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# Living in your consciousness cube

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**Abstract**
The Consciousness Cube represents a three dimensional figure illustrating contributing factors that impact consciousness. The Consciousness Cube model suggests consciousness is a part of all sentient living beings and Earth. The connection between sentient living beings and Earth is seen as the source of the origin and wellbeing of consciousness. Contributing factors that influence the activity of consciousness consist of Internal Awareness, External Awareness, Frequency, Others, Nature and Physical Integration. The Consciousness Cube model proposes the intensity of contributing factors compels the organism into experiencing a state of consciousness described as either self – consciousness, narrative consciousness or connected consciousness.

**Key words:** Consciousness, Consciousness Cube model, wellbeing of consciousness, Internal Awareness, External Awareness

## Consciousness Cube

Science always moves within the field of what consciousness reveals; it can enlarge this field and open up new vistas but it can never get beyond the horizon set by consciousness. In this way, direct experience is primary and science is secondary (Thompson, 2015, p. 102). The objective of this article is to present a phenomenological exploration of how factors that contribute to consciousness lead to its activity. Information utilized to describe factors related to consciousness will be gained from neuroscience, philosophy and psychology of contemplative experience. In contrast to established theories (Baars, 1997), a fundamental position presented is that consciousness is not limited to the brain. The Consciousness Cube will be offered to provide an illustrative representation of a model of consciousness.

## The Reflexive Model

Max Velmans (Velmans, 2000) Reflexive Monism model of consciousness provides a platform from which the Consciousness Cube will be presented. Velmans points out that conscious information is not restricted to the brain and can be experienced in the environment. Unlike fellow neuroscience theorist Gibson (1979) who proposed a passive theory of perception, the Reflexive Theory places emphasis on the processing organism and stimulating target. Gibson believed in implanted perceptual structures gathering information and directly processing from the environment. The passiveness of the perceptual structure is replaced in Reflexive Monism by a mental construction of the location of the experience of consciousness. Velmans' states "the experience is projected in the sense that, from the perspective of the subject it is located in the phenomenal space beyond the brain, rather than in the region of the neural causes or correlates "(Velmans, 1996, p. 195). Velmans example of the location of pain felt by a pin prick to the finger highlights the importance of conscious experience located in the environment. Conscious awareness is the derived from the organisms focal – attention. Velmans believes absence of attention results in consciousness being absent. " Consciousness nearly always results from focal-attentive processing (as a form of output) but does not itself enter into this or any other form of human information processing" (Velmans, 1991, p. 651). Reflexive Monism Theory divides "subjective and functional consciousness by describing the

organism's ability to perform non – consciously all functions attributed to conscious awareness system" (Hunt, 1995, p. 298). Velmans' states "conscious psychological process involves brain processes that involve the brain" (Velmans, 1996, p. 194). The Reflexive Monism Theory relies upon internal neural representations as part of the experiencing process found in consciousness (Velmans, 1991). The importance of neural activity in the connection between the organism and environment is fundamental to the Consciousness Cube Model. Velmans concept of perception at location continues to locate the conscious neural activity within the brain. Has the Reflexive Model succumbed to an over confidence in neuroscientific information? Could consciousness occur outside of the brain at any point during the connection which is required for the experience? When neural activity is occurring could this be organism biochemical and environmental bioelectrical activity establishing a connection with consciousness?

Neuroscientific information about consciousness appears to place emphasis on the emergence of consciousness from correlational observation of physical processes occurring within the brain (Baars, 1997). This paper proposes a model of consciousness that is ecologically grounded. Consciousness is seen as a part of the environment similar to the way oxygen is experienced. Organisms are equipped with structures that allow them to interact with consciousness. Similar to the Reflexive Model, consciousness connections are seen as being influenced by the neural activity within a sentient organism. The Consciousness Cube suggests consciousness is experienced at a point during connection with consciousness while representation of the conscious experience is derived from the type of connection and narrative neural patterning found within the organism (Damasio, 1999). In contrast to the Reflexive Theory, the Consciousness Cube puts forward the concept of consciousness being experienced beyond the brain and located beyond the brain. This requires a sentient organism to be conscious and coupled with the environment. Neural activity is seen as an evolutionary structure that facilitates connection with the consciousness.

## Consciousness Cube Factors

The Consciousness Cube is an illustration of the multidimensional factors that interact with each other to coordinate a connection with consciousness found within the environment. Each factor consists of a continuum from lower to higher level of activity.

The awareness continuum travels with attentiveness from internal to external. Consciousness is described as three interchangeable properties. They are (1) self - consciousness, (2) narrative – consciousness and (3) empathic consciousness. Awareness while experiencing narrative consciousness is an internal event of psychological and physical scanning. As a sentient organism is purposefully self – regulating, self – organizing and self – correcting, the scanning is designed to identify features of the organism that require action to achieve homeostasis. (Damasio, 1999). Self – Consciousness is realized when awareness of the other is acknowledged. The organism becomes aware of the self in relationship to their environment. Empathic Consciousness is experienced when the organism transcends the self and transports their empathic consciousness to the other. Empathy is seen as the transporting emotion found in a complete consciousness connection. It appears supporting emotional content can intensify the empathetic experience. When observing a couple experiencing love we can attest to the empathy each has for the other while the couple remains oblivious of the greater environment. The example of the couple in love highlights a shift from internal to external awareness.

## Physical Integration v Fragmented Sensitivity

Physical Integration refers to the internal alignment of three major areas of the organism that produce neural activity that affects consciousness. The brain has been extensively researched and established as a major area that influences conscious activity (Klemm, 2010, Baars, 1997). The heart dynamically connects with the brain and has been found to establish "heart intelligence." McCraty & Deyhle (2014) believe "when the heart and brain are coherent " we have a tighter coupling and closer alignment," they suggest the alignment helps to generate "intuitive intelligence and are able to more intelligently self – regulate our thoughts and emotions, which over time lifts consciousness and establishes a new physiological and psychological baseline" (McCarty & Zayas, 2014, p. 59). The third major neural area is the enteric nervous system which is an independent autonomic nervous

system which interacts with the emotional and cognitive centers of the brain. The discovery of the "gut brain axis (GBA) consists of bidirectional communication between the central and the enteric nervous system , linking emotional and cognitive centers of the brain with peripheral intestinal functions.(Carabotti, Scirocco, Maselli, & Severi, 2015, p. 2003). Is it possible that alignment of these three main centers of neural activity is an important factor for connection consciousness? Does dysfunction of the heart, brain or enteric nervous system limit consciousness? High levels of Fragmented Sensitivity on the Consciousness Cube represent a diminished or nonexistent alignment within the organism. Connection with the frequencies of our planet may provide energy for consciousness that has been ignited at birth by the connection between mother and child. Once the connection between mother and child or animal has been physically severed could it be the growing consciousness child or animal is nourished by the frequencies of the living planet?

## Empathy

The Consciousness Cube model suggests an organism's consciousness is developed from the dynamic interrelation of the self and other. This dynamic subjective relationship contains empathy as an emotional structure that helps connect the organism with their environment and self. It is possible that "our own human consciousness, for example, emerges from a primordial and preverbal sense of self, present in newborn infants, that is inseparably coupled to the perceptual recognition of other human beings" (Thompson, 2001, p. 17). The development of consciousness may include recognition of other human beings and recognition of the dynamic connection found in nature? Does the inability to transcend the self to the other limit an organism's development of consciousness? Wickramaskera suggests historically it has always been believed that something about empathy was powerful enough to alter the experience of consciousness (Wickramasekera II, 2015). Without the development of empathy does human consciousness lack growth and health? Empathic consciousness requires a connection between the organism and object in nature. During transcendence of self, it diminishes to be replaced as – if being the other.

## Connection and Gap

The Consciousness Cube model suggests internal awareness (self-consciousness) is acknowledged when recognition of the other is realized. Neuroscience has established neural and anatomical areas that correlate with conscious activity (Damasio, 1999). The establishment of consciousness for neuroscience would appear to coincide with the development of the biology required for conscious activity and the recognition of other. Hunt suggests "a Gibsonian rewrite of Kant would understand space, time, causality, and self as codetermined and inseparable aspects of a single, seamless, ecological array (Hunt, 1995, p. 244)." The Consciousness Cube theory proposes consciousness is present in all material that is found in nature. Nature has been described as all material that is of the natural environment that includes plants, animals, soil, water or air as well as the geological, evolutionary, biophysical and biochemical processes that have occurred throughout time to create the Earth as it is today (Maller, Townsend, Pryor, Brown, & St Leger, 2006, p. 45). Through a connection with nature and the necessary biological requirements, conditions are present for the origin of consciousness. The Gap occurs when the organism is without a connection to nature. An example of the Gap can be seen in humans (who remain inside) who are without others in their life and replace nature with extended use of computers and mobile devices. Chen (2004) found students addicted to mobile phone use showed higher relationships to depression, low self – esteem and high levels of anxiety. In contrast, natural settings stimulate a response that includes a part of the autonomic nervous system associated with physical energy (Ulrich, Simons, Fiorito, Miles, & Zelson, 1991). Nature has also been found to have a positive impact on blood pressure, cholesterol, outlook on life and stress – reduction (Parsons, 1991). The Consciousness Cube model proposes resonant frequencies found within the Earth are essential to the origin and well – being of human and mammal consciousness. Neuroscientist Michal Persinger has examined the effects of magnetic fields on brain function and concludes fields similar to Shuman resonances "can induce altered state of consciousness" and "the space occupied by the geomagnetic field can store information related to brain activity (Persinger, 2008, p. 7). MaCarty and Dehyle (2014) suggest humans have brain and heart frequencies overlapping the earth's magnetic field resonances (p. 420). Is it possible the enteric

system will also be found to overlap with the earth's magnetic field? Harry Hunt points out the importance of "sentient creatures" having evolved from "dynamics and structure of this very universe" he continues to suggest "structures must similarly illuminate both universe and consciousness (Hunt, 1995, p. 216)."

## Internal v External Awareness

The Consciousness Cube divides awareness into subject – as – object which includes all levels of internal awareness that are associated with self - consciousness. Subject – as – knowing includes both self – consciousness and narrative consciousness. Self – consciousness can be described as awareness of existence (self – object) and awareness of knowing about the object (self – knowing). Self – knowing embodies the Narrative Consciousness which represents the thread of consciousness moments experienced by the organism. Self – knowing contains the subjective quality of the organism by exercising an appraisal about experiences that include some aspect of self – consciousness. External awareness at the higher levels is without the self when Connected Consciousness is experienced. Empathy facilitates the self to fade until only as – if other (human or animal) or nature remains. As seen in figure 1 the Consciousness Cube includes representations of the relationship between internal, external awareness, physical integration, frequency levels, empathy, connection, others (human and animals) and type of consciousness experienced. When external awareness and all other factors are high, facilitation of connected consciousness is achieved. High internal awareness is identified by low factor levels facilitating the experience of self – consciousness. The three dimensional presentation of the Consciousness Cube is an attempt to highlight layered aspect of activity leading to conscious experience.

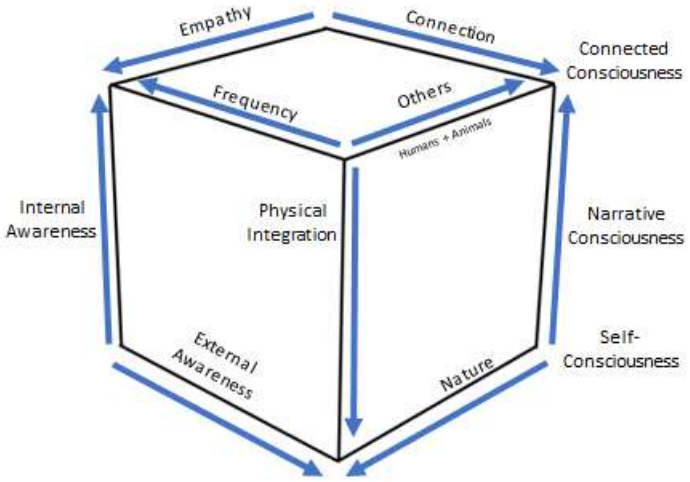


*Figure 1 Consciousness Cube*

The Consciousness Cube represents the relationship that occurs amongst factors that contribute to consciousness. The three – dimensional visual perception of the cube symbolizes the inability for consciousness to see the fourth – dimension and complete the unseen dimension with representational neural activity. The empty space in the middle of the cube may represent a number of consciousness concepts. Firstly, the space that has been proposed as the working place of consciousness (Baars, 1997) and the space that is the recipient of the voice – in – the – head (Hunt, 1995). Is it possible the inner section of the Consciousness Cube reflects Buddhist dharma that proposes the mind is like an empty space? (Gyatso, 1993).

The concepts presented in this article are embedded with neurophenomenological exploration. They are resting upon established research while reaching beyond that of current quantitative science. As there is no way currently to stand outside consciousness and look at it, a contemplative psychological experience was employed to go to the edge of the consciousness horizon. Astronauts looking through space station windows, seeking glimpses of the Earth below may reflect the need for

human consciousness to be nourished by the radiance found in planet Earth and not in the darkness of space (Maller et al., 2006).

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