

THE PORTALS OF PERCEPTION

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Mapping the Ultimate Mystery
of Human Consciousness





THE CENTRAL MYSTERY

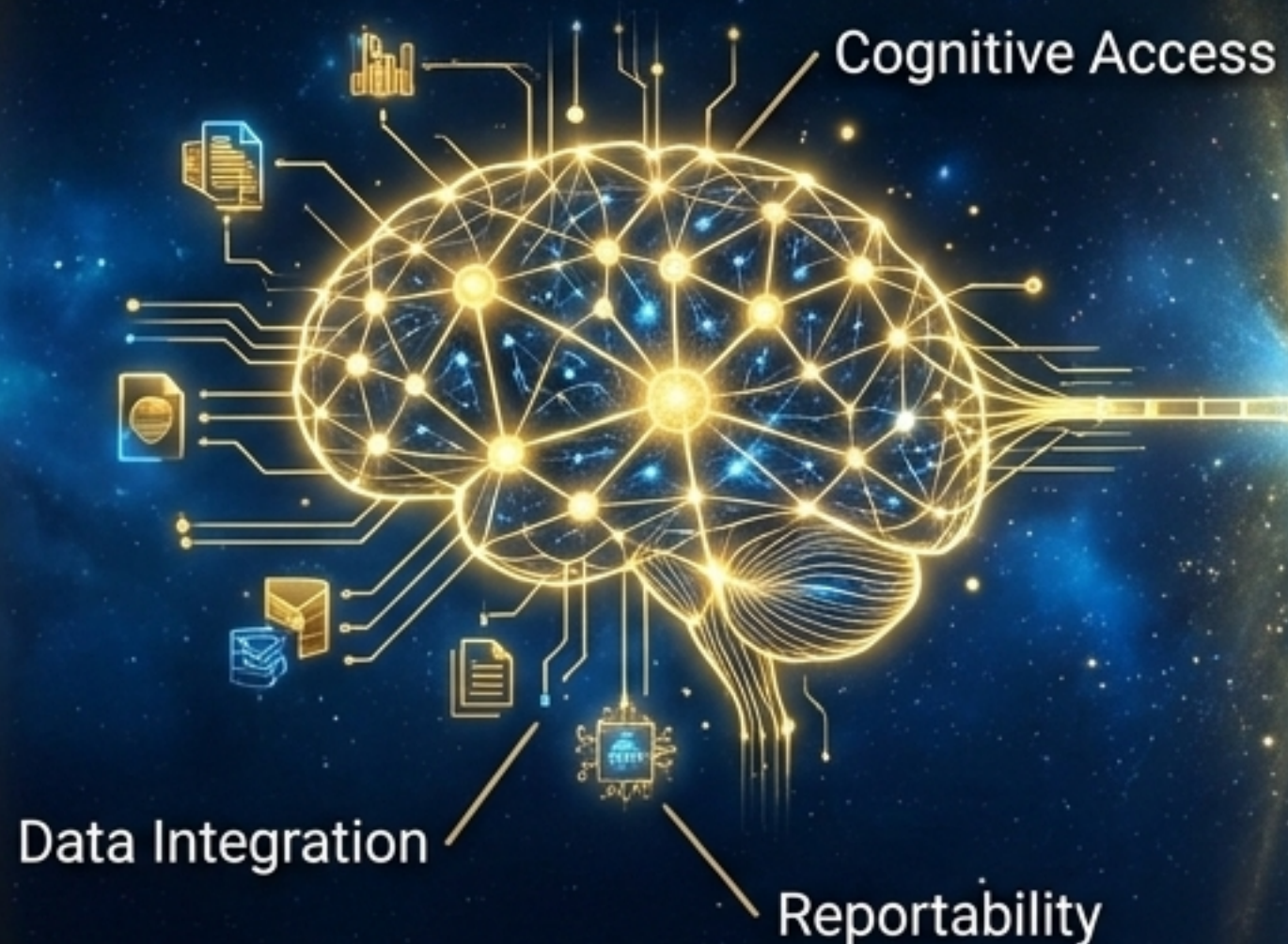
A Prism of Infinite Inquiry

Consciousness remains the most profound and contested problem in science and philosophy. It is the unmapped territory where biology meets the infinite. We do not seek a single answer, but rather to map the full terrain of human inquiry across seven distinct domains.

– Ethan James Farrell

THE EXPLANATORY GAP

The Easy Problems



The Hard Problem



a complete physical description of a system leaves open whether it is conscious.
Even a complete physical description of a system leaves open whether it is conscious. The physical mapping is verifiable, but the origin of subjective experience remains logically detached.

ORIGINS OF EXPERIENCE

Contrasting the Emergence of Mind with Fundamental Reality



Model A: Radical Emergence

Macro-consciousness suddenly sparking
from non-conscious matter.



Model B: Panpsychism (Goff, Strawson)

Consciousness as an intrinsic nature.
Challenge: The Combination Problem.

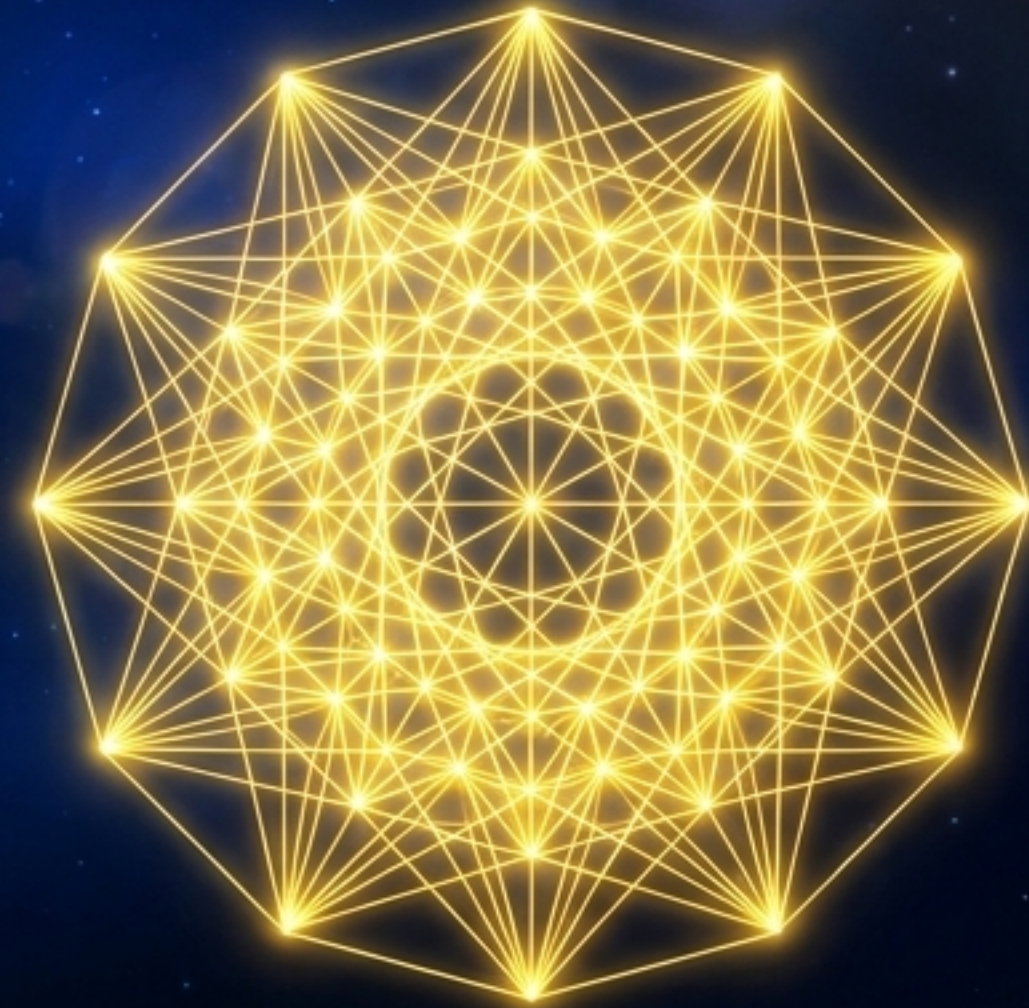
Convergence: Integrated Information Theory implicitly supports panpsychist frameworks by assigning consciousness to any system with $\phi > 0$.

SCIENTIFIC TOPOGRAPHIES

Global Workspace Theory (GWT)



Integrated Information Theory (IIT)



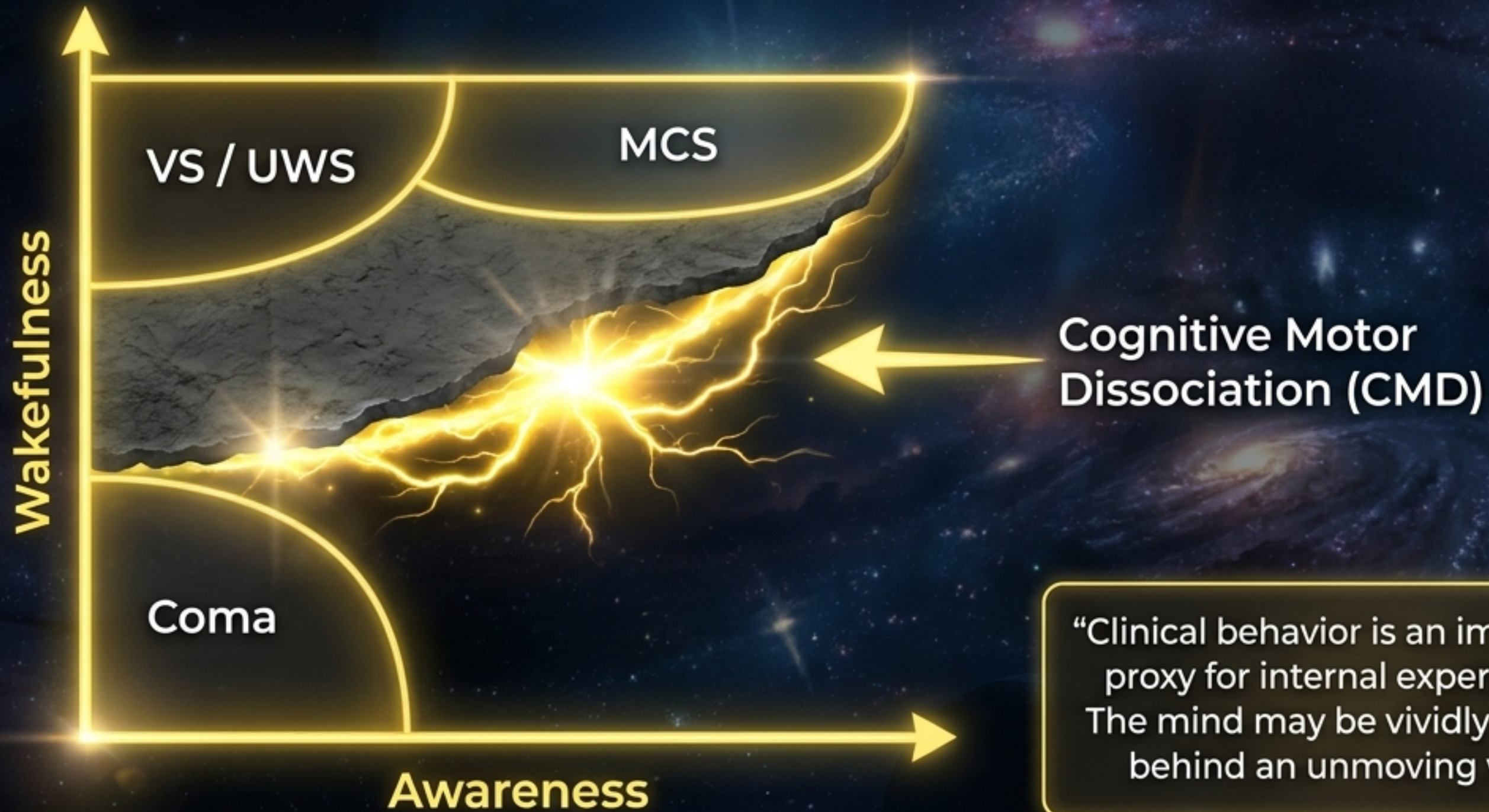
GWT models the broadcast of information.
IIT measures the irreducible integration of the system itself.

THE SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS MATRIX

Theory	Core Mechanism	Primary Substrate	View on Phenomenal Experience	Chief Critique
IIT	Integrated Information (Φ)	Posterior cortex (dense recurrent connectivity)	Axiomatic: Consciousness exists for itself	NP-hard to calculate; Information exclusion principle
GWT	Global broadcasting	Prefrontal and parietal workspace hubs	The illuminated stage of the theater	Addresses access, not the awfulness of qualia
Orch OR	Quantum computation & objective reduction	Neuronal microtubules	Intrinsically tied to Planck-scale spacetime	Fast decoherence ($\sim 10^{-13}$ s) in warm, wet brains
FEP	Minimizing free energy (surprise)	Generative models / interoceptive inference	A controlled hallucination (Seth)	Conceptually unfalsifiable

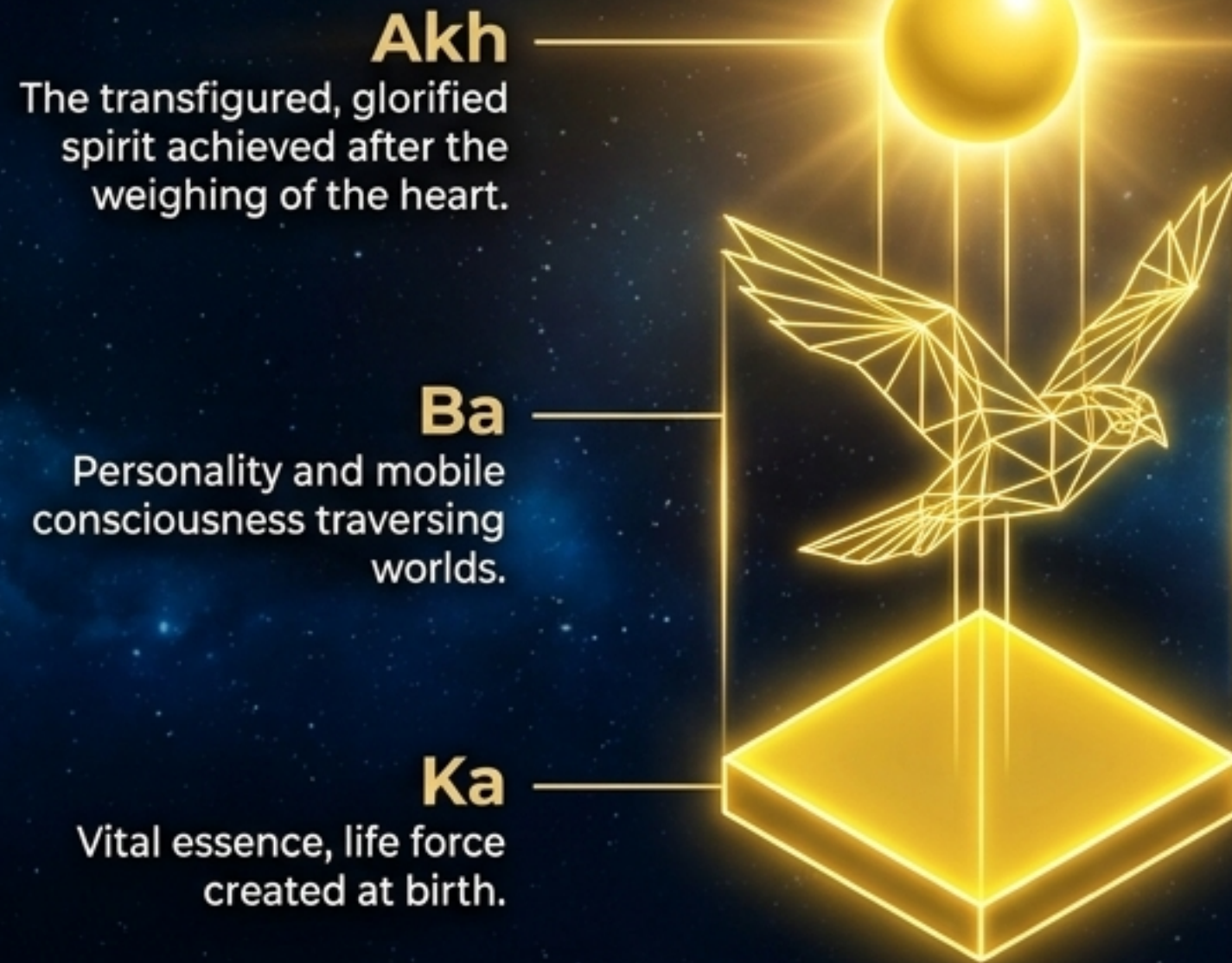
THE HIDDEN GLOW OF AWARENESS

Mapping the Clinical Spectrum of Consciousness



THE EGYPTIAN TRANSFIGURATION

Consciousness as a Dynamic Assemblage



For the ancients, death was not the end of consciousness, but the mechanism for assembling it into its ultimate, glorified form.

RELATIONAL TOPOGRAPHIES

Mapping Consciousness as Emergent Interconnectedness

Aboriginal Dreamtime

The land remembers and dreams;
human mind is continuous with
ancestral country.

African Ubuntu

I am because we are. A
shared social field including
the living and ancestors.

Diné / Navajo

Hózhó (harmony). Consciousness
as an ethical state achieved
through correct relationships
(K'é) with land and clan.



Consciousness is not a private possession housed in a skull;
it is an emergent property of profound interconnectedness.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SELF

Western Neuroscientific
The Constructed Self



Western Neuroscientific
The Constructed Self
The self is a controlled hallucination, a narrative center of gravity, or an attention schema. It is an illusion constructed by the brain for survival.

Hindu / Vedanta
The Permanent Substrate



Hindu / Vedanta
The Permanent Substrate
The empirical self is illusion (maya), but it rests upon a deeper, eternal, and unchanging true Self (Atman), which is ultimately identical to universal consciousness (Brahman).

Buddhist
Anatta (No-Self)



Buddhist
Anatta (No-Self)
Consciousness is a dependent process (Pratityasamutpada). It is an aggregate of momentary events without any permanent underlying substrate.

The convergence of modern neuroscience and ancient Buddhism on the illusion of the empirical self.

DISSOLVING THE PRIORS

The REBUS Model of Psychedelic States



Waking State

Top-Down Predictions (High-level priors suppressing sensory noise).



The Catalyst

5-HT_{2A} receptor agonism causing claustrum-cortical disconnection.



Psychedelic State

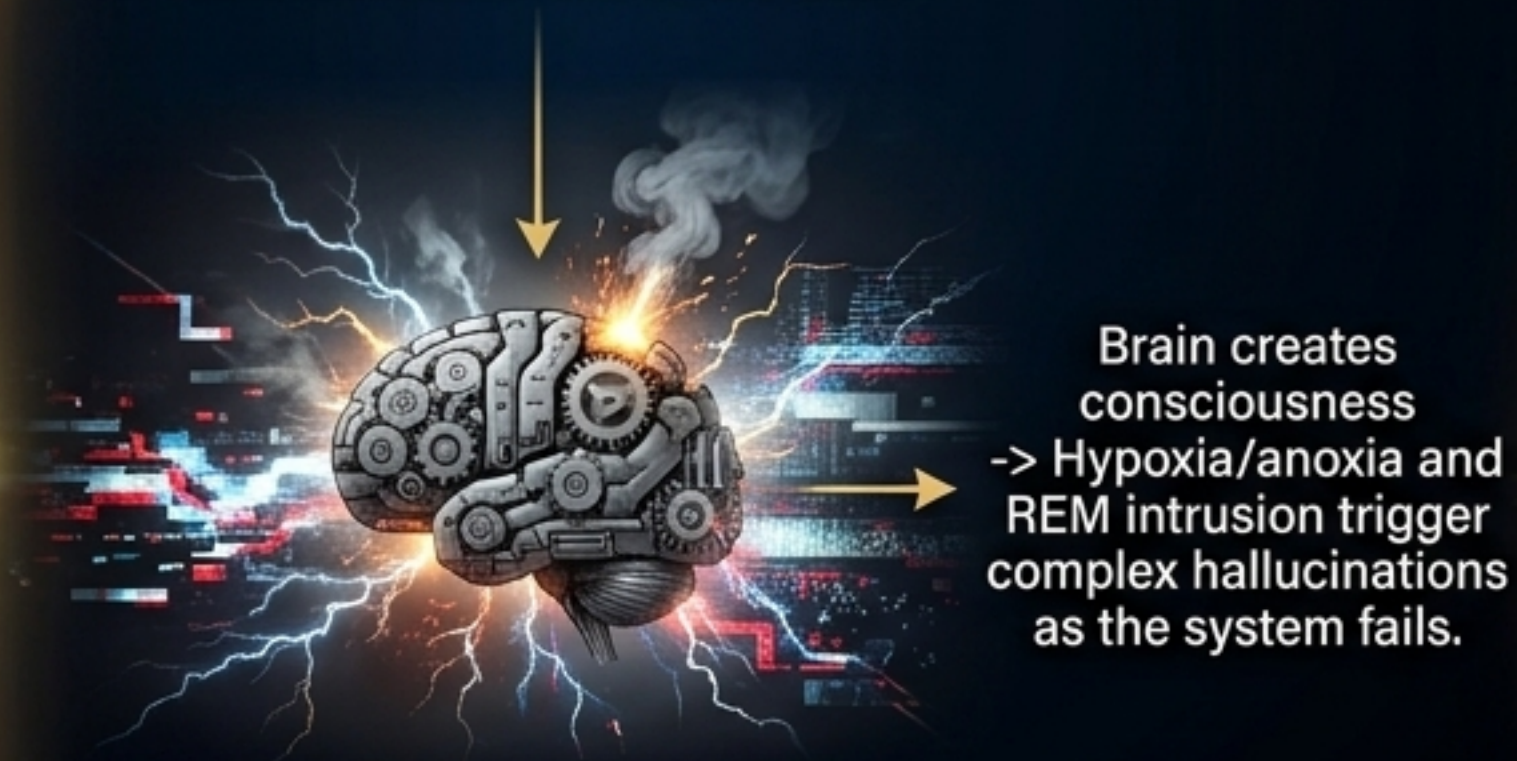
Bottom-Up Flow (Relaxed beliefs, ego dissolution, and oceanic boundlessness).

By relaxing the brain's predictive models, consciousness expands into a higher-dimensional state, revealing that everyday perception is merely a heavily filtered, constrained hallucination.

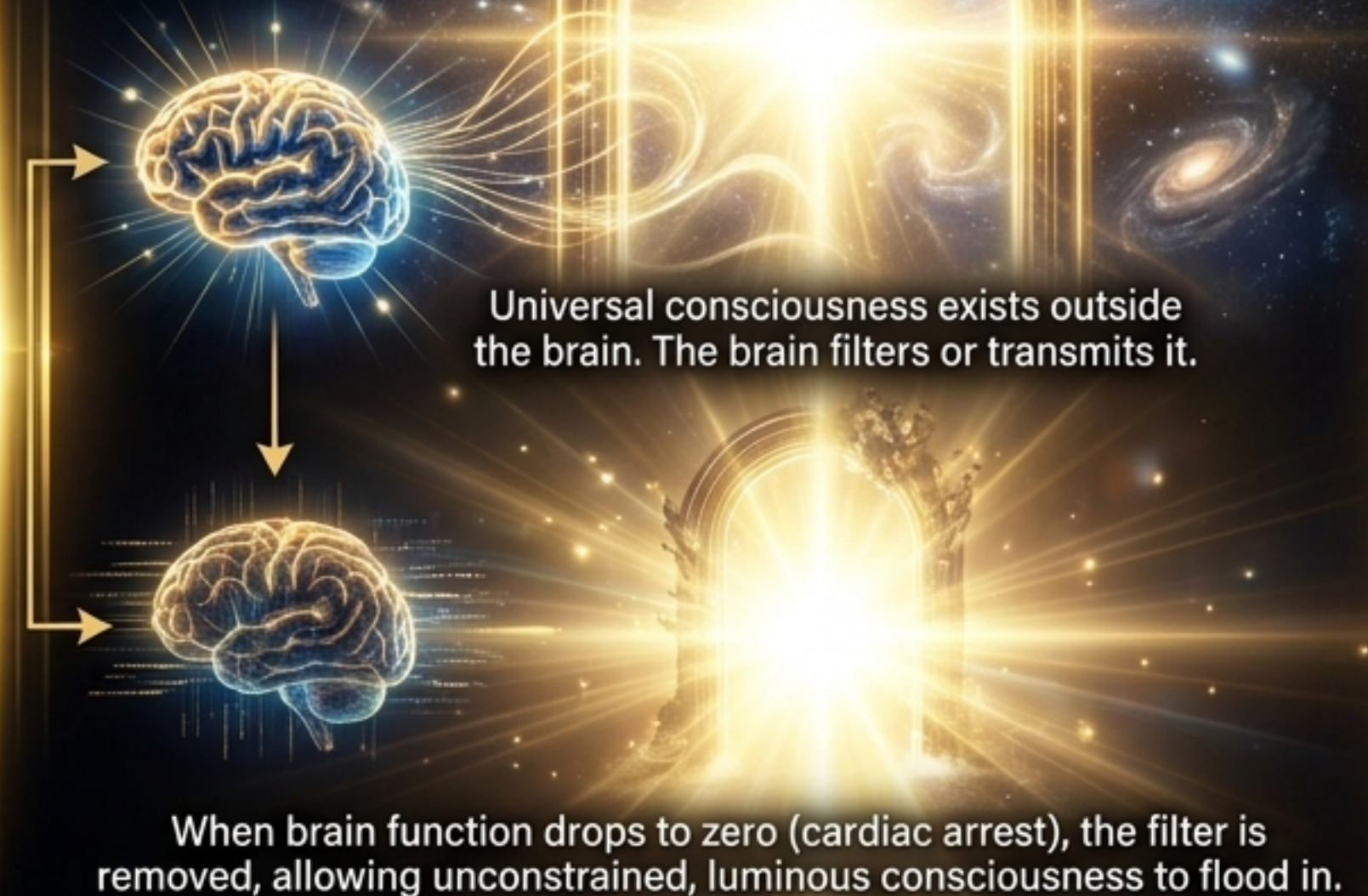
THE ANOMALOUS FRONTIER

Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) and The Filter Model

PATHWAY A: THE PRODUCTION MODEL



PATHWAY B: THE TRANSMISSION MODEL (James/Broad/Kelly)



The AWARE study (Parnia et al., 2014) highlights verified out-of-body perceptions during zero brain activity, presenting a profound challenge to production models.

THE CONTINUITY SPECTRUM

Mapping the Continuum of Post-Mortem Existence

Annihilation

(Materialism, Epicureanism).
Complete cessation of the system.

Transfiguration

(Egyptian Akh).
Reassembly into a higher, glorified state of light.



Reincarnation

(Buddhism).
A causal continuation of the process/karma without a core self.



Diminished Survival

(Mesopotamia, Greek Hades).
A shadowy, weakened continuation of identity.



Ancestral Participation

(Ubuntu, Dreamtime).
Merging into the active, conscious fabric of the community and land.



Cosmic Reunion

(Advaita Vedanta, Neoplatonism).
The drop returning to the ocean; identical with the infinite.



THE MULTIPLICITY OF MIND

Mapping the Continuum of Understanding Consciousness

Physics

History

Neuroscience

Ancestral Relationality

The Ultimate Nature
of Consciousness

Philosophy

Eastern Frameworks

Altered States

No single framework captures the full phenomenon. Consciousness is simultaneously biological, informational, quantum, constructed, and fundamental. They are not competing truths, but structural pathways supporting a singular, magnificent apex of understanding.



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