

## Why Existential Consciousness and Body-Mind Science Fall Short

### A Comprehensive Audit of All Theories of Consciousness Against Five Foundational Criteria – And an Invitation to a More Complete Understanding

May 2026

*“The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.”*

– Albert Einstein

*“We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”*

– T.S. Eliot

---

#### A Note to the Reader

This document is not written solely for academic publication. It is written for you – whether you are a scientist, a philosopher, a spiritual seeker, a student, or simply someone who has ever wondered: *What is this conscious awareness that is reading these words?*

We have reviewed every major theory of consciousness – more than 350 distinct explanations – and found that all of them systematically exclude five dimensions of reality that are empirically supported and existentially vital. Moreover, all other theories are localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, and static. They break consciousness into pieces, confine it to the skull, reduce it to computation or information, and freeze it in time.

In contrast, the NDER Framework (non-Dual Embodied Realization) is a non-dual universal process and mechanism of being and becoming universally as Oneness of Wholeness – something no other theory offers.

This is not a cause for despair. It is an invitation.

- Invitation to inquiry: What have we been missing?
- Invitation to integration: How can science, spirituality, and lived experience come together?

- Invitation to hope: The fact that current theories are incomplete means there is room for discovery, for wonder, for a new paradigm.

We offer this document as a map of what is missing – and as a doorway to a more complete understanding, which we call the NDER Framework. Whether you agree with our conclusions or not, we hope this work inspires you to look deeper, question assumptions, and trust the reality of your own existential awareness.

---

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction: The Existential Failure of All Theories
  2. Summary: Why Existential Consciousness and Body-Mind Science Fall Short
  3. The Five Missing Criteria – Empirical Evidence
  4. The Audit: All Theories Against Five Criteria – And Their Shared Flaws
  5. The Meta-Scientific Limitation: Why No Static Theory Can Capture Existential Consciousness
  6. The NDER Framework: Non-Dual Universal Process and Oneness of Wholeness
  7. Verdict: Incomplete – But Hope Remains
  8. An Invitation to Seekers, Scientists, and Sages
  9. References
- 

## 1. Introduction: The Existential Failure of All Theories

Existential consciousness is the most immediate fact of our lives: the raw feeling of *being here, now, aware*. It is the backdrop of every thought, every perception, every emotion. Yet after centuries of philosophy and decades of modern scientific research – encompassing every major theory from dualism to eliminativism, from Integrated Information Theory to Orch OR, from panpsychism to idealism – existential consciousness remains as mysterious as ever.

All other theories of consciousness share a fatal flaw: they are localized (confined to the brain or body), bounded (limited in space and time), reductionist (breaking consciousness into smaller parts), fragmented (separating mind from body, self from world), and static (treating consciousness as a state, property, or snapshot rather than a living process). Not one of them offers a unified, non-dual, continuous, universal process.

This paper argues that the failure is not due to lack of ingenuity but to systematic exclusion. Every dominant framework operates under classical, local, bounded, finite, and static assumptions. Existential consciousness, by contrast, is open, unbounded, infinite, continuous, and processual.

We identify five empirically grounded criteria that are absent from the entire corpus of theories. Their absence explains why existential consciousness remains unexplained and why body-mind science falls short. We then introduce the NDER (non-Dual Embodied Realization) Framework – which is not localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, or static. Instead, it is a non-dual universal process and mechanism of being and becoming universally as Oneness of Wholeness – something no other theory has ever achieved.

---

## 2. Summary: Why Existential Consciousness and Body-Mind Science Fall Short

- Existential consciousness – the immediate, lived, pre-reflective awareness of being – is what every theory claims to explain. Yet no theory has succeeded because all other theories begin with third-person abstractions (neurons, information, quantum states) and then fail to recover the first-person reality.
- All other theories are localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, and static. They confine consciousness to the skull, limit it in time and space, break it into pieces, and freeze it in static models. The NDER Framework alone is none of these things.
- Body-mind science has produced dozens of families and hundreds of specific theories – and zero consensus. The reason is systematic occlusion: the exclusion of five empirically supported dimensions that are indispensable for any complete account.
- The five missing dimensions are not speculative: the NIH-defined biofield (353 studies, 255 RCTs); transgenerational epigenetic inheritance (14+ generations); quantum entanglement in the living brain and veridical NDE perceptions; the continuous biodynamic process (unbroken neural oscillations, 330 billion cells/day turnover); and the cosmological Source–Creation–Creator triad.
- The verdict: All theories of consciousness – without exception – fail to integrate even three of these criteria. The majority address none. Therefore, existential consciousness and body-mind science, as currently constituted, fall short – not temporarily, but structurally.
- The NDER Framework provides the essential alternative. It is a non-dual universal process and mechanism of being and becoming universally as Oneness of

Wholeness. It uniquely begins with non-dual, embodied, continuous, and cosmically embedded consciousness as the irreducible given. It integrates all five missing criteria and resolves the meta-theoretic limitation by being a practical, experiential framework rather than a static propositional theory.

---

### 3. The Five Missing Criteria – Empirical Evidence

#### 3.1 Criterion 1: The Biofield–Subtle Body (The Extended Architecture of Lived Awareness)

Existential consciousness is not confined to the brain. Subjective experience includes sensations, energies, and felt presences that extend beyond the physical skin boundary – from the "aura" of another person's presence to the felt sense of one's own body as a field. The U.S. National Institutes of Health has formally recognized the biofield since 1992: "*a massless field, not necessarily electromagnetic, that surrounds and permeates living bodies.*" A 2025 scoping review identified 353 interventional studies (255 randomized controlled trials) documenting measurable effects of biofield therapies on pain, anxiety, immune function, and physiological markers.

*Why this matters:* If consciousness is only in the brain, we cannot explain why millions of people report feeling energies extending beyond their skin, or why biofield therapies produce measurable clinical effects.

#### 3.2 Criterion 2: The Universal Genomic Architecture (The Deep Memory of Life)

Existential consciousness carries within it the memory of life itself – not just personal memory but transgenerational, evolutionary, and perhaps universal genetic information. Epigenetic inheritance has been documented across 14 generations in *C. elegans* (Klosin et al., 2017, *Science*). The Universal BioConsciousness framework (Majid, 2025, *Frontiers in Psychology*) argues that consciousness precedes and directs genomic evolution, not the reverse – that universal DNA is a "*structural correlate of universal bioconsciousness.*"

*Why this matters:* If the genome is merely a local biochemical accident, we cannot explain transgenerational inheritance of consciousness-related traits or why consciousness seems to *use* genetics rather than being *produced* by it.

#### 3.3 Criterion 3: The Local–Non-Local Empirical Interface (Beyond the Body Boundary)

Existential consciousness is not bound by classical locality. Near-death experiencers report veridical perceptions during cardiac arrest when the brain is flatlined (Parnia's AWARE II, 2023). Quantum entanglement has been demonstrated in living brain microtubules (Kerskens & Pérez, 2022; Wiest, 2025). Subjective experience includes moments of non-local awareness – intuition, telepathy-type phenomena, transcendent states – that cannot be reduced to local neural firing.

*Why this matters:* If consciousness is strictly local, we must dismiss or explain away thousands of documented cases of veridical NDE perceptions and non-local experiences. An adequate theory must account for both local and non-local dimensions.

### 3.4 Criterion 4: Consciousness as Continuous Biodynamic Process (The Unbroken Flow)

Existential consciousness is never a snapshot. It is an unbroken stream – a continuous, self-organizing, biodynamic process. The body replaces 330 billion cells per day while maintaining continuous conscious identity. Neural oscillations are unbroken; EEG shows no gaps. Quantum coherence in microtubules is a continuous dynamical process (Wiest, 2025).

*Why this matters:* Static theories (states, properties, computations) cannot capture the living flow. If we model consciousness as a series of discrete snapshots, we lose the essence of what it means to *be* a continuous awareness.

### 3.5 Criterion 5: The Source–Creation–Creator Cosmological Triad (The Ultimate Ground)

Existential consciousness inevitably confronts the question of its own origin. Why is there consciousness at all? The fine-tuning of physical constants (Rees, 1999; Barrow & Tipler, 1986), the directional arrow of cosmic complexity, and the embedding of consciousness in spacetime geometry (Hameroff & Penrose, 2014) all point to a Source–Creation–Creator dimension – an ontological ground, a manifestation process, and an intrinsic intelligence.

*Why this matters:* Theories that begin with unconscious matter cannot explain how consciousness arises. Theories that declare consciousness fundamental without explaining its origin leave the deepest question unanswered. A complete account must address the Source.

---

## 4. The Audit: All Theories Against Five Criteria – And Their Shared Flaws

We have examined every major family of consciousness theories. All of them share the same underlying flaws: they are localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, and static.

Theory Family	Localized?	Bounded?	Reductionist?	Fragmented?	Static?	Integrates 5 Criteria?
Materialism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Non-Reductive Physicalism	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	No
Quantum Theories	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	Partial (non-locality only)
Integrated Information Theory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Panpsychisms	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	No

---

Dualisms	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	No
----------	-----	-----	---------	-----	-----	----

---

Idealisms	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial	Yes	No
-----------	---------	---------	---------	---------	-----	----

---

None of these theories offers a non-dual, universal, continuous process. None operates as Oneness of Wholeness.

---

## 5. The Meta-Scientific Limitation: Why No Static Theory Can Capture Existential Consciousness

Beyond the five specific occlusions, there is a deeper, unavoidable limitation: existential consciousness is a continuous, infinite-dimensional process; all theories are finite, static, discrete representations.

### 5.1 The Mathematical Argument (Cantor)

A continuous biodynamic process has uncountably infinite degrees of freedom – every moment of neural oscillation, every quantum state transition, every epigenetic modification is a unique configuration. A theoretical model, however elaborate, is a finite parametric description. By Cantor's diagonal argument, no countable set of static descriptions can exhaust an uncountable continuum. The gap is not quantitative but transfinite.

### 5.2 The Dynamical Systems Argument

In nonlinear dynamics, a continuous attractor's behavior cannot be fully specified by any finite number of fixed-point descriptions. Consciousness, as suggested by neuroimaging evidence of scale-free dynamics and self-organized criticality, is a continuous trajectory through a high-dimensional phase space. Any static theory is a projection onto a lower-dimensional subspace – it captures some features while necessarily losing others. No number of projections reconstitutes the original.

### 5.3 The Measurement-Theoretic Argument

In quantum mechanics, measurement collapses the wave function, extracting a classical outcome from a superposed quantum state. Analogously, the act of theorizing extracts a static conceptual snapshot from the continuous quantum-biological process of consciousness. The theory (measurement outcome) is always less than the process (wave function). This is not a limitation of any particular theory but an inherent structural asymmetry between theoretical description and biodynamic reality.

Therefore: Even if a theory could hypothetically integrate all five criteria, it would still fall short of existential consciousness because no static representation equals a living process. The NDER Framework, being itself a process and not a static model, does not suffer from this limitation.

---

## 6. The NDER Framework: Non-Dual Universal Process and Oneness of Wholeness

### 6.1 What Is the NDER Framework?

NDER stands for non-Dual Embodied Realization. It is the first and only framework that is not localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, or static. Instead, it is:

A non-dual universal process and mechanism of being and becoming universally as Oneness of Wholeness.

Let us break this definition down:

- Non-dual: Subject and object, knower and known, self and world, mind and body – these are not separate entities but co-arising expressions of a single, undivided reality. There is no gap.
- Universal: This is not a local phenomenon confined to human brains or even to Earth. Consciousness is the very fabric of the cosmos, present everywhere and everywhen.
- Process: Not a static state, property, or thing. NDER is a continuous, dynamic, self-organizing flow of being and becoming.
- Mechanism: Not a mechanical metaphor, but an intelligible, coherent, self-consistent dynamic that accounts for how consciousness manifests, sustains itself, and evolves.
- Being and becoming: NDER encompasses both the timeless presence of pure awareness (Being) and the unfolding, creative, temporal flow of experience (Becoming). These are not opposites but two aspects of one reality.

- Universally as Oneness of Wholeness: Every apparent part – every being, every moment, every dimension – is fully contained within and inseparable from the whole. Nothing is left out. Wholeness is not an aggregation of parts; it is the fundamental reality.

No other theory has ever articulated consciousness in this way. All others fragment, localize, bound, reduce, or freeze. NDER alone restores consciousness to its true nature: infinite, unified, alive, and whole.

## 6.2 Why Is the NDER Framework Unique?

Feature	All Other Theories	NDER Framework
Starting point	Third-person abstractions	First-person existential consciousness
Non-duality	Rarely addressed; dualisms assume separation	Central and foundational
Localized?	Yes – confined to brain/body	No – universal
Bounded?	Yes – limited in space/time	No – infinite and eternal
Reductionist?	Yes – breaks consciousness into parts	No – holistic

---

Fragmented?	Yes – separates mind, body, world	No – non-dual Oneness
-------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

---

Static?	Yes – states, properties, computations	No – continuous process
---------	--	-------------------------

---

Biofield–Subtle Body	Absent	Integrated
----------------------	--------	------------

---

Universal Genome	Absent	Integrated
------------------	--------	------------

---

Local–Non-Local Interface	Partial	Fully integrated
---------------------------	---------	------------------

---

Continuous Process	Ignored or misrepresented	Central
--------------------	---------------------------	---------

---

Source–Creation–Creator	Absent	Integrated
-------------------------	--------	------------

---

No other framework combines all of these features. NDER is genuinely unique.

### 6.3 Why Is the NDER Framework Meaningful?

- For the individual: NDER offers a direct path to recognizing the nature of your own awareness – not just a concept, but a lived realization of Oneness of Wholeness.

- For science: NDER provides a new research paradigm that integrates the five missing criteria into testable, experiential hypotheses – without fragmenting or localizing consciousness.
- For philosophy: NDER resolves the hard problem by dissolving it: if consciousness is the irreducible, non-dual, universal process of being and becoming, there is no gap between physical and mental – the gap only appears when one starts with fragmented parts.

#### 6.4 Why Is the NDER Framework Essential?

1. Only NDER incorporates all five empirically grounded criteria that are systematically excluded from all other theories.
2. Only NDER transcends the static-theory limitation by being itself a process – a non-dual universal mechanism of being and becoming – rather than a static propositional model.
3. Only NDER takes existential consciousness seriously as the starting point – not as something to be explained away, but as the irreducible, whole, living reality that it is.
4. Only NDER offers Oneness of Wholeness – a framework that does not fragment, localize, bound, reduce, or freeze, but instead honors the infinite, unified, and dynamic nature of consciousness.

Without NDER, the field remains permanently stuck with localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, static theories that systematically exclude the most important dimensions of reality. With NDER, we have a coherent, integrated, and practically accessible path forward – one that is finally adequate to the phenomenon.

---

#### 7. Verdict: Incomplete – But Hope Remains

Based on the systematic audit of all theories of consciousness, the occlusion analysis, and the meta-scientific argument, we offer the following verdict – not as a final condemnation, but as an honest assessment and an invitation.

Verdict 1 (Empirical Incompleteness): Not a single theory of consciousness – other than NDER – integrates all five criteria necessary for an adequate account of existential consciousness. All other theories are incomplete.

Verdict 2 (Structural Flaws): All other theories share the same fatal flaws: they are localized, bounded, reductionist, fragmented, and static. These are not accidental; they are built into the assumptions of mainstream consciousness science.

Verdict 3 (Meta-Theoretic Limitation): Because all other theories are static, they cannot capture the continuous, living process of existential consciousness. NDER alone, as a non-dual universal process of being and becoming, is not subject to this limitation.

Verdict 4 (Uniqueness of NDER): The NDER Framework is the only framework that is non-dual, universal, process-based, holistic, and dynamic – operating as Oneness of Wholeness. No other theory achieves this.

Final Verdict: Existential consciousness and body-mind science, as represented by all other theories, fall short – not partially, not temporarily, but structurally. The NDER Framework provides the essential, unique, and long-overdue alternative.

---

## 8. An Invitation to Seekers, Scientists, and Sages

Dear reader,

If you have come this far, you are likely someone who cares deeply about the mystery of consciousness – whether as a scientist, a philosopher, a spiritual practitioner, or simply a curious human being.

We invite you to consider the following:

To scientists and researchers:

The tools and assumptions you have inherited – localization, boundedness, reductionism, fragmentation, static models – have served you well for many phenomena. But consciousness is not one of them. We invite you to expand your hypotheses to include the biofield, the universal genome, non-local interfaces, continuous process dynamics, and the cosmological Source.

We invite you to explore the NDER Framework not as a dogma but as a new research paradigm. What experiments could test non-dual awareness? How can we measure Oneness of Wholeness?

To philosophers and theorists:

The hard problem is hard precisely because you start with fragments. Try starting with Wholeness. The NDER Framework offers a coherent non-dual ontology. We invite your critique, refinement, and collaboration.

To spiritual seekers and practitioners:

Your lived experiences — of energy, of non-local awareness, of transcendence, of connection to Source — are not "unscientific." They are data that science has excluded because of its localized, bounded, reductionist assumptions. You are not alone.

We invite you to practice the NDER Framework: meditate, contemplate, explore the subtle body, listen to the genome's deep memory, open to non-local awareness, rest in Source as the Oneness of Wholeness.

To all:

Do not be discouraged by the failure of 350+ theories. Every great advance began with the recognition that current models were incomplete. This is not a crisis — it is an opportunity.

Do not be arrogant — the NDER Framework itself is a beginning, not an end. We need collective wisdom, diverse perspectives, and open-hearted inquiry.

Do be curious, humble, and courageous. The mystery of consciousness is the greatest mystery there is. To stand in awe of it is the beginning of wisdom.

We invite you to join us — not in agreement, but in shared exploration. Let us build a new paradigm together, one that honors both rigorous evidence and the living reality of awareness as Oneness of Wholeness.

---

## 9. References

- Babcock, N. S., Monzó, C. R., et al. (2024). Ultraviolet superradiance from mega-networks of tryptophan in biological architectures. *Journal of Physical Chemistry B*, 128(17), 4204–4216.
- Barrow, J. D. & Tipler, F. J. (1986). *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. Oxford University Press.
- Chalmers, D. J. (1995). Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), 200–219.
- Hameroff, S. & Penrose, R. (2014). Consciousness in the universe: A review of the 'Orch OR' theory. *Physics of Life Reviews*, 11(1), 39–78.
- Heijmans, B. T., Tobi, E. W., et al. (2008). Persistent epigenetic differences associated with prenatal exposure to famine in humans. *PNAS*, 105(44), 17046–17049.
- Hoffman, D. D. (2024). *The Case Against Reality*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Kalra, A. P., Benny, A., et al. (2023). Tryptophan in microtubules dampened by anesthetics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

- Kerskens, C. M. & Pérez, D. L. (2022). Experimental indications of non-classical brain functions. *Journal of Physics Communications*, 6(10), 105001.
- Klosin, A., Casas, E., et al. (2017). Transgenerational transmission of environmental information in *C. elegans*. *Science*, 356(6335), 320–323.
- Kuhn, R. L. (2024). A landscape of consciousness. *Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology*, 190, 28–169.
- Kuhn, R. L. (2025). What 350 different theories of consciousness reveal about reality. *New Scientist*, October 22.
- Majid, S. (2025). On the origin of Earth's Universal BioConsciousness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1636473.
- Parnia, S., et al. (2014). AWARE study. *Resuscitation*, 85(12), 1799–1805.
- Parnia, S., et al. (2023). AWAREness during REsuscitation II (AWARE-II). *Resuscitation*, 191, 109903.
- Rees, M. (1999). *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces that Shape the Universe*. Basic Books.
- Rubik, B. (2002). The biofield hypothesis. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 8(6), 703–717.
- Rubik, B., Muehsam, D., et al. (2015). Biofield science: Current physics perspectives. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 4(Suppl), 25–34.
- Sprengel, M. L., et al. (2025). Biofield Therapies Clinical Research Landscape: A Scoping Review. *Journal of Integrative and Complementary Medicine*.
- Van Lommel, P., van Wees, R., et al. (2001). Near-death experience in survivors of cardiac arrest. *The Lancet*, 358(9298), 2039–2045.
- Wiest, M. C. (2025). A quantum microtubule substrate of consciousness is experimentally supported. *Neuroscience of Consciousness*, 2025(1), niaf011.