

Glossary of Terms

- **Abstract embodiment:** A phenomenological concept referring to the experience of embodying or identifying with a more abstract property, like space, wakefulness, or the nonconceptual experience of knowing. In this sense, pure awareness can sometimes be described as the experience of another kind of body (e.g., as spacious awareness or as awareness of a “wakefulness body”). This form of embodiment is constituted by an abstract level of our conscious self-model that has transcended or always already preceded the distinction between what is inside versus what is outside our physical body. See also **Nonegoic unit of identification, Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 24.
- **Absurdity management:** Any psychological coping strategy that aims to efficiently assimilate or simply deny our knowledge of impermanence and mortality, since otherwise it might function as a toxic form of self-knowledge, leading to a generalized “Sisyphean” quality of futility. See also **Existence bias, Immortality project, Mortality denial, Toxic self-knowledge**. See chapter 17.
- **Arousal:** A graded physical property of the human brain, depending on activation levels in five types of neurotransmitters in the ascending reticular activating system. Successful control of cortical arousal is necessary for tonic alertness and for generating the sleep/wake cycle. See also **Tonic alertness, Wakefulness**. See chapter 4.
- **Ataraxia (ἀταραξία):** A lucid and enduring state of “imperturbability,” “equanimity,” or “tranquility.” In ancient Greek philosophy, the term was first introduced by Democritus and Pyrrho, and then it was further developed by Epicurus and thinkers in the Stoic tradition. Cicero and Seneca used the Latin translation *tranquillitas animi* (tranquility of the soul). See chapter 14.
- **Augmented reality (AR):** A technological relative of virtual reality (VR), creating a multisensory and interactive experience of a transparent “real-world” environment where objects that are subjectively experienced as residing in the real world are

enhanced by computer-generated perceptual information. The technology of AR adds an environmental layer invisible to others outside it. It is conceivable that pure awareness itself—that is, the primordial model of an empty epistemic space—is what is augmented during ordinary conscious experience by superimposing a “real-world” environment via controlled online hallucination. See also **Phenomenology of virtuality, Translucency, Virtual reality (VR)**. See chapter 28.

- **Autobiographical self-model:** A dynamic process in the brain that allows us to organize future goals, memories, and abstract knowledge into a coherent biographical image of ourselves. This long-term self-model is not a little man in the head, but it can create the conscious experience of an abstract, knowing self that apparently remains the same across time. As such, the autobiographical self-model is a subpersonal process, but its content is sometimes reported as a “life history” or as if it were a “life narrative,” implying an illusory narrator or observer. See also **Epistemic agent model, Narrative self-deception, Phenomenal self-model, Transparent self-model**. See chapter 17.
- **Autoscopic hallucination:** A hallucinatory experience in which the person sees a double of himself or herself, from the usual visuospatial perspective and without disembodiment. See also **Heautoscopy, Out-of-body experience**. See chapter 21.
- **Bewusstseinskultur:** A practical philosophy of mind that involves three major elements: (1) the adoption of an ethical stance toward one’s own mental states; (2) the systematic cultivation of states assessed as valuable; (3) a continuous process of rational, evidence-based enculturation. See also **Normative phenomenology**. See the epilogue.
- **Bhava-taṇhā:** In Buddhism, the craving for existence. Arguably, this is one of the deepest causes of conscious suffering in humans, and probably in many other animals too. We therefore should avoid recreating it in conscious machines. See also **Existence bias, Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 17.
- **Bodiless body-experience:** A special case of the experience of spatiality that often begins with the body gradually disappearing from the phenomenal field. See also **Abstract embodiment**. See chapter 24.
- **C-fallacy:** A logical error consisting in falsely concluding that just because something *feels* like the very essence of consciousness, it is also a reliable indicator of actually *being* in touch with consciousness per se. As such, verbal reports referring to having experienced an “essence” or “pure consciousness in and of itself” do not imply or license any claims as to the actual existence of such an essence because all such claims need an independent epistemic justification. See also **E-fallacy**. See chapter 12.

- **Catuṣkoṭi:** The famous “four-cornered” negation, a term most frequently associated with the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna and also known as the “Tetralemma of Nagarjuna.” It consists of the rejection of a thesis, the rejection of its negation, the rejection of the conjunction of the thesis and the negation, and the rejection of the disjunction of the thesis and its negation. The full sequence can serve to “freeze the intellect” and serves as a logical procedure to make one realize emptiness. See chapter 14.
- **Clear light sleep:** The experience of pure consciousness during dreamless deep sleep. See also **Witness consciousness, Witnessing sleep.** See chapter 20.
- **Computational self-model:** An internal proxy for reality as a whole, a model that is neither a mere part of the egoic phenomenal self-model nor part of a world-model. Computationally, it is created by the organism predicting its own inner states (this is why it is a *self*-model and is physically realized through a part of one’s body), but according to conscious experience this model encompasses the environment, the body, and the knowing self. It underlies the totality of all conscious experiences and it is physically realized through a part of one’s body. Epistemic openness is a property created by the computational self-model as a whole, not by some sort of ego. Computationally, it is an integrated model of some of the organism’s own inner states; phenomenologically, an entire world appears. See also **Nondual knowing, Phenomenal self-model, Zero-person perspective.** See chapter 24.
- **Contemplative heroism:** Alluding to the work of Ernest Becker, the idea that some forms of contemplative practice may involve “living under the terms of the immortality project” as a strategy for dealing with impermanence and futility. An immortality project helps with death denial by involving a symbolic belief system that ensures that I can believe that my self is superior to physical reality, such as by trying to discover—or actually becoming part of—something eternal, something that can never die. See also **Absurdity management, Mortality denial, Narrative self-deception.** See chapter 17.
- **Contraction principle:** Phenomenality—“being conscious”—is a subpersonal property, a property of some complex brain state. The brains of neurotypical human beings misrepresent this property of phenomenality by contracting it into a transparent, conscious self-model that then forms the origin of a first-person perspective. From the first-person perspective, this creates the experience that *you* are conscious. See also **Nondual knowing, Phenomenal unit of identification, Transparent self-model.** See chapter 8.
- **Convergence principle:** The idea that some global modes of consciousness are actually closer to the scientific image of reality than others, in terms of their

underlying ontology and how the ongoing process of conscious experience itself is portrayed by them—and that minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) modes are special in precisely this regard. See also **High-convergence mode**, **Nondual knowing**, **Zero-person perspective**. See chapter 28.

- **Dharmakāya**: A Sanskrit term referring to the “truth body” or the true nature of the Buddha, which is sometimes viewed as a cosmic principle. Also used to describe the pure, nondual dimension of consciousness.
- **Diaphanousness**: Another term for phenomenal transparency. See also **Phenomenal transparency**. See chapter 28.
- **Dissociative identity disorder**: Formerly referred to as “multiple personality disorder,” a condition characterized by the maintenance of at least two distinct and relatively enduring personality modes and associated with severe memory lapses. The disorder pattern includes changing clusters of personality traits and multiple autobiographical self-models with which the individual identifies at any given time. See also **Narrative self-deception**, **Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 24.
- **Dolphin model of meditation**: According to this model, thought processes often cross the boundary between conscious and unconscious processing, in both directions, just as dolphins cross back and forth over the water surface. These transitions may be especially noticeable during meditation. Here, the idea is that a causal interaction between conscious and unconscious factors also might play a decisive role in understanding what happens during meditation. For example, unconscious processes may make certain experiential contents—sudden insights or minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) itself—appear as directly given, self-caused, or spontaneous. See chapter 10.
- **E-fallacy**: A logical error consisting in falsely concluding that a consciously experienced feeling of knowing is a reliable indicator of actually possessing knowledge. As such, verbal reports referring to a phenomenal signature of knowing or an intuitive sense of “just knowing” do not imply or license any theoretical claims about consciousness itself, the metaphysical nature of reality, the “true” self, and so on, because all such claims need an independent epistemic justification. See also **C-fallacy**. See chapter 7.
- **Ego dissolution**: A phenomenology that consists either in a temporary disappearance of the epistemic agent model or in its ceasing to function as a phenomenal unit of identification. Conscious experience without ownership, agency, cognitive self-reference, or self-location in time and space. See also **Nondual knowing**, **Zero-person perspective**. See chapter 25.

- **Epistemic agent model:** A special layer in the phenomenal self-model. It enables a cognitive system to form a strong first-person perspective and to represent itself as actively constructing and seeking new knowledge relations to the world and to itself. If the organism identifies with it, an epistemic agent model creates the experience of being a “knowing self.” See also **Contraction principle, Phenomenal self-model, Phenomenal unit of identification.** See chapter 25.
- **Epistemic openness:** A new phenomenological concept that refers to a specific form of being open to the world. It is the experience of openness related to knowledge, to the space of possibilities related to the acquisition of knowledge, and to the mere capacity for knowledge. It is related to the experience of wakefulness and clarity, and it can be seen as a nonmetaphysical, exclusively phenomenological reinterpretation of the traditional concept of “emptiness.” See also **Suchness.** See chapter 4.
- **Epistemic practice:** A practice that aims at insight, at the creation of knowledge. Just like philosophy and science, genuine meditation is an epistemic practice, but it aims at a very specific kind of knowledge that has nothing to do with words, concepts, or theories. See also **Convergence principle, Zero-person perspective.** See chapter 16.
- **Epistemic space:** An abstract concept used to describe a set of possible states or processes of knowing. Different conscious systems, such as human persons and nonhuman animals with different brains, may open very different spaces of knowing. If a given system has an internal model of its own epistemic space, it becomes conscious because it nonconceptually knows about its own capacity to know. This can include knowing about currently actualized states or processes of knowing unfolding within its integrated epistemic space, but it doesn’t have to. If a system has an explicit model of this space in and of itself, the phenomenal character of “pure awareness” appears. See also **Epistemic openness, Nondual knowing, Zero-person perspective.** See chapter 5.
- **Existence bias:** A physically embodied top-level preference, leading human beings to almost always opt for sustaining their own existence, even if doing so is not in their own best interest. It leads to a fundamental distortion in our model of reality and to a high-level cognitive bias in which our own mere existence is treated as evidence for the goodness of that existence. The existence bias also led to the evolution of religion because humans must deal with the additional challenge of “toxic self-knowledge” threatening the integrity of our self-model. See also **Absurdity management, Bhava-taṇhā, Toxic self-knowledge.** See chapter 17.
- **Existential ease:** A new phenomenological concept referring to the integrated experience of relaxation, lucid clarity, and a state of pure being. See chapter 1.

- **Fallacy of composition:** An informal fallacy that arises in natural language, when one falsely infers that something is true of the whole from the fact that it is true of some part of the whole. See also **Contraction principle**. See chapter 8.
- **Family resemblance:** A concept first introduced by Arthur Schopenhauer and later used by Ludwig Wittgenstein that advocates a nonessentialist view in which entities are defined not by common properties, but by a set of overlapping features and resulting similarities. From a phenomenological perspective, a full-absorption episode of pure awareness can be seen as an experiential prototype, and many of the experiences described in this book can be understood as referring to a family of states that resemble each other, some being more central than others. See the introduction.
- **Full-absorption episode:** An episode after which the phenomenal character of awareness itself is the only feature that can be reported. See also **MPE mode**, **MPE state**. See chapter 33.
- **Graviception:** The capacity of a biological organism to detect the Earth's gravitational field, which can have its own phenomenology (as in consciously feeling the body's own weight). In some contemplative states, one finds a distinct and contrasting quality of weightlessness. See chapter 24.
- **Groundless ground:** A Tibetan Buddhist concept (*gzhi'i gzhi med*) referring to the ground of all experience, which is not a metaphysical ground established by the usual sources of valid knowledge but rather is a matter of personally realized self-awareness. There are strong parallels in Western mysticism, and in some phenomenologies, pure awareness is the "foundationless foundation" of all experience. See also *Seelengrund*. See chapter 26.
- **Heautoscopy:** A rare neurological disorder characterized by a multimodal illusion in which one sees a double of oneself and has difficulty locating the self, either in the physical body or in the autoscopic body. See also **Autoscopic hallucination**, **Phenomenal unit of identification**, **Robotic reembodiment**. See chapter 21.
- **High-convergence mode:** A minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) mode in which the convergence principle is strongly expressed. Nondual awareness could be a high-convergence mode, a form of conscious experience that is suboptimal from a biological perspective but closer to our best scientific understanding of what the conscious brain really does and what the deeper causal structure of the world actually is. See also **Convergence principle**, **Nondual knowing**. See chapter 28.
- **Illusion of control:** A tendency to overestimate one's ability to control events, which may lead to the conscious experience of having control over random events, or hallucinating agency. Includes the idea that in meditation, the feeling

of having control over certain mental processes—such as successfully “noticing” and terminating a mind-wandering episode—may sometimes be based on an introspective illusion of control. See also **Epistemic agent model**. See chapter 32.

- **Immortality project:** According to Ernest Becker, a mode of mortality denial involving a symbolic belief system that allows one to believe one is superior to physical reality, to create meaning beyond one’s biological lifespan via a sense of legacy, and to identify with something larger than oneself or sustain belief in an afterlife. The optimal outcome is reduced death anxiety. See also **Absurdity management, Narrative self-deception, Toxic self-knowledge**. See chapter 17.
- **Lucid dream:** A type of dream in which the dreamer is aware that she is currently experiencing a dream and that its hallucinatory content is the result of an internal simulation. There are different levels of dream lucidity, and the plot can even be controlled by the dreamer in some cases. See chapters 20 and 21.
- **Lucidity lapse:** Transient loss of dream lucidity (e.g., during complex state transitions from pure consciousness to lucid dreaming, followed by its return). See chapter 21.
- **M-fallacy:** A faulty chain of reasoning where from the fact that something is subjectively experienced as self-caused or as uncaused, its metaphysical status is erroneously inferred. See also **C-fallacy** and **E-fallacy**. See chapter 10.
- **Minimal model explanation:** Explains a target phenomenon (like consciousness) via an idealized theoretical model that leaves out everything superfluous, isolating only the essential features and core causal factors that give rise to the target phenomenon we want to understand. See also **Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE), Triple triangulation project**. See note 1 in the introduction, and chapter 12.
- **Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE):** The simplest form of conscious experience. Pure awareness is one possible candidate for MPE.
- **Mortality denial:** Denial of one’s own mortality in the attempt to cope with feelings of futility, absurdity, or anxiety. Many religions are organized forms of mortality denial involving metaphysical belief systems. Many styles of meditation originated in exactly such belief systems. See also **Absurdity management, Contemplative heroism, Toxic self-knowledge**. See chapter 17.
- **MPE mode:** A global mode of conscious experience infused by an all-encompassing, unbounded, and nonegoic quality of awareness per se. See also **Clear light sleep, Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE), Nondual awareness, Witness consciousness**. See chapter 33.
- **MPE perennialism:** The philosophical thesis that MPE has a unique and distinct kind of phenomenal character that exists in all conscious humans (and perhaps

even in other animals), across all cultures, traditions, and historical epochs, albeit mostly unnoticed. See also **Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE)**, **Perennialism**. See chapter 26.

- **MPE state:** An episodic state carrying the specific qualitative character of minimal phenomenal experience (MPE), typically still attributed to an individual experiencing self. See also **Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE)**. See chapter 34.
- **Myth of cognitive agency:** The conventional belief that the paradigmatic case of conscious cognition is that of autonomous, self-controlled, and rational thought directed toward goals/tasks. See also **Epistemic agent model**, **Illusion of control**. See chapter 25.
- **Naive realism:** A theory in the philosophy of perception that the senses provide the perceiver with a direct awareness of mind-independent objects as they really are. The idea is also called “direct realism,” “perceptual realism,” or “common-sense realism.” There is a nonconceptual equivalent on the level of phenomenal experience itself: **Phenomenal transparency**. See chapter 28.
- **Narrative self-deception:** The process of mistakenly interpreting one’s own autobiographical self-model as if it were actually a narrative, and identifying with the person or entity that one believes to be the narrator. Narrative self-deception is mostly a subpersonal process that expands the organism’s predictive horizon and, in searching for thematic coherence, stabilizes the fabric of its long-term self-model, such as by creating a permanent inner monologue. Phenomenologically, it may create a fictitious entity that is in control and remains the same across time. See also **Epistemic agent model**. See chapters 16 and 17.
- **Nested *saṃsāra*:** A somewhat playful naturalistic reinterpretation of *saṃsāra*, the migration of the focus of experience from one phenomenal unit of identification to the next, as the process in which a self-organizing biological or mental system undergoes a succession of states leading to the impermanent functional embodiment of ever-new units of identification. Since *saṃsāra* takes place simultaneously on many levels, in life and in the mind, it is a nested process. See chapter 24.
- **Nondual awareness:** A global mode of conscious experience in the absence of subject/object duality. **Full-absorption episodes** are also characterized by nonduality. See also **High-convergence modes**, **Nondual knowing**, **Zero-person perspective**. See chapter 27.
- **Nondual knowing:** A conscious experience of perception and knowing that is no longer structured by a localized and “knowing” self represented by the brain as intentionally directed toward specific, external objects of knowledge. In some

cases, the transition from egoic knowing to the experience of nondual knowing turns into a state of full ego dissolution. See also **Ego dissolution**, **Epistemic agent model**, **Phenomenal signature of knowing**. See chapter 27.

- **Nonegoic reflexivity:** The phenomenal quality of pure consciousness that consists in being aware of itself, spontaneously, and completely nonconceptually, without any form of ownership or agency (e.g., in a deep and fully absorbed state of meditation). See **Nonegoic self-awareness**. See chapter 30.
- **Nonegoic self-awareness:** A special phenomenology of nondual insight that involves nonconceptually knowing that knowing is taking place; a nondual variant of meta-awareness (this time, awareness of the quality of awareness itself). The knowing is phenomenally experienced as selfless self-knowledge, and it can function as a nonegoic unit of identification. See also **Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 30.
- **Nonegoic signature of self-knowing:** An experiential quality of reflexive, nondual, selfless self-awareness that involves an inner dynamic in the phenomenal character of self-certainty. A continuous process of nonconceptually knowing that it knows itself. See also **Nonegoic self-awareness**. See chapter 30.
- **Nonegoic unit of identification:** A consciousness system with a nonegoic unit of identification is radically selfless, but it may still identify with a more abstract form of phenomenal character, like that of awareness itself or the quality of awareness nondually knowing itself. See also **Nonegoic self-awareness**, **Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 29.
- **Nonsensational awe:** A subtle but clearly noticeable form of bliss, sometimes described as an “invisible smile” or as a calm and entirely undramatic phenomenology of rapture and wonder. See chapter 1.
- **Normative phenomenology:** A set of norms that prescribe, on a phenomenological level, the course of a practitioner’s progress (i.e., what the various “stages” of meditation should entail). Many traditional systems explicitly state what “good” or “better” states of consciousness are. See also the discussion of *Bewusstseinskultur* in the epilogue. See chapter 2.
- **Noumenal awareness:** Another term for “phenomenology of transcendentality.” Possibly, pure awareness has epistemological and metaphysical dimensions that cannot be cleanly separated from the phenomenology. See also **Phenomenology of transcendentality**. See chapter 31.
- **Out-of-body experience:** The result of a deviant form of self-modeling where one has the feeling of being outside and often elevated above the physical body. See **Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapters 21 and 24.

- **Perennialism:** The philosophical thesis that a common core can be identified in all mystical experiences across all cultures and traditions, in all historical epochs, and in many social and religious contexts. See also **MPE perennialism**. See chapter 26.
- **Peripersonal space:** The region of space immediately surrounding our bodies in which objects can be grasped and manipulated. Our inner model of this space may help with early threat detection and response, such as via involuntary defensive or other self-preserving movements. The brain's representation of peripersonal space influences bodily self-consciousness and enables interaction with the environment, and may plausibly play a role in some forms of contemplative phenomenology. See also **Bodiless body-experience**. See chapter 11.
- **Personal and subpersonal levels of description:** Descriptions at the personal level refer to the person as a whole, to beliefs, desires, intentions, and so on, while descriptions at the subpersonal level refer to the constituent parts of the whole, for example to brain states like the neural correlate of minimal phenomenal experience (MPE). See chapter 32.
- **Phenomenal indeterminacy-blindness:** Being introspectively blind to phenomenal neither-nor-not-ness on the level of conscious experience, such as when body boundaries are *neither* well-defined *nor* explicitly experienced as absent. Sometimes there simply is no phenomenological fact of the matter, because an absence of representation is not the same as a representation of absence. "Indeterminacy blindness" means not being aware of being introspectively blind to phenomenal facts (e.g., being blind to the often indeterminate nature of one's phenomenal experience as such), and it can lead to confabulatory verbal reports. See **Narrative self-deception**, **Theory contamination**. See chapter 24.
- **Phenomenal signature of knowing:** The nonconceptual conscious experience of knowing, often experienced as an intuitive insight or a seemingly direct form of "seeing" the truth. Phenomenologically, uncontracted and nondual variants of the signature of knowing exist as well; see **Contraction principle**, **Nondual knowing**, **Nonegoic self-awareness**. See chapter 7.
- **Phenomenal signature of self-knowing:** The sense of being intimately familiar with oneself and of pure awareness knowing itself nonconceptually. See also **Nonegoic reflexivity**, **Nonegoic self-awareness**, **Nonegoic signature of self-knowing**. See chapter 30.
- **Phenomenal state space:** A mathematical model providing an abstract description of all possible configurations of a conscious system, where a position in the state space represents a particular type of state whose phenomenal properties are

described on multiple dimensions. Conscious experiences can be described as paths through state space, or categorized as belonging to certain regions within this space, or as being more or less close to each other, and so on. See chapter 16.

- **Phenomenal transparency:** A property of conscious mental representations in which only their content, not the process of content formation, is available for introspection, meaning that a representation cannot be experienced *as* a representation. A representation experienced *as* a representation is called “phenomenally opaque”; unconscious representations are neither transparent nor opaque. See also **Naive realism, Phenomenology of naive realism, Phenomenology of virtuality**. See chapter 28.
- **Phenomenal unit of identification:** Any experiential content that leads to phenomenological reports of the type “*I am this!*” or “*I was that!*” A conscious system that has no unit of identification has no phenomenology of identification and lacks self-consciousness. See also **Nonegoic unit of identification, Phenomenal self-model, Transparent self-model**. See chapter 24.
- **Phenomenological anchor:** A region in phenomenal space that describes similar types of conscious experience, which in turn form the inner anchor or reference point for certain verbal reports made in public, such as those about pure awareness. A phenomenological anchor assumes a relation of family resemblance connecting experiences but makes no further metaphysical assumptions, such as about the existence of a single phenomenological essence or some kind of intrinsic, disembodied, or context-independent quality of experience. See also **Phenomenal state space**. See chapter 26.
- **Phenomenal self-model (PSM):** A conscious, global, and multimodal representation of a biotic or postbiotic system as a whole. A PSM may include psychological and social features; if it is transparent, then it creates the phenomenology of selfhood. See also **Phenomenology of naive realism, Transparent self-model, Phenomenal unit of identification**.
- **Phenomenology of epistemic self-validation:** The phenomenal character of self-revelation, referring to the experiential quality of a conscious process or perceptual object presenting evidence for its own existence, or “disclosing” itself. See also **Suchness**. See chapter 9.
- **Phenomenology of metaphysical indeterminacy:** A form of conscious experience in which it is no longer the case that you experience things as either existing or not existing. See also **Lucid dream, Phenomenology of virtuality**. See chapter 28.
- **Phenomenology of naive realism:** The robust and irrefutable subjective experience of perceiving something that must be real (e.g., when directly perceiving

mind-independent objects as irrevocably real). See also **Phenomenal transparency**, **Naive realism**. See chapter 28.

- **Phenomenology of transcendentality:** The experience of an apparently self-evident fact: that pure consciousness is the timeless condition of possibility for all conscious experience, that the phenomenology of touching reality “in itself” somehow also reveals its true, fundamental nature. Often linked with the phenomenal character of timelessness and a sense of “always already.” See also **Noumenal awareness**. See chapter 31.
- **Phenomenology of virtuality:** A global form of experience in which objects are experienced as virtual because they appear as neither existent nor nonexistent but instead in “as if” mode, leading to a suspension of naive realism. See also **Naive realism**, **Phenomenal indeterminacy-blindness**, **Phenomenal transparency**. See chapter 28.
- **Prephilosophical mind/body problem:** The idea that the mind/body problem is hardwired into the human mind at a prephilosophical level because our phenomenal self-model possesses both spatial and nonspatial layers and the causal interaction between bodily and mental events cannot be introspectively experienced. This contingent phenomenological fact automatically creates dualistic, Cartesian intuitions (e.g., the “knowing self” could exist without the body) and makes humans feel the theoretical problem of psychophysical causality as part of their own experience. See also **Epistemic agent model**, **Narrative self-deception**, **Out-of-body experience**, **Phenomenal self-model**, **Phenomenological anchor**, **Theory contamination**. See chapter 22.
- **Principle of phenomenal correlates:** The assumption that all metaphysical theories (such as idealism, panpsychism, pantheism, solipsism, nihilism, or the existence of an ideal observer) correlate with a given altered state of consciousness or even a global mode of consciousness experience. The ontology of such altered states directly corresponds to the ontological assumptions made by the theory in question. Metaphysical theories and philosophical intuitions are nonconceptually mirrored in conscious models of reality that human beings have experienced, and perhaps even originated in them. See **Naive realism**, **Phenomenal state space**, **Phenomenological anchor**. See chapter 19.
- **Prosoché:** The practice of attention, a fundamental Stoic attitude of constant vigilance and presence of mind. A constant tension of the mind, and a continuous practice of self-awareness plus attention to the here and now. See chapter 14.
- **Reflexive MPE:** The experiential quality of pure awareness knowing itself; the timeless experience of nonegoic self-awareness, which is effortless and nonagentive

and can be spontaneously recognized; a quality of epistemic self-disclosure, as if the nonconceptual content were continuously “self-revealing” or as if an aspect of experience were making itself knowable, timelessly pointing to itself. See also **Nonegoic reflexivity**, **Nonegoic self-awareness**, **Nonegoic signature of self-knowing**. See chapter 30.

- **Rigpa**: In Tibetan Buddhism, a classical notion of pure awareness referring to the “knowing of the ground,” the spontaneous presence of primordial wakefulness, often symbolized by a mirror in which all phenomena of experience arise. *Rigpa* is characterized by qualities such as presence, openness, effortlessness, spontaneity, luminosity, original purity, expanse, clarity, and self-liberation (i.e., all attempts of the mind to “liberate” itself are futile because *rigpa*, its own true and fundamental nature, is already liberated). See chapters 5 and 10.
- **Robotic reembodiment**: Humanoid robotic avatars and avatars in virtual reality (VR) can be used to artificially manipulate the experience of embodiment and spatial self-location, making a human being identify with an artificial surrogate body. Some experimental setups can induce an identification with empty space, a sense of self that is smeared in space, or (in healthy humans) the sense of being in two different bodies at two locations at the same time, similar to the illusion of heautoscopy. See also **Heautoscopy**, **Out-of-body experience**, **Phenomenal unit of identification**. See chapter 21.
- **Sākṣin**: A classic term from Advaita Vedanta philosophy, referring to an entity that is different from the empirical individual: the single, immutable, and pure element of awareness in all knowing. Phenomenologically, it is also known as “witness consciousness,” denoting the experience of a passive and impersonal observer being present. See also **Witness consciousness**. See chapter 19.
- **Samadhi**: A classical concept referring to a peaceful state of complete, thoughtless equilibrium. It is the eighth and final level identified in the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, as well as the last of the eight elements of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism, and it has often been translated as “even intellect.” In our data, it is semantically related to the Low Complexity constraint. See the introduction.
- **Sat-chit-ananda**: A metaphysical concept perhaps best known from Vedanta philosophy, where it refers to the three main attributes of Brahman, the nonpersonal Absolute: “existence, consciousness, and bliss.” See the introduction.
- **Sciousness**: A term coined by the philosopher William James to draw attention to the fact that consciousness in and of itself is devoid of any duality of knower and known, rather being an “instant field of the present” lacking subject/object duality. See also **Nondual knowing**. See chapter 30.

- **Seelengrund:** An occidental concept (“ground of the soul”) introduced by Meister Eckhart into the theological, philosophical, and spiritual debates of the Middle Ages. Viewed as a phenomenological concept, *Seelengrund* shares many features with the phenomenology of fundamentality and nonreifiability, but also directly relates to unboundedness, the combination of emptiness and fullness, and global qualities like timelessness, presence, and nondual being. An important philosophical idea is that knowing God is actually a form of self-knowledge: The *Seelengrund* is that part of you where you can see God—and where God sees you. The phenomenologies of pure consciousness as a “groundless ground,” as described in the Eastern tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and by meditators in the Minimal Phenomenal Experience Project, are closely related to each other. See also **Groundless ground**. See chapter 26.
- **Self-certainty:** Here, an implicit, nonconceptual, embodied, and nonegoic form of self-knowledge that implies the phenomenal quality of “knowing that it knows.” See also **Phenomenal signature of self-knowing**. See chapter 30.
- **Single-embodiment constraint:** The fact that in all currently known conscious systems, the sensory and motor systems are physically integrated within the body of a single organism. See chapter 27.
- **Social embodiment:** The experience of merging with the phenomenal field and of one’s body boundaries dissolving can sometimes happen in the social domain, as an experience of becoming one with other embodied beings or as a transitory phase in the process of melting into space and transcending the distinction between inner and outer. See chapter 24.
- **Suchness:** “Just-as-it-is-ness,” the disclosedness of something; also called “thusness.” The experience of epistemic openness and nonconceptuality, like that applied to insentient perceptual objects themselves. Experiencing suchness involves the absence of any form of conceptual essence or intrinsic meaning, a quality of timelessness, the phenomenal character of self-disclosure and self-manifestation at the same time, and a phenomenology of epistemic self-validation. See also **Phenomenology of epistemic self-validation**. See chapter 9.
- **Temporal thickness:** A property of some generative models that enables an organism to predict the outcomes of actions in a more distant future, to successfully navigate the world and apply survival strategies in ever more intelligent ways. A model’s temporal thickness indicates its predictive depth (i.e., the temporal range of the prediction). Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) is temporally thin. See also **Timeless change**. See chapter 2.
- **Theory contamination:** Theoretical assumptions and beliefs that human beings physically embody via their self-model. Such assumptions (which can be

viewed as “priors,” statistical beliefs encoded in our brain) act as unconscious presuppositions and causally influence (i.e., “contaminate”) how we perceive, think, and verbalize things. In this way, they directly influence the flow of low-level information in our brains, and they also shape how our experiences are later described and interpreted. See also **Narrative self-deception**. See chapter 2.

- **Timeless change:** A phenomenological concept referring to the fact that the distinction between “timelessness” and “temporality” is not exclusive and exhaustive. Sometimes the atemporal phenomenal character of awareness itself can be quite explicit while being strongly overlaid or seamlessly integrated with different forms of time experience like nowness, duration, nonsimultaneity, succession, being in the past, or being expected in the future. See chapter 22.
- **Tonic alertness:** A graded functional property, linked to our cognitive capacities for sustained attention and orientation in time and space. It is the part of alertness that can be sustained in the absence of an external cue. Sometimes tonic alertness can be consciously experienced, and its distinct phenomenal character is intimately related to the experience of pure awareness. See also **Wakefulness**. See chapter 4.
- **Toxic self-knowledge:** Any form of knowledge or insight that threatens the biological fitness of an organism or its individual reproductive success. The explicit, self-conscious insight into one’s own mortality, the knowledge of one’s own inevitable death, is toxic in the sense that it is a threat to one’s mental integrity not only because of its demotivating potential, but also because it interferes with the coherence of one’s autobiographical self-model. An epistemic state that is toxic from a biological perspective may be seen as a healing or liberating form of knowledge or insight from a spiritual perspective. See also **Absurdity management, Contemplative heroism, Mortality denial**. See chapter 17.
- **Translucency:** A quality of experience in which the background becomes so dominant that what was previously in the foreground now becomes “see-through” or “diaphanous,” with some of its structural features gently fading or disappearing altogether. Minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) might be this background. See also **Augmented reality (AR), Nondual awareness, Phenomenology of virtuality**. See chapter 28.
- **Transparent self-model:** A self-model that is phenomenally transparent creates the realistic conscious experience of being someone and being in direct and immediate contact with oneself as a whole. The organism then *identifies* with whatever its current content is. See also **Phenomenal self-model, Phenomenal transparency, Phenomenal unit of identification**.

- **Triple Triangulation Project:** A proposed research strategy that may lead to the formulation of a first standard model for consciousness, because it would be focused on a minimal description that abstracts from all unnecessary details and excludes everything that is not causally necessary for phenomenal consciousness to emerge. The project would home in on the minimally sufficient neural correlate of minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) by comparing (1) pure awareness as entered from the wake state and as spontaneously occurring during clear light sleep, (2) pure awareness as entered from the wake state and from a lucid dream, and (3) pure awareness during clear light sleep and as entered from a lucid dream. See also **Minimal model explanation**. See chapter 20.
- **Turīya:** A term from the oldest Upanishads, the notion of a distinct fourth state of “pure” consciousness underlying the three common states of waking, dreaming, and dreamless deep sleep. See the introduction.
- **Ultimate origination:** As a phenomenological concept, the subjective experience of being the initiator or first cause of one’s own mental and physical actions, with a corresponding sense that one could have acted differently. A strong experience of free will. See chapter 32.
- **Virtual reality (VR):** Technological VR is experience depicted via the simulation of possible worlds and possible selves—and is arguably the best metaphor yet for biologically realized consciousness itself. One can view the content of consciousness as the content of a controlled online hallucination. See also **Augmented reality (AR)**. See chapter 28.
- **Wakefulness:** A graded phenomenal property that can be interpreted as nonconceptually representing tonic alertness. One *can* attend to it, but most people rarely do. See also **Tonic alertness**. See chapter 4.
- **Witness consciousness:** The experience of an uncontracted phenomenal signature of knowing, also known as *sākṣin*, a nonegoic “ideal observer.” It emerged as factor 12 in our first study. As a phenomenological concept, witness consciousness refers to the experience of a passive and impersonal observer being present, which is typically characterized by the nonegoic character of awareness itself, as well as by timelessness, a simplicity, and a global quality of choiceless awareness. The concept has a long tradition in Indian and Tibetan metaphysics; in a phenomenological reading, it obviously bears direct relevance to the idea of a minimal phenomenal experience (MPE) mode. See also **MPE mode**, *Sākṣin*. See chapter 17.
- **Witnessing sleep:** Another term for clear light sleep. See also **Clear light sleep**. See chapter 19.

- ***Ye shes***: The timeless awareness of primordial wakefulness, such as in Vajrayana Buddhism. See the introduction.
- **Zero-person perspective**: The absence of both a first-person and a third-person perspective in conscious experience. Full-absorption episodes of pure consciousness, as well as nonegoic self-awareness and global nondual states, are paradigmatic cases of being in a state involving the phenomenology of knowing from a zero-person perspective (OPP) in the absence of a knowing self. See also **Epistemic agent model**, **High-convergence mode**, **Nondual knowing**. See chapter 3.

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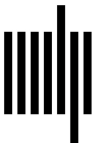
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