

Redefining the Methodology of Psychology and Psychoanalysis Through the Principle of Qualia Inaccessibility

Ryusho Nemoto (Ryuu)

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Abstract

This paper applies the “Principle of Qualia Inaccessibility”—the claim that subjective experience (qualia) cannot be observed or proven as an object by a third party—to the methodology of psychology and psychoanalysis, proposing a fundamental re-evaluation. Psychology and psychoanalysis have traditionally relied on methods that objectify the inner world of patients or subjects, extracting universal structures from verbal reports and behavioral observations. However, if objective qualia are, in principle, unobservable, such methodologies possess inherent foundational limits. This is not a critique of theoretical content, but an invalidation of the very preconditions for theory formation, constituting a potential paradigm shift in the history of psychology.

Core Propositions

- Subjective qualia can only be self-certified through one’s own metacognition (self-provable).
- The qualia of others (objective qualia) are, in principle, unobservable and unprovable.
- Conventional psychology and psychoanalysis implicitly presuppose the provability of objective qualia.

Implications

- Psychoanalytic interpretations and theories (e.g., Freud, Jung) require re-examination of their founding assumptions.
- Clinical psychology should be redefined as an interpretive framework for self-reports, rather than as a means of objectively verifying mental states.

Conclusion

The Principle of Qualia Inaccessibility denies the premise that “the mind of another can be objectively understood,” forcing a substantial reconstruction of methodology and theoretical structures in psychology and psychoanalysis. This proposal has the potential to mark a “before” and “after” in the history of psychology.

Keywords: Qualia; Consciousness; Psychological Methodology; Psychoanalysis; Freud; Jung; Paradigm Shift