

## Solving the Qualia Problem

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### ABSTRACT

This article attempts to reconsider the “hard problem of consciousness” (D. Chalmers, S. Harnad), a long-standing problem in analytical philosophy, which concerns the inability to explain the origin of subjective experience (qualia) from the physical processes of the brain. The author does not deny the reality of qualia, but rejects the very formulation of the question of the brain as the “generative mechanism” of consciousness, proposing instead a cultural-historical, semiotic and phenomenological approach. Relying on case study methodology, he examines five episodes: the development of the concept of the “painted sun” in a child, C.G. Jung’s adolescent religious experience, experiments with distorted vision at A.N. Leontiev’s school, the practice of distinguishing between sleep and reality and G. Nazloyan’s method of sculptural portraiture (mask therapy) for the treatment of schizophrenia. In each case, it is demonstrated that consciousness and qualia arise not as a result of neurophysiological processes, but in the space of communication, problem-solving, the invention of signs and schemas and the formation of “mental realities.” The brain is treated merely as a necessary substrate, not the cause of consciousness. The key conclusion: qualia is not an isolated sensory experience, but one of the planes of a holistic mental reality that can be purposefully transformed (including therapeutically) through a change in meanings, awareness of the boundaries between worlds (wakefulness, sleep, art) and a return to a healthy core personality. Thus, the article offers an alternative to the physicalist paradigm, bringing the explanation of consciousness into the realm of semiotics, cultural studies and the humanities.

**Keywords:** Consciousness; Vision; Dreams; Patterns; Images; Problems; Resolution; Objects

To clarify these problems, we can refer to two statements: one by Stevan Harnad (1995) and one by V. Vasilyev (2009). “The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining why we have qualia or phenomenal experience, how sensations acquire characteristics such as color or taste<sup>1</sup>.” According to another formulation, the hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining how any physical system is capable of generating subjective experience. This problem can be formulated in various ways and includes two main questions: 1) why does the brain generate consciousness; 2) how does the brain generate consciousness<sup>2</sup>?

Although some researchers, for example D. Dennett, deny the existence of qualia, considering this idea an illusion of philosophical explanation<sup>3</sup>, it seems quite obvious to me that we are dealing with a real phenomenon. The problem is different: how to characterize qualia? It is one thing to see a photo of the sun and say “the sun is red”; it is another thing to understand what “red” means and whether this red color that I see can be explained by the workings of the brain or by visual sensation or in some other way. “What is the ‘hard problem’?” asks Ned Block. “No one currently knows the answer to the question why the neurological basis of my experience, say of the color red, is the

neurological basis of that particular feeling rather than some other and why I have it at all... The mind-body problem is so complex that no appeals to filling explanatory gaps of the past justify my optimism<sup>4</sup>.”



I have no doubt that the sight of the red sun is a reality of my consciousness; that if asked, I can talk about it; that if I close my eyes, I will only have a memory of that sight; but this sun may appear in my dreams and its red color in the dream may be even brighter (I have more than once dreamed of flowers of extraordinary brightness and beauty). Of course, qualia are a phenomenon and exist in reality. But the explanations of their origin and essence are very diverse, including contradictory, unconvincing and fantastic ones. I find the very formulation of the hard problem of consciousness unconvincing; its adherents proceed from the belief that the brain or some other physical systems generate consciousness. Of course, without the brain, human consciousness does not exist, but the brain is the substrate of consciousness, not the mechanism that generates it. Mowgli has a human brain, but his “consciousness” (if one can speak of it) is closer to the animal type. For my human qualia of the red sun to form, I need not only a brain but also communication with people, speech and language and awareness of the sun and the color red. I understand that for supporters of the qualia concept, my considerations are not convincing and are probably not very understandable. It remains to offer a convincing explanation of qualia, carried out not within the framework of the hard problem of consciousness. In doing so, I will rely on the analysis of cases of the formation of consciousness and perception.

### Case One: The birth of a new kind of object

When my daughter was about two years old, I suddenly realized: she did not know how to draw, although I had been reading fairy tales to her for a long time. It happened in the countryside, where we have an old, renovated hut not far from the Volga. I called Lena, took some gouache, drew a red sun and said, “Look, here’s a red sun.” Lena looked at the paper in bewilderment, then at me and asked, “Where is the sun?” I did not immediately, but finally understood that she did not see the sun. And why should she see the sun, I thought; it is high in the sky, hot, blinding and I am pointing to a paper where there is just a red spot. I did not know what to do next, but just in case, I continued to draw the sun and show it to my daughter. Two days later, we went to the Volga in the evening to watch the sunset. Admiring the sunset, I casually said, “Look, what a big red sun, just like on paper.” The next day, I see Lena herself taking paper and gouache, dipping her brush in the paint, smearing paint on the paper and shouting, “Hurray, a red sun.” I became interested and asked, “Where did you get that sun?” Lena thought and answered, “I drew it myself.” I continued, “Your sun doesn’t

warm.” Long silence, then joyfully: “But it’s a drawn one.” And after a couple of minutes: “Here below is a girl (she quickly drew a stick figure with a circle on top), the sun is warming her head.” And off she went: the sun, a house, grass. But I was struck by another drawing. A neighbour came with her daughter, Masha. Lena started playing a game with her: when the sun went behind the clouds and it became colder, they shouted “Cold,” and when it appeared, “Warm.” But then it became cloudy and no matter how much Lena and Masha shouted “Warm,” the sun did not appear. The next day Lena drew the sun, grass and a girl and began to explain to me: “Look, Dad, Masha is frozen, the sun came out and warmed her.” Great, I thought, because Lena is playing; this drawing is perhaps her first artistic opus.

Let us try to conceptualize this material theoretically. The first fragment of our interaction can be understood as the crystallization of a “problem situation” in Lena (in the language of methodology) and in the language of psychology, as the formation of a “primary set” or “tension.” In addition, we can speak here of the impossibility of realizing the “set,” because Lena, trusting me, expected the appearance of the sun where I pointed (but it was not there). In other words, one of the conditions for the operation of the set was our “communication” (“sociability”). The primary set also had another consequence - “misunderstanding.” There was no “meaning” for Lena in my instruction (“look what a sun”).

The second situation - the resolution of the problem situation with the help of a “scheme” - “look, what a big red sun, just like on paper.” In the book “Introduction to Schematology: Schemes in Philosophy, Culture, Science, Design,” I show that a scheme is a semiotic formation invented by a person that allows one to resolve a problem situation; it defines a new reality (in this case, the “drawn sun”), provides understanding and enables one to act in a new way.

In psychological terms, we can speak here of the formation of a “new meaning” and a “new object” in a person’s consciousness. Lena’s “lifeworld” remained the same, but a new object appeared in it - the drawn sun - which, probably, Lena understood (of course, not immediately) in the same convention in which she perceived objects and characters of fairy tales. There is an ordinary sun in the sky and there is a sun on paper; the ordinary sun is high, shines and warms, while the drawn sun is cold and lives on paper, but it can be created by oneself and it warms drawn children. What are the stages and mechanisms for the formation of a new object and meaning?

The first stage is the transfer of “experience” formed in the perception of the ordinary sun onto the “semiotic material” presented in this case by the drawing. The important role of mental experience formed in visual perception was first pointed out at the beginning of the twentieth century by H. Helmholtz. Briefly, his point is that only part of the visual information comes from the object, while the other part (of a different kind) is contributed by the person themselves. What a person sees is the result of the fusion of visual impressions from the object and the person’s counter-activity, which sends lumps of past visual experience - marked, meaningful and integrated into the overall structure of human consciousness - to meet this information<sup>5</sup>.

The second stage of the process of forming a new object is as follows. To stop the experiences, to grasp (“concept” as was said in the Middle Ages) the new object, a sign is needed (in

this case, Lena invented the expression “drawable sun”). Only the actualization, the invention of a word and signification, allows one to stop the experiences and crystallize them in an objective form (compare with a similar position expressed by S.S. Neretina<sup>6</sup>).

The third link is the “comprehension” of the seen new object as the sun, albeit one that differs from the ordinary one.

The situations of playing with the sun were preceded by another one, namely, the formation of a second “problem situation”: a strong desire to make the sun come out from behind the clouds so that it would warm the girls. In psychological terms, we can speak of the crystallization of “desire” and “set” and their “blocking” in terms of realization.

The next situation is the resolution of this problem situation through artistic creativity, even if still very imperfect, but still creativity within the framework of art. From a psychological point of view, this process consisted, on the one hand, in satisfying the desire (realizing the set) in a roundabout way, that is, not in natural reality, but in semiotic reality, where virtual events were created by means of painting and imagination. On the other hand, Lena discovered (according to my observations, also not immediately) that these events can not only be lived instead of ordinary ones, but also that such living (“experience”) is a source of new interesting impressions.

Did my daughter realize that she was dealing with a different reality? To some extent, this is evidenced by her conversation with Masha. Lena showed Masha the drawing she had explained to me the day before. She said, “This is Masha, the sun is warming you.” Masha took offense, declaring that she was not that thin, not a stick. Lena began to calm her down, saying, “Don’t cry, that’s you in the fairy tale, but in reality, you are fat.” At that time, the sphere of art existed for Lena only as the world of fairy tales. A few years later, having learned to read, having discussed her dreams with me, having been to the theater several times, Lena better understood the difference between art and non-art. She realized that fairy tales, drawings and music belong to art, while in dreams and ordinary life everything can be different.

This is an analysis of just one case, but could it be considered a kind of hypothesis that outlines an explanation of how consciousness generally forms? Namely, in communication, in the process of crystallizing problem situations, resolving them by reorganizing mental experience, signification and comprehension? I think this is very far from the belief that the brain generates consciousness. The brain, of course, is important, but only as a physiological condition (substrate) of the processes listed here, not as their cause(s) and condition. The causes and condition of consciousness are culture, the human being, signs, communication, creativity.

### **Case two. Adolescent experience of Carl Jung**

This story can be read in Jung’s last book. On a beautiful summer day in 1887, he says, I thought: “The world is beautiful and the church is beautiful and God, who created all this, sits far, far away in the blue sky on a golden throne and ...” Here my thoughts broke off and I felt suffocation. I became numb and remembered only one thing: Do not think now! Something terrible is coming. (After three days of heavy inner struggle and experiences and sleepless nights, Jung nevertheless allowed himself to finish the thought that had begun and seemed so

harmless. – V.R.) I gathered all my courage, as if I had suddenly decided to jump immediately into the flames of hell and let the thought appear. I saw before me the cathedral, the blue sky. God sits on his golden throne, high above the world – and from under the throne a piece of dung falls onto the gleaming new roof of the cathedral, breaks through it, everything collapses, the walls of the cathedral break into pieces.”

Interestingly, instead of the expected fear, Jung experienced enormous relief. He understood nothing less than the will of God, as well as the actions of his father. The latter formally believed in God as prescribed by the Bible; he did not know the living God who could make his father abandon his views and even destroy the Church for the sake of freedom<sup>7</sup>.

We have before us a complex scheme and a new vision of reality, which Jung worked out for three days. It defines not only a new understanding of God but also a set for practical new action - a break with the church and the creator.

“In this religion,” writes Jung after his first communion, “I no longer found God. I knew that I could never again take part in this ceremony. The church is a place I will no longer go to. Everything there is dead, there is no life. I felt pity for my father. I realized the full tragedy of his profession and life. He struggled with death, the existence of which he could not admit. An abyss opened between him and me; it was boundless and I saw no possibility of ever overcoming it<sup>7</sup>.”

What was the problem situation for Jung? He was occupied by two existential problems. First. The relationship with his father, a hereditary clergyman. In Jung’s opinion, his father dogmatically performed his duty: having religious doubts, he did not try to resolve them and in general was unfree in relation to the Christian faith and God. The second problem was building his own relationship with God and clarifying his attitude toward the Church. Knowing what Jung later did, breaking radically with his father and the church, we can assume that even before his first communion, he wanted to break these relationships, but could not admit it to himself, because such an act would have seemed blasphemous in the eyes of believers (and Jung undoubtedly belonged to them).

Interestingly, for Jung, the decision (it was unconscious) is first taken over by his psyche, which, under the pressure of the desire to resolve the problem situation, produced an amazing hallucination-fantasy that frightened him as a believer. For three days, Jung lived with this hint and involuntarily sought means to justify it, since this was precisely the turn of events he desired, without admitting it. The obstacle to recognizing the possibility of breaking with his father and the church was precisely his faith, the fear that God would punish him. Which God? The one his father and the church spoke of. And if, somewhere in the background of consciousness, Jung supposed, God is completely different, more like a revolutionary. Such a God suited Jung very well; he could sanction a break with his father and the church. But how to bring such a God to light (into consciousness)? Yes, reader, you guessed right - by constructing a sign and a scheme where God was already different. In this new reality, the “free and omnipotent” God “stands above the Bible and above the Church,” “calls people to become equally free,” He “can make the father abandon all his views and convictions,” “forces one to give up traditions, no matter how sacred they may be.”

Now let's see how Jung created the new God. Of necessity, of course, but Jung starts with the old reality, borrowing the figure of God from it. Then he ascribes to Him the hypostasis of a revolutionary; consequently, he is forced to omit (forget) other characteristics of the Creator that contradicted the new hypostasis. As a revolutionary, the new God can make a revolution, destroy something and create something. So, Jung stages this revolution, in which God indecently destroys the church and gives sanction for the break Jung needs. I want to draw attention: Jung not only introduces a new objectivity - the revolutionary God - but also situates Him in a new world, simultaneously arranging this world. The new world is the world of the revolutionary God, the world of revolutionary events initiated by the new God. It is not enough to create one or several new objects (characters); one needs to build a new reality (with its own events and logic of life) in which one can live in a new way.

Does Jung realize that he has found himself in a new reality, entered a new world (which, by the way, he himself built)? I think, partly yes, he does realize: this is evidenced by his phrase: "Instead of the expected curse, grace descended on me and with it an inexpressible bliss that I had never known... I understood many things that I did not understand before; I understood what my father never understood - the will of God." I think the role of realizing the new reality (world) as different from other realities is very important here; without this, a change in both consciousness and behaviour is impossible.

This second case is also about the formation of consciousness, about the role in this process of creativity, external cultural conditions (religious upbringing, intersubjective situation), the invention of signs and schemes, awareness and the transformation of the lifeworld. And now, experiments with qualia.

### **Case three. Transformation of vision under the influence of changed perception**

Students of A.N. Leontiev (V. Stolin, A. Logvinenko, V. Petrenko, A. Puzyrei), as well as earlier in 1940 B.I. Kompaneisky, repeated a number of well-known classical experiments by foreign psychologists (M. Stratton, P. Ewert, J. Peterson, I. Kohler, I. Rock, H. Witkin, K. Koffka, M. Gaffron) with pseudoscopes and invertoscopes - optical devices that allow the creation of reversed, mirror and upside-down images of an object on the subject's retina [3]. Not only were objects and space distorted (near became far and vice versa, the arrangement of objects in space relative to each other changed, up was down and down was up - i.e., the world was seen upside down by the subject). Equally important, visual reality itself was disrupted, visual illusions and various visual effects arose. For example, some objects were not distorted at all (although theoretically they should have been), others were only partially distorted and still others were unrecognized and perceived as completely different objects.

For instance, in I. Kohler's experiment, the subject looks at an object and sees it, as expected, upside down. But if the subject touches the object, it immediately "flips" - i.e., appears correctly oriented in space. Another example: a thread with a weight, taken in hand, flips in space head to toe and is seen correctly; simultaneously, the perception of more distant objects also becomes adequate. In another experiment by I. Kohler, an inverted candle returned to its normal state (wick up) as soon as it was lit. In A. Logvinenko's experiments, the subject also saw

a burning candle in the dark in a normal position. But if a human face entered the field of view, the image flipped. When the face disappeared, the image of the candle again appeared correctly oriented.

What did these experiments show? First, that the world visible to a person does not coincide with the sensory data perceived by the eye. Although the human eye sees the same candle in both the first and second cases, in the first case it sees one object (upside down) and in the second - another (wick up).

Secondly, the experiments showed that the process of vision is regulated by a system of meanings and partly resembles the construction of utterances in language. As soon as the meaning of one of the elements of the situation observed through the device changes for the subjects, the meanings of all other elements associated with it change as well (liquid turns into plastic or metal, a towel stops hanging, becomes solid, stands). Moreover, a semantic (linguistic) analysis of the subjects' statements showed that these connections are simultaneously objective and linguistic.

In other words, it turned out that visual reality (the visible world) rests not only on current visual perception but also on the overall semantic picture of human consciousness, which includes both images of one's body and relationships of the surrounding world. That is why, in Kompaneisky's experiment, a human face is not transformed and in Kohler's experiments, including objects in the scheme of the human body restored the normal orientation of objects (it turns out that the scheme of the human body and the person's general idea of the world are such a powerful organizing force that they can significantly correct even clear visual impressions that contradict the image of the object).

Thus, vision depends significantly on consciousness, which not only corrects the sights but also, in certain situations, dictates qualia. To explain what is happening here, I introduced the concept of "psychic reality," showing that a person sees (hears, feels) within separate, successive realities that differ significantly from each other in events and logic. The sun in the sky is one reality, while the drawn sun is a completely different one. The God Jung was introduced to in the seminary is one reality, while the revolutionary God is another. Dreams are one reality, wakefulness is another. Art is one reality; ordinary life is another. An unlit candle is one reality (it can be positioned in space in any way), while a lit candle is another (only flame up). The face of an unfamiliar person is one reality, while that of a relative is completely different (we know that face with our eyes closed).

Psychic realities are formed in the process of resolving problem situations, when the conditions of life and the understanding of what is happening change dramatically. At the same time, the same necessary conditions (invention of schemes and signs, new objects, awareness and transformation of the lifeworld) plus comparison of events and our experiences. Just one example from the author's childhood.

### **Case Four. Distinguishing between the reality of dreams and wakefulness**

I had a very interesting dream at the age of six during the war, in evacuation in Kuibyshev. My mother worked day and night at an aircraft factory and only occasionally snatched a few hours

to visit my brother and me at the kindergarten. Almost always she brought something tasty: cocoa in a thermos, chocolate or something else. And I persistently began to dream about my mother and tasty treats. Understandably, I was very upset when I woke up: no mother, no cocoa. Finally, to avoid being deceived and getting upset in vain, I decided to test myself – pinch my ear: if it hurts, I am not asleep; if it doesn't hurt, I am asleep. And that same night I had a dream: mother arrives, I pull my ear, make sure I am not asleep, drink cocoa and then... wake up. The rest is clear. The force of the disappointment firmly imprinted this dream in my memory<sup>8</sup>.

In this case, the first problem situation is the desire to see mother more often. The second is the experience of her absence when I woke up. I invented a scheme to test myself and pull my ear. It turned out not to work, but I understood that when I sleep and see my mother, she is actually not there. So, there is a mother in a dream and a mother when I am awake and these mothers are very different. That was the first time I came to distinguish between events in sleep and in reality and I vaguely began to understand that there are dreams and that this is some other world than wakefulness. In it, mother exists and does not exist; in it, I can fall and not crash, run away from a dog and suddenly wake up. Much later, as a teenager, I finally distinguished, by comparing them, the realities of wakefulness, dreams and art.

Thus, in addition to the already indicated processes (resolving problem situations, signification, schematization and awareness), to explain the formation of consciousness we must add the process of forming psychic realities. And qualia are just one of the planes of this complex reality, namely the experience and awareness of what we see, with a desire to understand (scientifically explain) what determines what we see.

#### **Case Five: The Practice of Curing Schizophrenia through Portraiture**

Let us consider another case that sheds light on the dependence of qualia on the work and change of consciousness. We are talking about a psychotherapeutic practice called “mask therapy.” Its author, Gagik Nazloyan, consciously works with the psyche and consciousness of his clients (schizophrenics) with the aim of curing them. At the same time, the qualia also change. The essence of this unusual method is as follows: the doctor, over a fairly long period (from several months to a year or more), creates (sculpts) a series of portrait images (masks) of the patient from plasticine. The patient may for the first weeks or even months sit impassively in front of the sculpture, mulling over his problems (delusions, obsessions, painful sensations, etc.) to himself or aloud. But eventually, he becomes involved in the process of creating his own masks, begins to communicate with the doctor (both about his portraits and on other topics). Nothing, it would seem, during the long process of co-creation and communication between doctor and patient might foretell a cure, but suddenly it arrives, usually accompanied by a rather violent, catharsis-like reaction.

What is the initial problem facing the psychotherapist dealing with a severe mental illness? To make the patient, even if only temporarily, come out of the reality (world) in which he lives (let us call this reality “deformed”). G. Nazloyan vividly describes this problem, beginning his article with a characteristic subtitle - “Breaking Through the Wall of Silence<sup>5</sup>.” But how to do this if it is precisely the events of the deformed reality that are primary

for the patient, what exists for him, while ordinary events and the world, so significant for us, are peripheral. Although the patient sees these peripheral events, they are of little importance to him, like shadows. Moreover, he reinterprets all facts that, from our point of view, refute or cast doubt on the existence of the deformed reality, so that they only confirm the deformed reality and its existence.

A portrait, as is known, should resemble its original. In his article, G. Nazloyan repeatedly emphasizes the need for a portrait likeness of the patient's mask. It is absolutely necessary that the patient himself notice this likeness; if this does not happen, one has to specifically draw the patient's attention to the fact that his portrait resembles his face. To this end, a mirror, massage, self-portraiture and discussion of the portrait are used. “In professional art, where various interpretations of a portrait are permissible - up to complete dissimilarity - discussions on the topic of ‘looks like/doesn't look like’ are a sign of bad taste. The case of the therapeutic portrait is different. The gradual emergence of a realistic assessment of one's own face generates strong experiences, destroying the patient's habitual way of thinking, ‘tying’ him to his emerging image, often making him (sometimes ‘secretly’) approach the mirror to study individual details of his face, to seek similarities with the portrait<sup>9</sup>.”

This seemingly obvious point about the resemblance of the portrait to the patient's face, however, requires serious clarification and reflection. In an early but psychologically very subtle work by Mikhail Bakhtin, entitled “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” M. Bakhtin discusses an interesting question: can a person who, suppose, intends to make a self-portrait, see himself objectively, without bias, in the mirror? And he comes to the conclusion that this is impossible, that in the mirror we see ourselves as if from the position of another (others), from the point of view of how we think we should look. Only the real, external gaze of another, associated by Bakhtin with the position of “outsideness” (which is fundamentally not given to the person himself), allows us to see ourselves and our face more objectively. Using these observations of M. Bakhtin, we propose to introduce a distinction between three portraits of a person: one internal and two external.

The “internal portrait” is our integral sensation of ourselves, i.e., how I see myself at a given time (strong, young, energetic, beautiful or weak, insecure but spiritual, etc., etc.). This portrait may have nothing in common with the objective state of affairs; however, it objectifies the system of images, experiences and values of self-consciousness that we attribute to ourselves. The first external portrait, which a person usually deals with, can be called the “representative” portrait. This is exactly how we see ourselves in the mirror and from the point of view (but not the eyes) of others.

The second portrait will be called the “objective” portrait. It is objective not in the sense that it is our true, authentic portrait. It is objective because it can only be seen from the position of outsideness, i.e., through others, through works of art (painting, sculpture, dance, through a video recording of our face or behavior, etc.). The most interesting thing here is that the representative portrait, in general, must correspond to the internal portrait in a certain way, although at first glance this is not obvious. No matter how I see myself, why, one might ask, should this rather complex image of mine correspond to my representative portrait?

But let us consider what a person's psychological portrait actually is. In modern European culture, where both external reality and the inner world of a person are closely connected with his personality, the portrait is not just my external or internal image, but the basis, the center of my identification, my behavior, my value orientation. If, for example, I feel young, strong, energetic, but see an old man with a dull gaze in the mirror, it is unlikely that I will remain calm. More likely, in this case, I will have questions, bewilderment, strong feelings: "Is that me or someone else? And if it is me, then why am I like that, not how I feel myself?"

As a person grows up, he goes through individual stages of his development, points of mental experiences, metamorphoses. First, he is like a caterpillar, i.e., a small child. Then already a chrysalis, i.e., a teenager. And then a butterfly, i.e., a young man and so on. And each such psychological being leaves us its inner world, expressed in an internal portrait, as well as its representative portraits, some of which we have remembered or managed to capture with a camera. Our internal gaze and memory project onto our adult representative portrait a number of other genetically preceding portraits, referring us to our childhood, adolescence, youth or previous stages of growing up.

What representative portrait, I wonder, do Nazloyan's patients have? Probably the one that corresponds to the patient's internal portrait, entirely determined by the deformed reality. If, for example, a patient has delusions, a persecution mania, then he sees himself accordingly, as persecuted from all sides day and night. He sees fear on his face, sees the shadows of persecutors, physically feels the pressure of mysterious rays directed at him to destroy him. G. Nazloyan, naturally, could not fail to notice the patients' strange perception of their own faces. But he could not explain the reasons for this strangeness.

"Sometimes," writes G. Nazloyan, "patients are surprised by the shape of their ear, nose, pattern of eyes, lips, chin. This is the first exit from autistic captivity, the first glance at oneself from the outside, the first attempt to compare oneself with other people without vicious mythologizing and dysmorphophobic attitudes that distort the vision of the world in general and the world of human relations in particular. Sergei V., for whom the forehead was a 'polygon,' the surface of the nose a 'launch pad,' and the mouth a 'cave,' eventually recalled this with an ironic smile, as did his developed delusional system and inadequate actions associated with the fact that he is a 'Alien from the Future.' Another patient, Vladimir U., who has yet to be treated, 'sculpts' horses, cats and other animals from his cheeks and then 'erases' them. What is hidden behind all this<sup>9</sup>?"

I could answer. The patients' vision of their own face is entirely determined by the features of the deformed reality. Thus, precisely because Sergei V. considers himself an alien from the future and therefore a cosmonaut, he perceives his nose as a "launch pad" and his forehead as a "cosmic polygon."

But suddenly (although this "suddenly," as we noted, can be quite extended in time) the patient notices that the doctor creating his portrait from plasticine is sculpting someone else, someone similar to him but from a different perspective. On the periphery of his world, the patient is forced to admit that the portrait resembles him, but on the other hand, it is completely different. This portrait does not reflect the patient's feeling of himself – a feeling, I emphasize, inseparable from his portraitive

vision of himself.

In other words, the doctor, precisely through the position of "outsiderness," by means of art, creates an objective portrait of the patient, thereby throwing the latter into complex experiences. The patient feels that the portrait created by Nazloyan is his portrait, but it turns out that this portrait does not coincide with the portrait to which the patient has long been accustomed during his illness. However, why can't the patient simply wave away the portrait created by Nazloyan, pretend not to notice it? Probably, at first, he does just that. But Gagik persistently continues to sculpt the patient's face and the patient sees this; he cannot ignore that the emerging portrait is being made from him, made honestly.

And then the patient gets involved in the game, in communication. He tries to say that in reality everything is different, that he is being persecuted, poisoned, that the world is not at all as Nazloyan paints it. He says these words, but means something else – namely, that the doctor is sculpting the wrong thing, sees everything incorrectly. But Nazloyan brushes off his words like an annoying fly: "Leave your delusions, don't interfere with the work."

One possible scenario for further events is as follows. In an attempt to resolve the painful conflict between the internal, representative and objective portraits, the patient recalls (or reproduces anew) one of the representative images of his former healthy life. He suddenly recognizes in Nazloyan's portrait some of his own features, recognizes himself. And once he recognizes himself, he turns out to be captured by his internal portrait, part of his healthy self, the healthy core of his personality. Having grasped the mask of his portrait, part of the patient's healthy personality core seems to float to the surface of the psyche and consciousness, while the deformed personality, gritting its teeth, is forced to cede a little space to it in the sun.

At this point in our argument, the following question may arise: how does the patient's portrait help him restore his healthy core? Note that in his article, Nazloyan writes several times something like: "Suddenly I realized that the portrait was ready." For example, in the history of patient B.S., Nazloyan writes: "After the two mentioned stages, I began to feel that the patient herself was registering an improvement in her condition. I looked at the sculpture and suddenly saw that in essence it was already finished, only technical details remained<sup>9</sup>."

The question is, what did Nazloyan see in the portrait, by what signs did he decide that the process of portraiting the patient was coming to its completion? Clearly, this did not refer to aesthetic criteria, because Nazloyan notes that the portraits of patients are not created within the framework of aesthetic reality. Let us take into account another observation: in the portrait embodiment of the faces of all Nazloyan's patients, there is something similar. And not at all that we see mental and pathological changes in the faces of Nazloyan's patients. On the contrary, before us are faces that, although sometimes tense (and not always), are completely healthy. The similarity lies in something else, elusive, in some common ideality, detachment, serenity of these faces.

The main question here is: if Nazloyan is not guided by aesthetic criteria and reality, then what content does he reveal in the faces of his patients, what does he "predetermine" in these faces? Of course, Nazloyan strives to realistically, adequately

convey the face of his patient. But there is realism and realism. Each realist artist would depict his model differently. Let us consider how Gagik Nazloyan perceives his patients, no matter how seriously ill they may be.

I venture to assert that for Nazloyan, all of them are, firstly, people equal to him and, secondly, in a certain sense mentally healthy. Of course, they are withdrawn, confused, mired in their reality, separated from us by a “wall of silence,” but not hopelessly. There is a path and a guide to get out of this trap, this labyrinth, this terrible deformed world into the ordinary world. In other words, Gagik Nazloyan always strives to discern in a person’s face his healthy core. And not just discern, but reveal, expose, recreate this core.

In this sense, he sculpts not just a realistic portrait, but immerses the patient in a reality where the latter meets his former self, his healthy self. Only in this context can one understand such, at first glance strange, statement by Nazloyan: “A work of art develops following the logic of healing, but it itself participates in determining this logic.” For the same reason, by the way, all faces in Nazloyan’s portraits resemble each other. In all of Nazloyan’s portraits, the “mentally healthy faces of sick people” are creatively recreated; the individual healthy planes and structures of their personalities are integrated. From this point of view, it is also clear what G. Nazloyan “suddenly sees” in the finished portrait. In fact, he looks not only at the patient’s portrait but also at the original and sees that the patient’s healthy personality has already been revealed and recreated, already integrated from the individual fragments discovered at previous stages of treatment-co-creation.

However, it is necessary to understand that the emergence of a healthy part of the patient’s psyche creates a conflict, tension, but even more significant is the conflict caused by the clash of personality portraits, which threatens the person with a complete loss of orientation and meaningful existence in this world. It is here, presumably, that Nazloyan finishes his next mask-portrait of his patient and proceeds to the next one. Again, the patient does not recognize and recognizes his image emerging under Nazloyan’s fingers. And again, his psyche, forced to resolve the conflict of the three portraits of the patient, extracts from the depths of his subconscious and memory the previously repressed representative and internal portraits of his healthy personality, which takes its place next to his sick personality.

The work continues week after week, month after month, one mask replaces another and gradually, next to the patient’s sick personality, his healthy personality grows and is built (essentially from scratch). G. Nazloyan notes in his article that a necessary condition for recreating the patient’s healthy personality is not only recognizing himself in the past but also returning to the life plans, former affairs and creativity abandoned at the onset of the disease, as well as knowing himself in a new capacity.

Let us see how the decisive turning point arrives. The tension, the conflict between the two personalities, grows ever stronger. However, the healthy personality is filled with life forces and juices, kept afloat by the already completed portraits that gradually fill the studio, while the sick one receives no “food” for its existence and breathing. The doctor still refuses to communicate with the patient on topics of the deformed personality and the patient has already become involved in a completely healthy activity far from the events of the deformed

reality – co-creation and discussion of the process of making his portrait. And then, one fine and truly amazing moment, like in the finale of Pushkin’s play “Don Juan,” the sick, deformed personality “falls through” into the subconscious, i.e., in the language of psychoanalysis, it is repressed. From now on, only the healthy personality has access to consciousness. In other words, recovery occurs.

From the perspective of the concept of psychic realities, creating a portrait of the patient is an immersion in aesthetic reality. A peculiarity of this reality is that, on the wave of aesthetic events, the patient enters another reality – the reality of his healthy personality. In other words, the reality of the portrait includes two fairly independent realities – the aesthetic and another, let us conditionally call it “psychotherapeutic.”

In the psychotherapeutic reality, events unfold according to the following scenario. The patient begins to recognize himself, but the recognized, so to speak healthy image of the patient contradicts another image that formed during the illness; this image, as we said, is entirely conditioned by the deformed reality. The conflict between the two images of the patient is resolved in favor of the healthy image precisely because subsequent events of the psychotherapeutic reality strengthen and reinforce the healthy image and, on the contrary, level out and weaken the image corresponding to the deformed reality. Important roles in this process are played by: the doctor’s unwillingness to discuss topics of the deformed reality, the normal, non-hospital atmosphere of the studio, the nature of the patient’s communication with the doctor and people present at the sessions. Consequently, the psychotherapeutic reality is not only the reality of the portrait but also the reality of communication, the reality of communication. It would be wrong to underestimate the role of the aesthetic plane as well: through aesthetic reality, the patient, without noticing it, passes through the psychotherapeutic reality and then moves within it in a certain direction, towards recovery. Living through the events of aesthetic reality, he simultaneously lives through the events of psychotherapeutic reality.

We can assume that the effectiveness of treatment by G. Nazloyan’s method will be higher if a number of conditions are met more precisely. First, the patient must already be acutely experiencing the malaise in the deformed world, although at first this world attracts him as a hope for solving all his problems. Second, the patient must not be alien to the magic of art, at least to the extent of succumbing to the “primary illusion” of works of art, recognizing himself in the portrait. Third, recovery will proceed faster if Nazloyan’s patient is capable not only of remembering his former self but also, without realizing it, of composing, inventing, creating himself anew. When Nazloyan’s patients say they are born again, they express the essence of what is happening quite accurately.

## Conclusion

Thus, we have rejected the hard problem of consciousness because we consider its formulation (the brain or another physical system as generating consciousness) not in line with contemporary methodological views. On the contrary, we recognize qualia and, moreover, have shown what it is and how qualia is conditioned by the formation and operation of consciousness. In addition, we have shown that psychotherapy such as that developed by Nazloyan represents a purposeful

transformation of qualia. It turns out that within the framework of such therapy, the qualia characteristic of a schizophrenic's vision can be gradually blocked (dismantled), while simultaneously creating conditions that contribute to the restoration and cultivation of the qualia of a healthy person.

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