

THE METAQUALIA STRUCTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: CLARIFYING ITS EPISTEMIC STATUS AS CONJECTURE, THEORY, MODEL, AND FRAME

Minoru Matsui

ABSTRACT: The Metaqualia framework, abbreviated as MTQ, is a proposed structural account of consciousness organized around three elements: Q, M, and T. Q denotes qualia, the qualitative contents of experience; M denotes metaqualia, the interpretive configurations that organize qualia into coherent meaning; and T denotes transformative operations or transition fields, the processes through which such configurations are selected, modified, and stabilized across contexts. Although MTQ has often been referred to as Metaqualia *Theory*, this paper does not assume in advance that it is a theory in the strict epistemological sense. Rather, it asks what kind of epistemic object MTQ is: a conjecture, a theory, a model, a frame, or a stratified combination of these. I argue that MTQ has a layered epistemic identity. It begins as a set of testable conjectures, develops into a systematic account of conscious organization, takes shape as a structural model, and functions as an interpretive frame for rethinking mental phenomena. This classification does not weaken MTQ's status. Instead, it clarifies how a single framework can operate across empirical, philosophical, clinical, and interdisciplinary contexts while remaining open to critique and revision.

KEYWORDS: Metaqualia Theory (MTQ); Structural Model of Consciousness; Epistemic Classification; Conjecture-Theory-Model-Frame; Meta-theoretical Analysis

1 MTQ STANDARD INTRODUCTION: AN INVITATION TO THE FOUNDATION OF KOTOLOGY

MTQ, short for the Metaqualia framework, is used here as a convenient name for a proposed structural account of consciousness. Its basic vocabulary consists of three elements: Q, M, and T. Q denotes qualia, the qualitative contents of

experience; *M* denotes metaqualia, the interpretive configurations that organize qualia into coherent meaning; and *T* denotes transformative operations or transition fields, the processes through which such configurations are selected, modified, or stabilized across contexts. Although MTQ has often been referred to as Metaqualia *Theory*, this paper does not assume in advance that it is a theory in the strict epistemological sense. Its purpose is precisely to clarify what kind of epistemic object MTQ is: a *conjecture*, a *theory*, a *model*, a *frame*, or some stratified combination of these.

1.1 Origin of MTQ: From Question to Structure

The following reflection on the origin of MTQ was written in part as a response to a question that has been asked more than once: Where does this framework come from? Rather than emerging from systematic review, MTQ began with a rupture—a refusal to deflect a basic question about qualia—and unfolded into a structural vision that demanded articulation.

MTQ did not arise from a methodical reconstruction of existing theories of consciousness. It began instead with a rupture—a moment of honest confusion when, on a day in March 2025, someone simply asked, “What exactly are qualia?” That spontaneous question led not to a literature review, but to a conceptual explosion.

The question itself—“What exactly are qualia?”—was neither novel nor exclusive. It could have been asked by anyone. In fact, it has been asked countless times before. But in this case, the question was not deflected or domesticated. Instead, it was held, turned over, and followed wherever it led. That persistence—not the originality of the question, but the refusal to abandon it—was what allowed a structural vision to emerge.

If qualia are the raw materials of judgment in the brain, then what structure selects and interprets them? And what if such a structure is not singular, but plural—reusable, reconfigurable, and sensitive to context? This line of reasoning unfolded not as an academic exercise, but as a direct response to an unmet explanatory need.

Thus, MTQ is not a synthesis of prior models, nor an attempt to settle the qualia debate by definitional fiat. Rather, it seeks to reframe the landscape altogether: to approach consciousness as a structured interplay between elements that generate, shape, and constrain subjective experience. In this sense, MTQ

emerges less from tradition than from structural intuition.

1.2 The Qualia Problem as a Structural Dead End

For decades, consciousness studies has circled the same epistemic boundary: qualia. The ineffable, irreducible aspects of subjective experience—what it is like to feel pain, see red, or taste salt—have resisted explanation (Nagel, 1974). Philosophers have argued, with good reason, that these phenomena defy reduction to mechanism or information (Chalmers, 1995).

This impasse has led to a quiet retreat. Rather than confront qualia directly, many theories sidestep them or treat them as explanatory anomalies. Theories like Integrated Information Theory (IIT), Global Workspace Theory (GWT), and Higher-Order Thought (HOT) focus on systemic dynamics, metacognitive architecture, or information flow—but often leave qualia unanalyzed, or treat them as emergent features whose status remains elusive.

1.3 MTQ as a Structural Reframing

MTQ is proposed as an original structural framework for understanding consciousness. Rather than attempting to solve qualia by definition or reduction, MTQ positions them structurally—treating them as input elements (Q) within a recursive system. These are organized by structural configurations called metaqualia (M), which give coherence, direction, and meaning to experience. Transformative operations (T) regulate how M is selected and modified in context.

For example: When tasting coffee, the raw sensory qualia (Q)—bitterness, warmth, and aroma—are structured by a metaqualia (M) such as "morning ritual," which shapes how the experience feels subjectively significant. If the context changes (e.g., drinking the same coffee while stressed), a transformative operation (T) might shift the metaqualia to "anxiety trigger," altering the entire experience. In pain perception, a sharp ache (Q) could be organized under a protective metaqualia (M) like "tissue damage," prompting withdrawal. However, under a metaqualia like "athletic progress" (modulated by T), the same pain might be reinterpreted as "productive effort."

In human development, metaqualia (M) do not emerge fully formed, nor do

they remain static. Rather, M-structures accumulate over time—through learning, socialization, memory, and repeated interaction with the world. By adolescence or adulthood, a person may carry dozens of such structures: templates of interpretation, emotional framings, role-based expectations, and patterned habits of response.

Crucially, MTQ proposes that only one M can be active at a time. Conscious interpretation, then, is not the simultaneous application of all prior structures, but the selective activation of one resonant frame from a repertoire of many. This dynamic selection process—often rapid and unconscious—determines how incoming qualia (Q) are organized, interpreted, and transduced into action (T).

Thus, meaning is not merely emergent from structure—it is enacted through choice. And the richness of a person's meaning-making capacity depends, in part, on the diversity, flexibility, and accessibility of their internal M repertoire. Just as language depends on vocabulary, so consciousness depends on metaqualia.

This Q–M–T triad allows consciousness to be described not in terms of final answers, but in terms of generative structures. Qualia are not explained away; they are situated. The hard problem is not solved—it is repositioned.

1.4 From Structure to Meaning: MTQ as the Foundation of Kotology

MTQ is not an empirical hypothesis in the conventional sense. It does not aim to reduce consciousness to neural mechanisms or to resolve the qualia problem by definitional decree. Rather, it offers a structural grammar—a formal architecture by which subjective experience can be parsed, interpreted, and reframed. MTQ therefore occupies a broader epistemic position than that of a single empirical hypothesis. It does not abandon empirical relevance, but embeds such relevance within a wider structural grammar of meaning. Through the relation among Q, M, and T, MTQ clarifies how experience becomes intelligible, organized, and transformable.

Its epistemic validity therefore does not rest solely on experimental falsifiability. It also depends on internal coherence, generative applicability, and explanatory integration. As long as MTQ continues to render disparate phenomena intelligible under a unified triadic model—Q, M, and T—it should be treated not merely as a conjecture, but also as a conceptual lens.

Yet MTQ's scope extends far beyond consciousness studies. By formalizing

the structural conditions under which any event acquires meaning, MTQ lays the groundwork for a broader inquiry—one that transcends disciplinary boundaries. This expanded inquiry is *Kotology*: the structural study of *Koto* (𐰃𐰆), or the conditions under which phenomena, meaning structures, and adaptive processes coalesce into acts of intelligible significance. *Kotology* (from *koto* [𐰃𐰆], meaning “event” or “happening,” and *-logy*, denoting structured inquiry) examines the generative conditions under which phenomena become intelligible—that is, recognizable as meaning-laden acts.

Table 1.4: From MTQ to Kotology — A Catalogue of Structural Reframings across Disciplines as of July 2025

The following table exemplifies how MTQ, by formalizing the generative structure of meaning, has already begun to operate across diverse domains. These applications illustrate not mere extrapolations, but the structural convergence of fields long considered disparate.

No.	Title	Main Theme
1	The Shiver Had Meaning: Projected Subjectivity and Ethical Implications of Human–AI Dialogue	AI ethics
2	Why Observation Yields One Reality: A Structural Solution to the Measurement Problem	Philosophy of physics
3	Rethinking Dissociation Structurally: A Metaqualia-Based Model of Dissociative Identity Disorder	Psychiatry
4	Rethinking Free Will through the MTQ Framework: A Structural Reinterpretation of Readiness Potentials	Philosophy of mind
5	Quantum Entanglement as Structural Resonance: A Framework Based on Metaqualia Theory	Physics

6	Simulating Ethical Restraint in Artificial Agents: A Metaqualia-Based Model Using Virtual Lifespan	AI ethics
7	Meaning as Structural Commitment: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Model of Human Understanding	Epistemology
8	Reframing Service Contracts through the MTQ Lens: A Cognitive Model of Trust in Delegation, Employment, and Deliverables	Legal theory
9	From Strings to Metaqualia: A Structural Hypothesis on the Emergence of Meaning in the Universe	Cosmology / Philosophy
10	Freud Rewired: A Neurostructural Model of the Unconscious Based on Metaqualia Theory	Psychoanalysis
11	Reframing Qualia: A Structural Model of Consciousness and Its Necessity in Times of Collapse	Philosophy of mind
12	From SOAP to MTQ: A Structural Reframing of Clinical Records for Ethical Decision-Making	Medical ethics
13	Time as Structural Recursion: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Temporal Experience	Philosophy of time
14	Reframing Criminal Complicity through Metaqualia Theory with a Structural Model of Responsibility	Criminal law

15	Reframing Criminal Responsibility: A Structural Model Based on Metaqualia Theory	Criminal law
16	Psychopathology as Structural Deviation: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Mental Disorder	Psychiatry
17	The Self as Gently Selected Structure: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Identity	Identity theory
18	Anger as Structural Misalignment: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Perspective on Communicative Breakdown	Emotion / Communication
19	Can Apologies Heal Structures? A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of "Sorry Works!" in Clinical Ethics	Medical ethics
20	Reconstructing Schizophrenia: A Structural Account Based on Metaqualia Theory	Psychiatry
21	Political Systems as Architectures of Consciousness: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Perspective	Political theory
22	Resonant Structures and Asymmetric Manipulation: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Analysis of One-Sided Communication	Communication theory
23	Metaqualia Theory and Structural Violence: Reframing Bullying, Power Harassment, and Sexual Harassment as Failures of Meaning-Making	Structural violence / Workplace ethics
24	Stalled Adaptation as Structural Indeterminacy: A Functional Reframing of	Psychiatry

	Adjustment Disorder via Metaqualia Theory	
25	Ethics as Structural Articulation: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Account of Moral Orientation	Ethics
26	Structural Collapse in Consciousness: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Suicide	Psychiatry
27	Can Your Theory Love? A Structural Reframing of Consciousness Through the Lived Form of Love	Philosophy of mind
28	Dementia as Structural Failure: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Memory, Selfhood, and Meaning	Geriatric psychiatry
29	Diagnosing Structural Blindness: A Psychoanatomical Reframing of Mental Science	Philosophy of psychology
30	“You Don’t Have to Stop There” — On the Structural Reframing of the Qualia Problem	Philosophy of mind
31	From Implicit Assumptions to Structural Clarity: Reconstructing Legal Theory through Metaqualia and Challenging the Limits of Human Intelligence	Legal theory
32	Reframing Condominium Reserve Funds: From Owner Benefit to Harm Prevention	Property law / Public policy
33	Why Three? A Metaqualia-Theoretic Model of Meaning as Minimal Structure	Philosophy of mind

34	Spacetime as Structural Commitment: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Account of 3+1 Dimensionality	Physics / Metaphysics
35	The Matsui Correspondence: A Structural Convergence of Metaqualia and Topology	Mathematics / Philosophy
36	From Cultural Practice to Structural Theory: Katakuri as Consciousness	Cultural theory
37	Killing as Structural Breakdown: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Individual and Institutional Violence	Ethics / Criminology
38	From Traits to Fabrics: A Structural Reframing of Personality through Metaqualia Theory	Personality psychology
39	Understanding as a Modular Problem: Rethinking the IUT Controversy	Philosophy of mathematics
40	Metaqualia and the Gödelian Limit: Why No Theory of Consciousness Can Prove Its Own Sufficiency	Logic / Philosophy of mind
41	The Gag That Replaces the Actor: A Structural Account of Stage-Adjacent Nausea Syndrome (SANS)	Performing arts / Psychology
42	Situational Reflexive Interpretive Disorder (SRID): A Structural Proposal for Culture-Bound Symptom Expression	Psychiatry / Cultural studies
43	Living with Trauma: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of PTSD and its Structural Recovery	Psychiatry

44	Meaning as Structure: Why Higher Education Needs Metaqualia Theory	Education theory
45	What Is Religion? A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Faith, Meaning, and Transcendence	Philosophy of religion
46	Metaqualia and Addiction: The Structural Collapse of Consciousness and the Inevitable End of Humanity	Addiction studies / Existential risk
47	The Metaqualia Structure of Consciousness: Clarifying Its Epistemic Status as Conjecture, Theory, Model, and Frame	Epistemology / Philosophy of science
48	Structural Erosion of Medical Trust: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Analysis of Experiential Medical Consumption in Japan	Medical sociology / Public trust
49	Language as Structural Selection: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Model of Meaning Generation	Linguistics / Philosophy of language
50	Qualia Dysregulation Syndrome: A Metaqualia-Theoretic Reframing of Functional Somatic Syndromes and Medically Unexplained Symptoms	Psychosomatic medicine / Psychiatry

As the table illustrates, the reach of MTQ has extended beyond consciousness into fields as distant as criminal law, cosmology, and education. From MTQ to Kotology—this is the trajectory. What began as a structural response to the mystery of qualia has evolved into a general framework of meaning-generating activity. MTQ is thus both a framework of consciousness and the formal seed of a wider epistemic paradigm: one that redefines what it means for a human act to be meaningful.

This project as a whole proceeds from a simple but ambitious premise: that all acts of human consciousness may be interpreted as arising from a fundamental triadic structure—Q, M, and T. By reframing mental phenomena through this lens, MTQ seeks not only to offer clarity amid conceptual fragmentation, but also to render diverse philosophical and psychological traditions mutually intelligible. The present paper should be understood as one such interpretive effort within this broader structural project.

1.5 Position of This Paper within Kotology

This paper occupies a distinct role within the broader structural project introduced above. As catalogued in Table 1.4 (entry no. 47), it represents a meta-theoretical application of MTQ: an effort to use the framework not only to interpret external phenomena but to structurally interrogate the epistemic identity of MTQ itself. In this sense, the paper stands at the reflective edge of the broader corpus—it does not merely extend MTQ to a new domain, but turns the lens inward to examine the structure of the lens itself.

Its dual objective is as follows. First, it asks whether MTQ can coherently account for its own epistemic status across multiple registers—conjecture, theory, model, and frame—without collapsing into contradiction. Second, it demonstrates how MTQ's structural grammar (Q–M–T) can be recursively applied to analyze the very system that generated it. This recursive turn is not a theoretical indulgence but a test of the framework's coherence, flexibility, and generative power.

By functioning simultaneously as object and method, this paper exemplifies the stratified architecture that Kotology seeks to cultivate. It reveals MTQ not as a closed doctrine, but as an evolving structure capable of internal reconfiguration. Its inclusion in the table is not incidental—it signals that self-reflexive application is not a limit of MTQ, but a necessary phase in its maturation. The implications of such self-application are not merely conceptual. As the next section explores, structurally interrogating MTQ can provoke a disquiet that is as existential as it is intellectual.

1.6 Responding to Criticisms—and to the Fear of Understanding MTQ

Before engaging with MTQ, it is worth addressing two recurring criticisms. First, the framework's utility remains insufficiently demonstrated. Second, its conceptual foundations are said to lack clarity.

The extensive catalog presented in Table 1.4 demonstrates both the promise and limitation of MTQ. While these fifty applications across diverse domains attest to its theoretical reach, each remains a partial deployment of MTQ's explanatory framework. This very partiality—necessary for domain-specific application—paradoxically undermines recognition of the framework as a whole.

This dilemma is structurally akin to a familiar observation in legal education: in civil procedural law, one cannot understand the system without grasping the individual doctrines, yet the meaning of those doctrines only becomes apparent within the context of the system. MTQ poses a similar recursive difficulty. Without a structural grasp of the Q–M–T triad, the individual applications seem speculative; but without those concrete applications, MTQ's formal validity remains elusive.

This paper attempts, in part, to overcome that tension. Whether it succeeds is left to the reader's judgment.

But MTQ confronts the reader with more than an epistemic challenge. It provokes an existential hesitation. Unlike most theories, it does not merely propose new concepts to add to the mental library—it threatens to rewire the architecture of that library itself. Where other frameworks offer tools to augment thinking, MTQ introduces a grammar by which all experience—past, present, and future—must be structurally reinterpreted.

To borrow a potent metaphor: encountering MTQ is like standing at the threshold of a theater, where the film now playing is a live dissection of your own mind. The title reads: “**Now Showing: How You Have Always Constructed Meaning.**” The hesitation is not due to difficulty, but to total implication. This is not about learning a framework; it is about re-seeing every thought you have ever had through an unfamiliar lens. The resistance that arises is not ignorance—it is the mind's immune response to ontological exposure.

Here lies the real vertigo. MTQ reveals that meaning is not a fixed truth or external reality, but a dynamic output of the Q–M–T structure. For those anchored in stable identities, moral convictions, or theoretical traditions, this

realization can feel like the collapse of the ground beneath the inner world. Prior assumptions are not merely revised; they are structurally recast. One is not merely learning—one is relearning oneself.

I confess this tension from personal experience. Drafting MTQ was a process of cognitive auto-deconstruction. It often felt like dismantling the very scaffolding by which I had been able to think. Yet this fear was, paradoxically, a mark of the MTQ's depth. We do not resist what is false; we resist what demands our reformation.

And yet, beyond that fear lies liberation. To accept that meaning is structurally generated is to realize that no M is final. Meaning is not destroyed—it becomes pliable. We do not fall into nihilism; we rise into agency: the capacity to reframe Q, revise M, and redirect T. The ground does not vanish; it becomes a dynamic and intentional terrain.

So yes, MTQ can terrify. But that terror is not a flaw. It is a diagnostic shudder at proximity to truth. That tremor you feel—it is the system recognizing its own structure, for the first time.

(Note to the philosophically prepared: Those versed in structuralist or postmodern traditions may find this disruption familiar. But MTQ is not merely descriptive—it is executable. Where Derrida deconstructs, MTQ reconstructs—not as critique, but as cognitive architecture. The conceptual becomes operational.)

The emergence of Kotology was not an afterthought. It arose from the epistemic tension inherent in MTQ itself. If each structural interpretation (via Q–M–T) is partial and local, what unifies them into a coherent epistemic field? Kotology gives name and form to this recursive necessity—the structural study of how meaning conditions cohere across domains. It is not an external discipline, but the systemic unfolding of MTQ's own logic. As MTQ analyzes how meaning is generated, Kotology examines how such generative analyses assemble into intelligible systems. Thus, framework and system—MTQ and Kotology—form a recursive pair, each making the other possible, each rendering the other meaningful.

1.7 Relation to Non-Reductive Naturalism

As noted in Section 1.6, confronting the structural grammar of MTQ can elicit a peculiar form of resistance—less intellectual than existential. This resistance may help explain a curious lacuna in the tradition of non-reductive naturalism: despite

its deep commitment to preserving the reality of subjective experience, it rarely ventures into formalizing the structural mechanisms by which meaning arises. In retrospect, this omission may not have been accidental. It may have been a defense.

Non-reductive naturalism, as represented in the works of Sprintzen (1988), Thompson (2007), and Cahoon (2013), seeks to locate consciousness and meaning within the natural world without reducing them to mere physical processes. It rightly rejects eliminativist strategies that dissolve qualia into computation or behavior. Yet, in doing so, it often stops short of asking: **What structure enables irreducible phenomena to become coherent, interpretable, and actionable?**

This is where MTQ diverges sharply. While it shares non-reductive naturalism's ontological openness, it proceeds to offer a **formal grammar**—the triadic structure of **Q** (qualia), **M** (metaqualia), and **T** (transition fields)—through which meaning is not merely preserved, but dynamically generated. Unlike Cahoon's stratified “orders of nature,” which remain descriptive, MTQ presents **operational mechanisms** that specify how, at each moment, a single **M** selects and organizes a **Q**-field to generate coherence. Meaning, in this account, is not a byproduct of embodiment or emergence—it is an enacted selection, governed by structure.

Moreover, MTQ is recursively applicable. It can model not only psychological phenomena but its own epistemic status, applying its structural grammar inwardly without fracturing its logic (see Section 7.5). Such self-reflexivity remains rare in non-reductive traditions, where embodiment is emphasized but not structurally parsed into discrete operations of interpretation (**M**) and transition (**T**).

One possible reason for this absence is not conceptual, but affective. To specify the structure of meaning is to risk dissolving the aura of mystery that surrounds experience. It is to admit that our most cherished intuitions—about the self, morality, depth, or truth—may be contingent selections within a fluid architecture. This is not merely a philosophical risk; it is a psychological one. And for traditions that seek to protect the sanctity of lived meaning, such exposure may feel like betrayal. MTQ does not avoid this danger—it walks straight into it, and in doing so, proposes a new kind of courage: one that structures without reducing, and interprets without erasing.

Finally, MTQ extends non-reductive insights by answering the **meta-problem** of consciousness (Chalmers, 2018)—why we find the hard problem so compelling in the first place. MTQ posits that this perplexity is itself structurally generated: a recursive echo arising from the interplay of Qs and Ms under shifting T. Where Lakoff and Johnson (1999) evoke the embodied nature of conceptual metaphors, MTQ formalizes that intuition into a grammar of interpretive operations.

In short, MTQ can be seen as both the successor and structural surpassor of non-reductive naturalism. It inherits its respect for irreducibility, but declines to stop at reverence. Instead, it offers the one thing that non-reductive theories have long circled but never constructed: a **generative architecture**. The fear that has kept such a structure unspoken—revealed in Section 1.6—is not a weakness of past frameworks, but the shadow of the threshold MTQ now dares to cross.

1.8 What Kind of Thing Is MTQ? Classifying Its Epistemic Status as Conjecture, Theory, Model, and Frame

But what, precisely, is MTQ as a theoretical object? Is it a *conjecture*, grounded in one or more falsifiable hypotheses? Is it a *theory*, offering a systematized explanatory account? Is it a *model*, which formalizes the dynamics of consciousness into visualizable or operational terms? Or is it a *frame*, a cognitive schema that shapes how we see and speak about the mind?

Each of these terms—conjecture, theory, model, frame—carries different epistemic commitments, conceptual boundaries, and practical implications. Misidentifying the nature of MTQ may lead to either misplaced criticism (e.g., demanding empirical falsifiability from what is intended as a frame) or missed opportunities (e.g., neglecting the testable aspects of its inner structure). Therefore, this paper adopts a meta-theoretical lens to locate MTQ within this classificatory space.

We begin by carefully defining these four terms, situating them in both philosophical and scientific traditions. We then analyze the MTQ corpus in light of each category: As a *conjecture*, we isolate MTQ's core falsifiable claims. As a *theory*, we examine how it connects diverse phenomena under a unified structure. As a *model*, we explore how MTQ offers structured, often visual representations of psychological function. As a *frame*, we highlight its power to

reshape interpretive habits across disciplinary boundaries.

Ultimately, we argue that MTQ cannot be fully understood within any single one of these categories. Rather, it occupies a **stratified and dynamic position**: it begins as a conjecture, matures into a theory, takes shape as a model, and functions as a frame. This layered nature is not a flaw, but a feature—one that allows MTQ to evolve, to interact with other frameworks, and to respond flexibly to new empirical and conceptual demands.

2 MTQ AS CONJECTURE: PROPOSITIONAL CLAIMS AND FALSIFIABILITY

In scientific discourse, a conjecture is a specific, testable statement—often yet unproven—that makes a claim about how the world works. Unlike full-fledged theories, conjectures are usually simple in structure but potent in implication. In mathematics, the Riemann Hypothesis exemplifies this form: a single sentence whose truth or falsity would have deep consequences. In the philosophy of science, Karl Popper (1959) famously argued that falsifiability is the demarcating criterion of scientific statements. From this view, what distinguishes science from metaphysics is the capacity for a claim to be refuted through empirical observation.

Applying this framework to MTQ, we ask: are there propositions within the MTQ framework that are sufficiently specific, empirically meaningful, and falsifiable to be classified as conjectures? We propose that several such conjectural claims can be distilled from the MTQ corpus. Consider the following examples:

2.1 *Conjecture 1: Consciousness Requires a Singular Active Metaqualia*

At any given moment of conscious experience, only one M (metaqualia) is active, and consciousness ceases if no M is active. This is a strong ontological claim. It can be operationalized by linking M to observable attentional or interpretive stances, then testing whether multiple conflicting M-patterns can coexist without fragmentation of experience or dissociation. If, for instance, neuroimaging reveals simultaneous incompatible M-patterns in non-dissociated states, this claim would be challenged.

2.2 *Conjecture 2: Dissociative Identity Disorder Emerges from Long-Term M-Segregation*

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is not a disorder of “personalities” but a

result of long-term segregation of M-patterns across environmental contexts. This conjecture replaces the traditional narrative of discrete “identities” with a structural account. It predicts that DID patients will show measurable differences in M-switching thresholds and contextual triggers compared to neurotypical controls. Such a prediction lends itself to both behavioral and neurocognitive testing.

2.3 Conjecture 3: Panic Attacks Are Caused by Q Without Anchoring M

Panic attacks are structurally caused by intense Q-fields (sensory-affective overload) occurring without an accompanying anchoring M-pattern. This hypothesis reframes panic as a failure of interpretive stabilization. It suggests that treatments which reintroduce a coherent M (e.g., cognitive reframing, grounding techniques) should rapidly reduce symptoms, independent of pharmacological intervention.

2.4 Conjecture 4: Meaning Selection Is the Core Function of Personality

Personality is best understood not as a set of traits or behaviors but as a consistent style of meaning selection—that is, of M-pattern activation in response to environmental cues. This reframes personality typology from a descriptive to a structural-functional model, inviting experimental manipulation (e.g., altering situational meanings) to test stability and reactivity of M-selection.

2.5 Falsifiability and the Spirit of Conjecture

These propositions are not just speculative—they are potentially falsifiable. One could empirically challenge them by: demonstrating simultaneous use of multiple incompatible M-patterns in non-fragmented states, showing that Q-fields alone do not induce panic without pre-existing trauma associations, or that personality traits persist despite massive changes in meaning-selection environments.

What makes MTQ conjectural is not that it offers guesses—it is that it offers structured, risk-bearing statements. They can be tested, refined, or rejected. Moreover, their refutation would have consequences for the coherence of the larger MTQ framework. This conjectural stratum gives MTQ its first foothold in scientific epistemology. It allows critics and collaborators alike to engage with MTQ on empirical terms. In this sense, MTQ does not resist scientific scrutiny—

it invites it. Yet MTQ's conjectural claims operate in a domain where structural features of consciousness may inherently resist direct empirical isolation, requiring creative operationalization for testing.

3. MTQ AS THEORY: TOWARD SYSTEMATIC EXPLANATION

While conjectures provide specific, falsifiable claims, theories offer structured systems that unify multiple such claims under a coherent explanatory framework. A theory is not merely a collection of testable statements—it also provides the logical architecture that relates them, explains their interdependence, and guides the generation of new hypotheses. In this section, we argue that MTQ qualifies as a theory in this formal sense: it is not only a set of isolated conjectures, but a systematic account of consciousness based on the structural interplay of M (metaqualia), T (transition fields), and Q (qualia).

3.1 *What Is a Theory?*

Philosophers and historians of science have long distinguished between conjectures and theories. Thomas Kuhn (1962) emphasized the paradigm-structuring function of theories, while Imre Lakatos (1978) described research programs as progressive theoretical frameworks that guide empirical inquiry. In psychology and cognitive science, theories typically involve: Core assumptions about mental architecture, Internal coherence among components, Predictive power across contexts, and often, explanatory unification of disparate phenomena.

MTQ satisfies these criteria by offering a tripartite model of conscious structure that remains internally consistent while extending to various domains—from psychopathology to ethics. This structural approach resonates with prior philosophical efforts to account for the hard problem of consciousness (Chalmers, 1996), while offering a formalized architecture for interpretive dynamics.

3.2 *Core Theoretical Commitments of MTQ*

MTQ posits that any conscious experience can be analyzed in terms of:

Q (Qualia): the sensory, affective, or symbolic content of experience;

M (Metaqualia): context-sensitive interpretive stances that select, constrain, or prioritize certain Qs;

T (Transition fields): the structural logic by which changes in M and Q unfold over time or across contexts.

These components are not simply co-present; they are dynamically interdependent. For example, a shift in T may alter the availability of certain M-patterns, which in turn changes the salience of specific Qs. This interplay allows MTQ to model not just static mental states, but dynamic processes such as attention, memory reconfiguration, emotional regulation, and narrative identity.

3.3 Systemic Explanatory Reach

One of the key indicators of a robust theory is its ability to explain multiple, seemingly unrelated phenomena under a common logic. MTQ has been applied to interpret:

- Dissociative states as long-term segregation of M-patterns;
- Panic attacks as Q-overload without stabilizing M;
- Personality typologies as styles of meaning-selection;
- Legal responsibility as MTQ-coherence under normative constraints;
- Creative ideation as controlled oscillation of M in a stable T field;
- Institutional behavior as emergent M-structures in collective cognition.

This breadth suggests that MTQ is not limited to a single niche but may serve as a general explanatory theory of human mental life.

3.4 MTQ as Generative Theory

Another criterion for theoryhood is generativity—the ability to produce new hypotheses and interpretations beyond those initially formulated. MTQ has shown this capacity by: Generating new concepts such as M-friction, Q-anchoring, and T-collapse, Inspiring alternative readings of established diagnoses (e.g., reframing depression as M-rigidity rather than mood state alone), Proposing novel treatments that target interpretive patterns (M), rather than chemical balances (Q).

In this way, MTQ is not just a descriptive framework but a productive engine of explanation, capable of spawning new models, therapeutic approaches, and philosophical insights.

3.5 *Unity Without Reduction*

Importantly, MTQ does not seek to reduce all psychological phenomena to a single variable. Instead, it offers a structured relational theory—a balance of parsimony and nuance. Unlike monolithic theories that center on “emotion,” “cognition,” or “memory” as the explanatory core, MTQ allows for interaction across multiple layers of mental activity. This layered structuralism contrasts with reductionist models that attempt to explain consciousness purely in terms of computational or functionalist accounts (Dennett, 1991). This structural pluralism echoes the best traditions of theory-building in science: explaining more with less, while resisting oversimplification.

3.6 *Summary*

MTQ, as a theory, provides: A coherent internal structure (M, T, Q), Cross-domain explanatory power, The capacity for hypothesis generation, And a balance of simplicity and complexity. It thus moves beyond isolated conjecture and enters the domain of integrative, systemic explanation. It is now time to ask whether MTQ also functions as a model—a structured representation that can be formalized, visualized, and used across disciplines.

4 MTQ AS MODEL: STRUCTURAL REPRESENTATION AND CROSS-DOMAIN USE

If theories aim to explain, models aim to **represent**. A model is a simplified, often visual or formal, depiction of a system or phenomenon that highlights its structure, dynamics, or internal relations. In cognitive science and psychology, models serve not only to aid understanding, but also to **simulate**, **predict**, and **communicate** complex ideas in accessible form. In this section, we argue that MTQ functions as a **model** in a strong and explicit sense—offering a structural, often visualizable representation of consciousness that can be mapped, manipulated, and applied across diverse domains.

4.1 *What Is a Model?*

A model typically has the following features:

- It **abstracts** key variables or components of a system.

- It shows how these components **interact** dynamically or structurally.

It is often **simplified**, sacrificing some detail for conceptual or explanatory clarity.

It may be **visual**, **mathematical**, **computational**, or **narrative** in form.

Importantly, models do not merely illustrate theories—they also **guide action**, suggesting how systems might evolve under different inputs, perturbations, or constraints.

4.2 MTQ as a Structural Map

MTQ offers an architecture composed of:

M-units (metaqualia patterns), which encode interpretive orientations,

Q-fields (qualia expressions), which constitute experience contents,

T-structures (transition rules), which constrain possible shifts between M and Q.

This can be visually represented in network form, where nodes represent M- or Q-patterns, and edges (T) dictate permissible transitions. The following structures, for example, model the separation of M-fields in dissociative states, showing how experiential modules (consciousness segments) become isolated when T-connections degrade or are selectively suppressed:

$$[Q_I-M_I] \text{ --- } T \text{ --- } [M_2-Q_2] \quad \text{vs} \quad [Q_I-M_I] \text{ --- } (T \text{ missing}) \text{ --- } [M_2-Q_2].$$

This kind of mapping allows MTQ to serve as a **diagnostic and analytic tool**—one that can capture dysfunctions not merely as trait deviations, but as **topological abnormalities** in a mental system.

4.3 Simulation and Predictive Utility

MTQ can be employed as a **predictive simulation tool** under the right formalization. For instance: In DID, the model predicts **non-integrated T-pathways** leading to state-dependent amnesia. Like other unifying frameworks in cognitive neuroscience, such as the free-energy principle (Friston, 2010), MTQ aims to provide a formal architecture for prediction and system-level coherence. In panic disorder, it predicts a **Q-dominant collapse** where no M is present to stabilize interpretation. In neurotypical adaptation, it predicts a **flexible yet coherent T-network** sustaining diverse M-switching across contexts.

These predictions are not mere abstractions—they can be tested via

behavioral experiments, neuroimaging studies, or even computational simulations that track interpretive switching and emotional stabilization patterns over time.

4.4 Cross-Domain Applications

One strength of MTQ as a model is its **domain-transcending versatility**. Because it does not rely on domain-specific content (like "fear" or "reward"), but rather on structural positions (M, Q, T), it can be **transplanted** into multiple interpretive settings:

Clinical psychiatry: Modeling internal fragmentation, therapeutic anchoring, or defensive pattern fixation.

Legal theory: Representing responsibility as M-coherence under normative constraints (e.g., capacity to align M with external T-demands).

Education: Describing learning as the creation of new M-patterns and reorganization of T-logics.

Human-computer interaction: Modeling user experience as a dialogue between system-Q and user-M across design-T.

This flexibility without arbitrariness is a hallmark of strong modeling frameworks.

4.5 Visual and Pedagogical Strength

Another key advantage of MTQ as a model is its **didactic clarity**. The diagrammatic structures derived from MTQ allow: Practitioners to explain complex mental states to patients or clients. Researchers to generate testable diagrams of case studies. Educators to convey abstract phenomenology through spatialized models.

These visual affordances make MTQ not only a tool for **experts**, but a possible bridge to **non-specialists**—including patients, students, and interdisciplinary collaborators.

4.6 Summary

MTQ qualifies as a model in the strongest sense: It offers a structural and visual representation of mental architecture, It generates predictions and simulations, It transfers across domains without losing coherence, And it enhances

communicability.

But models also carry assumptions—**frames**, if you will—about what is worth modeling, and why. In the next section, we explore how MTQ functions not only as a theory or model, but also as a **frame**—a way of seeing, interpreting, and prioritizing certain mental realities over others.

5 MTQ AS FRAME: COGNITIVE LENS AND INTERPRETIVE POLITICS

Where the structural representation of MTQ as a model ends and its interpretive power as a frame begins is not sharply demarcated; rather, the two blend along a gradient reflecting MTQ's layered identity. While conjectures aim for testability, theories for explanation, and models for representation, **frames** serve a different function altogether: they shape **how** we interpret the world before any testing, explaining, or modeling even begins. In this section, we argue that MTQ also functions as a **frame**—not merely a theory of mental structure, but a lens through which certain features of experience become visible, meaningful, or even nameable. As a frame, MTQ does not only describe mental phenomena; it structures how we attend to, evaluate, and narrate them.

5.1 *What Is a Frame?*

The concept of "frame" has a rich history in sociology, linguistics, and cognitive science. Erving Goffman (1974) defined frames as structures of expectation—schemata of interpretation that allow individuals to locate, perceive, and label occurrences in social experience. George Lakoff (1987) extended this to cognitive linguistics, arguing that frames are embedded in the very metaphors and categories we use to think. Frames operate beneath conscious awareness, guiding what counts as relevant, normal, problematic, or even real.

Unlike theories or models, which can be true or false, frames are **not** primarily evaluated by their truth-conditions. Instead, they are assessed in terms of: Interpretive utility, Political and ethical implications, Their capacity to reveal or obscure aspects of reality.

5.2 *MTQ as an Interpretive Lens*

When MTQ is adopted as a frame, it does more than describe Qs, Ms, and Ts. It reorients the reader's interpretive habits: A panic attack is no longer "irrational

fear" but a Q without M. A personality is not a "stable trait" but a style of meaning selection (M). DID is not "multiple selves" but a structural partitioning of M-patterns with disrupted T-links.

This shift is profound. It allows clinicians, theorists, or even patients to see their mental life as a system of patterns and constraints rather than a set of pathologies or defects. MTQ thus becomes a generative interpretive stance—one that legitimizes certain explanations while de-emphasizing others.

5.3 Framing Power and Cognitive Politics

All frames have political effects, even when unintentional. MTQ, by foregrounding structure and dynamics over traits and labels, has several notable implications: It challenges categorical diagnoses by offering gradient-based interpretations. It resists moralizing language (e.g., "weakness," "instability") by shifting focus to systemic coherence or incoherence, echoing how frames in political discourse shape what is seen as normal, moral, or urgent (Lakoff, 2004). It reframes responsibility not as internal willpower but as the ability to maintain normative M-selection under pressure.

Yet framing also brings risks. MTQ may overshadow alternative framings—for example, phenomenological accounts that prioritize first-person narratives, or sociocultural models that emphasize external oppression. The more powerful a frame becomes, the more it must be self-aware of its blind spots.

5.4 MTQ and Frame Pluralism

To avoid becoming a totalizing discourse, MTQ-as-frame must remain pluralistic. It should not claim to be the only correct lens, but rather a productive lens among many. In practice, this means: Encouraging dialogue with psychodynamic, humanistic, and sociocultural frameworks, Remaining open to criticisms that arise from outside its structure (e.g., trauma theory, narrative identity), Acknowledging that some phenomena may resist structural decomposition altogether.

Framing is not neutral, and MTQ's tendency to "structuralize" experience may not always be appropriate. For example, grieving may not be best understood in terms of M/Q imbalance, but rather as an existential rupture not captured by structural parameters. A healthy frame is one that knows its limits.

5.5 *MTQ as Frame in Everyday Practice*

Perhaps the most practical effect of MTQ as a frame is its impact on **how we talk about minds**: Patients begin to describe themselves in terms of interpretive patterns rather than defective traits. Therapists ask, “What is the dominant M here?” instead of “What is the underlying disorder?” Legal theorists shift focus from inner intent to **structural alignment of M with T-demands**.

This is not just linguistic; it is conceptual reprogramming. A person who internalizes MTQ as a frame begins to see mental states **not as reflections of the self**, but as outcomes of a system interacting with context—a powerful shift for both empowerment and de-pathologization.

5.6 *Summary*

MTQ, as a frame, performs a **reordering of attention and interpretation**. It decides: What we see first (structure, not defect), What we deem relevant (patterns, not categories), What we allow to matter (process, not permanence).

If MTQ is a conjecture in its core claims, a theory in its structure, and a model in its representation, then it is a frame in its **world-making capacity**. This framing function may be its most subtle—and most enduring—contribution.

6 BEYOND CATEGORIES: MTQ'S STRATIFIED IDENTITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

MTQ has been examined through four distinct lenses: as **conjecture, theory, model, and frame**. Each captures a different dimension of its epistemic function and disciplinary utility. But these categories, while analytically useful, risk becoming reified if treated as exclusive. In this section, we argue that MTQ's strength lies not in fitting neatly into one of these types, but in **occupying all of them at once**—a stratified identity that enables multiple modes of engagement. We explore how this layered character enhances both its explanatory reach and its resilience in interdisciplinary discourse.

6.1 *Stratification, Not Confusion*

It may seem conceptually untidy for a single construct to function simultaneously as a falsifiable conjecture, a structured theory, a transferable model, and a guiding frame. But such stratification is not unique to MTQ. Many robust frameworks—

e.g., Darwinian evolution, cognitive dissonance theory, or Bayesian inference—also operate on multiple levels: *As conjectures* (e.g., “natural selection explains trait distribution”), *As theories* (with systematized concepts and predictive structures), *As models* (e.g., fitness landscapes, dissonance-arousal curves), *And as frames* (e.g., seeing behavior as adaptation or belief revision).

What matters is not categorical purity, but **functional integrity** across levels. MTQ's layered identity allows it to serve different needs: Researchers may use it to derive hypotheses, Clinicians may use it to guide diagnosis or intervention, Philosophers may use it to rethink agency, identity, or normativity.

This modularity makes MTQ especially adaptive in fields where disciplinary boundaries are porous.

6.2 A Scaffold for Expansion

Rather than collapsing its identity into a single form, MTQ can be seen as a **scaffold**—a conceptual structure that supports further elaboration: *As conjecture*, it invites falsification and refinement. *As theory*, it invites formal consistency and explanatory scope. *As model*, it invites visual clarity and operational use. *As frame*, it invites cultural, ethical, and narrative alignment.

Each layer becomes a platform for growth. For example: A conjecture that fails may lead to an adjusted theory. A model that proves useful may lead to broader frame adoption. A frame that gains traction may prompt theoretical rigor or empirical testing.

This **feedback loop**—between levels and across domains—is what gives MTQ its unique developmental potential.

6.3 MTQ and Epistemic Humility

Ironically, the more levels a framework operates on, the more important it becomes to **recognize its limits**. MTQ, while ambitious, does not explain everything. There may be domains where its structural vocabulary is too coarse, too abstract, or too unfamiliar. By foregrounding its stratified nature, MTQ practitioners can **tailor their claims** to the appropriate level: Avoiding overreach when functioning as a frame, Demanding rigor when functioning as a theory, Encouraging openness when functioning as a model, Accepting error when functioning as a conjecture.

This layered epistemology fosters humility without retreat—a rare and valuable posture in theoretical innovation.

6.4 Structural Theories and Cultural Evolution

Stratified theories tend to **evolve culturally**, not just empirically. As more people adopt MTQ's vocabulary, it may begin to function **memetically**—shaping discourse, self-understanding, institutional practice, even software design. This is especially likely when a framework offers: Structural simplicity with conceptual richness, Diagnostic precision with interpretive flexibility, Compatibility with existing norms and values.

MTQ's identity as both model and frame positions it well for this kind of **cultural embedding**. The future of MTQ may not be a singular domain of application, but a **distributed ecology of uses**. Such cultural embedding, while powerful, demands reflexivity lest MTQ risk evolving into an ideological frame rather than remaining a tool for inquiry.

6.5 Summary

MTQ is not one thing—it is many things, **layered into one system**: A *conjecture* to be tested, A *theory* to be expanded, A *model* to be applied, A *frame* to be lived and questioned. This stratification is not theoretical messiness. It is **structural resilience**—a capacity to flex, adapt, and evolve across contexts without losing coherence.

In the final section, we reflect on what this means for the future of MTQ: its responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and potential to shape how we understand consciousness, selfhood, and mind.

7 CONCLUSION: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A STRATIFIED FRAMEWORK

The preceding sections have shown that MTQ is not easily classified. It operates as a **conjecture**, a **theory**, a **model**, and a **frame**—each with its own logic, affordances, and vulnerabilities. This stratified identity is a source of MTQ's versatility, but it also entails a **responsibility**: to remain legible across disciplines, accountable to evidence, and open to critique at every level.

7.1 *The Burden of Coherence*

When a framework operates on multiple epistemic levels, it invites evaluation from multiple directions: As a *conjecture*, MTQ must tolerate empirical failure. A falsified prediction should not collapse the whole framework but inform its refinement. As a *theory*, MTQ must maintain internal consistency, define its terms, and offer mechanisms, not just metaphors. As a *model*, it must remain interpretable and testable, avoiding the seduction of complexity for its own sake. As a *frame*, it must stay reflexive—aware that how we interpret minds has social, political, and ethical consequences.

To sustain coherence across these levels, MTQ must resist **internal inflation** (claiming too much) and **external dilution** (losing precision in broad adoption). That balance—between clarity and openness—is its central burden.

7.2 *Critique as Contribution*

A stratified framework invites layered critique: A philosopher may challenge the ontology of M or Q. A psychologist may test and disconfirm an MTQ-based hypothesis. A clinician may find that MTQ fails to resonate with patient experience. A sociologist may argue that MTQ frames subjectivity in ways that reinforce existing power structures.

Rather than treat these as threats, MTQ must treat them as **contributions**. Each points to a different level of its operation, and each may reveal a **hidden assumption**, **untested premise**, or **unnoticed effect**. Indeed, the most mature frameworks are not those that avoid critique, but those that **change shape in response** to it without fracturing their core logic.

7.3 *Responsibility to Users*

MTQ's users will come from varied backgrounds: theorists, therapists, educators, designers, patients. Some will engage it structurally, others metaphorically. Some will adopt its diagrams; others its vocabulary. To these users, MTQ owes:

Transparency: about what it claims and what it does not.

Accessibility: language and tools that adapt to local needs.

Modularity: parts of the system that can be used without wholesale adoption.

Non-coerciveness: an invitation to see differently, not a demand to believe.

A responsible framework does not insist on being the last word—it aims to

be a fertile beginning.

7.4 *A Stratified Future*

If MTQ endures, it will likely do so not as a monolithic theory, but as a distributed vocabulary and structural grammar—a way to speak, think, and model minds. It may evolve in parts: new Ms may be discovered, new T-logics formalized, new Q-classifications proposed. It may split into schools of thought. It may hybridize with other systems—neuroscientific, phenomenological, computational. This is not fragmentation. It is evolution—the destiny of a stratified framework is to grow in multiple directions at once.

7.5 *Meta-theoretical Reflections: The Structural Recursion of MTQ*

What happens when a stratified framework turns its lens on itself? In the foregoing sections, we have examined MTQ as a conjecture, a theory, a model, and a frame—an epistemic stratification that grants MTQ its conceptual agility. But MTQ also offers a unique possibility: it allows us to re-interpret MTQ itself using the internal structure of MTQ.

We explore the consequences of such reflexive application. What does it mean for a framework of meaning selection, interpretive patterning, and structural transition to examine its own logic of construction? The result is more than mere intellectual play: it reveals MTQ to be not only an account of structure, but a structure capable of reflecting on its own theoryhood.

7.5.1 Q, M, and T Within MTQ Itself

To apply MTQ to MTQ, we must first ask: what are the Qs, Ms, and Ts that constitute the experience of engaging with MTQ?

Q (Qualia): The concrete phenomena that MTQ accounts for—panic, dissociation, decision conflict, identity disruption. But also, in this context, the very experience of encountering MTQ: its diagrams, concepts, explanatory cases, and theoretical gestures.

→ MTQ's Q is the felt presence of structure.

M (Metaqualia): The interpretive stance that MTQ promotes: an orientation toward patterns, transitions, and contextual meaning selection. MTQ does not simply describe the world; it selects **what counts** as meaningful and **how** that meaning is organized.

→ MTQ's M is its own style of seeing minds.

T (Transition fields): The rules that govern shifts between interpretive stances—between theories, between mental states, between explanatory levels. In the case of MTQ, T is the structural logic that allows it to **move between** conjecture, theory, model, and frame, without collapsing into contradiction. → MTQ's T is the glue between its own forms.

Thus, MTQ can be said to **generate, select, and link** its own Q, M, and T structures: it is not merely describing a system—it *is* the system, recursively. 7.5.2 Conjecture as Q, Theory as M, Model as T, Frame as MTQ We can go one step further. Each of MTQ's four epistemic positions—conjecture, theory, model, frame—can themselves be re-read as Q, M, or T components within MTQ:

Table 7.5.2. **Reflexive Mapping of MTQ's Epistemic Roles onto Its Structural Elements**

<i>Epistemic Layer</i>	MTQ Role (Self-Interpreted)
Conjecture	Q: Specific mental content offered for test (e.g., "Only one M is active")
Theory	M: The structural interpretation connecting phenomena
Model	T: The dynamic relations between M and Q made operational
Frame	MTQ-as-a-whole: The recursive system that reinterprets other systems

This reflexive matrix creates a metafractal structure: Each layer of MTQ can be decomposed into M, T, Q. But the totality of M, T, Q is also decomposable into the four layers. The result is not circular reasoning, but **structural recursion**: a stratified framework capable of describing its own structure.

7.5.3 Implications of Reflexive Structuring

Few theoretical frameworks have dared to apply their own logic to themselves. MTQ's capacity to do so is not a gimmick—it is a form of **structural maturity**. Just as natural languages can describe themselves through metalanguage, and Gödel's theorem encodes its own undecidability (Gödel, 1931), MTQ contains the elements to ask what kind of thing MTQ is without escaping its own domain.

This is a dangerous gift. It makes MTQ immune to certain critiques by internalizing them—but it also exposes MTQ to a higher form of accountability: **Can a framework that models minds also model the structure of its own mind-likeness?**

MTQ's answer, we believe, is yes. And that yes is not triumphal. It is recursive, hesitant, self-structuring.

7.5.4 The Loop That Never Closes

If MTQ functions as a theory of meaning selection, then applying it to itself means choosing the meaning of MTQ. But that meaning is itself modulated by MTQ. In this loop, no final stance is possible. Only: More perspectives, More reframings, More internal transitions.

Perhaps that is the ultimate meaning of MTQ: not to close the loop, but to make visible the structure of its curvature. Not to conclude, but to circulate. And perhaps the highest form of meaning selection is this: To see a theory not as a tool, but as a topology. And if MTQ can interpret itself through its own structure, this is not a trick of recursion—it is one mark of its theoryhood within a broader stratified framework.

7.6 Final Synthesis

To call MTQ a *conjecture* is to invite testing. To call it a *theory* is to demand coherence. To call it a *model* is to seek clarity. To call it a *frame* is to change perception.

But to hold all four in layered tension is to do more than classify—it is to inhabit a new grammar of consciousness itself. MTQ is not just a framework about minds; it is a framework that exposes why we have, until now, resisted making such frameworks at all.

Earlier traditions—especially those of non-reductive naturalism—have respected the irreducibility of meaning but often stopped short of specifying how meaning is generated. That hesitation, as explored in §1.8, may not have been theoretical. It may have been affective. To model meaning structurally is to risk dismantling the very ground upon which identity, morality, and depth have been imagined. It is to admit that what once felt sacred may have been structurally selected.

MTQ does not evade this discomfort—it formalizes it. It shows that fear of structure is itself a structure: a protective M, resisting destabilizing T. That recursive insight is not merely clever. It is revealing. MTQ was not simply constructed; it was *inevitable*, once the refusal to refuse structure was itself refused.

In this light, MTQ is not merely a theoretical account of how meaning works. It is the structural consequence of taking meaning seriously. A grammar born not of metaphysical fiat, but of patient engagement with the very act of interpretation. Its layered identity—conjecture, theory, model, and frame—is not theoretical ambiguity, but epistemic resilience: the capacity to withstand inquiry, to integrate critique, and to evolve across domains without collapsing into noise.

MTQ does not freeze consciousness into fixed definitions. It does not resolve the mystery of qualia. Instead, it tracks the dynamic interplay of Q, M, and T—the living infrastructure through which minds make, resist, and revise meaning. And in doing so, it offers not answers, but scaffolding—a structured openness from which new acts of interpretation can emerge.

If MTQ is the structure of consciousness, then Kotology is the structure of meaning. And if meaning is always selected, situated, and transformed, then this framework—born from a single unrelenting question—may yet become a shared grammar for mapping the conditions under which anything becomes intelligible at all.

mmatsui@dd.iij4u.or.jp>

REFERENCES

- Cahoone, L. (2013). *The Orders of Nature*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Chalmers, D. J. (1995). Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), 200–219.

- Chalmers, D. J. (1996). *The conscious mind: In search of a fundamental theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chalmers, D. J. (2018). The meta-problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 25(9–10), 6–61.
- Dennett, D. C. (1991). *Consciousness explained*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Friston, K. (2010). The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory? *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11(2), 127–138.
- Gödel, K. (1931). *Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I*. Monatshefte für Mathematik und Physik, 38(1), 173–198.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakatos, I. (1978). *The methodology of scientific research programmes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't think of an elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*. White River Junction: Chelsea Green.
- Nagel, T. (1974). What is it like to be a bat? *Philosophical Review*, 83(4), 435–450.
- Popper, K. (1959). *The logic of scientific discovery*. London: Hutchinson.
- Sprintzen, D. (1988). *Camus: A Critical Examination*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of AI tools, including ChatGPT (OpenAI), for support in drafting, editing, and formatting this manuscript. The conceptual contributions and final decisions remain entirely the responsibility of the author.