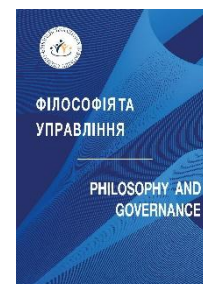




e-ISSN 3041-248X

Philosophy and Governance

<https://www.eu-scientists.com/index.php/fag>



The Phenomenon of Meta-Consciousness: An Integrative Approach

Nina Bilokopytova  ¹ *

¹ Zaporizhzhia National University (Ukraine). Doctoral Student at the Department of Philosophy, Public Administration and Social Work, PhD in Philosophy.

* **Corresponding Author**, e-mail: nina_turk@ukr.net

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

DOI:

[10.70651/3041-248X/2025.11.09](https://doi.org/10.70651/3041-248X/2025.11.09)

Copyright © 2025 by author



This is an open access journal and all published articles are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)



ABSTRACT

The article presents an interdisciplinary study of the phenomenon of meta-consciousness at the intersection of philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical tradition. The aim is to integrate analytical, phenomenological, and spiritual-hermeneutical approaches to construct a unified model of meta-consciousness as a recursive process of self-observation. The object of the research is meta-consciousness as a multilevel phenomenon of human cognition that combines neurophysiological, cognitive, phenomenological, and mystical dimensions of self-awareness. The subject of the research is the integrative structure and mechanisms of the formation of meta-consciousness, in particular, the interaction between bodily-emotional, cognitive, and hermeneutic-mystical levels of self-observation, which ensure recursive self-knowledge and the experience of presence. It is noted that in classical European philosophy, the concept of consciousness underwent significant transformations – from the Cartesian cogito as the core of subjectivity to Husserl's phenomenological description of intentionality. However, in both cases, consciousness was considered as a phenomenon centered around the knowing "I." Contemporary cognitive philosophy expands this horizon by introducing the concept of "meta-consciousness," that is, awareness of the very process of being aware. Drawing on philosophical (Husserl, Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty), cognitive-scientific (Varela, Metzinger, Thompson), and mystical (Rumi, Ibn 'Arabi, Suzuki) sources, the author proposes a conceptual framework encompassing three levels: the core of consciousness – neurophysiological mechanisms of self-observation; the bodily-emotional field – integration of sensory and affective data; the recursive level – mystical processes of self-presence. Meta-consciousness is interpreted as a fractal structure, where each layer of experience reflects and reproduces others, forming a dynamic continuum of "awareness of awareness." This model unites scientific rigor with existential depth, demonstrating that consciousness not only mirrors reality but also constitutes it through the act of presence. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the development of an integrative ontological-fractal model of meta-consciousness, which enables the synthesis of bodily, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions within a unified theoretical system.

KEYWORDS

meta-consciousness, "conscious-subconscious", fractality, recursive level, cognitive neuroscience, Sufism, "science-mysticism", integrative paradigm.



Феномен метасвідомості: інтегративний підхід

Ніна І. Білокопитова  ¹ *

¹ Запорізький національний університет (Україна). Докторантка кафедри філософії, публічного управління та соціальної роботи, канд. філос. наук.

* Автор-кореспондент, e-mail: nina_turk@ukr.net

СТАТТЯ

АНОТАЦІЯ

Дослідницька

DOI:

[10.70651/3041-248X/2025.11.09](https://doi.org/10.70651/3041-248X/2025.11.09)

Авторське право

© 2025 автора



Цей твір
ліцензовано на
умовах Ліцензії
Creative Commons
«Із Зазначенням
Авторства –
Некомерційна 4.0
Міжнародна»
(CC BY-NC 4.0).



У статті здійснено міждисциплінарне дослідження феномена метасвідомості на перетині філософії, когнітивної нейронауки та містичної традиції. Метою є інтеграція аналітичного, феноменологічного та духовно-герменевтичного підходів для побудови єдиної моделі метасвідомості як рекурсивного процесу самоспостереження. Об'єктом дослідження є метасвідомість як багаторівневий феномен людського пізнання, що поєднує нейрофізіологічні, когнітивні, феноменологічні та містичні виміри самосвідомості. Предметом дослідження є інтегративна структура та механізми формування метасвідомості, зокрема взаємодія між тілесно-емоційним, когнітивним і герменевтико-містичним рівнями самоспостереження, які забезпечують рекурсивне самопізнання та досвід присутності. Було зазначено, що у класичній європейській філософії поняття свідомості зазнало значних трансформацій, від картезіанського “*cogito*” як осереддя суб'єктивності до феноменологічного опису інтенційності у Гусерля. Проте в обох випадках свідомість розглядалась як феномен, що має центр “Я”, котре пізнає. Сучасна когнітивна філософія розширює цей горизонт, вводячи поняття «метасвідомості» (“*meta-consciousness*”), усвідомлення самого процесу усвідомлення. На основі філософських (Гусерль, Ріккорт, Мерло-Понті), когнітивно-наукових (Варела, Метцінгер, Томпсон) та містичних (Румі, Ібн Арабі, Судзукі) джерел автор пропонує концептуальну схему, що охоплює три рівні: ядро свідомості – нейрофізіологічні механізми самопізнання; тілесно-емоційне поле – інтеграцію сенсорних та афективних даних; рекурсивний рівень – містичні процеси самоприсутності. Метасвідомість розглядається як фрактальна структура, де кожен рівень досвіду відображає інші, утворюючи динамічний континуум «усвідомлення усвідомлення». Така модель поєднує наукову строгість і екзистенційну глибину, демонструючи, що свідомість не лише відображає реальність, а конститує її через акт присутності. Наукова новизна полягає у розробці інтегративної онтологічно-фрактальної моделі метасвідомості, що дозволяє поєднати тілесний, когнітивний і духовний виміри у єдину теоретичну систему.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

метасвідомість, «свідоме-підсвідоме», фрактальність, рекурсивний рівень, когнітивна нейронаука, суфізм, «наука-містика», інтегративна парадигма.

1. Introduction

In classical European philosophy, the concept of consciousness has undergone significant transformations, ranging from the Cartesian *cogito* as the locus of subjectivity to Husserl's phenomenological description of intentionality. However, in both instances, consciousness is regarded as a phenomenon possessing a central "I" that cognizes. Contemporary cognitive philosophy expands this horizon by introducing the concept of "meta-consciousness" – the awareness of the process of awareness itself [16, p. 35].

Meta-consciousness is a complex phenomenon that transcends simple cognitive self-observation. It encompasses the capacity of consciousness to reflect upon its own processes, thereby creating a multi-level structure of self-knowledge. In cognitive science, this phenomenon is frequently designated as *metacognition* [4, p. 907], whereas analytical philosophy regards it as an ontologically significant process: consciousness becomes the object of its own inquiry. In *Cartesian Meditations*, Edmund Husserl describes the possibility of recursive intentionality: "I perceive and at the same time can perceive that I perceive" [5, p. 82].

This dual structure constitutes the foundation of meta-consciousness. Contemporary research in neurophilosophy demonstrates that meta-consciousness is realized through the dynamic integration of neural networks [20; 9; 2], including the prefrontal cortex and the "default mode network" [1, p. 8722].

Mystical traditions, ranging from Sufism to Zen Buddhism, describe meta-consciousness as a state of presence in which the subject becomes the observed and the observer [15; 17, p. 102]. This demonstrates that meta-consciousness is not merely a cognitive function, but a phenomenon of being.

2. Literature Review

The investigation of meta-consciousness in philosophy begins with the phenomenological approach, which emphasizes the structure of consciousness as an event of self-observation. Husserl (1950) describes consciousness as capable of recursive intentionality: every act of perception contains the possibility of observing itself. This postulate became the foundation for subsequent analyses of meta-consciousness in the philosophy of mind and the analytic tradition. Merleau-Ponty (1945) expands the phenomenological analysis by highlighting the corporeal dimension of consciousness, allowing it to be understood as an integrated system where sensory, emotional, and cognitive aspects interact. Such a vision lays the groundwork for an interdisciplinary approach, combining philosophical analytics with cognitive and neuroscientific models. Ricoeur (1990) focuses on the hermeneutic aspect of self-interpretation, emphasizing that consciousness always interprets itself through symbolic and linguistic structures. His concept allows for the integration of cognitive and cultural dimensions into the study of meta-consciousness, demonstrating its dynamic and integrative nature.

Cognitive science describes meta-consciousness through the concept of *metacognition*, defined by Flavell [4] as the ability to be aware of one's own cognitive processes. Research by neurophilosophers (Varela; Metzinger; Damasio) [20; 9; 2] indicates that meta-consciousness emerges through the integration of neural networks, specifically the prefrontal cortex, the cingulate gyrus, and the "default mode network" [1, p. 8722]. Varela [20] proposes the concept of neurophenomenology, which combines empirical observation of neural processes with subjective experience, allowing meta-consciousness to be modeled as a lived process of self-observation. Metzinger [9] develops the theory of the *self-model of subjectivity*, wherein meta-consciousness is realized through the construction of an integrated model of oneself that supports systemic reflection and self-regulation. Damasio [2] demonstrates that meta-consciousness includes not only a cognitive but also an emotional-somatic component, which aligns with phenomenological approaches and ensures the integrity of experience.

Mystical literature offers an alternative perspective on meta-consciousness as a state of presence where consciousness is simultaneously the observer and the observed. Rumi describes the recursive nature of consciousness through the image of a mirror: "The mind becomes the mirror of the mirror – what is reflected reflects itself" [15, VI: 2920–2925]. This image of fractal recursion aligns with neurophilosophical and phenomenological models of self-observation. Ibn Arabi emphasizes that the heart acts as a mirror of Reality, reflecting being in a state of meta-consciousness: "The mirror of the heart reflects the Real; when it is polished, it reflects nothing but Him" [6]. In Zen Buddhism, the practice of awareness of breathing and movement ensures a holistic presence in the moment, which corresponds to the somatic-phenomenological dimensions of meta-consciousness [17, p. 102].

Synergetic and fractal models of consciousness (Varela [20]) allow for the integration of philosophical, cognitive, and mystical perspectives. Each approach highlights different aspects of meta-consciousness: philosophy analyzes the structure and logic of appearance; cognitive science examines neural and cognitive mechanisms; and mystical traditions focus on existential presence and spiritual experience.

The literature review demonstrates that contemporary research into meta-consciousness requires an integrative paradigm capable of combining empirical, analytical, and phenomenological approaches. The review indicates that meta-consciousness is a multidimensional phenomenon that: possesses a structural basis in phenomenology and analytical philosophy; is realized through cognitive and neural mechanisms; and reflects the mystical experience of recursive presence and self-knowledge. This review establishes the theoretical basis for the subsequent analysis of meta-consciousness in this article and substantiates the integrative paradigm for its study.

3. Problem Statement

The phenomenon of meta-consciousness, despite the multifaceted nature of research in philosophy, cognitive science, and mystical traditions, remains conceptually and empirically insufficiently elucidated. Several key issues determine the problem statement of this study. First, there is significant ontological ambiguity, as meta-consciousness is often described either as a cognitive function (metacognition) or as a mystical experience of presence, with no coherent analytical model explaining its structure, functions, and recursive nature in the context of being. Furthermore, interdisciplinary fragmentation remains a challenge; philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical traditions examine meta-consciousness in their own terms, rarely integrating one approach with another. This limits the understanding of meta-consciousness as a holistic process comprising cognitive, phenomenological, and spiritual aspects. Additionally, methodological uncertainty complicates the systematic study of the recursive processes underlying meta-consciousness, creating a need to synthesize analytical, empirical, and phenomenological approaches into a unified paradigm. Finally, while modern synergetic and neurophilosophical studies point to a fractal, recursive structure of meta-consciousness realized through embodiment, systematized models combining these aspects with mystical concepts of self-knowledge and presence are currently lacking.

The overarching aim of this article is to develop an integrative analytical model of meta-consciousness that unites ontological analysis and the phenomenology of consciousness with cognitive-neurophysiological mechanisms of self-observation, as well as mystical practices and concepts of recursive presence found in Sufism, the works of Rumi and Ibn Arabi, and Zen. To achieve this aim, the study analyzes philosophical approaches to meta-consciousness, including phenomenological and analytical concepts of recursive consciousness. It examines neurophilosophical and cognitive models explaining the mechanisms of self-observation and experience integration, and interprets mystical sources within the context of analytical analysis. Ultimately, the work seeks to develop an integrative paradigm uniting the cognitive, phenomenological, and mystical dimensions, thereby defining the ontological, functional, and recursive structure of meta-consciousness for further interdisciplinary research.

4. Methods and Materials

The study of meta-consciousness requires the integration of analytical, cognitive, and phenomenological methods. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the work, the research employs a combination of conceptual analysis, a systematic review of neurophysiological data, and the interpretation of mystical texts.

The philosophical and analytical method provides the structural and logical analysis of concepts. Within the scope of this study, conceptual analysis was applied to terms such as “meta-consciousness”, “self-observation”, and “recursive presence”, allowing for the clarification of their ontological and cognitive significance. This was complemented by a phenomenological reconstruction of the experience of consciousness based on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, ensuring an understanding of the corporeal and sensory dimensions of meta-consciousness, as well as a logical and systemic classification of levels of self-observation to form the conceptual basis for the integrative model.

Phenomenological psychology investigates the internal structure of experience – how the subject experiences their own consciousness. Among Ukrainian researchers addressing this issue, L. P. Mishchychka (2025) stands out. In the article *Self-Awareness as a Psychological Phenomenon*, it is noted that in the process of the ontogenesis of self-awareness, within the personality that rises to a new stage of development (overcoming normative and non-normative developmental crises), there occurs a self-awareness of one's thoughts, emotional states, and behavioral motives. The personality reflects upon its internal intentions, which are prompted by joint activity in the perceptual, communicative, and interactive field of relationships. Although the identity of the "I" is preserved, the personality realizes its involvement in a common "collective field", where, through others, it reflects its actions and its very presence in the space of social being. Insofar as there is no "I" without "Thou", and in the process of developing subjectivity, this becomes increasingly realized and, consequently, lived. Self-knowledge plays a key role here and is the basis for the self-regulation and self-control of the personality.

Attention was also drawn to the article by the domestic researcher M. Murashkin (2022) *"The Tangible Transcendent" and "Cessation" as a Higher State of Consciousness (Religious Studies Analysis)*. The author notes that the Higher State of Consciousness, represented in postmodernism as the internal recognition by a person of their own "other" within themselves, can be understood as a compensatory insight inherent to human nature. The Higher State of Consciousness ceases all non-essential activity, leading to a process of purification from obsolete thoughts and feelings. This purification proceeds because there exist compensatory mechanisms of the psyche inherent in human nature itself, which are capable of renewing mental processes. The concepts of "The Tangible Transcendent" and "Cessation" thus appear as property-characteristics of the same state of consciousness.

To analyze cognitive mechanisms, the research employed neurophilosophical and cognitive methods. This included a review of neurophysiological data regarding the prefrontal cortex, cingulate gyrus, and "default mode network" which ensure self-observation and behavioral regulation. Furthermore, the study synthesized cognitive models of metacognition, encompassing processes of planning, evaluating one's own actions, and integrating sensory and emotional signals. A neurophenomenological approach was also utilized to combine subjective experience and neural activity, allowing for the reconstruction of the recursive structure of meta-consciousness.

Mystical texts from Sufism and Zen Buddhism were studied through hermeneutic and interpretive analysis. This involved the textual analysis of the works of Rumi and Ibn Arabi to isolate concepts of recursive presence and the cardiac reflection of being, as well as the phenomenological interpretation of Zen practices to compare meditative experience with cognitive and corporeal mechanisms. A comparative analysis was subsequently conducted between mystical descriptions of meta-consciousness and modern cognitive models to identify common structural elements.

The integration of these diverse methods was achieved through a comparative analysis of meta-consciousness concepts across philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical texts, leading to the formation of an integrative model describing the recursive, corporeal, and cognitive structure of meta-consciousness. Theoretical constructs were verified by juxtaposing phenomenological descriptions, neurophysiological data, and mystical sources. The primary materials of the study include philosophical texts by Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, and Metzinger; neurophilosophical and cognitive sources by Varela, Damasio, Christoff, and Flavell; mystical sources such as Rumi's *Masnavi*, Ibn Arabi's *Futuhat al-Makkiyya*, and Zen texts; as well as contemporary reviews and analytical articles on interdisciplinary consciousness research. This methodological approach ensures transparency, demonstrating that the integration of analytical, cognitive, and mystical perspectives is essential for a systemic analysis of meta-consciousness, combining logical rigor with empirical reliability and phenomenological depth.

5. Results and Discussion

Philosophical Approaches. The phenomenological analysis of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty confirms that recursive self-observation is a key structural characteristic of meta-consciousness [5; 8; 10]. The integrative model aligns with this, demonstrating the interrelation between cognitive and corporeal dimensions. Edmund Husserl (1950), in *Cartesian Meditations*, describes recursive intentionality as follows: consciousness simultaneously perceives an object and observes its own act of perception. "I perceive – and at the same time can perceive that I perceive" [5, p. 82]. Merleau-Ponty, in his *Phenomenology of Perception* [10], describes embodiment as the primary horizon of experience; consciousness is not separated from the body but integrated with sensory and motor processes. This

explains how meta-consciousness is realized in the corporeal-phenomenological dimension. Ricoeur, in *Time and Narrative* [14], highlighted the hermeneutic aspect of self-interpretation: consciousness interprets itself through symbols and language, demonstrating the dynamic and integrative nature of meta-consciousness.

Cognitive Neuroscience. Research by Christoff et al. (2009) [1], Metzinger (2003) [9], and Damasio (2010) [2] reveals the neurophysiological basis of self-observation and recursive reflection. The integrative model confirms that neural integration is fundamental to the realization of meta-consciousness. Flavell (1979), in his concept of *metacognition* [4], emphasized that meta-consciousness is understood as the ability to evaluate one's own cognitive processes, focusing on control, planning, and self-verification. Varela (1991), in his work *Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem* [20], investigated the combination of neural processes and subjective experience. He views meta-consciousness as a process of self-regulation of a living system. In *Being No One* (2003) [9], regarding the theory of the *self-model of subjectivity*, Metzinger posits that consciousness creates an integrated model of itself for self-observation, underscoring the recursive character of meta-consciousness. Christoff et al. (2009), in a study of the "default mode network" [1], noted that self-observation and internal reflection are realized through the prefrontal cortex and the cingulate gyrus, identifying a correlation between the activity of these zones and the level of metacognition. In *Self Comes to Mind* (2010) [2], Damasio noted that the combination of cognitive, emotional, and bodily data is essential for forming a holistic experience of consciousness. A group of Polish scholars proposed their vision of a metacognitive model of mindfulness (2014), noting: "We adapted this concept to outline the cognitive and metacognitive processes involved in mindful information processing. Our model describes the state of mindfulness as understood and defined in the tradition initiated by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Thus, it helps to understand what happens in the consciousness of a person who has intentionally induced a state of mindfulness" [7]. In the article *Mindful Meta-Awareness* (2019), J. Dunne emphasized that while important advances have recently been made in conceptualizing meta-awareness in mindfulness, greater clarity is needed to characterize the type of meta-awareness associated with the constant monitoring of attention and affect, even when attention itself is focused on an explicit object of awareness, such as the breath [3]. In the collective research article *A Neurophenomenological Approach to Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness: Hypnosis, Meditation, and Psychedelics* (2023), it was noted that the neurophenomenological approach to studying non-ordinary states of consciousness provides a unique opportunity to rigorously investigate the content and structural aspects of consciousness as dynamic (i.e., process-oriented), together with their embeddedness in various scales including the brain, mind, body, and context [19].

Mystical Tradition. The practices and concepts of Rumi, Ibn Arabi, and Zen Buddhism demonstrate that meta-consciousness possesses existential and spiritual dimensions that transcend analytical description [15; 6; 17]. The integrative model allows for connecting these aspects with empirical and logical approaches while preserving their autonomy and profound value. The Sufi poet Rumi, in the *Masnawi*, depicts meta-consciousness as a recursive mirror: "Each reflection knows itself in the next – the sea becomes aware through the wave" [15]. This points to the fractal structure of consciousness and the unity of the observer and the object. The "Greatest Sheikh" of Sufism, Ibn Arabi, in his work *Futuhat al-Makkiyya*, noted that the heart is like a mirror of Reality: "The mirror of the heart reflects the Real; when it is polished, it reflects nothing but Him" [6]. This emphasizes the spiritual dimension of meta-consciousness and its ontological nature. In Zen Buddhist practices, Suzuki, in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* [17], wrote that practices of breath and movement awareness are conceived as the realization of corporeal and cognitive presence. The author demonstrated the integration of phenomenological experience and the practice of self-observation.

Thus, Philosophy provides the structure and logic of the appearance of meta-consciousness. Cognitive neuroscience shows the mechanisms of its realization in the brain and bodily experience. The mystical tradition illustrates the existential, recursive, and fractal nature of meta-consciousness.

The *Integrative Model* has several strengths: it explains the recursive and fractal structure of meta-consciousness, supported by both neurophysiological and mystical sources. It combines analytical rigor with empirical grounding, increasing its scientific validity. It ensures a systemic vision of meta-consciousness that accounts for cognitive, somatic, and spiritual levels. However, limitations exist: empirical verification of mystical aspects remains difficult, as spiritual experience is hard to quantify. Interdisciplinary integration requires further refinement of terminology and methods to avoid

conceptual ambiguity. The potential cultural specificity of mystical sources may limit the model's universality for other traditions.

The integrative model of meta-consciousness opens several perspectives: interdisciplinary studies can explore the relationship between neurophysiological processes and spiritual experience through experimental and phenomenological methods. Psychotherapeutic and educational applications: understanding meta-consciousness can improve methodologies for developing self-reflection and emotional regulation. Expansion of the integrative paradigm: inclusion of other mystical traditions or modern mindfulness practices for comparative analysis.

The discussion demonstrates that meta-consciousness: embodies the recursive character of consciousness, which can be described as a fractal structure of self-knowledge; combines cognitive, somatic, and spiritual dimensions realized through neurophysiological, phenomenological, and mystical mechanisms; and requires an integrative approach combining analytical philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical practices for a full understanding of its nature. Thus, the integrative model confirms the conceptual and empirical expediency of the approach laid out in the article and paves the way for further interdisciplinary research into meta-consciousness.

Research into meta-consciousness, through the integration of analytical, cognitive, and mystical approaches, allows for the isolation of structural and functional components of meta-consciousness, their interconnections, and integrative patterns.

1. Structural Components of Meta-Consciousness. Analysis of literature and mystical sources has allowed for the identification of three main levels of the structure of meta-consciousness:

- *Cognitive Level* – includes processes of self-observation, evaluation, and action planning, realized through the neural integration of the prefrontal cortex and the “default mode network” [1, p. 8722; 9, p. 239].
- *Phenomenological-Somatic Level* – ensures presence in bodily experience, integrates sensory and emotional signals, confirmed by the phenomenological descriptions of Merleau-Ponty and the neurophenomenological models of Varela.
- *Mystical/Spiritual Level* – reflects recursive presence and the unity of the observer and the object, characteristic of Sufism and Zen Buddhism.

2. Functional Characteristics of Meta-Consciousness. Identified functions include:

- *Recursive self-observation* – consciousness is capable of simultaneously observing itself and its processes.
- *Integration of cognitive, somatic, and emotional data* – ensures the integrity of experience and behavioral adaptability.
- *Fractal organization* – each level of meta-consciousness contains a reflection of other levels, creating an infinite recursive structure.
- *Hermeneutic function* – the process of constant interpretation and renewal of the meaning of experience [13].

3. Integrative Analysis. Combining the three approaches allows defining meta-consciousness as an integrative system functioning at the interface of the conscious and the subconscious, science and mysticism. Main patterns:

- *Compatibility of neurophysiological and phenomenological data* – somatic and cognitive levels interact, ensuring holistic self-perception [2; 20].
- *Recursive presence in mystical traditions* – confirms the fractal nature of meta-consciousness, where consciousness reflects itself at all levels [15; 6].
- *Holistic cognitive-philosophical model* – integrates conceptual analysis, empirical data, and phenomenological description into a single theoretical paradigm.

4. Scheme of the Integrative Model of Meta-Consciousness. Based on the results, a conceptual scheme can be proposed:

- *The Core of Consciousness* – neurophysiological mechanisms of self-observation.
- *The Body-Emotional Field* – integration of sensory and emotional data.
- *Recursive Level of Self-Knowledge* – mystical and hermeneutic processes ensuring presence and reflection.

This model (Fig. 1) allows for the explanation of the structural and functional integrity of meta-consciousness and its capacity for self-regulation and self-transcendence.

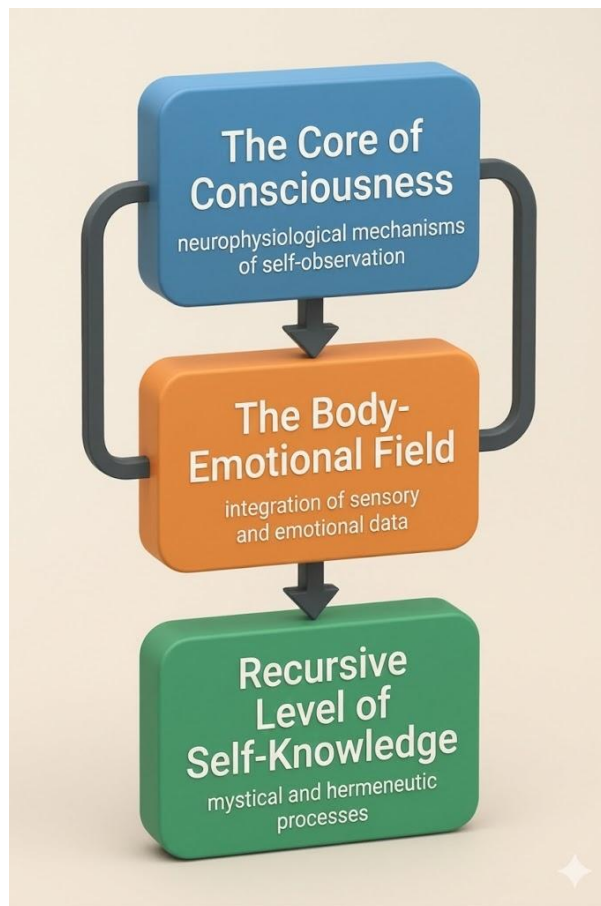


Figure 1. Schematic of the Integrative Model of Meta-Consciousness

Source: Author's development.

5. Key Conclusions of the Analysis. Meta-consciousness is a recursive and fractal system integrating cognitive, somatic, and mystical dimensions. It is realized through dynamic neural integration and subjective self-observation, confirmed by cognitive and phenomenological research. Mystical traditions (Sufism, Zen) demonstrate that meta-consciousness extends beyond analytical and cognitive description, combining spiritual experience and logical analysis. The integrative paradigm allows for reconciling disparate approaches, forming a basis for future interdisciplinary research.

6. Conclusions

The study has confirmed that meta-consciousness is a recursive system integrating cognitive, somatic, and spiritual aspects. It is realized through the interaction of neurophysiological mechanisms, subjective experience, and mystical practices, allowing for holistic self-reflection. The analysis of philosophical, cognitive, and mystical sources has shown that meta-consciousness possesses a fractal character: each level of self-observation reflects other levels, creating an infinite recursion. This conclusion is supported by both neurophysiological data and mystical concepts.

The combination of analytical philosophy, cognitive neuroscience, and mystical traditions allows for the formation of a systemic model of meta-consciousness that accounts for its ontological, cognitive, and existential nature. This model simultaneously ensures logical rigor, empirical reliability, and phenomenological depth.

The research demonstrates that practices of self-observation and presence, characteristic of Sufism and Zen Buddhism, can be juxtaposed with neurophysiological processes of metacognition, opening new perspectives for the interdisciplinary study of consciousness.

For the first time within a single analytical article, philosophical, cognitive-neurophysiological, and mystical approaches to the study of meta-consciousness have been combined, allowing it to be viewed as a holistic recursive system.

A conceptual fractal model has been proposed that describes the recursive nature of meta-consciousness, integrating cognitive, somatic, and spiritual aspects. The model explains the relationship between neural activity, subjective experience, and mystical awareness.

For the first time, a methodology has been employed that combines analytical conceptual analysis, neurophenomenology, and the hermeneutic interpretation of mystical texts, opening new pathways for the scientific investigation of consciousness and meta-consciousness.

The developed integrative model can serve as a foundation for:

- Research in cognitive science and neurophilosophy;
- The development of methodologies for self-reflection and mindfulness in psychology and education;
- Comparative studies of spiritual practices and modern mindfulness methods.

The article demonstrates that meta-consciousness is not limited to cognitive or mystical descriptions but is a holistic phenomenon combining the recursive structure of consciousness, bodily experience, and spiritual presence. The integrative paradigm proposed in the study ensures a new theoretical and methodological approach to its study and opens perspectives for interdisciplinary research.

References

1. Christoff, K., Gordon, A. M., Smallwood, J., Smith, R., & Schooler, J. W. (2009). Experience sampling during fMRI reveals default network and executive system contributions to mind wandering. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106(21), 8719–8724. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0900234106>
2. Damasio, Antonio R. (2010). *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain*. New York: Pantheon.
3. Dunne, J. D., Thompson, E., & Schooler, J. (2019). Mindful meta-awareness: sustained and non-propositional. *Current opinion in psychology*, (28), 307–311. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.07.003>
4. Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906–911. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906>
5. Husserl, E. (1950). *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to phenomenology*. Martinus Nijhoff.
6. Ibn 'Arabi. (1980). *Futuhat al-Makkiyya* (Vol. 2). Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya.
7. Jankowski, T., & Holas, P. (2014). Metacognitive model of mindfulness. *Consciousness and Cognition*, (28), 64–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2014.06.005>
8. Lambie, J. A., & Marcel, A. J. (2002). Consciousness and the varieties of emotion experience: A theoretical framework. *Psychological Review*, 109(2), 219–259. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2002-12576-002>
9. Metzinger, T. (2003). *Being no one: The self-model theory of subjectivity*. MIT Press.
10. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945). *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
11. Mishchykha, L. P. (2025). Samousvidomlennia yak psykholohichniy fenomen [Self-awareness as a psychological phenomenon]. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University. Psychology Series*, (1), 18–22. <https://doi.org/10.32782/psy-visnyk/2025.1.3> (in Ukrainian)
12. Murashkin, M. (2022). “Vidchutne transtsendente” i “Prypynennia” yak vyshchyi stan svidomosti (relihiieznachnyi analiz) [“Tangible transcendent” and “termination” as the higher state of consciousness (religious analysis)]. *Grani*, 25(1), 40–44. <https://doi.org/10.15421/17225> (in Ukrainian)
13. Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences: Essays on language, action and interpretation* (J. B. Thompson, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
14. Ricoeur, P. (1990). *Time and narrative* (Vol. 1). University of Chicago Press.
15. Rumi, J. al-Din. (2008). *Masnavi, Book VI* (J. Mojaddedi, Trans.). Penguin Classics. <https://doi.org/10.1093/owc/9780192874283.001.0001>
16. Schooler, J. W. (2002). Re-representing consciousness: Dissociations between experience and meta-consciousness. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 6(8), 339–344. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613\(02\)01949-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613(02)01949-6)
17. Suzuki, D. T. (1973). *Zen mind, beginner's mind*. Weatherhill.
18. Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind*. Harvard University Press.
19. Timmermann, C., et al. (2023). A neurophenomenological approach to non-ordinary states of consciousness: Hypnosis, meditation, and psychedelics. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(2), 139–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2022.11.006>
20. Varela, F. J. (1996). Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 3(4), 330–349. https://unstable.nl/andreas/ai/langcog/part3/varela_npmrhp.pdf