufficient grounds for action and recognition. A marriage registrar can process a valid registration, a priest can conduct a recognized rite, and a community can recognize a marital status through established symbolic relations.

Lacan's formulation concerning the "Other of the Other" introduces a different analytical level. The symbolic field lacks a final signifying position whose own authority supplies complete grounding for the entire field [20, 15]. Operational symbolic authority and constitutive incompleteness therefore belong to the same symbolic configuration.

For the present paper, *symbolic self-guarantee* refers to the situated capacity of a symbolic order to supply resources that support the continued force, interpretation, and recognizability of a commitment through time. The concept concerns practical relational support rather than a claim of complete philosophical self-foundation.

Let the guarantee-resource vector be

$$\mathbf{G}_S(R,t) = (g_v, g_r, g_m, g_i, g_c, g_s)\,, \tag{52}$$

where:

$$g_v := \text{resources of validity}, \tag{53}$$
$$g_r := \text{resources of recognition}, \tag{54}$$
$$g_m := \text{resources of symbolic memory}, \tag{55}$$
$$g_i := \text{resources of interpretation}, \tag{56}$$
$$g_c := \text{resources of continuity}, \tag{57}$$
$$g_s := \text{resources of social or institutional support}. \tag{58}$$

These dimensions can be supplied through several media. Documentary inscription supports memory and status continuity. Law supports recognition and obligation. Ritual produces memorable temporal and material markers. Communities reproduce shared interpretations. Religious symbols may situate commitment within sacred narratives whose temporal horizon exceeds the present participants.

The vector formulation is important because the components of $\mathbf{G}_S$ possess different functions. A legal document can provide strong status continuity while contributing relatively little to shared existential interpretation. A ritual memory can have considerable interpretive force while possessing limited legal authority. A religious institution may provide community support and sacred orientation while civil institutions supply enforceable rights and obligations.

Symbolic self-guarantee therefore has a distributed structure:

$$\mathbf{G}_S = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \mathbf{g}_j, \tag{59}$$

where each $\mathbf{g}_j$ represents the contribution of a legal, institutional, ritual, familial, communal, material, or religious component.

Equation (59) provides the first formal basis for the later analysis of transcendent mediation. A sacred reference can become relationally significant through its contribution to particular components of the support structure, through its reorganization of the relations among those components, or through both processes.

3.3 Temporal Iterability and Recontextualization

This subsection specifies the mechanism through which a present symbolic act remains available within later relational states. Its role is to distinguish the persistence of a symbolic form from the changing contexts through which that form acquires future significance.

A commitment expressed at t_0 enters a temporal sequence extending beyond the conditions of its initial performance:

$$\sigma_{t_0} \longrightarrow \sigma_{t_1} \longrightarrow \cdots \longrightarrow \sigma_{t_n}. \tag{60}$$

The arrows in Equation (60) represent continued availability for citation, recollection, institutional recognition, interpretation, and ritual reactivation. Derrida's account of iterability is useful for characterizing this property. A mark can continue to function across contexts because repeatability belongs to its signifying operation [9]. Repetition simultaneously exposes the mark to contexts differing from the circumstances of its initial production.

Let

$$\mathcal{I} : \sigma_{t_0} \mapsto \{\sigma_{t_1}, \sigma_{t_2}, \ldots, \sigma_{t_n}\} \tag{61}$$

denote the iterability of the commitment.

The relational meaning of each later occurrence depends upon its context:

$$M(\sigma, t_i) = \mathcal{M}\left(\sigma, R_{t_i}, A_{t_i}, B_{t_i}, S_{t_i}, \Gamma_{t_i}\right), \tag{62}$$

where Γ_{t_i} denotes the wider material, temporal, social, and symbolic conditions operative at t_i.

Equations (61) and (62) identify two simultaneous properties: symbolic continuity and contextual transformation. A vow can remain available as the same historically identifiable vow while its significance is reinterpreted through changing circumstances.

This process matters for marriage because commitment is frequently recalled under conditions substantially different from those present at its constitution. Illness, migration, parenthood, economic change, bereavement, conflict, aging, and changes in personal identity can reorganize the context in which the initial commitment is understood.

The future force of commitment therefore depends partly upon the availability of symbolic resources that mediate recontextualization:

$$\sigma_{t_0} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{I}} \sigma_{t_i} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{J}_{t_i}} M(\sigma, t_i), \tag{63}$$

where $\mathcal{J}_{t_i}$ denotes the interpretive process occurring within the later relational state.

Ritual can participate in this process by creating highly structured memories, objects, places, phrases, witnesses, narratives, or sacred references that remain available for later recollection. The analysis of sacred marriage will therefore examine ritual mediation partly through its capacity to alter the future interpretive environment of commitment.

3.4 Temporal Exposure of High-Commitment Relations

This subsection models the demands created when commitment extends across a future characterized by personal transformation, contingency, and relational openness. Its objective is to define the type of relational exposure under which symbolic support becomes especially significant.

Arendt's analysis of promising provides an important philosophical account of the relation between commitment and unpredictability. In *The Human Condition*, promising is treated as a capacity through which islands of relative reliability can be established within the unpredictability of plural action [1]. The promise gains significance precisely within a future whose development remains open.

This insight can be represented through a commitment-exposure vector:

$$\mathbf{X}(R,t) = (x_\tau, x_p, x_c, x_i, x_d, x_e)\,, \tag{64}$$

where:

$$x_\tau := \text{temporal extension}, \tag{65}$$
$$x_p := \text{participant transformation}, \tag{66}$$
$$x_c := \text{external contingency}, \tag{67}$$
$$x_i := \text{interpretive variability}, \tag{68}$$
$$x_d := \text{relational interdependence}, \tag{69}$$
$$x_e := \text{institutional and social entanglement}. \tag{70}$$

Marriage commonly involves substantial exposure along several of these dimensions. Its temporal horizon may extend across decades. Participants develop through changing biographies and identities. External events alter the material conditions of shared life. Norms and expectations require repeated interpretation. Decisions made by one participant can restructure the possibilities available to the other. Families, legal systems, communities, property relations, caregiving structures, and religious institutions may become entangled with the marital relation.

The demand placed upon symbolic support can therefore be represented by a vector

$$\mathbf{D}(R,t) = \mathcal{D}\left(\mathbf{X}(R,t), R_t, \Gamma_t\right), \tag{71}$$

whose components correspond to the dimensions of support introduced in Equation (52).

The distinction between $\mathbf{D}$ and $\mathbf{G}_S$ permits a more precise definition of symbolic insufficiency. Define

$$\mathbf{\Delta}_S(R,t) = \left[\mathbf{D}(R,t) - \mathbf{G}_S(R,t)\right]_+, \tag{72}$$

where $[\cdot]_+$ denotes componentwise positive difference:

$$[\Delta_k]_+ = \max\left(D_k - G_k, 0\right). \tag{73}$$

Equation (72) defines a *local symbolic insufficiency profile*. Its purpose is diagnostic. A positive value in one component indicates that a particular dimension of relational demand exceeds the support available through the currently operative symbolic configuration.

For example, a marital relation may exhibit

$$\Delta_v \approx 0 \tag{74}$$

when legal validity remains secure, while

$$\Delta_i > 0 \tag{75}$$

when participants possess limited resources for interpreting how the commitment applies under a newly generated circumstance.

A different relation may exhibit strong interpretive continuity together with weak social support:

$$\Delta_i \approx 0, \qquad \Delta_s > 0. \tag{76}$$

This formulation allows symbolic insufficiency to remain local, multidimensional, and historically contingent. It also permits several institutions and symbolic systems to contribute simultaneously to the support of the same relation.

The relation between symbolic validity and local insufficiency can then be written as

$$V_S(\sigma, t_0) = 1, \qquad \|\mathbf{\Delta}_S(R, t_i)\| > 0 \quad \text{for some } t_i > t_0. \tag{77}$$

Equation (77) provides the central structural condition of this section. A commitment can remain fully recognized within its symbolic order while later relational states generate demands exceeding some of the support resources attached to its original constitution.

3.5 Mediation Interface at Sites of Symbolic Insufficiency

This subsection consolidates the preceding mechanisms and defines the transition from symbolic self-guarantee to additional mediation. Its role is to identify the local relational site at which sacred witness, transcendent reference, ritual memory, community support, or condition-configuring practices can enter a commitment whose symbolic validity is already established.

The relevant pre-mediation state can be represented as

$$\mathcal{Q}_t = (R_t, S_t, \Gamma_t, \mathbf{G}_S(R, t), \mathbf{D}(R, t)) \,. \tag{78}$$

A nonzero insufficiency profile

$$\|\mathbf{\Delta}_S(R, t)\| > 0 \tag{79}$$

identifies a site at which additional relational resources can become significant.

Let Z_t denote an additional mediating configuration. Its contribution can take two conceptually distinguishable forms.

The first modifies the symbolic-support structure:

$$\mathbf{G}'_S = \mathbf{G}_S + \Psi_G(Z_t), \tag{80}$$

where Ψ_G represents contributions to validity, recognition, memory, interpretation, continuity, or social support.

The second modifies the conditions under which future relational states are generated:

$$\Gamma'_t = \Psi_C \left(\Gamma_t, Z_t\right). \tag{81}$$

These two transformations correspond to the analytical distinction introduced in Section 1 between guarantor-oriented mediation $\mathcal{M}_G$ and condition-oriented mediation $\mathcal{M}_C$.

The complete transition can therefore be represented as

$$\mathcal{Q}_t \xrightarrow{Z_t} \mathcal{Q}'_t = (R'_t, S_t, \Gamma'_t, \mathbf{G}'_S, \mathbf{D}'_t) \,. \tag{82}$$

A transcendent Other can occupy the position of Z_t when the mediating configuration is organized around a reference whose significance exceeds the unilateral control and immediate temporal standpoint of the participants. Religious ritual can instantiate such a position through divine witness, sacred covenant, blessing, kami, ancestral reference, sacred place, ritual specialists, inherited liturgical forms, or combinations of these elements.

Condition-oriented ritual practices can instantiate Z_t through a different emphasis. Temporal selection, spatial orientation, cosmological alignment, purification, sequencing, material arrangement, and other practices can modify Γ_t, thereby acting upon the conditions under which later relational generation occurs.

The analytical relevance of sacred mediation therefore lies in its possible effects on both

$$\mathbf{G}_S \qquad \text{and} \qquad \Gamma_t. \tag{83}$$

This dual interface establishes the transition to Section 4. The next section examines selected forms of sacredly witnessed marriage and related ritual configurations in order to identify how transcendent references become operative, which components of the support structure they reorganize, and how ritual practices can configure the conditions of subsequent relational generation. “‘

4 Comparative Configurations of Sacred Marital Mediation

This section examines several ritual configurations through which marital commitment becomes embedded in relations extending beyond the immediate couple. Its role is comparative and evidential. The discussion first analyses selected Christian liturgical forms in which God explicitly enters the constitution, witnessing, blessing, and future orientation of marriage. It then examines *shinzenkekkon* as a historically modern Shinto configuration in which the couple performs marriage rites before the kami. The third subsection turns to Chinese family-ritual traditions in order to identify a different structure of marital embedding through family, ancestry, ritual sequence, and inherited social order. The fourth subsection uses scholarship on Daoist ritual space–time as a contrastive philosophical resource for condition-oriented mediation. The final subsection compares these configurations through the two analytical modes introduced in Section 1: guarantor-oriented mediation and condition-oriented mediation.

The comparison is deliberately asymmetric. Christian and Shinto materials provide direct cases of sacred marital mediation. Chinese family-ritual materials provide a broader ritual configuration surrounding marriage. Daoist materials contribute a conceptual model of temporal and spatial modulation whose application to marriage remains exploratory. This distinction preserves the historical specificity and evidential strength of each source.

4.1 Covenantal and Witnessing Mediation in Selected Christian Traditions

This subsection examines explicit forms of transcendent mediation within selected Christian marriage traditions. Its objective is to identify the relational functions assigned to divine presence, covenant, blessing, and witnessing. Anglican and Catholic materials are used as representative liturgical and doctrinal examples, while the diversity of Christian marriage traditions remains beyond the present comparative scope.

The Church of England marriage service places marital commitment within an explicitly theocentric relational field. The service situates marriage in the presence of God and the assembled witnesses, gives formal expression to mutual vows, and directs prayers toward the future life of the couple [27]. The marital relation therefore contains several simultaneous relational axes:

$$\mathcal{F}_{\text{Ang}} = \{R_{AB}, R_{AT}, R_{BT}, R_{AW}, R_{BW}\}, \tag{84}$$

where A and B denote the spouses, T the divine reference, and W the witnessing community.

The presence of T modifies the position of the vow. A purely dyadic representation would take the form

$$A \xrightarrow{C} B, \tag{85}$$

where C denotes commitment. Sacred witnessing introduces a triadic configuration:

$$A \xrightarrow{C} B \quad \text{within} \quad \mathcal{F}_T. \tag{86}$$

The commitment thereby acquires a relational location extending beyond the private exchange of intentions. The ritual makes the vow publicly repeatable, socially witnessed, religiously interpreted, and temporally oriented toward a future common life.

Catholic sacramental theology gives the divine relation a particularly strong formulation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes matrimonial consent as establishing a covenant between the spouses and states that the resulting bond is sealed by God. It further situates the spouses' covenant within the covenant between God and humanity and describes sacramental grace as supporting the couple's shared life [8].

For analytical purposes, this structure can be represented as

$$C_{AB} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{S}} C_{AB}^{T}, \tag{87}$$

where $\mathcal{S}$ denotes sacramental mediation and C_{AB}^{T} denotes a marital commitment situated within a divine covenantal relation.

The Catholic formulation illustrates a strong version of guarantor-oriented mediation:

$$\mathcal{M}_G^{\text{Cath}} : T \longrightarrow C_{AB} \longrightarrow R_{AB}(t > t_0). \tag{88}$$

The first arrow includes several theological relations: divine sealing, covenantal incorporation, grace, and fidelity. These concepts have meanings specific to Catholic theology. The Generative Relational analysis extracts a more limited structural feature: commitment is placed in relation to a transcendent position whose temporal and normative horizon exceeds the immediate intentions of the spouses.

The ritual configuration also contributes to the support vector introduced in Equation (52). Sacred marriage can potentially add resources of recognition, memory, interpretation, continuity, and community:

$$\Psi_G(T, \mathcal{R}) = (\delta g_r, \delta g_m, \delta g_i, \delta g_c, \delta g_s)\,. \tag{89}$$

Equation (89) represents possible relational functions of the ritual configuration. It does not establish an empirical effect on marital durability. The equation identifies the channels through which sacred mediation can enter the symbolic support structure.

Christian liturgy therefore provides a clear case in which transcendence operates through both commitment and generative conditions. Divine witness and covenant correspond strongly to $\mathcal{M}_G$, while blessing, communal support, prayer, shared liturgical memory, and moral formation can also affect Γ_t. The two analytical modes can consequently coexist within the same religious configuration.

4.2 Kami Presence and Ritual Reconfiguration in Shinzenkekkon

This subsection examines *shinzenkekkon* as a second configuration of sacredly mediated marriage. Its objective is to identify the ritual position of the kami and the relational transformations produced through purification, offerings, vows, sacred sake, priestly mediation, and family participation. The historical genealogy of the modern ceremony is included because its modern formation provides direct evidence for the regenerative character of ritual transcendence.

The *Encyclopedia of Shinto* defines *shinzenkekkon* broadly as nuptial rites conducted before a kami and, in common usage, as wedding ceremonies performed at shrines or wedding halls by Shinto priests [13]. The same source records earlier associations between marital observances and

kami while locating the formation of the modern priest-led ceremony in the Meiji period. The 1900 marriage of the Crown Prince provided an important institutional impetus, and a revised liturgical form was subsequently disseminated through shrine networks [13].

Shida's sociological analysis similarly emphasizes the modern formation of the Shinto wedding ceremony and its later diffusion, especially during the twentieth century [25]. The historical record therefore supports an important distinction between sacred reference and ritual form. Association between marriage and kami has a longer history, while the standardized modern configuration through which the kami become present in a recognizable wedding ceremony has a more recent genealogy.

This distinction is relevant to the concept of regenerated transcendence:

$$T_{\text{historical}} + S_{\text{modern}} + \mathcal{R}_{\text{modern}} \longrightarrow T_{\text{operative}}. \tag{90}$$

Equation (90) represents a historical reconfiguration rather than a claim concerning the ontological generation of the kami. The variable $T_{\text{operative}}$ denotes the position through which transcendence becomes active within a particular modern ritual system.

The documented sequence of contemporary *shinzenkekkon* includes purification, offerings to the kami, priestly *norito*, ritual sharing of sake, the reading of marriage vows, *tamagushi* offerings, and a pledge between the two families expressed through shared sacred wine [13]. These elements produce a relational field wider than the couple:

$$\mathcal{F}_{\text{Sh}} = \{A, B, T, P, F_A, F_B, O, L, X\}, \tag{91}$$

where P denotes priestly mediation, F_A and F_B the two families, O ritual objects and offerings, L liturgical language, and X sacred space.

Several dimensions of mediation become visible within this configuration. Purification alters the ritual condition of entry. Offerings establish a relation with the kami. The *norito* verbally addresses the sacred position. The vows situate commitment before that position. Sacred sake produces a shared embodied act. Family participation extends the relation beyond the dyad. The shrine or ritual site locates the event within a material and sacred environment.

The resulting transformation can be represented as

$$(A, B, C_M) \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_{\text{Sh}}} (A, B, C_M, T, \Gamma'_{\text{Sh}}), \tag{92}$$

where Γ'_{Sh} denotes the reconfigured symbolic, material, familial, spatial, and mnemonic conditions surrounding commitment.

The Shinto example therefore contains both analytical modes:

$$\mathcal{M}_G^{\text{Sh}} : T \to C_M, \tag{93}$$

through vows and sacred presence, and

$$\mathcal{M}_C^{\text{Sh}} : T, \mathcal{R}_{\text{Sh}} \to \Gamma'_{\text{Sh}}, \tag{94}$$

through purification, sacred space, ritual sequence, material mediation, and family incorporation.

The importance of the case for the present paper lies in the historical visibility of ritual regeneration. A modern ritual system assembled inherited sacred references, institutional forms, new ceremonial structures, and changing social conditions into a configuration that came to function as a recognizable tradition. The transcendent position within the ceremony therefore possesses a historical mode of mediation even where theological interpretations attribute independent reality to the kami.

4.3 Family-Ritual Embedding in Chinese Marriage Traditions

This subsection introduces Chinese family-ritual traditions as a contrastive configuration of marital mediation. Its objective is to identify forms of relational embedding through family structure, ritual sequence, ancestry, and inherited normative order. The discussion concentrates on Confucian family ritual literature and preserves the heterogeneous relation among Confucian, popular-religious, Buddhist, Daoist, local, and familial practices.

Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* contains a dedicated wedding procedure alongside capping, funeral, and ancestral sacrificial rites [28]. Ebrey's historical analysis demonstrates the importance of family ritual manuals in the formation, circulation, adaptation, and social practice of Confucian ritual across imperial China [11]. Marriage within this literature belongs to a wider system of family transitions and status relations.

The relational field can be represented as

$$\mathcal{F}_{\mathrm{Ch}} = \{A, B, F_A, F_B, K, H, N, \mathcal{R}\}\,, \tag{95}$$

where K denotes kinship relations, H inherited family and ritual continuity, N normative order, and $\mathcal{R}$ the ritual sequence through which marital transition becomes socially organized.

This configuration highlights a form of mediation whose structure extends beyond a divine witness model. Marriage changes relational positions within families and lineages, establishes new forms of affinity, redistributes status, and becomes situated within inherited rites that connect present action with intergenerational continuity.

The associated transformation can be written as

$$R_{AB} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_F} R_{AB}^{F,K,H}, \tag{96}$$

where $\mathcal{R}_F$ denotes family-ritual mediation.

The analytical significance of this case lies in its distributed structure. Relational support can arise through family recognition, prescribed sequence, ancestral continuity, normative role allocation, shared memory, and the material organization of ritual. These elements can modify several components of the symbolic support vector:

$$\Psi_F : \mathbf{G}_S \longrightarrow \mathbf{G}'_S. \tag{97}$$

Such mediation can coexist with sacred and cosmological references, while the historical configuration varies substantially across periods, regions, social classes, and communities. The present analysis therefore treats Chinese family ritual as a distinct relational configuration and reserves specific claims about divine witnessing for cases supported by corresponding ritual evidence.

This distinction matters for the broader argument. A relation can acquire trans-individual depth through several mechanisms:

$$\text{divine reference,} \quad \text{ancestral continuity,} \quad \text{family structure,} \quad \text{ritual inheritance,} \quad \text{community recognition.} \tag{98}$$

The category of transcendent mediation therefore requires attention to the specific position occupied by each of these mechanisms. Their relational effects can overlap while their theological and ontological meanings remain distinct.

4.4 Daoist Space–Time Modulation as a Contrastive Resource

This subsection develops an exploratory comparison between sacred guarantee and the modulation of generative conditions. Its role is conceptual. Scholarship on Daoist ritual and meditative practice is

used to identify a mode in which religious action engages qualitative time, space, rhythm, alignment, and transformation. The subsection confines its inference to this structural affinity and leaves the history of Daoist wedding liturgies to specialist historical research.

Kim's study of Daoist ritual and meditative practices describes traditions developed between the fourth and twelfth centuries as forms of engagement with, recalibration of, and transformation within qualitative space–time [18]. The analysis emphasizes correlative spatial and temporal order, alignment with cosmic rhythms, ritual performance, and the production of particular conditions for transformation.

This orientation can be expressed through a generative-condition model:

$$R_{t+1} = \Phi\left(R_t; \Gamma_t\right), \tag{99}$$

where Γ_t contains the conditions under which a relational process develops.

A ritual practice oriented toward spatial or temporal configuration acts upon Γ_t:

$$\Gamma_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_C} \Gamma_t', \tag{100}$$

followed by

$$R_{t+1} = \Phi\left(R_t; \Gamma_t'\right). \tag{101}$$

The structural difference from a strong guarantor model concerns the immediate target of mediation. In

$$\mathcal{M}_G, \tag{102}$$

transcendent mediation acts prominently upon commitment, obligation, or symbolic authorization. In

$$\mathcal{M}_C, \tag{103}$$

mediation acts prominently upon the temporal, spatial, bodily, material, or relational conditions in which subsequent generation unfolds.

This distinction creates a possible philosophical affinity with certain Daoist conceptions of transformation. A condition-oriented intervention can preserve a substantial role for the endogenous dynamics of the process:

$$\Gamma_t \to \Gamma_t', \qquad R_t \xrightarrow{\Phi(\cdot;\Gamma_t')} R_{t+1}. \tag{104}$$

The relational system continues to generate its subsequent state through its own interactions under a modified field of conditions. This structure is relevant to Generative Relational thought because governance of generative conditions differs analytically from direct specification of a desired trajectory.

The present paper treats this comparison as a research hypothesis:

$$\mathcal{H}_D: \quad \text{some Daoist ritual logics may provide conceptual resources for } \mathcal{M}_C. \tag{105}$$

Equation (105) carries a limited evidential status. It does not establish a historical explanation for the prevalence of particular marriage ceremonies. It identifies a philosophical correspondence between documented modes of Daoist engagement with qualitative space–time and the GR concept of condition-oriented mediation.

Table 1: Comparative configurations and analytical roles of marital and ritual mediation

Configuration	**Documented relational structure**	**GR analytical role**	**Evidential status**
Selected Christian marriage	Vows, divine presence, blessing, covenant, witnesses, community	Strong $\mathcal{M}_G$; additional effects on Γ_t through blessing, memory, and community	Direct liturgical and doctrinal evidence [27, 8]
Shinzenkekkon	Kami presence, priestly mediation, purification, offerings, vows, sacred sake, familial participation	Coupled $\mathcal{M}_G$ and $\mathcal{M}_C$; historically visible ritual regeneration	Direct ritual description and historical evidence [13, 25]
Chinese family ritual	Wedding rites embedded in family, kinship, inherited ritual order, and intergenerational continuity	Distributed symbolic support and relational embedding	Historical textual and social-historical evidence [28, 11]
Daoist ritual space–time	Ritual engagement with qualitative space, time, rhythm, alignment, and transformation	Conceptual resource for $\mathcal{M}_C$	Exploratory transfer from Daoist ritual studies [18]

4.5 Comparative Modes of Sacred and Ritual Mediation

This subsection consolidates the comparative evidence and prepares the mechanism developed in Section 5. Its objective is to separate documented ritual structures from GR analytical interpretation and to identify the different locations at which mediation can enter a marital relational system.

Table 1 summarizes the evidential and analytical status of the configurations discussed in this section.

The comparison identifies at least four locations of mediation:

$$\mathcal{L}_M = \{C, \mathbf{G}, \Gamma, \mathcal{F}\}\,, \tag{106}$$

where C denotes commitment, $\mathbf{G}$ symbolic support resources, Γ generative conditions, and $\mathcal{F}$ the wider relational field.

A sacred witness can operate at the level of commitment:

$$T \to C. \tag{107}$$

Ritual memory and communal recognition can operate through the support structure:

$$\mathcal{R} \to \mathbf{G}. \tag{108}$$

Purification, timing, spatial arrangement, material sequence, and cosmological alignment can operate upon generative conditions:

$$\mathcal{R} \to \Gamma. \tag{109}$$

Family, kinship, ancestry, divine reference, and community can expand the relational field:

$$R_{AB} \to \mathcal{F}^{+}_{AB}. \tag{110}$$

The resulting comparative model is

$$\mathcal{R}_t : (C_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \Gamma_t, \mathcal{F}_t) \longrightarrow (C'_t, \mathbf{G}'_t, \Gamma'_t, \mathcal{F}'_t)\,. \tag{111}$$

Equation (111) provides a more general description than a single model of divine guarantee. Sacredly witnessed marriage represents one important configuration within a wider class of ritual operations that reorganize commitment and the conditions of relational becoming.

The next section develops the mechanism of *ritual regeneration* and *local symbolic repair*. It examines how a transcendent position can become operative at a site of symbolic insufficiency, how ritual can preserve the visibility of that insufficiency while reorganizing its relational surroundings, and how the resulting configuration can affect future generativity.

5 Ritual Regeneration and Local Symbolic Repair

This section develops the central mechanism connecting symbolic insufficiency, transcendent mediation, and future relational generativity. Its objective is to specify how a transcendent position becomes operative through ritual, how this operation reorganizes a local symbolic configuration, and how the resulting configuration modifies the conditions of subsequent relational development. The discussion proceeds through five stages. It first defines ritual regeneration as the activation of a transcendent relational position through a historically situated ritual configuration. It then develops local symbolic repair as a multidimensional reorganization of symbolic support. The third and fourth stages distinguish guarantor-oriented and condition-oriented repair. The final stage integrates both modes into a common transition model that prepares the formal Generative Relational analysis of Section 6.

5.1 Ritual Activation of Transcendent Relational Positions

This subsection defines ritual regeneration and identifies the components through which a transcendent position acquires operational presence within a relational system. Its analytical focus lies on ritual mediation as a process that organizes symbolic, bodily, material, spatial, temporal, and institutional relations.

Ritual studies provide several resources for understanding such mediation. Tambiah develops a performative approach in which ritual action operates through conventionalized speech, patterned action, symbolic communication, and indexical relations [26]. Bell's account of ritualization emphasizes the strategic differentiation and organization of practices within fields of social relations [5]. Rappaport examines ritual as a formally ordered mode of action through which participants enter relations with canonical messages, social orders, and religious commitments extending beyond individual authorship [24].

These approaches support an analysis of ritual as an organized relational operation. Let

$$\mathcal{R}_t = (L_t, A_t, M_t, X_t, \Theta_t, I_t, W_t) \tag{112}$$

denote a ritual configuration at time t, where:

$$L_t := \text{liturgical and symbolic language}, \tag{113}$$
$$A_t := \text{embodied ritual action}, \tag{114}$$
$$M_t := \text{material mediation}, \tag{115}$$
$$X_t := \text{ritual space}, \tag{116}$$
$$\Theta_t := \text{ritual temporality and sequence}, \tag{117}$$
$$I_t := \text{institutional and specialist mediation}, \tag{118}$$
$$W_t := \text{witnessing and collective participation}. \tag{119}$$

A transcendent reference may already possess theological, historical, or cultural intelligibility before the performance of a particular ceremony. Ritual regeneration concerns the transition through which that reference becomes operative within a present relational configuration:

$$T^{\mathrm{ref}} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t} T_t^{\mathrm{op}}, \tag{120}$$

where T^{ref} denotes an available transcendent reference and T_t^{op} denotes its operative position within the ritual field at time t.

Equation (120) defines *ritual regeneration*. Regeneration refers to the production of present relational efficacy through historically inherited and contemporaneously performed mediations. The concept concerns the operational mode of transcendence within a relational system.

This distinction is especially important for religious traditions in which the divine is understood as possessing independent ontological reality. The model can preserve such an interpretation by distinguishing

$$T^{\mathrm{ont}} \tag{121}$$

from

$$T_t^{\mathrm{op}}. \tag{122}$$

The first variable denotes the metaphysical object of theological commitment. The second denotes the relational position through which transcendence becomes effective within a particular symbolic and ritual configuration.

The relation between them can be represented as

$$T^{\mathrm{ont}} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t, \Sigma_t} T_t^{\mathrm{op}}, \tag{123}$$

where Σ_t contains the symbolic and interpretive resources through which participants relate the ritual performance to the transcendent reality recognized by the tradition.

A sociological interpretation can assign a different ontological account to T^{ref} while retaining the same operational question. The formal model therefore isolates the relational mechanism from the metaphysical adjudication.

Ritual regeneration can affect the relation once T_t^{op} becomes a node or reference within the operative field:

$$\mathcal{F}_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t} \mathcal{F}_t' = \mathcal{F}_t \cup \{T_t^{\mathrm{op}}\}. \tag{124}$$

The term "expansion" in Equation (124) includes changes in relational position as well as the addition of an explicit sacred reference. A ritual can redistribute attention, authority, memory, interpretation, obligation, and temporal orientation across the field.

5.2 Local Reorganization of Symbolic Support

This subsection defines local symbolic repair as a change in the support architecture surrounding a commitment. Its objective is to specify the relation between the symbolic insufficiency profile developed in Section 3 and the resources generated or reorganized through ritual mediation.

Recall the symbolic support vector

$$\mathbf{G}_S(R,t) = (g_v, g_r, g_m, g_i, g_c, g_s), \tag{125}$$

and the local insufficiency profile

$$\mathbf{\Delta}_S(R,t) = [\mathbf{D}(R,t) - \mathbf{G}_S(R,t)]_+. \tag{126}$$

A ritual configuration can modify the support architecture through

$$\mathbf{G}'_S(R,t) = \mathbf{G}_S(R,t) + \mathbf{\Psi}_R\left(\mathcal{R}_t, T_t^{\mathrm{op}}\right), \tag{127}$$

where $\mathbf{\Psi}_R$ denotes the support contribution produced by the ritual configuration and the operative transcendent position.

The resulting insufficiency profile becomes

$$\mathbf{\Delta}'_S(R,t) = \left[\mathbf{D}'(R,t) - \mathbf{G}'_S(R,t)\right]_+. \tag{128}$$

A *local symbolic repair* is defined as a bounded transition

$$\mathfrak{P}_R : (\mathbf{G}_S, \mathbf{D}, \mathbf{\Delta}_S, \mathcal{F})_t \longrightarrow (\mathbf{G}'_S, \mathbf{D}', \mathbf{\Delta}'_S, \mathcal{F}')_t \tag{129}$$

through which the symbolic and relational architecture surrounding a specific commitment is reorganized.

The locality of the operation concerns both scale and domain. A marriage rite can reorganize the symbolic field of a particular couple, family, congregation, or ritual community while wider questions concerning law, theology, symbolic authority, and social order remain open. The repair therefore has a bounded target:

$$\mathrm{Dom}\left(\mathfrak{P}_R\right) \subset \mathcal{F}_{\mathrm{local}}. \tag{130}$$

Ritual repair can operate through several components of $\mathbf{G}_S$. A publicly witnessed vow can strengthen g_r, the resources of recognition. A memorable ceremonial event can increase g_m, the resources of symbolic memory. Sacred narratives and liturgical formulations can contribute to g_i, the resources available for later interpretation. Institutional or communal participation can strengthen g_s, the resources of social support. Repeated rituals, anniversaries, sacred places, or durable ritual objects can contribute to g_c, the resources of continuity.

The multidimensional structure permits heterogeneous effects:

$$\mathbf{\Psi}_R = (\psi_v, \psi_r, \psi_m, \psi_i, \psi_c, \psi_s). \tag{131}$$

Different rituals can therefore reorganize distinct dimensions of symbolic support. This formulation preserves variation among theological traditions, ritual forms, communities, and participants.

Ritualization also changes the distribution of salience within the relational field. Bell's analysis is relevant here because ritualization differentiates certain actions, spaces, times, and bodies from ordinary practice and thereby produces structured distinctions within a field of relations [5]. A marital vow uttered within an ordinary conversation and a vow articulated within an organized sacred ceremony can share linguistic content while occupying different relational configurations.

This distinction can be represented as

$$\sigma \longrightarrow \mathrm{Pos}\left(\sigma \mid \mathcal{F}_t\right), \tag{132}$$

with ritual producing

$$\mathrm{Pos}\left(\sigma \mid \mathcal{F}'_t\right) \neq \mathrm{Pos}\left(\sigma \mid \mathcal{F}_t\right). \tag{133}$$

The operation of repair therefore includes a change in the position from which a commitment is remembered and interpreted.

5.3 Guarantor-Oriented Regeneration

This subsection develops the first mode of local symbolic repair. Its role is to specify how a transcendent position can reorganize commitment by providing witnessing, authorization, sacred orientation, covenantal meaning, or a reference exceeding the immediate dyad.

Let

$$C_t = C(A_t, B_t) \tag{134}$$

denote a commitment between participants A_t and B_t. Ritualized transcendent mediation produces

$$C'_t = C\left(A_t, B_t, T_t^{\mathrm{op}}, W_t, \Sigma_t\right), \tag{135}$$

where W_t denotes witnesses and Σ_t the symbolic resources through which the transcendent position is interpreted.

The guarantor-oriented mode can then be written as

$$\mathcal{M}_G : \qquad T_t^{\mathrm{op}} \to C'_t \to \mathbf{G}'_S \to R_{t+1}. \tag{136}$$

The term *guarantor* refers here to a relational function. Its possible operations include:

$$\mathcal{O}_G = \{\text{witnessing}, \text{sanctification}, \text{authorization}, \text{covenantal embedding}, \text{normative orientation}, \text{symbolic continuity}\} \tag{137}$$

Religious traditions assign distinct theological meanings to these operations. The GR model treats them as differentiated relations through which commitment acquires a position extending beyond the present dyad.

A central effect of the guarantor mode concerns temporal displacement. A vow performed before a transcendent reference can be recalled later as a relation among at least three temporal positions:

$$\left(A_{t_0}, B_{t_0}, T_{t_0}^{\mathrm{op}}\right) \longrightarrow \left(A_{t_n}, B_{t_n}, T_{t_n}^{\mathrm{ref}}\right). \tag{138}$$

The reference to T can provide continuity across changes in the participants. The persons at t_n can interpret their current relation through a commitment that was originally situated within a sacred field at t_0.

This temporal structure also clarifies the meaning of regeneration. The transcendent position can be reactivated through memory, prayer, repeated ritual, sacred place, religious community, liturgical language, or renewed interpretation:

$$T_{t_0}^{\mathrm{op}} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{I}} T_{t_n}^{\mathrm{ref}} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_{t_n}} T_{t_n}^{\mathrm{op}}. \tag{139}$$

Regeneration can therefore occur repeatedly during the life of a relational system. Its recurrence gives transcendence a dynamical role extending beyond the initial ceremony.

5.4 Condition-Oriented Regeneration

This subsection develops the second mode of local symbolic repair. Its objective is to formalize ritual operations directed toward the conditions in which future relational generation occurs, including temporal, spatial, material, bodily, communal, and interpretive conditions.

Let the generative-condition vector be

$$\mathbf{\Gamma}_t = \left(\gamma_\tau, \gamma_x, \gamma_m, \gamma_b, \gamma_c, \gamma_i\right), \tag{140}$$

where:

$$\gamma_\tau := \text{temporal conditions}, \tag{141}$$
$$\gamma_x := \text{spatial conditions}, \tag{142}$$
$$\gamma_m := \text{material conditions}, \tag{143}$$
$$\gamma_b := \text{bodily and affective conditions}, \tag{144}$$
$$\gamma_c := \text{communal and relational conditions}, \tag{145}$$
$$\gamma_i := \text{interpretive conditions}. \tag{146}$$

A condition-oriented ritual operation modifies this vector:

$$\boldsymbol{\Gamma}'_t = \Psi_C \left(\boldsymbol{\Gamma}_t, \mathcal{R}_t, T_t^{\text{op}} \right). \tag{147}$$

The subsequent relational state is then generated according to

$$R_{t+1} = \Phi \left(R_t; \boldsymbol{\Gamma}'_t, \eta_t \right), \tag{148}$$

where η_t represents contingencies and influences outside the analytically specified condition vector.

The condition-oriented mode is therefore

$$\mathcal{M}_C : \qquad \mathcal{R}_t, T_t^{\text{op}} \rightarrow \boldsymbol{\Gamma}'_t \rightarrow R_{t+1}. \tag{149}$$

This mode includes a broad range of ritual operations. Purification can modify bodily, affective, and symbolic entry conditions. Sacred architecture can reorganize spatial orientation and attention. Calendrical selection can locate an event within a culturally meaningful temporal configuration. Family and community participation can modify relational conditions. Offerings, ritual objects, dress, music, food, or shared substances can create material and sensory conditions through which the event is experienced and remembered.

The analytical importance of $\mathcal{M}_C$ lies in the location of intervention. The ritual affects parameters of the relational process:

$$\frac{\partial \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_t}{\partial \mathcal{R}_t} \neq \mathbf{0}. \tag{150}$$

The later state remains a product of the relational dynamics represented by Φ. Condition-oriented mediation thereby provides a formal vocabulary for religious and ritual practices whose principal effect concerns the environment of becoming.

The distinction between $\mathcal{M}_G$ and $\mathcal{M}_C$ concerns analytical emphasis. A single ceremony can alter commitment and generative conditions simultaneously:

$$\mathcal{R}_t \longrightarrow \left(C'_t, \mathbf{G}'_t, \boldsymbol{\Gamma}'_t \right). \tag{151}$$

This coupled structure corresponds closely to the comparative findings of Section 4.

5.5 Generative Symbolic Repair as a Relational Transition

This subsection integrates ritual regeneration, symbolic support, and generative-condition modification into a single relational transition. Its role is to define the mechanism that will be evaluated in terms of generativity in Section 6.

Let the pre-ritual relational state be

$$\mathcal{Q}_t = \left(R_t, C_t, S_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_t, \mathcal{F}_t, \boldsymbol{\Delta}_t \right). \tag{152}$$

Ritual regeneration introduces an operative transcendent position and reorganizes the relational configuration:

$$\mathcal{Q}_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t(T)} \mathcal{Q}'_t, \tag{153}$$

with

$$\mathcal{Q}'_t = \left(R'_t, C'_t, S_t, \mathbf{G}'_t, \mathbf{\Gamma}'_t, \mathcal{F}'_t, \mathbf{\Delta}'_t, T_t^{\mathrm{op}}\right). \tag{154}$$

The repair operator can be decomposed as

$$\mathfrak{P} = \mathfrak{P}_G \circ \mathfrak{P}_C \circ \mathfrak{P}_F, \tag{155}$$

where:

$$\mathfrak{P}_G := \text{reorganization of symbolic support and commitment,} \tag{156}$$

$$\mathfrak{P}_C := \text{reorganization of generative conditions,} \tag{157}$$

$$\mathfrak{P}_F := \text{reorganization of the relational field.} \tag{158}$$

The resulting state enters subsequent relational dynamics:

$$R_{t+1} = \Phi\left(R'_t, C'_t, \mathbf{G}'_t, \mathbf{\Gamma}'_t, \mathcal{F}'_t, T_t^{\mathrm{op}}; \eta_t\right). \tag{159}$$

This formulation gives the term *generative symbolic repair* a precise meaning. The operation changes the relational configuration from which future states are generated:

$$\mathcal{Q}_t \to \mathcal{Q}'_t \to R_{t+1}. \tag{160}$$

The outcome of repair therefore concerns a changed generative starting configuration. Ritual memory, sacred reference, community witnessing, transformed symbolic support, and reconfigured conditions become inputs to later relational processes.

Rappaport's account of ritual is relevant to this transition because ritual participation can place actors in relation to canonical forms whose authority and persistence extend beyond individual authorship [24]. Tambiah's performative approach similarly illuminates the capacity of patterned symbolic action to produce effects through conventional, indexical, and performative relations [26]. These accounts support the general proposition that ritual can reorganize relational states through publicly structured action.

The GR contribution concerns the next analytical step. The existence of a repair transition does not determine the generative value of the resulting state. The relevant assessment concerns how $\mathcal{Q}'_t$ changes the relational system's capacity for future becoming.

Let

$$\mathfrak{G}\left(\mathcal{Q}_t\right) \tag{161}$$

denote the generativity associated with a relational configuration. The generative effect of ritual repair can be represented as

$$\Delta\mathfrak{G}_t = \mathfrak{G}\left(\mathcal{Q}'_t\right) - \mathfrak{G}\left(\mathcal{Q}_t\right). \tag{162}$$

Equation (162) establishes the central transition to Section 6. The next section defines relational generativity more precisely and analyses the conditions under which transcendent mediation can preserve, expand, redirect, or constrain the future state space of a relational system.

6 Generative Relational Dynamics of Transcendent Mediation

This section develops the Generative Relational model used to evaluate the relational consequences of transcendent mediation. Its role is to move from the mechanism of ritual repair developed in Section 5 to a formal account of future generativity. The discussion proceeds through five stages. It first defines generativity as a constrained and multidimensional future capacity. It then distinguishes generative continuity from stability and resilience. The third stage classifies the principal dynamical effects that transcendent mediation can have upon a relational system. The fourth stage analyses the relation between commitment binding, attractor formation, and revisability. The final stage integrates guarantor-oriented and condition-oriented mediation within a common Generative Relational transition model.

6.1 Constrained Future Capacity

This subsection defines the generativity of a relational configuration. Its objective is to represent the capacity for continued becoming while preserving a domain of viable relational states, future revisability, and the generative participation of the subjects involved.

Let

$$\mathcal{Q}_t = (R_t, C_t, S_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \mathbf{\Gamma}_t, \mathcal{F}_t, T_t) \tag{163}$$

denote the relational configuration at time t.

The future of this configuration consists of possible trajectories

$$\omega = \{\mathcal{Q}_t, \mathcal{Q}_{t+1}, \ldots, \mathcal{Q}_{t+H}\} \tag{164}$$

over a horizon H.

The concept of viability provides a useful formal analogy. Viability theory studies the evolutions through which a dynamical system can remain within a specified domain of admissible states under constraints [3]. The present paper adopts this concept at a heuristic level for relational systems.

Let

$$\mathcal{C}_\tau \tag{165}$$

denote the admissibility conditions applicable to the relational system at time τ. These conditions may include minimal requirements concerning participant integrity, relational agency, safety, interpretive participation, and the preservation of feasible processes of revision or reconfiguration. Their complete ethical specification belongs to a wider Generative Relational ethics and remains outside the present paper.

The viable future set over horizon H is defined as

$$\mathcal{V}_H(\mathcal{Q}_t) = \{\omega \mid \mathcal{Q}_\tau \in \mathcal{C}_\tau,\ \tau \in [t, t+H],\ \omega \text{ is dynamically reachable from } \mathcal{Q}_t\}. \tag{166}$$

Equation (166) introduces an important restriction on future possibility. Relational generativity concerns futures that remain within an admissible relational domain. An expansion of physically possible states therefore acquires generative significance only through its relation to viability.

The richness of $\mathcal{V}_H$ can be represented through an abstract functional

$$\rho_H = \mathfrak{R}(\mathcal{V}_H), \tag{167}$$

where $\mathfrak{R}$ may refer, depending on the formal setting, to the measure, dimensionality, connectivity, diversity, or other structural richness of viable future trajectories.

Future richness forms only one component of generativity. The present paper defines a generativity profile

$$G\left(\mathcal{Q}_t; H\right) = \left(\rho_H, \nu_H, \pi_H, \chi_H, \zeta_H\right), \tag{168}$$

where:

$$\rho_H := \text{richness of viable future trajectories,} \tag{169}$$

$$\nu_H := \text{capacity for relational and symbolic revisability,} \tag{170}$$

$$\pi_H := \text{capacity for subject-preserving participation,} \tag{171}$$

$$\chi_H := \text{capacity for self-sustaining generative cycles,} \tag{172}$$

$$\zeta_H := \text{capacity to remain generative under perturbation.} \tag{173}$$

The first component concerns future possibility. The second concerns the capacity to revise commitments, interpretations, norms, and relational configurations as new conditions emerge. The third concerns the continued capacity of participating subjects to interpret, contest, contribute to, and reconfigure the relation. The fourth concerns cycles through which material, symbolic, affective, social, and interpretive resources return to the processes that generate them. This component has a conceptual affinity with Eglash's account of generative justice, which emphasizes self-sustaining circulation and the return of value to its generators [12]. The fifth concerns the capacity of the system to remain within a generative domain when subjected to disturbance.

The profile in Equation (168) is intentionally multidimensional. A relational configuration can increase one component while reducing another. Strong continuity may coexist with weak revisability. A wide future state space may coexist with weak subject participation. High resistance to disturbance may coexist with deep dependence upon a rigid interpretive structure.

Generativity therefore admits a partial ordering. For two relational configurations $\mathcal{Q}$ and $\mathcal{Q}'$, define

$$\mathcal{Q}' \succeq_{\mathcal{G}} \mathcal{Q} \tag{174}$$

when every component of $G(\mathcal{Q}')$ is at least as well preserved as the corresponding component of $G(\mathcal{Q})$, with improvement in at least one component.

Configurations with mixed changes remain partially ordered:

$$\mathcal{Q}' \parallel_{\mathcal{G}} \mathcal{Q}. \tag{175}$$

Equation (175) is important for the analysis of religious mediation. A sacred guarantor may improve continuity and perturbation tolerance while simultaneously reducing revisability under some institutional configurations. Such cases require multidimensional interpretation.

6.2 Stability, Resilience, and Generative Continuity

This subsection distinguishes three dynamical properties that can appear similar in long-duration relations. Its objective is to clarify the specific meaning of generative continuity and to prevent marital persistence from being used as its proxy.

Holling's classic distinction between stability and resilience in ecological systems provides a useful conceptual precedent. Stability concerns the tendency of a system to remain near or return toward a reference condition, while resilience concerns its capacity to absorb changes while preserving the organization that sustains the system [14]. The present paper transfers this distinction only at the level of dynamical analogy.

Let

$$\mathcal{A} \tag{176}$$

denote a reference relational configuration or attractor. A simple stability quantity may be represented as

$$\mathfrak{S} = \mathfrak{S}\left(R_t, \mathcal{A}\right), \tag{177}$$

describing the tendency of the relation to remain near or return toward $\mathcal{A}$.

Relational resilience can be represented as

$$\mathfrak{Z} = \sup\left\{\|\delta\| : \mathcal{Q}_t + \delta \text{ retains access to } \mathcal{V}_H\right\}, \tag{178}$$

where δ denotes a perturbation.

Generative continuity concerns a further property:

$$\mathfrak{C}_G = \mathrm{Cont}\left(\mathcal{V}_H, \nu_H, \pi_H, \chi_H\right), \tag{179}$$

representing the continued availability of viable, revisable, participatory, and self-sustaining relational trajectories.

These three properties remain analytically distinct. A highly stable relation may occupy a narrow attractor with limited revisability. A resilient relation may undergo substantial structural change while preserving a viable relational process. A generative relation may leave its previous configuration and produce a substantially different form of association.

For marriage, this distinction is particularly important. The continued existence of marital status provides information about persistence:

$$M(t) = 1. \tag{180}$$

Generative evaluation requires additional information:

$$G\left(\mathcal{Q}_t; H\right). \tag{181}$$

A religious or symbolic intervention can therefore contribute to generativity through several pathways. It can buffer temporary perturbations, preserve memory across conflict, provide resources for reinterpretation, connect the couple to supportive communities, or modify the conditions under which a new relational configuration can emerge.

The same intervention can also produce forms of persistence whose generative profile is weaker. The formal distinction between $\mathfrak{S}$, $\mathfrak{Z}$, and G allows these outcomes to be examined separately.

6.3 Dynamical Effects of Transcendent Mediation

This subsection classifies the principal effects through which an operative transcendent position can alter future relational generativity. Its role is to replace a binary distinction between successful and unsuccessful repair with a set of dynamical transformations.

Let ritualized transcendent mediation produce

$$\mathcal{Q}_t \xrightarrow{\mathcal{M}_T} \mathcal{Q}'_t, \tag{182}$$

where $\mathcal{M}_T$ may contain guarantor-oriented mediation, condition-oriented mediation, or a coupled configuration.

The corresponding future sets are

$$\mathcal{V}_H = \mathcal{V}_H(\mathcal{Q}_t) \tag{183}$$

and

$$\mathcal{V}'_H = \mathcal{V}_H(\mathcal{Q}'_t). \tag{184}$$

Four analytically distinct effects can then be defined.

Generative expansion. Generative expansion occurs when mediation creates additional viable trajectories while preserving the previously available viable domain:

$$\mathcal{V}_H \subset \mathcal{V}'_H, \tag{185}$$

together with

$$\mathcal{Q}'_t \succeq_{\mathcal{G}} \mathcal{Q}_t. \tag{186}$$

A ritual can contribute to this effect by adding interpretive resources, community support, shared memory, or new modes of reconciliation that permit a relation to develop through states that were previously difficult to sustain.

Generative buffering. Generative buffering occurs when mediation primarily increases tolerance to perturbation:

$$\zeta'_H > \zeta_H, \tag{187}$$

while the overall viable domain remains structurally similar:

$$\mathcal{V}'_H \approx \mathcal{V}_H. \tag{188}$$

A transcendent witness can perform this function when the remembered weight of a vow, sacred narrative, ritual event, or community relation prevents a temporary conflict from becoming an irreversible relational collapse.

Generative redirection. Generative redirection occurs when mediation changes the structure of the viable future domain:

$$\mathcal{V}_H \cap \mathcal{V}'_H \neq \varnothing, \tag{189}$$

while

$$\mathcal{V}_H \not\subseteq \mathcal{V}'_H, \qquad \mathcal{V}'_H \not\subseteq \mathcal{V}_H. \tag{190}$$

The relation gains some trajectories and loses others. A religious commitment, for example, can close certain interpretations of marital conduct while opening new forms of community participation, sacrificial action, reconciliation, or shared spiritual practice.

Generative closure. Generative closure occurs when mediation reduces the viable future domain or substantially weakens revisability or subject-preserving participation:

$$\mathcal{V}'_H \subset \mathcal{V}_H, \tag{191}$$

or

$$\nu'_H < \nu_H, \qquad \pi'_H < \pi_H. \tag{192}$$

Closure can occur even when persistence increases. A transcendent reference can deepen commitment while narrowing the admissible interpretations, reconfiguration paths, or participatory capacities available to the subjects.

The four effects establish a central GR distinction:

$$\mathcal{M}_T \longrightarrow \{\text{expansion}, \text{buffering}, \text{redirection}, \text{closure}\}. \tag{193}$$

The relational value of transcendent mediation therefore depends upon its dynamical effect within a particular configuration.

6.4 Commitment Binding and Attractor Depth

This subsection analyses the dual role of binding structures in a relational system. Its objective is to formalize how transcendent mediation can protect a relation from transient disturbances while also increasing the risk of generative closure when binding becomes excessively rigid.

Let

$$\kappa_t \tag{194}$$

denote the effective binding strength of a commitment. The quantity represents the combined influence of legal obligation, symbolic memory, sacred commitment, community expectation, personal identification, and other factors that resist rapid relational transition.

Transcendent mediation can modify this quantity:

$$\kappa_t' = \kappa_t + \Delta\kappa_T. \tag{195}$$

For a temporary perturbation δ_t, an increase in κ_t can preserve access to a viable continuation:

$$\|\delta_t\| < \kappa_t' \quad \Longrightarrow \quad \mathcal{V}_H\left(\mathcal{Q}_{t+1}\right) \neq \varnothing. \tag{196}$$

This mechanism represents the buffering function of commitment. The relation acquires sufficient depth to prevent every short-term fluctuation from rewriting its entire trajectory.

Binding strength also alters transition costs among relational configurations. Let

$$\mathcal{B}\left(\mathcal{Q}_i \to \mathcal{Q}_j\right) \tag{197}$$

denote the effective barrier associated with transition from configuration i to configuration j. Transcendent mediation can produce

$$\mathcal{B}_{ij}' = \mathcal{B}_{ij} + \beta_{ij}(T). \tag{198}$$

A moderate increase in barrier height can protect a relation against transient noise. A large increase can remove feasible paths toward revision, reorganization, separation, or other admissible relational states:

$$\mathcal{B}_{ij}' > \mathcal{B}_{ij}^{\text{feas}} \quad \Longrightarrow \quad \mathcal{Q}_j \notin \mathcal{V}_H'. \tag{199}$$

The corresponding GR problem concerns the simultaneous preservation of continuity and transition capacity. Define

$$\mathcal{E}_H\left(\mathcal{Q}_t\right) \subseteq \mathcal{V}_H\left(\mathcal{Q}_t\right) \tag{200}$$

as the subset of viable trajectories that permit substantial reconfiguration of the existing relational structure.

A generatively buffered relation therefore satisfies

$$\zeta_H' > \zeta_H \tag{201}$$

together with

$$\mathcal{E}_H' \neq \varnothing. \tag{202}$$

Equation (202) captures a central property of generative commitment: transient disturbances encounter resistance while admissible pathways of transformation remain available.

The same structure explains why the transcendent guarantor has an ambivalent dynamical role. Sacred authority can increase the depth of relational memory and commitment. Its generative significance depends upon the continued availability of interpretive and relational transition paths.

6.5 Coupled Dynamics of Guarantor- and Condition-Oriented Mediation

This subsection integrates the two analytical modes of transcendent mediation into the full Generative Relational model. Its objective is to identify how changes in commitment support and changes in generative conditions jointly modify the future relational system.

Recall the two mediation operators:

$$\mathcal{M}_G : T_t \to (C'_t, \mathbf{G}'_t)\,, \tag{203}$$

and

$$\mathcal{M}_C : T_t, \mathcal{R}_t \to \mathbf{\Gamma}'_t. \tag{204}$$

Their coupled operation can be represented as

$$\mathcal{M}_{GC} = \mathcal{M}_G \oplus \mathcal{M}_C, \tag{205}$$

where $\oplus$ denotes joint intervention in distinct components of the relational state.

The pre-mediation configuration is

$$\mathcal{Q}_t = (R_t, C_t, S_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \mathbf{\Gamma}_t, \mathcal{F}_t)\,. \tag{206}$$

Ritualized transcendent mediation produces

$$\mathcal{Q}'_t = \mathcal{M}_{GC}\,(\mathcal{Q}_t, T_t, \mathcal{R}_t)\,, \tag{207}$$

followed by relational generation:

$$\mathcal{Q}_{t+1} = \Phi\,(\mathcal{Q}'_t, \eta_t)\,. \tag{208}$$

The generative consequence of the mediation is then

$$\Delta G_t = G\,(\mathcal{Q}'_t; H) - G\,(\mathcal{Q}_t; H)\,, \tag{209}$$

where the subtraction denotes componentwise comparison.

This formulation permits the two modes to have different dynamical effects. Guarantor-oriented mediation can contribute strongly to symbolic memory, continuity, recognition, and perturbation buffering:

$$\mathcal{M}_G \to (g_m, g_c, g_r, \zeta_H)\,. \tag{210}$$

Condition-oriented mediation can modify the environment of subsequent generation:

$$\mathcal{M}_C \to \mathbf{\Gamma}'_t \to \mathcal{V}'_H. \tag{211}$$

The interaction between them can be complementary. A vow situated before a transcendent witness may provide temporal continuity, while ritual space, community participation, purification, shared material acts, or temporal configuration may establish conditions in which the commitment is experienced, remembered, and later interpreted.

The interaction can also create tension. Strong guarantor-oriented binding may increase ζ_H while reducing ν_H. Condition-oriented practices can support future generation while leaving symbolic commitment comparatively open. The GR model therefore preserves both dimensions as independent variables.

The complete process developed across Sections 3– 6 can now be written as

$$\boxed{\mathcal{Q}_t \to \mathbf{\Delta}_{S,t} \to \mathcal{R}_t(T) \to (\mathcal{M}_G, \mathcal{M}_C) \to \mathcal{Q}'_t \to \mathcal{V}'_H \to G'_t} \tag{212}$$

Equation (212) provides the formal core of the paper. A local symbolic insufficiency creates a site at which ritual mediation can make a transcendent reference operationally present. The resulting configuration can modify commitment, symbolic support, generative conditions, and the relational field. These modifications alter the viable future trajectories available to the relational system and thereby change its generativity profile.

The model also sharpens the meaning of the paper's central proposition. A transcendent guarantor can be ritually regenerated at a site of symbolic self-guarantee insufficiency. Its subsequent significance lies in the transformation

$$G_t \longrightarrow G_t'. \tag{213}$$

The direction and composition of this transformation remain contingent upon the ritual form, institutional structure, interpretive distribution, participating subjects, historical setting, and later relational dynamics.

Section 7 develops these contingencies in greater detail. It examines interpretive monopoly, sacralized domination, symbolic closure, historical overgeneralization, metaphysical neutrality, and the limits of using a formal dynamical vocabulary for lived religious relations.

7 Interpretive Boundaries and Generativity-Constraining Configurations

This section examines the boundary conditions of the Generative Relational account and the configurations through which transcendent mediation can reduce future relational generativity. Its role is both critical and methodological. The discussion proceeds through six stages. It first establishes the historical specificity of the comparative categories used in the paper. It then separates the metaphysical status of transcendence from its operational representation in the formal model. The third and fourth stages analyse interpretive concentration, sacralized authority, attractor rigidity, and the preservation of relational exit and reconfiguration paths. The fifth stage identifies the normative commitments embedded in the Generative Relational evaluation. The final stage defines the empirical and formal limits of the present model and specifies corresponding research obligations.

7.1 Historical Specificity of Comparative Categories

This subsection defines the historical limits of the paper's comparative vocabulary. Its objective is to preserve the specificity of religious, ritual, legal, familial, and cosmological traditions while maintaining a common analytical interface for relational comparison.

The categories *religion*, *ritual*, *transcendence*, *marriage*, and *sacred authority* carry distinct genealogies. Asad's critique of religion as a universal anthropological category is especially relevant to comparative analysis because the concept developed within historically specific relations among Christianity, discipline, secularization, institutional power, and modern knowledge [2]. His genealogy of ritual similarly draws attention to the historical processes through which ritual becomes available as an apparently general analytical object.

Bell's comparative work on ritual also emphasizes the diversity of practices collected under the category of ritual and the changing theoretical definitions through which scholars have interpreted them [6].

The present paper therefore uses a structural comparison of relational positions:

$$\mathcal{A} = \{C, T, \mathcal{R}, \mathbf{G}, \mathbf{\Gamma}, \mathcal{F}\}, \tag{214}$$

where the variables denote commitment, transcendent reference, ritual mediation, symbolic support, generative conditions, and relational field.

The elements of $\mathcal{A}$ provide an analytical interface. Their substantive meanings remain dependent upon the historical tradition under examination:

$$\text{Meaning}\,(\mathcal{A}) = \mathcal{M}\,(H, L, I, P, \Sigma)\,, \tag{215}$$

where H denotes historical formation, L language, I institutions, P practices, and Σ inherited symbolic systems.

Christian covenant, Shinto kami presence, Chinese ancestral and family ritual, and Daoist cosmological alignment therefore enter the model through distinct historical meanings. Their placement in a common formal vocabulary indicates comparable relational functions at a selected level of abstraction.

This distinction establishes a constraint on the conclusions of the paper:

$$\text{structural comparability} \;\Rightarrow\; \text{historical equivalence.} \tag{216}$$

Equation (216) governs the comparative interpretation of the case material developed in Section 4.

7.2 Metaphysical and Operational Levels of Transcendence

This subsection clarifies the ontological scope of the formalism. Its objective is to distinguish theological claims concerning divine reality from the relational operations through which transcendence becomes effective within a specific ceremonial and symbolic configuration.

The model introduced in Section 5 distinguishes

$$T^{\text{ont}} \tag{217}$$

from

$$T_t^{\text{op}}. \tag{218}$$

The first term designates the ontological reality attributed to the transcendent referent within a theological or metaphysical account. The second designates the position through which the transcendent reference participates in an operative relational configuration.

The formal dynamics developed in this paper apply to T_t^{op}:

$$T_t^{\text{op}} \to (C_t', \mathbf{G}_t', \mathbf{\Gamma}_t', \mathcal{F}_t')\,. \tag{219}$$

The metaphysical variable T^{ont} remains available to several philosophical interpretations. A theological realist account can understand ritual mediation as a mode through which an independently existing divine reality enters human relation. A phenomenological account can emphasize the mode in which transcendence is encountered. A sociological account can analyse institutional, collective, and symbolic processes through which sacred authority becomes operative. A psychoanalytic account can examine the symbolic position occupied by divine guarantee.

The present formalism preserves these interpretations as separate explanatory layers:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{explanation}} = \{\mathcal{L}_{\text{theological}}, \mathcal{L}_{\text{phenomenological}}, \mathcal{L}_{\text{sociological}}, \mathcal{L}_{\text{psychoanalytic}}, \mathcal{L}_{\text{GR}}\}\,. \tag{220}$$

The GR layer concerns relational transitions and future generative conditions. Its conclusions therefore concern the effects associated with an operative transcendent position within the specified relational model.

7.3 Interpretive Concentration and Sacralized Authority

This subsection analyses a principal pathway through which transcendent mediation can produce generative closure. Its objective is to examine the distribution of interpretive authority surrounding a transcendent reference and the consequences of concentration for revisability and subject participation.

A transcendent position frequently requires interpretation. Sacred texts, ritual traditions, doctrinal authorities, priests, families, communities, and individual participants can all contribute to the interpretation of what the transcendent reference means for a particular relation.

Let

$$\mathcal{I}_T = \{I_1, I_2, \ldots, I_n\} \tag{221}$$

denote the set of interpretive positions associated with T, and let

$$\mathbf{p} = (p_1, p_2, \ldots, p_n), \qquad \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i = 1, \tag{222}$$

represent their effective shares of interpretive authority.

An abstract concentration measure can be defined as

$$K_T = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2. \tag{223}$$

The quantity approaches higher values as interpretive authority becomes concentrated within fewer positions. Equation (223) has a heuristic role. Its purpose is to represent the distribution of authority surrounding the transcendent reference.

High concentration can become generatively significant when a single interpretive position acquires effective control over the mapping

$$T \xrightarrow{I_k} N, \tag{224}$$

where N denotes the normative implications assigned to transcendence.

Under a distributed configuration,

$$T \xrightarrow{\{I_1,\ldots,I_n\}} \{N_1, \ldots, N_m\}, \tag{225}$$

several interpretive pathways can remain available.

The effect of interpretive concentration on generativity depends upon the institutional and relational context. A stable interpretive authority can provide continuity, expertise, memory, and recognizable practice. Increasing concentration can also reduce the available pathways through which participants contest, reinterpret, or reconfigure the relation:

$$\frac{\partial \nu_H}{\partial K_T} < 0 \tag{226}$$

under configurations in which interpretive concentration reduces revisability.

Subject-preserving participation can be affected through the same mechanism:

$$\frac{\partial \pi_H}{\partial K_T} < 0 \tag{227}$$

when participants lose meaningful access to interpretation and relational reconfiguration.

The relevant GR concern therefore lies in the coupling between transcendent authority and interpretive distribution:

$$T + K_T + I_{\text{institutional}} \longrightarrow G_{t+1}. \tag{228}$$

Sacralized authority becomes especially consequential when a human interpreter acquires the capacity to present a contingent interpretation as the direct and complete expression of transcendence. The distinction between T and $I_k(T)$ then becomes difficult to preserve within the relational system.

A useful formal separation is therefore

$$T \neq I_k(T), \tag{229}$$

where the inequality indicates analytical distinction between the transcendent reference and a historically situated interpretation of that reference.

Preserving this distinction creates space for interpretive plurality, historical learning, and future revision while allowing the transcendent reference to remain relationally significant.

7.4 Attractor Rigidity and Relational Reconfiguration Paths

This subsection develops the dynamical form of generative closure. Its role is to analyse how symbolic, institutional, communal, and sacred binding can deepen a relational attractor while altering the accessibility of future reconfiguration paths.

Section 6 introduced the transition barrier

$$\mathcal{B}_{ij} \tag{230}$$

between relational configurations $\mathcal{Q}_i$ and $\mathcal{Q}_j$.

Transcendent mediation can increase effective barrier height through sacred commitment, community expectation, doctrinal interpretation, identity formation, ritual memory, and institutional consequences:

$$\mathcal{B}'_{ij} = \mathcal{B}_{ij} + \beta_T + \beta_I + \beta_C, \tag{231}$$

where β_T, β_I, and β_C represent transcendent, institutional, and communal contributions.

The corresponding attractor can become more resistant to perturbation:

$$\zeta'_H > \zeta_H. \tag{232}$$

Generative closure arises when the same barrier structure removes admissible reconfiguration trajectories from the viable future domain:

$$\mathcal{E}'_H \subset \mathcal{E}_H, \tag{233}$$

where $\mathcal{E}_H$ denotes viable trajectories permitting substantial relational reconfiguration.

The concept of reconfiguration includes several possible transitions:

$$\mathcal{E}_H = \{E_{\text{int}}, E_{\text{role}}, E_{\text{inst}}, E_{\text{sep}}, E_{\text{com}}, E_{\text{term}}\}. \tag{234}$$

Here, E_{int} denotes reinterpretation, E_{role} redistribution of roles, E_{inst} institutional renegotiation, E_{sep} temporary separation, E_{com} transformation of commitment, and E_{term} termination of a relational form.

The inclusion of termination within $\mathcal{E}_H$ follows from the viability-based definition of generativity. In some configurations, continued reproduction of an existing relation can reduce the viability of

Table 2: Generativity-constraining configurations of transcendent mediation

Configuration	**Relational mechanism**	**Affected GR dimensions**	**Analytical consequence**
Interpretive concentration	Authority over the meaning of T becomes concentrated in a narrow interpretive position	ν_H, π_H, ρ_H	Reduced interpretive and participatory pathways
Sacralized institutional capture	Institutional authority becomes closely identified with transcendent authority	ν_H, π_H, χ_H	Reduced capacity for contestation and redistribution of relational authority
Attractor rigidity	Commitment and institutional barriers substantially increase transition costs	ρ_H, ν_H, ζ_H	Higher perturbation resistance together with reduced reconfiguration access
Subject absorption	The continuation of the relational form receives priority over participant interpretive and generative capacities	π_H, ρ_H, χ_H	Weakening of subject-preserving generativity
Condition fixation	A historically situated generative condition becomes treated as permanently authoritative	ν_H, ρ_H, ζ_H	Reduced adaptation to transformed environments and participants

participating subjects. A generative transition can therefore involve transformation into a different relational form.

The dynamical criterion is:

$$\text{buffering capacity} \quad \text{together with} \quad \mathcal{E}'_H \neq \varnothing. \tag{235}$$

Equation (235) represents a balance between resistance to transient disturbance and preservation of meaningful transition capacity.

Table 2 summarizes the principal generativity-constraining configurations developed in this section.

The configurations in Table 2 describe analytical mechanisms. Their presence and magnitude require case-specific historical and empirical investigation.

7.5 Normative Commitments of Generative Relational Evaluation

This subsection identifies the normative assumptions embedded in the GR generativity profile. Its objective is to distinguish descriptive claims about religious practice from the evaluative commitments through which this paper assesses future relational generativity.

The profile introduced in Equation (168) assigns positive analytical significance to revisability, subject-preserving participation, viable future trajectories, self-sustaining generative cycles, and capacity under perturbation. These dimensions express a particular normative orientation.

Mahmood's analysis of women's piety movements provides an important caution for such an orientation. Her critique of secular-liberal accounts of agency shows that agency can be cultivated

through practices of discipline, embodied formation, religious authority, and ethical self-fashioning whose internal logic differs from an account centred primarily on resistance to norms [23].

This critique has direct implications for the present model. A GR measure such as

$$\pi_H = \text{subject-preserving participation} \tag{236}$$

requires a substantive account of participation. The concept cannot be reduced to independence from tradition, authority, discipline, or commitment. Participants can exercise generative capacities through practices that include submission, fidelity, discipline, self-limitation, and inherited forms when these practices are meaningful within their ethical and religious worlds.

The GR criterion therefore concerns the continued capacity of subjects to participate in the generation and interpretation of their relational lives:

$$\pi_H = \Pi\left(p_{\text{int}}, p_{\text{resp}}, p_{\text{rel}}, p_{\text{reconf}}\right). \tag{237}$$

Here, p_{int} denotes interpretive participation, p_{resp} response capacity, p_{rel} relational contribution, and p_{reconf} meaningful reconfiguration capacity.

Revisability requires a similar clarification. Revisability concerns the availability of processes through which a rule, interpretation, relational configuration, or institutional arrangement can encounter future reconsideration under changed conditions:

$$\nu_H = \mathcal{N}\left(\text{future interpretive access}, \text{procedural reconsideration}, \text{historical responsiveness}\right). \tag{238}$$

The paper therefore treats π_H and ν_H as GR normative commitments. Their relevance to any particular religious tradition requires dialogue with the tradition's own ethical vocabulary and forms of self-understanding.

This position also constrains the interpretation of sacred authority. Strong commitment, obedience, discipline, covenant, and ritual fidelity can contribute to a generative relational system when they participate in viable, subject-sustaining, and historically responsive forms of common life. Their effects remain dependent upon the wider relational configuration.

7.6 Formal Scope and Empirical Research Obligations

This subsection defines the methodological limits of the mathematical expressions developed throughout the paper. Its role is to distinguish conceptual formalization from empirical measurement and to identify the research required for future development of the model.

The variables

$$\mathbf{G}, \qquad \mathbf{\Gamma}, \qquad \mathbf{\Delta}, \qquad G, \qquad K_T, \qquad \mathcal{B}_{ij} \tag{239}$$

are conceptual quantities. Their present definitions specify relations among components of the argument. They do not provide validated empirical scales.

The formal model therefore operates at three levels:

$$\mathcal{L}_F = \{\text{conceptual decomposition}, \text{relational dependency}, \text{dynamical hypothesis}\}. \tag{240}$$

Conceptual decomposition distinguishes dimensions such as symbolic support, generative conditions, and subject participation. Relational dependency specifies possible pathways connecting ritual mediation with later relational states. Dynamical hypotheses identify expected forms of expansion, buffering, redirection, and closure.

Empirical evaluation would require additional work at several levels:

$$\mathcal{O}_E = \{O_{\text{hist}}, O_{\text{ethn}}, O_{\text{part}}, O_{\text{inst}}, O_{\text{long}}, O_{\text{comp}}\}. \tag{241}$$

Here, O_{hist} denotes historical reconstruction, O_{ethn} ritual ethnography, O_{part} participant interpretation, O_{inst} institutional analysis, O_{long} longitudinal relational study, and O_{comp} comparative measurement.

Historical reconstruction is especially important for the comparative claims involving Christian, Shinto, Chinese, and Daoist materials. Ritual ethnography would clarify how participants actually experience divine witness, sacred space, family incorporation, auspicious timing, and related practices. Participant interpretation would identify the meanings assigned to these elements within lived relations. Longitudinal study would be required to evaluate claims concerning future relational generativity.

The formal model also leaves several causal pathways underdetermined. An observed change in G can emerge through ritual mediation, family structure, socioeconomic conditions, legal arrangements, personality, community, health, historical change, or interactions among these factors:

$$G_{t+1} = \Phi\left(\mathcal{R}_t, T_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \mathbf{\Gamma}_t, \mathbf{X}_t, \eta_t\right), \tag{242}$$

where $\mathbf{X}_t$ collects additional observed factors and η_t represents unresolved influences.

The present paper therefore establishes a philosophical and formal research programme. Its principal contribution lies in identifying a relational mechanism through which symbolic insufficiency, ritual regeneration, transcendent mediation, and generative conditions can be studied within a common dynamical framework.

The resulting boundary can be expressed as

$$\boxed{\text{philosophical mechanism} \rightarrow \text{formal relational model} \rightarrow \text{historical and empirical research obligations}} \tag{243}$$

Section 8 consolidates the model within these limits and returns to the central problem of how relational systems generate, reactivate, and live through transcendent references when their existing symbolic resources face the demands of an open relational future.

8 Conclusion: Transcendent Mediation and Relational Generativity

This section consolidates the philosophical and formal argument developed throughout the paper. Its role is to restate the central problem, integrate the comparative and Generative Relational analyses, clarify the resulting contribution, and identify the principal implications for further philosophical, historical, and empirical research. The discussion proceeds from symbolic self-guarantee to ritual regeneration, then to the two modes of transcendent mediation, and finally to the conditions under which such mediation contributes to future relational generativity.

The paper began from a structural feature of long-duration commitment. A marital relation can acquire a valid symbolic form at a determinate moment, while the persons, circumstances, interpretations, and relational states to which that commitment subsequently applies remain open to generation. A symbolic order can establish status, preserve records, recognize obligations, and organize institutional consequences. The future trajectory of the relation continues to emerge through processes extending beyond the conditions available at the moment of commitment.

This structure was represented through the distinction between symbolic validity and future relational generativity:

$$V_S(\sigma, t_0) = 1, \qquad \mathcal{T}_R(t > t_0) \text{ remains generative.} \tag{244}$$

The distinction creates the analytical space for the concept of *symbolic self-guarantee insufficiency*. The concept identifies a local configuration in which the demands generated by a temporally extended relation exceed some of the symbolic, interpretive, mnemonic, communal, or continuity resources presently available to it. In the multidimensional formulation developed in Section 3,

$$\mathbf{\Delta}_S(R,t) = [\mathbf{D}(R,t) - \mathbf{G}_S(R,t)]_+ . \tag{245}$$

This formulation preserves the operative capacity of symbolic institutions. Legal validity, ritual recognition, social memory, existential interpretation, and communal support can possess different degrees of sufficiency within the same relation. Symbolic insufficiency therefore concerns a local relational profile rather than a general collapse of symbolic order.

The philosophical traditions considered in Section 2 illuminate different components of this structure. Religious philosophy provides accounts of interpersonal relations mediated through a transcendent reference. Existential philosophy draws attention to commitment, temporality, and the formation of continuity across changing states of a relation. Levinasian alterity introduces an exteriority exceeding unilateral possession. Durkheimian and ritual-theoretical approaches explain the collective and performative processes through which sacred authority becomes socially operative. Structural analysis locates marriage within wider fields of kinship, institution, and symbolic position. Lacanian theory provides a particularly important account of an operative symbolic order whose authority coexists with constitutive incompleteness.

The comparative analysis of sacred marital mediation subsequently identified several ways in which relational systems can respond to such conditions. Selected Christian marriage traditions explicitly place marital commitment before God through covenant, vows, divine witness, blessing, and community. Modern *shinzenkekkon* places the couple before the kami through a historically developed ritual configuration containing priestly mediation, purification, offerings, sacred sake, vows, material forms, and family participation. Chinese family-ritual traditions provide a wider configuration in which marriage becomes embedded in kinship, intergenerational continuity, ritual sequence, and inherited normative order. Daoist materials concerning qualitative space–time, alignment, and ritual transformation provide an exploratory philosophical resource for analysing intervention at the level of generative conditions.

The comparison led to two analytical modes of transcendent mediation:

$$\mathcal{M}_G : \qquad T \longrightarrow C \longrightarrow R_{t+1}, \tag{246}$$

and

$$\mathcal{M}_C : \qquad T \longrightarrow \mathbf{\Gamma} \longrightarrow R_{t+1}. \tag{247}$$

The first mode acts prominently upon commitment, symbolic authority, witnessing, memory, and continuity. The second acts prominently upon the temporal, spatial, material, communal, bodily, and interpretive conditions under which future generation occurs. Actual ritual traditions can combine both modes:

$$\mathcal{M} = \alpha\mathcal{M}_G + \beta\mathcal{M}_C. \tag{248}$$

This distinction provides one of the central comparative contributions of the paper. Transcendent mediation can operate through the strengthening of a commitment, through the configuration of the conditions surrounding its future development, or through a coupled transformation of both domains.

The concept of *ritual regeneration* was introduced to describe the process through which a transcendent reference acquires present operational force within a historically situated ritual configuration:

$$T^{\mathrm{ref}} \xrightarrow{\mathcal{R}_t} T_t^{\mathrm{op}}. \tag{249}$$

Regeneration concerns relational operation. A theological account can locate the referent of T in an independently existing divine reality. A sociological account can emphasize institutions, collective practices, and symbolic formation. A phenomenological account can examine the experience of sacred presence. A psychoanalytic account can analyse the symbolic position of guarantee. The GR model isolates the transition through which the transcendent reference becomes an operative element of the relational field.

This distinction allows the central insight of the paper to be formulated with greater precision. A transcendent guarantor can acquire renewed operational presence at a local site where existing symbolic resources face demands generated by an open relational future:

$$\boldsymbol{\Delta}_{S,t} \longrightarrow \mathcal{R}_t(T) \longrightarrow T_t^{\mathrm{op}}. \tag{250}$$

The resulting process was described as *local symbolic repair*. Repair denotes a bounded reorganization of the symbolic and relational architecture surrounding a commitment:

$$(C_t, \mathbf{G}_t, \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_t, \mathcal{F}_t) \longrightarrow (C_t', \mathbf{G}_t', \boldsymbol{\Gamma}_t', \mathcal{F}_t')\,. \tag{251}$$

The concept therefore concerns the production of a changed generative configuration. Ritual can reposition commitment, create durable memories, redistribute witnessing, connect participants to institutions and communities, activate sacred references, organize material and spatial relations, and alter the interpretive environment through which later states of the relation become meaningful.

The Generative Relational contribution begins from the consequences of this transition. The value of a ritual repair depends upon its effects on future relational capacity. Section 6 represented this capacity through the multidimensional profile

$$G\left(\mathcal{Q}_t; H\right) = \left(\rho_H, \nu_H, \pi_H, \chi_H, \zeta_H\right), \tag{252}$$

whose components concern viable future richness, revisability, subject-preserving participation, self-sustaining generative cycles, and generativity under perturbation.

This profile distinguishes relational generativity from persistence alone. Transcendent mediation can strengthen continuity and memory while producing different effects on revisability, subject participation, and future possibility. Its dynamical consequences were therefore classified as

$$\mathcal{M}_T \longrightarrow \{\text{expansion}, \text{buffering}, \text{redirection}, \text{closure}\}\,. \tag{253}$$

Generative expansion enlarges the domain of viable relational trajectories. Generative buffering increases the capacity of the relation to remain generative through temporary disturbance. Generative redirection changes the composition of the viable future domain. Generative closure reduces viable future trajectories, revisability, or subject-preserving participation.

This classification clarifies the ambivalent role of a transcendent guarantor. Sacred commitment can increase resistance to transient disruption:

$$\zeta_H' > \zeta_H. \tag{254}$$

The same configuration can also increase transition barriers:

$$\mathcal{B}_{ij}' > \mathcal{B}_{ij}. \tag{255}$$

A generatively significant form of commitment therefore combines buffering with the preservation of viable reconfiguration pathways:

$$\zeta_H' > \zeta_H, \qquad \mathcal{E}_H' \neq \varnothing. \tag{256}$$

Equation (256) captures the central normative tension of the paper. A relation can acquire depth sufficient to survive temporary fluctuations while retaining meaningful capacities for reinterpretation, redistribution of roles, transformation of commitment, and other forms of relational reconfiguration.

The same principle applies to condition-oriented mediation. Ritual timing, space, purification, material arrangement, community participation, and cosmological alignment can modify $\mathbf{\Gamma}_t$, thereby changing the field in which subsequent relational processes develop:

$$\mathbf{\Gamma}_t \longrightarrow \mathbf{\Gamma}'_t \longrightarrow R_{t+1}. \tag{257}$$

This mode provides a distinctive philosophical implication. A relational system can be governed partly through the configuration of its generative conditions. Such an approach places analytical emphasis on the environment of becoming, the relations among participants, and the conditions through which future states become reachable.

The resulting GR model can be summarized as

$$\boxed{\mathcal{Q}_t \to \mathbf{\Delta}_{S,t} \to \mathcal{R}_t(T) \to T_t^{\mathrm{op}} \to (\mathcal{M}_G, \mathcal{M}_C) \to \mathcal{Q}'_t \to \mathcal{V}'_H \to G'_t} \tag{258}$$

The sequence gives formal expression to the paper's principal philosophical proposal. Relational systems can encounter local sites at which existing symbolic resources provide limited support for the demands of an open future. Ritual can make a transcendent reference operationally present at such sites. The resulting transcendent position can reorganize commitment, symbolic support, generative conditions, and the wider relational field. These changes subsequently alter the viable futures available to the system.

Several limits remain essential to this proposal. Structural comparison carries no implication of historical equivalence among Christian, Shinto, Chinese, and Daoist traditions. The connection between Daoist ritual logics and condition-oriented mediation remains an exploratory philosophical hypothesis. The formal variables used throughout the paper remain conceptual quantities requiring historical, ethnographic, institutional, and longitudinal empirical development. The GR dimensions of revisability and subject-preserving participation also express normative commitments that require dialogue with the ethical vocabularies through which religious practitioners understand discipline, fidelity, submission, obligation, and agency.

These limits define the appropriate scale of the present contribution. The paper offers a philosophical mechanism and a formal comparative vocabulary for studying transcendent mediation in temporally extended relational systems. It also identifies a set of research obligations concerning the historical formation of sacred marriage practices, participant interpretations of divine witness and ritual conditions, the distribution of interpretive authority, and the long-term relational effects of ritualized commitment.

The broader implication concerns the relation between transcendence and generation. A transcendent Other can possess a genealogy within a relational system while acquiring effects that exceed the immediate intentions of the participants who reproduce its operative presence. Ritual is one process through which such a position becomes present, memorable, authoritative, and available for future relational interpretation.

Transcendence can therefore participate in a recursive relational sequence:

$$R_t \longrightarrow T_t^{\mathrm{op}} \longrightarrow R_{t+1} \longrightarrow T_{t+1}^{\mathrm{op}} \longrightarrow \cdots. \tag{259}$$

Within this sequence, the central question shifts from the presence of transcendence alone to the form of relational becoming that its presence makes possible. A transcendent guarantor can provide memory, depth, orientation, and resistance to transient collapse. A transcendent or cosmological

reference can also configure the conditions under which new relational states emerge. The Generative Relational perspective evaluates these operations through their effects on the continuing capacity of relational systems to generate viable, revisable, participatory, and self-sustaining futures.

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