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The Neurophilosophy of Awakening: The Witnessing-Space as an Operative Bridge to Resolving the Mind-Body Problem

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Abstract

This contribution proposes an ontological interpretation of the "neurophilosophy of awakening" through the lens of enactive inference. Here, awakening is conceptualized not as an elusive, irreversible endgame found in classical Asian traditions, but as a process-oriented recognition of reality's fundamental structure. It marks the spiritual moment when consciousness becomes aware of itself—a transition into meta-awareness. Within the framework of *processual perspectivism*, the "Witnessing-Space" emerges as the central, metastable configuration of an enactive inference system. We describe awakening as a radical reorganization of this space: a transition from fragmented, affectively dysregulated patterns to an integrated perspective where the system discerns its own generative architecture. The Witnessing-Space thus serves as an operative hinge between process-ontological philosophy, empirical brain dynamics, and the existential dimensions of spiritual self-realization. Ultimately, we argue that the study of awakening provides a heuristic key to resolving the classical mind-body problem by exposing the generative mechanisms of phenomenal appearance.

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Public Significance Statement

For centuries, Western thought has been haunted by the "mind-body problem"—the profound sense of disconnection between our physical existence and our inner experience. This article bridges that divide by examining "awakening," the precise moment when consciousness becomes aware of its own creative activity. By introducing the concept of the "Witnessing-Space," this research demonstrates how the brain can reorganize itself to move from rigid, trauma-bound patterns toward a state of open, integrated awareness.

The implications extend far beyond philosophy; they offer a new foundation for understanding mental health and resilience. In an era often characterized by fragmentation and existential distress, this work suggests that our capacity for healing lies in reclaiming a "meta-perspective" on our own minds. Ultimately, the study provides a scientific and philosophical roadmap for human freedom, showing that we are not merely passive inhabitants of our biographies, but active architects of the meaning we find in the world.

Introduction: The Paradox of Awakening

When René Descartes sacrificed the unity of the world in favor of a clean cleavage between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, he laid the foundation for the philosophy of the modern subject. Yet, in doing so, he inflicted a wound upon Western thought that has remained unhealed for centuries. As Thomas Nagel (1974) poignantly observed, we seem categorically incapable of truly grasping the phenomenal experience of another—the "what it is like" to be a bat. While the interiority of the "Other" remains hermetically sealed to us, contemporary neuroscience attempts to solve the riddle of consciousness through increasingly granular naturalistic models. Yet, despite the rapid accumulation of empirical

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data, theory-building remains fractured by a deep ontological divide. We are faced with a chronic aporia: on one side, the attempt to dissolve experience entirely into physical mechanisms; on the other, the assertion of an irreducible "remainder" that evades all explanation. This dichotomy, however, is not a law of nature. It is the symptom of a style of thought that still lingers in the long shadow of Cartesianism—a philosophy that finds itself busy treating a disease it invented itself.

David Chalmers' diagnosis of the "Hard Problem" represents the modern apex of this deadlock. The question of why information processing should be accompanied by experience at all can be read as a contemporary revival of a dilemma recognized by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi at the close of the 18th century. Jacobi identified a performative contradiction at the heart of Kantian epistemology: to enter the system of transcendental philosophy, one requires the "thing-in-itself," yet once inside, the consistency of the internal world collapses the moment one clings to this external reference point. Structurally, this "Jacobi Dilemma" repeats wherever mind and world, the physical and the phenomenal, are hypostatized as separate entities between which a bridge must later be built.

In the current debate, this logic manifests in many representationalist readings of Predictive Processing. Here, the brain is often portrayed as an isolated inference machine operating in the darkness of the skull, painstakingly reconstructing an internal model of a world that is, in principle, "beyond." Within this framework, access to the world is reduced to a logical conclusion—a hypothesis whose validity the system can never verify from the outside. Skepticism is thus not merely a philosophical option but a structural consequence of the architecture itself. In this light, phenomenal properties inevitably appear as mysterious, functionally redundant additions—epiphenomena severed from the pulse of the actual world.

To resolve this stubborn aporia of the mind-body problem, a mere theoretical reinterpretation is insufficient. We must investigate the limit case where consciousness becomes aware of its own construction: spiritual awakening. In ordinary experience, the brain remains "opaque" to itself—we see the world, but we do not see the act of seeing. Awakening marks that state of epistemic transparency in which the system begins to witness itself as a process. The study of this state is therefore of systematic importance to the philosophy of mind: it serves as a heuristic key to exposing the seam between physics and phenomenon. Awakening is the spiritual moment in which enactive inference finally looks at its own cards.

Rather than searching for a sturdier bridge between two pre-separated substances, we begin with the ontology that brings this separation about in the first place. Drawing on the theory of enactive inference and the thermodynamics of open systems, we develop a *processual perspectivism*. Consciousness is understood here not as an additional ingredient to matter, but as the intrinsic perspective of a self-organizing, affectively regulated system. We conceptualize awakening not as a static "destination," but as a qualitative transformation of cognition itself.

The "Witnessing-Space" proposed here marks this emergent configuration. It is neither an inner observer nor a localizable module, but a metastable space of presence in which neural dynamics, bodily resonance, and symbolic meaning merge into an experience we call "Being-at-home-in-the-world." Our guiding question is: How can awakening be understood as a fundamental reorganization of this space—and what role do the brain's temporal organization, its critical dynamics, and the affective fine-tuning of its inference processes play in this transformation?

In the following, we first develop processual perspectivism as a neurophilosophical framework. We then outline how temporal binding mechanisms, dynamic models of time-coding, and current programs for the empirical testing of theories of consciousness can illuminate the neurodynamic foundation of the Witnessing-Space. Finally, we discuss awakening as a clinical-existential process of reorganization—within the horizons of healing, resilience, and non-dual experience—and sketch a research agenda in which the Witnessing-Space becomes tangible as the foundational space for spiritual experience and the operative resolution of the mind-body dualism.

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Philosophical Framework: Processual Perspectivism and Enactive Inference

Entering today's research landscape on the explanation of consciousness feels like stepping into a minefield of century-old border disputes. The classical debate is still dominated by the tacit assumption that the mental and the physical constitute two ontologically separate provinces—a pattern of thought that inevitably leads to the dead end of mediation and the search for a legitimate border crossing. The aforementioned Jacobi Dilemma marks the logical flipside of this thinking: whoever posits the subject and the world as strictly separate substances creates an epistemological exile. One attempts to build a bridge while simultaneously defining the shores so far apart that they can never touch. A "no-man's-land" emerges between the "world-in-itself" and the "world-for-us," in which the subject remains a prisoner of its own representations. This dilemma is no mere historical curiosity; it is the fundamental "birth defect" of any theory that conceives of the mind as an observer isolated from the body and the world, trapped in a hermetically sealed interior without genuine external contact.

This structure persists tenaciously in modern guises. In Chalmers' property dualism, for instance, consciousness appears as a fundamental but functionally enigmatic "substance" attached to the physical world like an appendage, yet without truly penetrating its causal closure. In certain interpretations of Predictive Processing, we encounter the mind as a lonely constructor—a hermetic inference machine designing models of a world that remains, in principle, "beyond" (Hohwy, 2013). In this view, phenomenality becomes either a mysterious luxury—a kind of cosmic ornament without real function—or is epistemically marginalized as a purely internal epiphenomenon. It is shadowboxing in the darkness of the skull, where the question of the reality of experience always remains hidden behind a veil of inferential probabilities. Every answer the system gives to the world remains a mere guess about a reality it never truly "touches."

At this juncture, a processual approach proposes a fundamental shift in perspective. It refuses to dissect reality into finished things and isolated properties. Instead, it begins with dynamic processes in which stabilities appear only temporarily, as metastable islands of order in a sea of change. In this view, living systems are not fixed objects later endowed with mental attributes. They are thermodynamically organized events that actively bring forth their own integrity through a continuous exchange with the environment. *Autopoiesis*—the term coined by Maturana and Varela (1980) for this organized self-maintenance—describes a system that unceasingly defines and renews itself in the very performance of its activity. Here, the "inside" is not a predefined container but the result of a dynamic boundary-drawing performed by life in its processual struggle against entropy. This act of self-preservation is not a static border but a living membrane. It is a functional closure amidst an energetic openness that does not isolate the organism from the world but first constitutes it as a meaningful actor within it.

The theory of enactivism radicalizes this thought: cognition is not a passive mirroring of a predetermined world but the active bringing forth—the "enacting"—of a lifeworld. Organisms enact their environment; through their sensory-motor activity, they generate the webs of meaning in which their own existence first makes sense. A cell does not "recognize" sugar as an objective chemical formula but as biological relevance for its continued existence. The notion of a merely receiving subject is as misleading here as the assumption of a fully determined, perspective-independent external world. Every cognitive situation is instead the result of a circular dance: the organism structures the world by acting within it, thereby exerting selection pressure on its own perception, while the world informs the organism through the resistances, pains, and resonances that this action encounters (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). Perception and action merge into an inseparable unity of being.

This process can be further specified through the philosophy of enactive inference (Leidig, 2025b). Inference here is not an abstract computational operation of a disembodied "mind-machine," but the basal, embodied attempt of a living system to stabilize its states within a viable range—the viability space. The system generates hypotheses about the causes of its sensations and acts to minimize threatening surprises or prediction errors (Friston, 2010). In this context, affect is not a

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

downstream feeling but the driving force of inference: it marks the existential relevance of the deviation. Neural dynamics, bodily processes, and environmental coupling merge into an inseparable loop in which predictions do not merely process information but regulate the integrity of the organism in real-time. Every prediction is thus an act of self-preservation, in which the organism weights its own viability against the uncertainties of the world.

Within this framework, consciousness can be understood as the specific way in which this inferential regulation is perspectivally organized. "Perspective" here means far more than just a subjective standpoint; it is a fundamental ontological structure, an achievement of organization. It is the manner in which a system draws the distinction between itself and the world in the act of inference and affectively weights meanings. A processual perspectivism conceives of consciousness as that intrinsic perspective in which the diverse, often contradictory dynamics of an organism converge into a view of world and self that is relevant to it (Sellars, 1997). Consciousness is the "inside" of living self-regulation—it is the phenomenon of what it feels like to be a system that actively struggles for its own continuation while generating meaning.

The question of the philosophy of consciousness thus shifts decisively. We no longer ask: "How is spirit added to the flesh?" but rather: "Under what dynamic conditions does an order arise in which world and self appear as a meaningful whole?" This order is not a momentary effect that suddenly "flashes up," but the way a highly complex, critical system organizes its own duration within a precarious field of possibilities (Tucker et al., 2025). Consciousness is the emergent quality of a self-organization operating at the threshold of instability—so-called criticality—and thereby becoming aware of its own conditions. It is the system mirroring itself in the act of becoming, using the difference between expectation and experience as a space of insight.

The Witnessing-Space we have conceptualized marks precisely this space of perspective. It is neither an inner theatre nor a homunculus, but a metastable configuration in a dynamic field—a node of relevance. Here, the enactive inference system bundles its bodily dynamics, its sensory couplings, and its narrative patterns into an experienced present (Leidig, 2025a). In this view, "awakening" is not the arrival of a new, mystical substance but a profound change in the style of this perspective-building. It is that spiritual moment when consciousness begins to witness itself as a process—a transition into a meta-consciousness that recognizes the rigid boundaries between observer and observed for what they are: necessary but fluid constructions of a living, processual architecture. Consciousness does not wake up *from* the world; it wakes up *within* its own activity. It recognizes the "clearing" in which it operates and transforms from the mere endurance of inference toward a conscious awareness of its own creative dynamics.

The Witnessing-Space in NEAS: The Architecture of a Perspectival Present

In the NEAS model (Leidig, 2025a), conscious experience never exists as mere content; it is always a deeply organized structure. The Witnessing-Space serves as the level of culmination—the plane where disparate procedural streams coalesce and order themselves into a stable perspective. We can conceive of this architecture as a fabric woven from four functional layers that mutually penetrate one another to form the "grammar" of our experience:

1. Affective Tonality: This layer represents the interoceptive "ground note," functioning as a kind of ontological grid or emotional resonance floor. It determines, in advance, whether the world is constructed as a habitable space of meaning or as hostile chaos. An individual whose system oscillates in a state of chronic fear or shame will perceive every incoming piece of information through this filter. In traumatized systems, this level often leads to a massive "allostatic overload": the brain is trapped in a permanent "combat mode," attempting to suppress supposed error signals from the body through cognitive effort, which results in profound energetic exhaustion.
2. Action Affordances: Inspired by James J. Gibson's ecological psychology (1979), we view the environment not as a collection of lifeless objects, but as a dynamic field of functional invitations. In this layer, a chair is not simply a configuration of matter; it is the immediate invitation to "sit."

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Perception is thus inseparably linked to agency; it is already a proactive draft of the future. When this level is disturbed—as in depression—the world loses its "invitational" character; affordances fade, and the surroundings freeze into a meaningless backdrop.

3. Narrative Gravity: This is the symbolic order that translates the fleeting succession of moments into a coherent biography. It provides the diachronic stability required to experience ourselves as identical over decades. However, this gravity can become an existential trap: if the system begins to mistake its traumatic or limiting stories for the sole, immutable reality, the subject becomes a prisoner of its own narrative. The Witnessing-Space allows us to witness the "story" as such, without being consumed by it.
4. Social Resonance: Humans are relational beings. In this layer, the "I" constitutes itself as part of a "We." Horizons of meaning are not formed in isolation but in resonance with collective myths, values, and expectations. Social embedding acts as a stabilizing factor, correcting and securing individual inference processes through intersubjective alignment.

Within this complex tapestry, the Witnessing-Space serves as the operative hinge of subjectivity. It is far more than a passive stage upon which information is presented; it is the dynamic process through which the system makes its own inferential activity transparent to itself. In the NEAS model, we define it as a *structural Master-Prior* (Leidig, 2025a). While semantic priors (Mechanism 1) clarify *what* we experience (e.g., "I am in danger"), this structural prior regulates *how* the system processes information fundamentally.

It optimizes inference through "Bayesian Binding": disparate, often contradictory data—including physical pain, emotional dissonance, and logical contradiction—are integrated into a broader field of awareness. Rather than being forced to violently harmonize or suppress these signals (which is metabolically expensive), the Witnessing-Space permits their mere co-presence. This immediately reduces allostatic pressure, as the system is no longer compelled to resolve every prediction error through an instantaneous alteration of the self-model.

Phenomenologically, this corresponds to a radical transition from the narrative flow of time (*nunc fluens*) to the synchronous presence of a *Nunc Stans* (standing now). In this state, the exhausting effort of narrative justification ("Why is this happening to me? Who am I now?") is replaced by a "witnessing resonance." Consciousness learns to stop identifying with fleeting contents and instead realizes itself as the space in which these contents appear. This conserves valuable metabolic energy: the Witnessing-Space acts as a "Chrono-Anchor," preventing temporal fragmentation and generating an antifragile stability. It is the "eye of the storm"—that point of stillness from which the flow of the world first becomes observable without the system drowning in the turbulence of events.

In this architecture, awakening denotes the transformation from merely suffering through a story to a clear awareness of the perspectival structure itself. It is the moment the system discerns its own architecture. In this process, the mind learns a fundamental lesson: it realizes it is not the waves on the pond—those fleeting thoughts and emotions—but the water itself. The water remains untouched in its essence, yet it is capable of transforming every disturbance, every thrown stone, and every turbulence into a new, vast pattern of order. This realization is not merely intellectual; it is a new mode of being that establishes the Witnessing-Space as the actual foundational space of spiritual freedom.

Neurodynamic Foundations: Temporal Binding, State Dynamics, and Empirical Markers

Within a consistently process-oriented framework, neural correlates are no longer misunderstood as static material foundations but are instead grasped as the highly dynamic conditions of possibility under which an enactive system can bring forth a stable yet flexible perspective on itself and the world (Leidig, 2025a, 2025b). The Witnessing-Space demands a neurobiological architecture capable of transforming disparate noise into a coherent horizon of meaning. To explicate this foundation, we rely on three complementary lines of research: (1)

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

mechanisms of temporal binding (Singer, 1999); (2) neural state dynamics (Buonomano, 2017); and (3) current programs for the empirical testing of theories of consciousness (Melloni et al., 2023).

Temporal Binding and the Neural Clearing (Heidegger/Singer)

In the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (1927/2006), the "Clearing" (*Lichtung*) denotes that open space of Being in which beings can appear in their unconcealment in the first place. The clearing is not a passive illumination of what is already present, but the fundamental "release" of a space where encounter and meaning become possible. It is that site of truth (*Aletheia*), understood as an active unconcealing that presupposes a protective openness. Wolf Singer provides—as a neurobiological echo to this fundamental question of Being—the dynamic mechanics: the functional unity of our conscious perception is generated not by anatomical convergence centers, but by precise temporal coordination (Singer, 1999). In this view, consciousness is not a static location but a resonant event of synchronization that first "lights up" a phenomenal world.

Neurobiologically, this process of "clearing" can be anchored in the highly specialized laminar architecture of the neocortex, particularly in the key role of Layer V pyramidal cells (Singer, 2021; Melloni et al., 2021). These cells act as ontological gating instances or "neural dipoles" that reconcile two worlds: through their apical dendrites in Layer I, they receive wide-ranging top-down signals representing our expectations, structural priors, and horizons of meaning—the "heavens" of our internal map. Simultaneously, through their basal dendrites, they take up the bottom-up error signals of the sensory periphery—the "earth" of immediate sensation. Gamma synchronization (30–80 Hz) is the operative mode of the clearing: it sets the beat for that coherent coupling that merges prediction and sensation into an unconcealed, holistic gestalt. When this biophysical dipole oscillates, a coincident activation occurs that transitions into a "burst mode"—the neural signal that world and model have become one in this moment.

This process represents the material instantiation of the Witnessing-Space. When temporal binding succeeds, it functions as the "dynamic glue" that unconceals disparate interoceptive impulses and exteroceptive stimuli as a coherent world for a perspective center. In traumatic states, however, this clearing collapses: synchronization fragments, the precise gating of Layer V cells fails, and the world disintegrates into disconnected fragments of stimuli. Phenomenologically, this leads to a loss of the "thickness" of experience; the clearing closes, and the system sinks into the neural darkness of uncoordinated dynamics, appearing clinically as emotional numbness or depersonalization.

Against this backdrop, awakening marks the re-entry into a stable, highly fluid coordination regime in which Being becomes aware of itself in the act of synchronization. It is the transition from mere inference to epistemic transparency: the system no longer perceives only the contents (the objects within the clearing) but witnesses the clearing itself—that sacred act of appearing that makes all experience possible. Meta-awareness recognizes that unconcealment is not a coincidental byproduct but the fundamental quality of a successful neural integration.

Time as State Dynamics: The Temporal Horizon (Buonomano)

While classical physics often treats time as an external parameter—as a series of isolated points on a line—Dean Buonomano directs our gaze away from the search for such artificial "clocks in the brain." Instead, he understands time as an intrinsic property of neural networks. In his model, the brain does not produce time as a separate product; it *is* time through its own dynamics. Temporal information is directly inscribed into the trajectories of neural activity (Buonomano & Maass, 2009; Buonomano, 2017). Since every state of a neural network is inseparably linked to its immediate past through physical constraints, the system functions as a kind of "Liquid State Machine."

To illustrate this, let us imagine the surface of a quiet pond: every stone thrown in creates ripple rings that spread, overlap, and form complex interference patterns. If we throw a second stone after a few seconds, it does not hit a smooth, history-less surface. It hits water that still carries the physical

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memory of the first impact in the form of decaying waves. The water acts here as a "reservoir," and its current pattern—the superposition and interference of all previous oscillations—encodes the entire history of the last moments. The brain operates in exactly this way: a sensory stimulus hits a network that is still "reverberating" from previous signals. The current state is never an isolated data point in a vacuum but carries the signature of its own history as an active presence. Buonomano speaks here of "population clocks": time is not counted but represented by the specific spatio-temporal activity pattern of an entire neuronal population.

This neurobiological "thickness of the present" is the biophysical equivalent of Henri Bergson's concept of durée (duration). For the organism, time is not a spatially decomposable sequence of discrete "now-points," but an interflowing of states that we experience phenomenologically as Husserlian retention (the echo of what has just passed) and protention (the anticipated foretaste of what is to come). Only this temporal horizon allows us to hear a melody not as a sum of isolated tones, but as a holistic gestalt, or to recognize an intention immediately in the fluid movement of an interlocutor. It is the system's ability to hold history as the context of the present.

Within the NEAS model, spiritual awakening marks a decisive transition in this time-space. In traumatic states or chronic affective dysregulation, this dynamics often freezes: the system loses its liquidity and gets caught in rigid, "frozen" trajectories. The water of the reservoir has metaphorically turned to ice; traumatic "echoes" dominate the surface so absolutely that new sensory stones can no longer generate fresh interference patterns. The system then no longer reacts to the living world but compulsively repeats the frozen patterns of the past.

Awakening here means the return to liquidity—the transition from deterministic loops to more flexible, richly branched paths in the neural state space. This transformation marks the gain of "dynamic sovereignty": the system gains the ability not only to mechanically undergo its own developmental paths but to actively navigate the topography of its experience. The widening of the Witnessing-Space leads to the system no longer being a slave to its historically grown attractors. Meta-awareness becomes the observer of the waves on the pond, recognizing that it is neither the stone nor the wave, but the water itself, which remains capable of integrating every impulse into a new order. Awakening is thus the liberation of neural dynamics from the fetters of automated reactions. It creates that "sacred interval" between stimulus and response in which true freedom is rooted—a freedom that does not lie outside of time but in the sovereign shaping of one's own temporal duration.

Empirical Markers and the Objectification of Witnessing (Melloni)

If we assert the Witnessing-Space as a fundamental neuro-existential architecture, it must not remain a purely theoretical postulate. In a science that increasingly demands hard data, the quality of witnessing must be reflected in measurable biophysical signals. A central mechanism for objectifying this space is precision weighting (Melloni et al., 2021; Friston et al., 2017). Within enactive inference, precision describes the statistical confidence a system places in its own error signals.

This finely-tuned weighting leads to a phenomenal and neurodynamic phenomenon we call the Quiet Neural Background (QNB) within the NEAS framework. The QNB is not a state of absolute void or consciousness-theoretical nihilism, but a state of reduced allostatic load coupled with maximal integrative capacity. Instead of actively fighting neural noise through metabolically expensive suppression—a process that often resembles a desperate struggle against a hydra—the QNB transforms neural topography.

To visualize this, imagine the acoustics of an ancient amphitheater: while in a noisy marketplace every voice must scream to be heard above the cacophony (high allostatic load), the precise geometry of the theater allows even a whisper to fill the entire space. The silence of the background here is not an absence of sound, but that structural resonance capacity that frees the system from wasting energy on mere noise defense. A stable Witnessing-Space weights signals so efficiently that the "background noise" of the nervous system drops drastically, while the integration of truly significant information paradoxically increases. This "quiet background" is the necessary neurobiological resonance floor for

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

meta-awareness: only when the permanent background noise of self-justification and fear subsides does the system become capable of witnessing its own modeling activity as a fluid process, rather than losing itself in the contents.

The methodical validation of these theses is found in the groundbreaking work of Lucia Melloni. In so-called "adversarial collaborations" (Melloni et al., 2023), competing theories of consciousness—such as Global Neuronal Workspace (GNW) and Integrated Information Theory (IIT)—are directly tested against each other in mutually agreed experiments to minimize ideological distortion. For the Witnessing-Space, this program provides the gold standard: today we can draw on markers such as large-scale synchrony, effective connectivity, and complex measures of criticality.

A particularly valid and promising marker is the Lempel-Ziv complexity (LZc) of neural time series. This measures the algorithmic "richness" of the brain state—how unpredictable and thus information-saturated the neural pattern is (Schartner et al., 2017). Clinical studies have shown that LZc not only reliably distinguishes between consciousness and unconsciousness but can also map the "depth" and "breadth" of extraordinary states of consciousness. It functions, in a sense, as a mathematical barometer for the opening of the Witnessing-Space.

In contrast, a collapsed or traumatized Witnessing-Space can be described phenomenologically as Angustia (constriction): the subject loses its perspective and gets caught in a "biographical gravity" that keeps the system trapped in narrow, painful attractors. Neurodynamically, this Angustia corresponds to a drastic reduction in complexity; the system stereotypically repeats the same defensive trajectories, unable to enter the freedom of new inference paths. Awakening, against this background, can be understood as a measurable shift in network harmony, where precision weighting enables higher "epistemic transparency" (Melloni et al., 2021). This means the system not only sees what it sees but increasingly witnesses how it sees. Thus, the neurophilosophy of awakening moves away from vague metaphysics toward a testable science of perspective formation. The Witnessing-Space becomes tangible as that metastable configuration in which the brain operates at the "edge of criticality"—a state of maximal flexibility in which it realizes its own operative freedom and spiritual experiences become comprehensible as natural functions of a highly developed self-organization.

Awakening as a Shift in Perspective: Healing, Resilience, and Spiritual Opening

In the light of the Witnessing-Space, awakening can be understood as a specific type of perspective shift. This refers not merely to the physiological transition from sleep to wakefulness, but to a fundamental change in the way a living organism perspectivally organizes itself and its lifeworld (Leidig, 2025a, 2025b). In this view, awakening is a profound reconfiguration of the Witnessing-Space: a transition, often stretched over years, from states of constriction—in which affective dysregulation, rigid prediction loops, or traumatic imprints narrow the gaze—to configurations where a more flexible, integrated perspective resonant with the environment becomes possible. Awakening here means no longer merely enduring one's own perspectival grammar, but witnessing it as a plastic field of unfolding.

Healing as a Reorganization of the Witnessing-Space

The clinical dimension of awakening becomes tangible in the NEAS context where the previously described *Angustia* dominates experience. In traumatic or chronically burdened states, the processual nature of the Witnessing-Space freezes into a rigid, often hopeless geometry—a kind of existential claustrophobia where every thought and sensation is inevitably channeled into the same ruts of pain. Here we encounter an existential form of "biographical gravity": the force described in the theoretical section acts as an active curvature of the space of possibility. Much as a massive object warps spacetime, traumatic memories inevitably pull every new perception into their orbit. Every new piece of information, every encounter, and every fleeting moment of potential joy is so massively distorted by the extremely strong priors of the past that they inevitably confirm the old model of

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threat, lack, or powerlessness. The system "over-fits," as it were, to the catastrophes of the past, whereby the world loses its diachronic depth and its novelty; the future becomes a mere, painful copy of yesterday. A state of epistemic exhaustion arises in which genuine surprises—those vital prediction errors that make learning possible—disappear into the black hole of one's own history. Healing in this framework means nothing less than the methodical overcoming of this predictive stasis and the restoration of an adaptive openness toward the world.

In the practice of clinical transformation—such as trauma-sensitive bodywork, depth psychology, or existential counseling—the process is not primarily aimed at the mere "deletion" of burdensome content, as these are often deeply inscribed into the neural architecture. Rather, it is about the restoration of neuronal liquidity. Healing here is the return to healthy criticality: a state in which the brain is once again flexible enough to integrate information instead of defensively warding it off or pressing it into rigid schemas. Therapeutically, this is achieved through a gradual loosening of identification. A paradigmatic approach is "parts work" (as in the Internal Family Systems model; Schwartz, 2021): as the subject learns to witness the "Inner Critic" or the "Wounded Child" as transient, energetic patterns within the Witnessing-Space, the monolithic weight of suffering breaks open.

Phenomenologically, a decisive shift takes place: the individual no longer experiences themselves as the pain, but as that vast, supportive space in which the pain appears, is allowed to pulsate, and finally passes away. This meta-awareness functions as a diachronic relief and strikes a breach in the predictive cage of the past. It allows the system to once again risk a prediction error—that is, to allow information that contradicts the old trauma model and enables a genuine reassessment of reality. Neurodynamically, this corresponds to a decoupling from the compulsive attractors of trauma and a re-stabilization of the Default Mode Network in a state of higher flexibility and functionality (Kalisch et al., 2015). Healing in the sense of awakening is thus the liberation of the Witnessing-Space from the Angustia of the past for the creative curiosity of a living present that is no longer merely the compulsive repetition of the same.

Awakening, Resilience, and Meaning

In the NEAS model, resilience appears not as a passive return to a previous state (rebound), but as an active capacity for the creative reorganization of the entire Witnessing-Space. In enactive logic, it is about restructuring the system under massive pressure so that a viable horizon of meaning is not only preserved but—often under pain and from the ruins of old certainties—created entirely anew (Leidig, 2025b). In severe existential crises—whether through grave illness, the loss of loved ones, or radical biographical ruptures—the habitual perspective space is fundamentally shaken. We speak here of an "ontological shock": those stabilizing prediction models (priors) about the world as a safe place and the self as a competent actor collapse. The future appears in this moment not as a space of planning, but as a closed wall or threatening chaos.

Resilience here means the ability to develop a new perspectival order precisely in this moment of maximal instability. What has been experienced is no longer felt as purely destructive loss, but as a catalytic turning point for radical self-knowledge. This process resembles an "antifragile" transformation in the sense of Nassim Taleb (2013): the system does not simply emerge unscathed from the disturbance, but it grows because of it, reaching a higher level of functional integration. The collapse of old identity patterns (such as the narrative self-draft as a "healthy, successful professional") paradoxically opens a fertile void in which the Witnessing-Space becomes felt as a fundamental, enduring instance for the first time. Awakening, in this context, is that precise movement in which a transformed horizon of meaning is not only thought abstractly but actually anchored bodily and affectively within the Witnessing-Space. Phenomenologically, this describes the qualitative transition from a merely mechanical, often alienated "functioning" to a deeply felt sense of existential significance and connectedness.

The neuro-existential architecture shifts its entire weighting: where defensive patterns of avoidance and the reduction of complexity previously dominated, a space for resonance and the

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

integration of contradictions now arises. The Witnessing-Space activates the so-called "Logos-Vector"—a directed force of meaning that points beyond mere biological self-preservation. Drawing on Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, we understand the Logos-Vector as that "will to meaning" that stabilizes the system even under extreme conditions of suffering. While the Witnessing-Space provides the synchronous breadth of awareness—the space in which pain may be—the Logos-Vector functions as the diachronic arrow directing action toward a meaningful "what for."

This process radically reduces the existential uncertainty of the system by embedding suffering into a larger context of meaning. It is neurobiologically and metabolically far more efficient to integrate pain as part of a significant growth model than to have to fight it permanently as unforeseen noise. Meaning acts here as an organizing principle that minimizes the system's free energy. Instead of seeing the subject as a passive victim of blind fate or biological accidents, the Witnessing-Space increasingly understands itself in this spiritual moment as an active co-shaper of a lifeworld. This remains resistant and often painful, but is once again experienced as habitable, understandable, and deeply meaningful (Leidig, 2025b). The individual thus awakens to their own authorship in the midst of the crisis. They recognize that they possess the freedom to oppose the experienced entropy with a wise order of their own—a realization often described as the actual "gift" of awakening in distress, forming the basis for post-traumatic growth.

Non-Dual Perspectives and Awakening as Meta-Awareness

A special and radical form of perspective shift lies in so-called non-dual and contemplative modes of experience. While many Asian traditions describe awakening as a final, irreversible state of "non-return" (*Anagami*), we propose a decidedly processual interpretation within the framework of NEAS. Awakening is not understood here as arrival at a metaphysical terminal station, but as the discovery of a meta-awareness within the Witnessing-Space.

This meta-awareness does not represent an additional entity or an "inner homunculus," but marks a qualitative change in the style of inference: the system stops mistaking its own prediction models for "reality" (epistemic opacity) and begins to witness the process of modeling itself (Metzinger, 2003). In neurophilosophical terminology, we describe this as the attainment of full epistemic transparency: the brain "discerns" its own constructive mechanisms in real-time.

Normally, our mental representations are "invisible" to us; we do not see the model, but we see through the model directly at the supposedly objective world. Awakening means that this automatic process of objectification is interrupted. It is as if one no longer merely looks through a window at the world, but simultaneously witnesses the glass, its quality, and the act of seeing itself. It is that spiritual moment when consciousness begins to become conscious of itself—not as another observable object in the world, but as the processual space in which world and self first appear together. This form of "processual self-transparency" frees the system from naive identification with the contents of the mind.

The enactive inference system "awakens," as it were, within its own activity: it recognizes the fundamental structure of reality—its relational, fluid, and ultimately constructive (empty) nature—immediately and performatively. Phenomenologically, this leads to a radical shift in perspective, where identification with the narrow, often threatened self-model loosens. The self is no longer experienced as a monolithic, immutable core, but as a transparent, diachronic stability within the Witnessing-Space. The boundary between "inside" and "outside" loses its ontological hardness and frozen certainty; the system experiences itself less as an isolated center of control and more as a pulsating, resonant node in an infinite web of relations (Lutz et al., 2007; Leidig, 2025a).

Neurodynamically, such states can be interpreted as markers of a profound reconfiguration in which the ego-centered perspective of the Default Mode Network (DMN) and the associated "narrative gravity"—that permanent compulsion to refer experiences to a stable self-image—recede significantly into the background (Brewer et al., 2011; Garrison et al., 2015). The system experiences a "narrative relief": when the constant justification and defense of the self-model subside, enormous energetic resources are freed. However, this awakening is not a "possession" that one acquires once

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and then holds statically. It is a metastable configuration of the Witnessing-Space that must be continuously cultivated and stabilized through daily practice (habitualization) like a fragile balance at the edge of criticality.

In this sense, spiritual awakening is the extreme point of a continuum where consciousness learns to understand itself as the conditional space of its experiences—a processual recognition that transforms the Witnessing-Space from the ground up and releases that "clearing" (Aletheia) in which Being shines forth in its unconcealment. Thus, it becomes clear that awakening can be described throughout as a transformation process within the Witnessing-Space—a path from constriction to breadth, from identification to awareness (Leidig, 2025a, 2025b). Meta-awareness recognizes that the supposedly solid walls of the self are merely high-frequency neurodynamic patterns that lose significance in the silence of the Witnessing-Space. From a neurophilosophical perspective, this leads directly to those final consequences concerning the "Hard Problem," the nature of the self, and the future direction of theories of consciousness within a processual ontology.

Neurophilosophical Consequences: The Hard Problem, the Self, and the Future of Consciousness Theories

The preceding considerations regarding the architecture of the Witnessing-Space and the dynamics of awakening can be distilled into three guiding neurophilosophical questions, marking the transition from a static philosophy of things to a dynamic science of processes. First: What happens to the so-called "Hard Problem" of consciousness when we no longer view it as a mysterious ontological ingredient, but rather as the intrinsic and indispensable perspectival formation of a thermodynamically open, enactive system? Second: How is our understanding of personal identity transformed when the self is no longer situated in an immutable substance, but in the diachronic stability and coherence of a self-organizing Witnessing-Space? And third: What structure must future research programs adopt to empirically map the fleeting, processual quality of awakening such that the phenomenal depth of experience is not sacrificed to purely reductionist analysis (Leidig, 2025a, 2025b; Melloni et al., 2023)?

These questions touch the very core of how we locate our own existence, our psychological vulnerability, and our spiritual capacities in a world increasingly shaped by technology. Clarifying these points is far more than an academic exercise; it challenges us to find a language that honors the biophysical reality of our neural dynamics without denying the existential force and creative freedom of conscious being. The Witnessing-Space functions here as the necessary architectural framework within which this reconciliation of empiricism and phenomenology can occur.

The Hard Problem as an Artifact of Substance Ontology

In classical philosophy of mind, the "Hard Problem" (Chalmers, 1996) appears as an insurmountable wall: if we posit the physical world as a collection of lifeless objects and experience as a separate, purely phenomenal property, the question of their mediation becomes an insoluble metaphysical burden. However, our thesis is that this dilemma is not a law of nature in cognitive science, but the result of a deep-seated categorical misstep. It marks the modern return of the Jacobi Dilemma: whoever conceptually separates dynamics and perspective in advance—by defining matter as "extended" (*res extensa*) and mind as "thinking" (*res cogitans*)—must not be surprised if they cannot later coherently reunite them through artificial "psychophysical bridge laws." This ontological split robs matter of its inherent activity and mind of its bodily grounding, creating an unbridgeable hiatus that can only be masked by postulating mysterious additional factors.

At this juncture, the investigation of the spiritual goal of awakening proves to be the decisive heuristic for a fundamental reorientation. The mind-body problem remains insoluble in a "sleeping" system that is unreflectively identified with its contents, for such a system cannot discern its own generative mode of operation; it remains "opaque" to itself and mistakes the results of inference for an independently given objective world. Only in the act of awakening, when meta-awareness learns

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to effectively look over the brain's shoulder during its constructive labor, does the artificial separation between body and soul performatively collapse. We study the extreme case here to understand the normal form of the mind: just as astrophysics fully grasped the nature of gravity only by investigating the singularity near black holes, the architecture of awakening reveals the operative seam between physics and phenomenon. Awakening is the experimental laboratory of subjectivity, in which the illusion of a substantial separation is abandoned in favor of a processual unity. The study of awakening thus provides the phenomenal evidence that the psychophysical split is not an ontological fact, but the result of a specific, naive style of inference that does not yet witness its own modeling as such.

Building on the ontology of existential care (Seinsvorsorge) developed here, we no longer conceive of consciousness as a mysterious "added value," but as the form in which self-world regulation becomes immediately present to the system itself (Friston, 2010). For a system struggling thermodynamically for its integrity, experience is not neutral monitoring, but an evaluative act. The "what-it-is-like" (qualia) is thus the phenomenal signature of regulatory capacity—the way in which the metabolic urgency and existential necessity of life "shine forth" phenomenally within an organism. Qualia are not the problem, but the navigational instrument with which the system maps its own viability space. The Witnessing-Space sharpens this perspective by defining experience as the operational clearing of the inference system. The explanatory gap closes not through a new discovery within the old system, but through a radical revision of ontology that describes the system and its environment as an inseparable, processual whole.

The Self as Diachronic Stability of the Witnessing-Space

The fundamental concept of the "self" also undergoes a radical revision within this framework. Instead of seeking a monolithic ego or a localizable control instance (*ego-center*) in the brain (Metzinger, 2003), processual perspectivism suggests understanding the self as the diachronic stability within the space of perspectives. In this view, the self is not a substance, not an immutable metaphysical core, and certainly not a "thing" among other physical things. Rather, it is a recurring, highly complex pattern—the "recognizability" of certain configurations in the Witnessing-Space over time (James, 1890/1950; Leidig, 2025b).

One can compare this self-phenomenon to a melody: a melody does not consist of a single, static tone that remains unchanged. Each of its tones is fleeting and passes away the moment it sounds. Nevertheless, we identify the melody as a coherent unit because its diachronic structure, its specific rhythm, and its harmonic recurrence establish a form of identity. The self thus resembles less a solid rock in the surf that defies the flow of time, and more the fluid yet gestalt-giving theme of a symphony that proves itself as the same throughout all variations. Identity here is not the result of rigidity, but the outcome of a continuous, resonant integration of change.

In the architecture of the NEAS model, the self forms the contour of an inner landscape whose topography is shaped by a specific "narrative gravity." Just as we recognize a physical landscape by the characteristic arrangement of its valleys, ridges, and horizons, we identify ourselves by the persistent way our Witnessing-Space bundles affective tones, interoceptive echoes, biographical fragments, and social mirrors. This landscape is by no means static; it is stabilized by the diachronic recurrence of certain predictive styles. In traumatically narrowed configurations, a steep, inaccessible horizon of guilt or an omnipresent, dark atmosphere of threat may dominate, coloring every incoming piece of information in advance. Here, the self becomes an imprisonment in a frozen, inhospitable topography where every prediction error is experienced as an existential shock.

In awakened configurations, however, this space widens into a perspective where connectedness is experienced as a supportive ground and freedom not as a threatening deviation, but as a responsible and creative possibility (Leidig, 2025b). The self functions here as the dynamic boundary at which the system continuously reconciles its own history with the demands and opportunities of the living present. It is the organism's ability to maintain a "sense of selfhood" despite the constant flow of states, one that is flexible enough to integrate new experiences without collapsing.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

Awakening in this sense does not mean looking behind a supposed curtain of deception to "find" a "true," hidden subject that waits like an immutable relic for its discovery. Rather, it marks that moment of clarity in which consciousness discerns the processual structure of the Witnessing-Space as a whole. Meta-awareness allows the system to witness its own "beaten paths" of meaning—those automated, often painful patterns of self-modeling that we mistook for unalterable facts for years—for the first time as such. Through this precise witnessing, biographical gravity loses its compelling, often paralyzing power.

The individual steps out of the passive endurance of their history and initiates an act of dynamic sovereignty. In this state, they learn to actively reshape the topography of their experience—they become the architect of their own world of meaning. The identity of the self thus lies not in the substance of an "I-core," but in the processual coherence of an ongoing transformation and integration process. We are not the inhabitants or even the prisoners of the Witnessing-Space; we are the space itself, which in an eternal becoming learns to configure itself in ever more open, wise, and compassionate ways. Identity thus becomes the act of a conscious, rhythmic self-orchestration amidst the contingency of life.

The Future of Systematically Compared Theories of Consciousness

Finally, the urgent question of the empirical operationalization of these neurophilosophical insights arises. The pioneering work of Lucia Melloni on the systematic confrontation of competing theories in so-called "adversarial collaborations" has set the gold standard for future consciousness research (Melloni et al., 2023). This approach marks a shift away from isolated, often ideologically tinged theory verification toward a transparent, collaborative search for falsifiability. Yet, a neurophilosophy of awakening demands a decisive expansion of this program: future studies must no longer ask only which brain areas "fire" during static conscious contents, but must take the dynamics of perspective formation itself into view. We need a departure from the mere "snapshot" of the brain toward a cinematographic capture of its state-space trajectories.

This requires at least two methodological expansions. First, established theories such as Global Neuronal Workspace (GNW) or Integrated Information Theory (IIT) must be tested not only for their predictive power regarding binary states (conscious vs. unconscious), but for how well they can explain transition phenomena in the Witnessing-Space. We need objective markers for the "quality" of perspective organization—for example, for the highly complex transition from ego-centered constriction to non-dual breadth. Here, system-theoretical measures such as the balance between integration and segregation (Deco et al., 2015) come into focus. We can imagine this balance as the neurodynamic equivalent of a virtuous polyphonic composition: its complexity is fed not by the simplicity of a unison, but by the precarious harmony of independent voices. When specialized areas (segregation)—the independent melodic lines of sensory input or the rhythmic precision of executive planning—maintain their operative autonomy while being simultaneously embedded in an overarching, synchronous oscillation pattern (integration) (Tononi et al., 1994), the system reaches that metastable apex of dynamics. An "awakened" Witnessing-Space resembles a masterful fugue: in it, every voice remains audible as a functional specialist while still being an inseparable part of a single, undivided tonal truth. A collapse of this balance would either freeze into the monotony of total synchronization or decay into the noise of isolated neuronal fragments.

In addition, the Lempel-Ziv complexity of neural time series allows for an objective quantification of that phenomenal density we experience as "breadth of mind." It functions as a mathematical sensor for the informational texture of consciousness: while a system under anesthesia shows a monotonous, highly compressible dynamics—comparable to the repetitive ticking of a mechanical clock whose next beat is already fully determined by the previous one—meta-awareness unfolds a pattern of such high information content that it eludes any simple prediction (Schartner et al., 2017). In this state, every second of awareness is unique, a non-reducible creation in state space, characterized mathematically by an almost infinite algorithmic depth. Awakening is thus graspable here as the transition from a predictable loop to an open, informationally saturated presentness.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

These measures can map the flexibility, informational richness, and maturity of a Witnessing-Space far more precisely than mere activity levels. An "awakened" Witnessing-Space is likely characterized by higher epistemic transparency, which should be reflected in specific network signatures of criticality—that narrow tightrope walk between order and chaos where the brain realizes its maximal processing freedom (Tucker et al., 2025; Leidig, 2025a).

Second, research should increasingly investigate those "limit cases of awakening" in which the Witnessing-Space is radically reorganized. Therapeutic turning points in trauma healing or the diachronic effects of decades of contemplative practice serve as natural experimental fields here (Mashour et al., 2020; Kalisch et al., 2015). These "transformations in the field" allow us to study the mechanisms of self-modeling under extreme stress and to understand how meta-awareness learns to restabilize neural architecture. Such research connects clinical evidence with the mathematical precision of inference theory.

In this sense, a neurophilosophy of awakening pleads for a double opening: an ontological turn toward processual perspectivism and a methodological focus on exploring transformation paths in consciousness. The Witnessing-Space functions here as that theoretical vanishing point where philosophical clarification, neurodynamic precision, and existential depth merge into a new science of the mind. It is far more than an abstract concept; it is an empirical program for exploring that sacred space in which consciousness learns to watch itself becoming and thus discover the fundamental structure of its own freedom (Leidig, 2025a, 2025b).

Conclusions: The Witnessing-Space as an Operative Bridge—Resolving the Mind-Body Problem Through Awakening

The journey through the neurophilosophy of awakening has led us from the deepest ontological wounds of Western philosophy to the fleeting trajectories of modern neural dynamics. We began with the painful insight that our separation from the world is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of a centuries-old categorical error. Whoever dissects the world in advance into lifeless objects and mysterious souls loses access to the living wholeness in which we always already find ourselves. Overcoming this artificial split is not merely a theoretical task; it is an existential necessity for an integrated understanding of human being.

In this contribution, we have argued that consciousness is not a mysterious, physically inexplicable ingredient added to already finished biological processes. It is, rather, the intrinsic and indispensable way in which an enactive, thermodynamically open system relates itself to the world. Phenomenologically speaking, consciousness is the "self-appearance" of one's own regulatory activity—the moment when life becomes transparent to itself (Varela et al., 1991; Leidig, 2025b). The classical "Hard Problem" thus reveals itself not as an insoluble scientific riddle, but as an artifact of a static substance ontology that artificially isolated dynamics and phenomenality from one another. Where dualism sees a wall, processual perspectivism recognizes a bridge: experience as the phenomenal signature of life.

Why is the study of the spiritual goal of awakening so decisive for resolving these fundamental aporias? Because awakening marks that privileged epistemic point where the system discerns its own mode of operation. As long as we remain unreflectively merged with our identity models, consciousness remains "invisible" to us. Only in the act of awakening, when meta-awareness learns to "watch" the brain in its constructive labor, does the artificial separation between body and soul performatively collapse. We then no longer see only the finished house of the phenomenal world; we witness the process of building itself. The study of awakening is therefore no esoteric excursion, but the necessary heuristic of a mature science of consciousness.

The Witnessing-Space developed in the NEAS model forms the architectural center of this reorientation. It functions as that metastable configuration in which affective groundings, bodily resonances, neural synchronizations, and narrative horizons of meaning merge into a single, undeniable presence (Leidig, 2025a). Awakening denotes the radical transformation of this space itself. It is the often arduous but deeply liberating transition from a perspective dominated by

 doi:10.20944/preprints202602.1567.v1

constriction and traumatic gravity to a form of "Being-at-home-in-the-world" characterized by flexibility, epistemic transparency, and a profound, resonant connection with the whole. In this space, the "predictive cage" of the past is shattered and replaced by the curiosity of encounter.

A neurophilosophy of awakening that centers the Witnessing-Space thus gains three decisive categorical dimensions that point far beyond disciplinary boundaries. First, an ontologically coherent framework that does not merely overcome Cartesian dualism but makes it comprehensible as a historical dead end, honoring consciousness as a processual quality of life itself (Chalmers, 1996; Friston, 2010). Second, a dynamic understanding of the self that seeks its identity not in an immutable metaphysical core but recognizes it in the diachronic stability—the melody—of perspectival configurations that we can actively and responsibly help to shape (James, 1890/1950; Leidig, 2025b). And third, a future-oriented research agenda that brings together neurobiological modeling, clinical evidence, and contemplative wisdom along those transformation paths where true healing and awakening can be cultivated as measurable and yet deeply personal processes.

In this sense, the Witnessing-Space proves to be the actual foundational space of spiritual experience. It is that "clearing" in which meta-awareness learns to discern its own constructive principles and watch itself becoming. A neurophilosophy of awakening is therefore far more than a dry academic exercise; it is the exploration of that sacred space in which we gain the freedom not merely to passively suffer our own perspective on the world, but to help shape it wisely, compassionately, and creatively. Within the witnessing of consciousness lies not only the key to understanding the mind but also the source of a new, processual ethics of connectivity.

Declaration of AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author utilized a Large Language Model-based AI system (Perplexity, powered by GPT-5.1) to assist in specific stages of the drafting process. The AI was employed solely as a supportive technical tool for the following tasks:

- Developing initial structural outlines and proposing terminological variations.
- Consolidating and condensing original draft material to enhance precision.
- Ensuring linguistic coherence and stylistic transitions across different sections of the text.

The author emphasizes that all theoretical claims, central arguments, and philosophical interpretations, as well as the selection, weighting, and final presentation of the scholarly literature, remain the sole responsibility of the author. All citations, references, and empirical evidence have been personally verified and, where necessary, corrected or supplemented by the author to ensure scientific accuracy, transparency, and compliance with the journal's submission guidelines.

The AI system had no independent access to confidential data, raw study data, or non-public patient information. No generated passage was adopted without critical review; every segment of the text was carefully scrutinized for factual accuracy, argumentative consistency, and originality. Substantial revisions were made by the author to ensure the final manuscript reflects an original intellectual contribution.

This disclosure is intended to provide full transparency regarding the use of AI-based tools as technical aids, without delegating or replacing the scholarly authorship, responsibility, and accountability of the human researcher.

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