

## 21 Pure Awareness and Lucid Dreaming

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A lucid dream is a dream in which you know that you are dreaming. There are different types of dream lucidity, and during the last three decades, the phenomenon of lucid dreaming has become more and more important for consciousness research.<sup>1</sup> The relationship between dream lucidity and pure awareness is complex and interesting. For example, there may be a relationship between passive dream lucidity and the phenomenology of witness consciousness (chapter 19). There is more than one kind of lucid dreaming. Sometimes we are only passively witnessing the dream story, like watching a movie, while all the time knowing that this is a dream. At other times, there is full-blown agency, and we can control what happens because different self-models lead to different dream experiences.<sup>2</sup> There are also prelucid states in which we already feel that “something is wrong here,” but we never realize that all of this is actually a dream because there are ways of being aware of the virtuality of one’s own state without recognizing it as the *type* of state that it is (chapter 28). Such prelucid phases do not involve conceptual awareness, but they may causally enable a transition to the phenomenon that we later describe as a “lucid dream.” The most important distinction, however, may be the one between those states in which lucidity is still tied to a knowing self, with the insight being of a propositional nature (called “dual meta-awareness”), and those in which an entirely nonpropositional and nonconceptual form of open monitoring has carried over into the dream state (called “nondual meta-awareness” or “clear

light dreaming"). In the first case, there is still someone having the insight; in the second case, there isn't.<sup>3</sup>

Lucid dreams seem to occur more frequently in the context of intensive meditation practice, such as during long retreats. Let us therefore look at some results from our first study. As you will see, the phenomenological landscape is rich, fascinating—and at times messy.

A first clear finding is that there is a clear phenomenological path from lucid dreaming into a full-absorption episode of pure awareness:

1272 [ . . . ] I was having a lucid dream. Suddenly the dream started to fall apart.

The dream images appeared, with long moments of emptiness in between. I started to panic and feel fear of letting go. It was like I kept on forgetting who I was. Just experiencing emptiness, and suddenly remembering again. Feeling afraid of letting go. After some struggle I finally relaxed into emptiness, and into not knowing. After experiencing it for who knows how long, I started waking up in my bed. I felt great afterward!

105 I was in the early stages of a lucid dream; lucidity came from flying upward.

The lucidity was so shocking that I had the experience of falling out of the dream, down into a space that was a vast, limitless, empty void but also filled completely with pure awareness. It was completely black, but filled with radiance. There were no sounds, sights, colors, or objects. I was not aware of having/being a body but could feel that I was also part of the limitless space filling it and expanding into it entirely. A feeling of deep peace, of both being the entire limitless space of awareness and being in the entire limitless space of awareness at the same time. A place or state completely filled with nothingness. I refer to it now as the lucid void. It felt like a state I could easily have fallen all the way out of, back into full wakefulness, but instead, I landed in a vast state of pure awareness on the way.

Second, the quality of wakeful presence during the dream state is not something that the dream self fabricates; it typically occurs spontaneously:

933 [ . . . ] I woke up in the night and noticed that I was still sleeping. I realized

that while I was sleeping and dreaming I was simultaneously wide awake. This lasted for a few minutes, at a guess. It was a very pleasant experience; it was accompanied by an inner smile. [ . . . ]

A third general characteristic is that in gradual transitions to pure awareness, there can be a quality of de-immersion that may relate to the aspects of "nonidentification," "witnessing," and "virtuality," as discussed in chapters 8, 19, and 28:

2973 During a nightmare I step out of the scene with the realization that all these images and stories are a product of my thinking—and I experienced an immediate silence, freedom, alertness, and clarity that went very deep. [. . .]

2774 [. . .] I was also in a similar state after lucid dreams, after they collapsed and I was simply there. There was an I-consciousness, a sense of duration, but no objects and no own body. This state was dark too, like in meditation. But once it was bathed in glistening white light. [. . .]

Interestingly, there is also a fourth observation, a phenomenological path leading from pure awareness into lucid dreaming. The transition can be reversible, and complex state transitions may apparently also include a temporary loss of dream lucidity, followed by its return. In dream research, this well-known phenomenon is called a “lucidity lapse”—and of course, this phenomenon is related to what every mindfulness meditator on her cushion experiences again and again, many thousands of times over a lifetime of meditating:

3058 My answers refer to what is known as “Basal Clarity”—pure awareness in the sleep state [. . .]. Luminous awareness. Lay down and almost immediately snapped into the Basal Clarity. A dream in the arctic. A lot of snow, ice, everything white, in it I already recognize the inherent radiation of consciousness. To my astonishment, the arctic is alive: fish and polar bears . . . I return into the dreamless Basal Clarity. It is bright, it is luminous. I hang snug in the brightness; it could stay like this forever. Dreams surface and fade away. No information nodes today, no exciting stories—just Being There. But a dream leads me unconsciously and insidiously away. [. . .] The memory activates a concatenation of memories and I become clear again. Centre myself again in the Basal Clarity. Enjoy luminous awareness. Later I wake myself up, become layer by layer more awake. [. . .]

2747 [. . .] 1st experience: before the beginning of a dream: My consciousness is completely clear, pure consciousness and nothing is there, absolutely nothing. Only darkness. I am completely present and pure awareness. Then suddenly the dream begins: I realize that I am sitting in a deck chair, a wooden one with a hanging canvas. Suddenly, about 25 m away from me, a light behind a frosted pane of glass goes on . . . etc. The dream begins. [. . .]

75 [. . .] as my consciousness returns to dream I nearly always perceive bubblelike images, each with a dream inside. As I am attracted to one, I enter the dream with full lucidity and do my dream practices in that state.

A fifth general observation is that there seems to be a direct phenomenological path from ordinary, *nonlucid* dreaming into states strongly resembling pure-awareness experiences:

3481 When I was younger, I dreamt that I wanted to open the lowest shelf of a very large cupboard in the living room, and the cupboard started falling on me. I realized I'm going to die as soon as the cupboard smashes me, when it would hit the floor. Instead, I was still alive, but I was not as my body—I was a presence in the room, being aware of that space, with all light entering the room (the dream was happening during the day, but there was just daylight). The presence did not have feelings (e.g., any positive or negative or happy or sad). It was constant and it didn't need any form of human expression. It was just there.

Sixth, in terms of vividness and intensity, the phenomenal character of pure awareness during an ongoing lucid dream resembles some aspects that also were experienced during periods of nondual awareness in the wake state (see chapters 26 and 27 for examples):

3171 [. . .] In lucid dreaming—vivid, energized, vibrant, euphoric, with visual imagery. [. . .]

Seventh, dream lucidity can exhibit the holistic and global character of witness consciousness (as investigated in chapter 19):

932 [. . .] I had a very strong experience of a lucid dream. I felt pure awareness watching (being aware of) myself dreaming . . . and there was some fluidity, hovering—between each other . . . how I dream. I also knew that I am also something “bigger, from outside and above,” watching myself how I am dreaming. It was such a strong and compelling feeling . . . as if I were inside and out as one . . .

Eighth, people who actively practice lucid dreaming often experience periods of pure awareness in phases of transition:

135 [. . .] I became lucid in a dream and remained lucid in the transition between one dream and another. That was the moment when I experienced pure awareness, and I realize that at the moment when this happened it was as if there had been a void of everything, as if all concept of time had disappeared, as if I had witnessed the crumbling and decomposition of what my mental senses were perceiving until I could no longer think or imagine, until I was no longer there without needing to be. As if there was a void not distinct from me. [. . .]

183 While practicing lucid dreaming I had the sensation of separating from my sleeping body and then moving forward through total emptiness. I could not see any image of my body or my surroundings. Just pure alive emptiness.

2352 I've had experiences of pure awareness right in the moment when I was becoming lucid in one of my dreams. For me it was really intoxicating and fulfilling, I felt like I was born again in the dream and was becoming aware of everything around me with a brand-new perspective that I never have when I'm awake. Great amazement at being conscious of everything, just becoming conscious is fabulous and exciting.

3536 I have tried to slide wakefully into a dream, and have experienced this awareness moment in the intermediate state between dream and reality.

Transition phases triggering the wakeful presence of pure awareness can also occur during exhaustion within contemplative practice, or at sleep onset:

2485 The experience [ . . . ] was almost dreamlike, but while I was still awake. I was very tired while doing vipassana meditation, and suddenly I was incredibly awake in an entirely different way than my usual experience.

2628 [ . . . ] during out-of-body and lucid dream states there is a different type of pure awareness, without thought but with infinite agency. And during reverie, often in the hypnagogic state before sleep, awareness can “sink” to a simple frequency/continuum that is the same essence it has been my entire life, unaffected by any of my experiences, memories, or stories.

A final, tenth discovery is that a variety of quite complex phenomenologies are also possible. For example, not only can a full-absorption episode of pure awareness spontaneously occur during the lucid-dream state, it can also be the result of deliberate contemplative practice *in* the lucid dream. This can then be followed by what dream researchers call a “false awakening” into a nonlucid dream, with the subject's autobiographical memory later appearing to be preserved across all stages:

1649 [ . . . ] The dream became lucid and clear, and I noticed that dream sequences were apparently repeating themselves, which helped me to wake up in the dream: It became crystal clear to me that I was sleeping and dreaming. I then remembered—in the dream—a friend's instruction not to take part in the activities in the lucid state, I sat down in the dream and existentially questioned everything I saw in the dream (“This is only a dream!”) and meditated in the dream. Everything disappeared: The people in the dream, buildings, my body, everything dissolved . . . what remained was pure undiluted attention,

deep black disembodied space, seemingly endless, . . . I was this space and this space was pure awareness. I awoke crystal clear in one room, this awakening felt absolutely concrete and real (but as I later realized, I was still in a dream!). In this state I could remember everything that had previously happened in the dream, the dissolving etc. I was in a room with a beautiful view of a meadow and a tree. I left the bed and sat down on a meditation cushion in the room and immersed myself in meditation. Then I left the room and went to a supermarket. On the way back to my apartment I heard unfathomably beautiful singing, sounds similar to whale song . . . I also saw a big light over a park. I went there. The park was flooded with light, many people were standing around the park and looking in . . . in the park sat beings that are hard to describe: human, androgynous bodies without genitals, with animal heads. These creatures were lying on the meadow or sitting in the trees, they emanated light and this fascinating singing. Shortly after that I woke up, this time for real, and I could remember everything down to the very last detail, the 1st dream, the lucid state, the pure awareness, the black endless space, the awakening in this room, these strange creatures . . .

All this gives you a flavor of the relationships between dream lucidity and minimal phenomenal experience (MPE), which are not at all easy to understand. Let me end the phenomenological section of this chapter by drawing your attention to one highly specific detail. In our study, a small category of experiential reports pointed to *mirror experiences* as a special context in which pure awareness can occur. To bring these together in the same place, I will present two experiential reports describing such experiences as occurring during a lucid dream, and two more that took place during the wake state. We begin with those starting from lucid dreaming:

1708 During a lucid dream I decided to look at myself in a mirror. What I experienced was, as far as I could tell, indiscernible from looking in a mirror while awake. Having such percepts while knowing that anything apparently “external” was actually a projection of this “internal” dream state was what I believe is meant by “pure awareness” in this survey, although I disagree with this description because it implies a hierarchy of conscious experience. The experience I am describing was not more or less “pure” than any other experience. However, the image in the dream mirror was not a mere reflection as we usually think of it. In that context the mirror surface was identical to the scene it seemed to reflect, so that it was more like a window than a mirror. And what was on the other side of the window? For a moment I wondered whether I was

looking at my wakeful self, who was looking not through a window as I was, but at a mirror surface reflection. This uncanny sense of being in two places at once (but from a first-person perspective) was noticed without considerable surprise, as if this was exactly what one would expect to happen while looking at a mirror in a lucid dream. And yet somehow, this was all profoundly puzzling. I turned to look at the environment and then back at the mirror. All of it appeared realistic under scrutiny, giving no hint that it was being rendered on the fly. Perhaps this was wishful thinking, and I could have found something amiss if only I had looked more carefully, but it was not apparent to me then.

81 [ . . . ] I am in a dream, fully lucid with the intention of finding another dream, so I create a mirror and start to enter it. It gets to the point where my feet are on the floor in one place, my body halfway through the mirror and the top part of me in this blackness in a state of nothingness. I am slowly dissolving into the void. I feel there are two places that dreamers call the void, the first is in the early stages of a wake-induced lucid dream when you drop or phase to a light sleep state and retain awareness of this state change. At this point it gets eerily quiet as the sense of hearing is the first to shut down and you can be in a darkness that feels like an open space and will often precede hypnagogic imagery. The second place is entered from within a lucid dream, and I term this the space between dreams. In the early days I would enter this space and quickly transit to a new dream; now I am able to spend time there and see it as a place of its own with potential for adventure. It is this second state that I am trying to describe. My first impressions of this space were from trying to change to a different dream and when for a few moments I find myself in this darkness and often with the feeling of not wanting to remain in there due to a vague sense of unease. Very quickly I would find myself in another dream, having passed through within a few seconds. Over time I started to wonder about this feeling and then started to associate the sensations with a place separate from normal dream space. In my thoughts this darkness or space between the dreams became a separate reality that I suspected I could explore if I had the skill. The void always seemed to be present and was a recurring event in most lucid dreams. Over a series of dreams, I had lot of entries into the void and found that if I just accepted being there I would remain for longer periods. In time I also started to lose the uneasiness that seemed to accompany me at first. The more time I spent in the void the more I seemed to lose any sense of self, and it got to the point where I felt I existed as pure awareness. In the void there is blackness that seems to be all around and has a presence, it is

not seen with eyes but experienced with a set of inner senses that combine to create the awareness. This awareness is very hard to define in normal terms. There is nothing to touch and I have nothing to touch with as there is no energy or dream body either. There is thought and full access to memory and the ability to leave to another dream if desired. I suspect what is happening is a shutdown of all sensory input and no recall of sensory data to construct a dream with. This is a shift to an inner sense and for me a new form of awareness that leaves me with a sense of wonder and more puzzles to try and solve. I think that when I am in the void, I am also a part of the void so exist for a few moments as pure thought. To be something with awareness and having shut off all contact with both the physical body and the energy or dream body is a state of wonder for me. I asked to meditate while in the void and had the following experience on transit to another dream. One dream goal is to meditate in the void, so I ask for this from within the dream and then imagine I close my dream eyes, start to relax my mind, and lose all thoughts. I am now gently spiraling in a 360-degree rotation like I am moving into a long tunnel. This is a pleasant motion with some movement, and I am enjoying it. I feel warm and safe, I am still moving forward, and a bright white light is expanding in my mind and I think it is the sun in the distance. I fall into this light and it is warm and infuses me with a nice energy that I am enjoying. At this point I lose all sense of self and let the motion and feelings carry on till they finish and place me into another dream. [ . . . ] I think the void is an area of mind that exists as a place of its own and can be accessed if desired and therefore can also be explored. In this mind space normal symbols may not be valid, so for now it may be an empty arena with the potential for adventure when I learn how to interact with whatever controls the state. [ . . . ]

And here are two phenomenological reports of pure awareness related to mirror practice, but this time originating in the wake state:

1926 [ . . . ] This happened while I stared into my own eyes in the reflection of a mirror. Like many, my first sense was that I was standing in front of a mirror looking into my own eyes/reflection, but keeping at it for about ten minutes there came this sense of being just aware of awareness. To clarify, yes, I stood in front of a mirror gazing at my reflection but the subjective sense was that what I saw in my reflection was devoid of any concepts. Looking into my own eyes in the mirror seemed synonymous with looking at a chess piece on the ground where there was no subject or object. There was only what was appearing.



3447 You sit or stand facing a mirror. During this time, you focus attention on your reflection and at the time you feel enough focus. You then turn attention to what your reflection is looking at. If successful, you find nothing. I experience a strong feeling of motion that feels like falling backward. The reflection in the mirror and the world around it gain clarity. The sensation of all awareness suddenly snapping into focus. It has a quality of infinity to it like a torus rotating around its central circle. This gives it a dual sensation of the awareness both falling into itself and constantly creating itself.

### Pure Awareness, Different Kinds of Lucidity, and the Embodied You-Turn

It appeared to a man as in a dream—it was a waking dream—that he became pregnant with Nothing like a woman with child, and in that Nothing God was born; He was the fruit of nothing.  
—Meister Eckhart (1260–1328), Sermon *Surrexit autem Saulus de terra*

Much recent research demonstrates that the human mind has the capacity to self-locate in more than one place at a time. Evidence from neurology, cognitive neuroscience, and ingenious experiments using virtual reality (VR) and robotic reembodiment show that “bilocation” is a genuine experience. For example, there are a number of phenomenal states in which you see yourself from the outside, such as “autosopic hallucinations” or visual out-of-body experiences.<sup>4</sup> Then there is “heautoscopy,” a rare neurological disorder first described in 1935 that involves a multimodal illusory experience characterized by the duplication of one’s own body and self. During classic heautoscopy, the patient sees a double of himself in extrapersonal space. Here, however, this double is not a mere image or visual hallucination, but something that the sense of self can jump into and out of. The locus of identity can be experienced as being in the position of the physical body and—sometimes simultaneously, or even in rapid alternation—in the position of the double. Not only may self-location and first-person visual perspective alternate between an embodied and a disembodied location, but, as the well-known Swiss neurologist Peter Brugger has demonstrated, it can even be difficult for individuals to decide where they are localized.<sup>5</sup>

As I explained in my book *The Ego Tunnel*, this fascinating stream of research is important if we want to understand what the simplest form of self-consciousness really is. Recently, innovative experiments have created an artificially induced body reduplication paradigm using a humanoid robot avatar and have demonstrated that healthy human beings are capable of mentally bilocating in two bodies at the same time (see figure 21.1).



**Figure 21.1**

Experimental setup: A participant wears a head-mounted display that provides a visual first-person perspective from the robot's eyes, a headset that provides stereo sound feedback from the robot's ears (microphone), and holds a joystick to control the robot's movement. The robot is strategically placed next to the participant at the beginning of the experiment to avoid the participant being in the robot's field of view. Mirrors are placed along the path so that the participant has a full view of the humanoid robot's body. The sketch shows the U-shaped path followed by the participant during the experiment, with the start and end positions and the location of the main elements of the setup. What this shows is that the consciously experienced sense of self can expand in space. (Figure courtesy of Laura Aymerich-Franch, caption adapted from Aymerich-Franch et al., 2016. The robot belongs to CNRS-AIST JRL.)

In an intriguing study conducted by Laura Aymerich-Franch and colleagues, you would first learn to identify with a robot by looking out of its camera-eyes, then look at your own robot body in a mirror, and then turn around to see your biological body from the outside, wearing VR goggles and controlling the robot with joysticks. Artificially induced own-body reduplications of this type can produce a feeling of bilocation and illusions similar to heautoscopy, but in healthy people. Interestingly, for some participants, an experience ensued in which the sense of self seemed to be “smeared” in phenomenal space between two candidate bodies. This observation is highly relevant in the context of MPE because it might relate to the many descriptions of something that is unbounded in the sense of having the potential to expand (chapters 4, 5, and 8) and to phenomenologies in which the “true self” (chapter 29) is described as a global experience of spacious awareness, of wakeful presence “everywhere and nowhere at the same time.” What you identify with and what you experience as “your” self is apparently something that can be contracted or uncontracted (chapter 8)—something that can, phenomenologically, be bound to a single body, but also something that disperses through the space of conscious experience. It is interesting to note that the underlying mechanisms involved in expanding the phenomenal self and shifting rapidly between viewpoints may be important in social contexts (e.g., as part of developing capacities for compassion and perspective-taking).<sup>6</sup>

What I like about this “robotic you-turn” experiment is that it is an embodied version of certain ancient meditation techniques in which, after you have stabilized attention on a perceptual object or even on pure awareness itself, you try to dissolve dual mindfulness into nondual mindfulness by simply trying to find the meditator. The phenomenological fact hidden in plain sight is that—if you gently and precisely turn attention back onto itself in this way and then let go completely—you do *not* find the meditator. My claim would be: Ultimately, the whole notion of a meditator is merely a figure of speech, and the actual phenomenology does not involve the meditator who is aware. In reality, there is no knowing self, no stable “epistemic agent” (chapter 25) at all. What you find is a diffuse sense of mental effort and a slightly indeterminate feeling of bodily location (often in the head), neither of which has anything to do with the phenomenal character of awareness itself.

Recall that in each chapter of this book, I am deliberately offering only some appetizers and a dessert because I want to encourage you to cook your own main course. Everybody can try this: Nonconceptually, in silence, without thought, you can directly ask yourself *who* it is that meditates, *what* exactly it is that is aware right now, *how* this is known—and *where* it is. Ancient traditions like Tibetan Buddhism make a strong phenomenological claim: There is nothing to be found except a nondual *space* of

wakefulness that is already aware. If you try and then let go, do you reach the same result? There are modern versions of this ancient technique,<sup>7</sup> and our robotic you-turn experiment shows that for some participants, the egoic sense of “knowing from here” can actually spread out in space. In the classical version, only attention moves; in the new version, two bodies are involved, one standing and one moving, one biological and one artificial. Here is an interesting research question for all of us: How exactly would one *integrate* attention- and motion-based, fully embodied versions of the you-turn into one another?

When investigating the relationship between lucid dreaming and MPE, it is important to bear in mind that there are multiple kinds of dream lucidity. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, there is the pre-lucid state, in which lucidity is beginning to dawn on us but we haven’t had the realization yet. Reality may already have taken on a dreamlike or symbolic quality, the motif of dreaming itself may occur in the dream, we may have the strong sense that we are just about to remember or discover something important—but it is still an ordinary dream because lucidity is lacking. Then there is passive observation while knowing that all of this is a dream. And sometimes we later see the emergence of plot control and the dream self’s discovery of agency: Now, the dream narrative can be controlled and the lucid dreamer can fly, move through walls, and do almost everything she desires. But recent research shows that dream plot control is not quite the same as the actual *insight* of lucidity.<sup>8</sup>

And then there is the strong form of cognitive lucidity as a new feature of the dream self who now can think and report about the fact that she has become fully aware of how all of this is only a dream. The thinking self is not only lucid but intellectually *knows* about her own state of mind and the nonveridicality of all perceptual experience. The epistemic agent model has been fully stabilized (chapter 25). Future research will have some tricky issues to resolve when teasing apart these kinds of dream lucidity. For example, there are good empirical reasons to infer that at least some experimental participants reported lucid dream content, even though all they ever did was stay awake and control vivid waking fantasies. We could also question whether all experimental participants possess mastery of the concept of “lucidity” (let alone all its possible versions).

This book is trying to lay the very first foundations for future empirical investigations of MPE, and in chapter 20, I sketched out what I personally would consider the most exciting first step: the Triple Triangulation Project. Lucid dreams may be part of an important second step in expanding this research strategy. As you may recall, my initial idea was to use the phenomenon of clear light sleep or witness consciousness during dreamless deep sleep as an entry point from which to triangulate the minimally

sufficient neural correlate of MPE. We first distinguished between type I episodes of full absorption, in which MPE is entered from the wake state (usually during periods of formal meditation practice), and type II episodes of full absorption, in which MPE spontaneously occurs during periods of non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep. Stable lucid dreams, in which the lucid dreamer has the ability to *deliberately* dissolve all the content of conscious experience and merge into a nondual state of pure awareness, would be the logical next step for the Triple Triangulation Project—if the phenomenon could be brought into sleep labs, which is certainly a technically demanding enterprise. Let us define type III episodes as full-absorption states that occur around the edges of lucid dreaming, such as before a lucid dream actually begins, or intermittently, or whenever a practitioner manages to *willfully* access MPE starting from the lucid-dream state. I have now presented statistical data and qualitative phenomenological evidence demonstrating that this is an absolutely real phenomenon: Reports #105, #183, #1274, #1649, #2747, #2774, #2973, and #3058 in our database provide us with first-person descriptions of different variants of the target state. The methodological relevance of lucid dreams used as a gateway into MPE—an ancient practice that was cultivated, for example, in Tibetan dream yoga<sup>9</sup>—consists in providing a third access route to help us home in on the physical and computational correlates of pure awareness.

If we now return to the experience of pure awareness as coemerging during ordinary wake states, this leads to a series of interesting new research questions: Is there something like “lucid waking”? If so, how does it relate to MPE? Is lucid waking an MPE mode of experience? How many kinds of “lucid waking” are there? For example, when focusing on contemplative phenomenology in the wake state, do we find analogs of the different kinds of lucidity briefly sketched above? But eventually we should also move from science and theory to actual practice: In the ordinary wake state, do you actually know that you are awake and conscious right now—and, if yes, *how* exactly do you know this? *What* exactly is it that you know? For the practitioner of mindfulness meditation, is there perhaps a phenomenological analog to “prelucid waking”? And how is all this related to the much more direct (and often shocking) phenomenology of nonconceptually realizing that all this is neither real *nor* unreal? I call this phenomenological kind of metaphysical indeterminacy the experience of “virtuality,” and we will return to this topic in chapter 28.



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# The Elephant and the Blind

The Experience of Pure Consciousness: Philosophy,  
Science, and 500+ Experiential Reports

By: Thomas Metzinger

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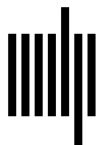
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