

The Simple Science of Psychiatry, Psychodrugs and of WAR—Friendless Childhoods Foment Warring Adults

Bob Johnson

STALIN STOPPED TALKING and started killing—why? What if there were a common thread running throughout all tyranny? Hitler too, came to believe that millions of his fellow human beings were alien to him, so he decided that the optimum policy for himself and his nation, was to organise their slaughter with industrial efficiency—again, why? Their destruction brought him no military, economic or strategic advantage, and zero personal emotional security—what was he thinking of? Identical titanic emotions crippled serial killers detained in Parkhurst Prison, then a maximum security prison on the Isle of Wight, UK. This paper highlights the overlap between these threads, thereby illuminating their elimination.

The world we live in, is far too complex for one pair of eyes—the more people we talk to, the better our chance of surviving in an uncompromisingly hostile inanimate reality. So silencing others, because they differ, is like blinding oneself—only the clear sighted have any chance of surviving. If friendless children do make unfriendly adults, then we'd be in with a chance—at least it would give us an insight into where our abundant inhumanities come from. Only clarity of thinking can offer us the least chance of remedy, let alone cure. As Covid-19 demonstrates beyond question—no one is safe until we're all safe.

There is simply no logical reason why verbal opponents should become deadly enemies. It makes no coherent sense whatsoever. In reality, the more talking we do, the better. Even Winston Churchill concluded that “Jaw, Jaw is better than War, War”. So where does all this inhumanity come from? And what can we do about it?

Talking is a vital part of humanity. *Homo loquens* would be vastly more apt than *Homo sapiens*, especially in view of some of the blank human idiocy that passes for “sense”. Indeed talking things through is the optimum way of solving humanity's innumerable squabbles, if given the chance. Before going further, it is as well to acknowledge that the connection between thinking and talking is unfathomable, a problem which need not trouble us here. It pays to assume they are irretrievably linked, since the one stops when the other does, and vice versa, as we shall see.

This is a *philosophy* paper—it is not a medical or clinical exposition. And the reason for this is that there is a vastly simpler theoretical basis for unpacking psychiatric problems than today's psychiatry is ever likely to reach. For 41

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years, today's psychiatry has been marching blindly, wilfully, and unforgivably, in an extraordinary medical direction, and in the teeth of copious clinical evidence to the contrary. So set aside preconceived psychiatric notions, and focus on **talk**, and what stops it. By doing so, we alight on a much simpler conception of thought, and what stops that—simpler, yes, but still far from easy.

HEALTH WARNING—This paper argues on *philosophical* grounds, that today's prevailing psychiatric practice is comprehensively flawed in logic—you cannot unlearn childhood terrors by swallowing chemicals—this is not how we humans learn. If you are unfortunate enough to be taking psychoactive drugs, currently—DO NOT STOP THEM ABRUPTLY. Today's medical orthodoxy has decided that it is optimal to disable certain functions of your brain tissues, chemically. The logical reasoning behind this brain emasculation is flawed; the evidence that it doesn't work, is abundant; and the whole is inflicted upon you without your fully informed consent—this paper sets out to rectify all three. Your brain tissue does not take kindly to inept meddling, and expert assistance is indispensable if you are to escape from it, without fearsome toxic effects—often surprisingly difficult to undo, in practice—doctor-induced disease on a surprising scale.

To illustrate how broken-talking (also known as blocked-thinking) underlies crime, psychotic symptoms, and serial killings, three representative examples are included. Again, I would emphasise these are intended to illustrate problems in logic, rather than clinical practice. The paper has seven sections—1. *We Are Who We Talk to*; 2. *Sample Broken-Talk Sufferers*; 3. *Brainscans Show Where Broken-Talk Comes From*; 4. *Psychodrugs Slur Talk*; 5. *Towards a More Talkative Psychiatry*; 6. *Delightful Talk*; 7. *Conclusion*.

The sad truth is that where *philosophical* conceptions of the mind mangle key points, psychiatrists magnify the flaws, without restraint. As earlier papers have argued, human beings are not mechanical accumulations of chemicals, nor do we live in a Clock Work Universe—thus, unless we respond and adapt to the ever-changing world in which we currently exist, then, in common with every other living species that ever was, or will be, we'll be extinct. In our biosphere—whether we acknowledge it or not—the Iron Law of Evolution rules—adapt or perish. And the key to avoiding our very own species extinction is thought—or, in simpler terms, talk.

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1. We Are Who We Talk to

WHY WAR? Ask a serial killer why he kills, and he'll give you lots of replies—all different, none sensible, none coherent, none definitive—i.e., he doesn't know/can't say. Ask about his childhood, and you'll get the same—a confusion of non-answers, all heavily loaded with lethal emotions. Ask in the wrong way, and he has no difficulty in adding you to his hit list—thereby ensuring you are his next victim. This “omerta” applies anywhere, everywhere, throughout history, to each and every human, whether male or female—any who dedicate their life to mindless power. “Alec”, a 24-year-old, fully intended to kill every two years. He'd already killed in prison, and made no secret of his ambition to kill repeatedly, without compunction, without end. When I misjudged my enquiries about his mother, he practised garrotting his pillow, preparatory to killing

me. Once you can see the link between these two emotional tsunamis—tormenting adults arising solely from tortured childhoods—then man’s inhumanity to man is obvious—again, whether you are male or female.

Ask Kaiser Wilhelm why he went to war, and, unless it’s on Saturday, 1 August 1914 when he arbitrarily decided not to (the “George Vth Telegram”, 1914, see Massie, 2007), he’d give you lots of answers—but nothing intelligible, nothing that makes any sense whatsoever. Reams of print have been devoted to unpacking why the world suddenly went unreal in 1914—but again, none of them remotely conclusive. Instead of using its ever increasing industrial power to defeat famine and planet-wide plagues, our world community devoted itself to smashing itself to smithereens—an inexcusable global tsunami of non-thinking, from which we have yet to recover, but which has never yet been explained. *Homo sapiens?*—I don’t think so. Meanwhile we seem fully intent on self-inflicting it all over again, only more so this time. Where do such lethal political pandemics come from?—and how can we be rid of them?

There’s no need to ask about Wilhelm’s childhood—it was awful (As was Hitler’s, see Miller, 1981. Check out Stalin, Genghis Khan, and the rest). We know this now, but Wilhelm himself, would have been as inarticulate about it as Alec was. He could no more have talked coherently, consistently and openly about *his* mother than Alec did about his—conflicting emotions lead to conflicted life-strategies, and if you’re His Royal Highness, His High Excellency, a Modern Day Version of Caesar/Kaiser, Undisputed Autocratic Emperor of a mighty nation, then your tantrums harm us all. No one is safe until we’re all safe.

This paper makes overt, the link between tortured childhoods and the tormenting adults which follow. In other words, friendless children make for unsocial adults. From a *philosophical* viewpoint, the overlap between incoherent reasoning about childhoods, and the utter non-thinking which alone powers inter-human destruction, is too irresistible to overlook any longer. Inexcusable human self-species destruction prevails everywhere—it’s high time we understood why.

We call ourselves *Homo sapiens*, but infants are different. We don’t expect them to be “wise”—we expect them to *learn*. What could be simpler than assuming that some don’t? What if troubled infants carry their unwisdom, untrammelled, into adulthood? It makes logical sense. It is open to any amount of scientific scrutiny. And, at last, it offers a remedy, even a cure.

It’s simple enough, if only we can bring ourselves to see it (Gorman, 2021). We were all children once. Who talked to us then? What did they tell us about ourselves? Can we use our ineffable reasoning to contradict the worst, and enhance the best? Friendless children needn’t become anti-social adults—but it takes hard work, and some really simple thinking.

In 1988, in a Californian clinic, a brutally simple poster pointed the way. Even 33 years later, it stirs the emotions. It could not have been more clear cut. It showed a child, of about 8, looking bewildered, as well she might. The text that ran down the left hand side was as follows—

“You Idiot!”
 “You Idiot!”
 “You Idiot!”
 “You Idiot!”
 “You Idiot!”
 “... children learn what they’re taught.”

If we call this little girl Polly, it’s not difficult to guess what her main emotional problem will be in adult life. Self-esteem comes from the people we talk to—we don’t have to believe them all, or indeed to listen to

half of them—except when we’re very small—and then we do. We have no alternative. We have no escape. We have nowhere to run. When we’re infants, our parents and carers are the most important people in our life—listening hard to them, as infants, is not optional—it’s more significant than anything else—indeed it’s a matter of life-or-death, our impending death at that. Negative talk like this, is grossly out of place—children need coaxing not cursing. But to curtail parental negativity, we need to see where it too, comes from. Here we emphasise how its impact on vulnerable youngsters can overwhelm—and, uncorrected, can last a lifetime. This is the origin of what I later called parental footprints, long into adult life.

And just look at that talk for a moment. Is it encouraging? Or discouraging? Does it make you feel good about yourself, or not? These may seem just like words, ordinary words—but to a small child they are not. They feed the mind, just as food does the body. And they stick. Human beings learn. The quantity of information the infant absorbs in the first few years of its life is prodigious. Not only is there a vast vocabulary to be mastered—“what is this thing called?”; “how do you describe what just happened?”—but emotions are bigger at this time of life than they ever are again. Childhoods matter.

Time passes, you double, then triple in size. Things you couldn’t do at all, become second nature. Words trip off your tongue in a constant flow—accompanied by a similar stream of thoughts in your mind—the two are married together, in a tight relationship it’s best to leave untangled.

So much changes—but what about the things that remain the same? You learn to get up from all fours, you no longer have to crawl, you stand on your own two feet and do not need to be carried from one spot to the next by someone else, as inescapably happens to all humans immediately they are born, and then for the first few months of their life. But what about those emotions? Those feelings? Do they keep pace? Do they mature as you do? Or not?

And here is where all that talk impacts. You remember what people say to you—the bad more than the good—indeed, if you are subjected to a constant barrage of negation, like little Polly in the poster, then you will require extraordinary measures to gainsay it. It all goes in. If you don’t learn to cope with the ordinary things in life—clean your teeth, brush your hair, wash behind your ears—then the bad will continue to outweigh the good—why would it not?

Picture the scene—you are still quite small, but beginning to put one foot in front of the other with a confidence that you didn’t have before. What are you learning? Who are the people talking to you? Well, obviously at a young age, you cannot earn your own living, you are *dependent*. You have to rely on people bigger and stronger than you to provide whatever you need in the way of food, shelter and talk.

In recent years, an international example hits you in the eye, with unhappy consequences for us all. Look at the photo of a man then aged 18 or so, who later became a highly divisive politician (Smith, 2020).

Can you see a sneer in the one for the other? This inflicts a non-verbal version of the audible trauma inflicted on Polly—is it really very surprising that such a teenager emerged into adult life from these formative years, with emotional difficulties? Thinking-straight was nowhere to be seen. Consistent thought didn’t feature anywhere in his childhood—no one taught him it was important—why would he imagine it was? Lying was like breathing—no-one who talked to him demonstrated otherwise. Once embedded, these internal tunes become challengingly difficult to change, and quite impossible without trustworthy support and help—an emotional commodity not always easy to acknowledge, let alone supply.



Figure 1. Donald Trump talks to his father in a photo from the 1980s. Mary Trump describes Fred as a “high-functioning sociopath” (Photograph: Bernard Gotfryd/Getty Images).

Why should it be easy? If being sneered at is the only thing you’ve ever known, the only way you’ve ever been taught that life is always like, on our singular planet—then, as with Polly, you learn what you’re taught. The hidden key is that deeply embedded beliefs can sink below the “thinking-line”, and become unavailable for reconsideration. Polly was not an idiot—but who would she believe to the contrary? Powerful, indeed the most powerful people you ever meet before the age of say 5, have told you what you are, and deeply. Since there is no one else there to contradict them, and at the time, you are far too small to risk doing so yourself—what is to prevent this verbal-scar persisting throughout life—what indeed?

Serial killers such as Alec, Stalin and Hitler, who killed without restraint, may seem too far out of the ordinary to be of general philosophical interest. The same cannot be said of serial liars, who crop up all over the place. What if there were a link in logic between the two? What if, being careless with words ran a close parallel to being uncaring about life—especially your own? Could it be at all possible that those who murder truth without a care in the world, can much more easily contemplate inflicting the same, not only on their fellow humans, but also on themselves?

“Loose talk costs lives”—this was a slogan I remember reading in a wartime York bus, in 1945—it was meant to stop people chatting indiscreetly while travelling by public transport. It was feared they could give away grievous military secrets to supposed German spies, who might also happen to be on the same bus. This paper applies it, not to military hazards, but to social harms of all varieties—personal, marital, societal and global.

2. Sample Sufferers From Broken-Talk

It is commonly assumed that a given line-of-talk (also known as a line-of-thought) will continue in a straightforward, logical sequence, unless derailed by insufficient application or data. Two plus two will always equal four, in rational conversations, and the square root of minus one is ever relevant when considering higher mathematics. Where such lines of thought falter, or remain incomplete, the reason for this is usually considered

to have nothing to do with the way thoughts are put together, and all to do with the inadequate application of mental “energies”, whatever they might be—at least that’s how the conventional wisdom has always run, so far.

However, this paper presents a radical departure from this comfortable line in reasoning. There are certain thoughts, certain talks which paralyse the very act of speaking, of thinking itself. This is contrary to the comfortable view that Homo sapiens is a rational, sensible creature, if only it tries harder—the reality is that certain thoughts, certain topics gum up thinking and talking abilities, by their intrinsic nature. Talk and thought break, when crisis items come up to be processed. The outcome is that they remain unprocessed, unthought-through, unspeakable—i.e., they fall below the “thinking-line”. Now this is not merely a medical problem. It’s a political, social and human one too—do we encounter thoughts and words which block or break our line of thinking or of talking? Because if we do, then we need to be fully aware of this horrendous flaw, this emotional blackhole, in human capabilities.

The argument presented here, is that there are indeed such “breaks”. Certain emotive items, which by their very nature, do stop thought and talk in its tracks. Talking and thinking cease when these emotive subjects come up. The person thus afflicted looks away, thinks away, and simply cannot put into words the logical, rational conclusion that everyone else can readily see. It is a challenge at the best of times, and often quite uncomfortable enough to cause that particular point to be dropped, without further consideration. Homo sapiens then becomes Homo non-sapiens—Homo non-sense.

Both Alec and Wilhelm suffered blockages to thought, manifested by their inability to talk coherently. It is time to set aside the simplistic notion that because we can all breathe in and out, that we can also, and by the same token, talk or think about whatever we want, whenever we need to. No, sadly for our species, we suffer emotional blind-spots—which being “blind” are invisible to us personally. But this does not mean they do not exist. This is such a radical departure from conventional wisdom, it needs hammering home extra hard. It carries huge consequences for psychiatry, for psychodrugs and for war.

Let’s therefore take a direct, straightforward experiment, to show you, now, that if you have your own personal blind-spot, then, by definition, items that fall within it, are simply invisible to you. They just cease to come to mind, to appear in your field of view. Just to show how unsettling this can be, not only to conventional philosophy, but to emotions—take a moment or two, to look at your very own visual, i.e., retinal, blind-spot. Try the following physical experiment for yourself. It will work every time, guaranteed, because that’s how our mammalian eyes are put together—it’s because that’s how our optic nerve leaves our eye. Try it now.

1. Close your left eye.
2. Stare at the circle in the following diagram.
3. Move closer to the screen or page, then further away.
4. Keep doing this until the plus sign disappears.
5. When it disappears, you have found your right eye’s blind-spot.



The cross is simply not visible. There is no way you can see the cross, when it falls in that particular small patch of your vision. The cross does not disappear from the page—but it might just as well do so, because you cannot see it. Moving your eye, or opening your other eye, and lo and behold, there it is in its full glory. Try the same with your left eye, focussing on the cross, until the circle disappears. Hard to imagine, easily disbelieved, but universal throughout humanity. The same applies, whether you like it or not, to emotional blind-spots. This is the root of all irrationalities, up to, and including, war.

Now for three illustrations of how this works in practice. These may sound more medical than Wilhelm, but the reason they are included here is to show just how pernicious these broken-thoughts, this broken-talk can be. It inflicts much damage onto these three, but being so widespread, the same process can inflict even more destruction on innumerable others. Indeed, this is the key to understanding how friendless children fail to become friendly adults—they've stopped growing up emotionally, they still operate in Polly-mode, and millions, even billions, suffer as a consequence. Their very own emotional blind-spot prevents them seeing it, or correcting it, for themselves. No one is safe until we're all safe.

So to the first of the three sample sufferers. Lenny is a 45-year-old man. His verbal blind-spot is well visible to everyone else, *but not* to him—he can neither say nor think “I'm an adult”. This is preposterous. And it took exceptional patience, trust, and support for him to admit it. And it's taking even longer for the medical profession and others to do so too. But there it is on the video (Johnson, 2021a), as the dialogue clearly shows.

37. Bob: Do you find that surprising, that you find it difficult to tell your mother you're an adult?
 38. Len: Yes. Very surprising.
 39. Bob: It is, isn't it? So what will stop you? Say your mother was sitting over there, what would you say to her?
 40. Len: I'd say “Mother you can't hit me any more. I am an adult”.
 41. Bob: And you believe that?
 42. Len: Yes. Partly.
 43. Bob: You partly believe it and partly don't?
 44. Len: Yes. I don't know whether I could say it to her or not.
 45. Bob: What would stop you?
 46. Len: Fear.
 47. Bob: Fear of what? What is she going to do?
 48. Len: Well she might get up **and clout me**.

Line 42—his blind-spot is gradually fading—but it hasn't gone completely, as Line 44 confirms. He has no confidence he could actually say the words, if his mother was hearing them. Such honesty is rare, but it tells those who will listen, that here we have a grown man unable to say the words, “I'm a grown man”. At this point, the reader has two choices—either Lenny is making it up, fooling me, and everyone else—or he is genuinely verbally paralysed—which carries unlimited emotional consequences. And those consequences can be anything the human imagination can dream up—from timid and inwardly looking, to outward and encompassing the whole world, perhaps for a thousand years. Once thought/talk takes leave of reality, as here, then there is nothing, but nothing to limit its excess.

I would stress again, this is such a significant human finding, that it should not be confined to narrow clinical contexts. If Lenny can find himself unable to think or talk about something that is obviously real to everyone else—i.e., that he is in reality an adult—then this demonstrates how the human mind can “break”. And if a brave person like Lenny can admit it—why can't everyone else? Later in this paper, solid scientific, irrefutable brainscan evidence is described, which shows where and why this comes about. However, this is a

philosophy paper, not a medical or clinical one, so practical steps on how to rectify it, and indeed how to avoid making matters a great deal worse, are explored elsewhere (Johnson, 2018a). Meanwhile, I must repeatedly stress that these matters are vastly more fragile and more sensitive than might at first appear—solid, real and available for objective scrutiny, but capable of disastrous retraumatisation, if handled badly (i.e., do NOT try this at home, without expert assistance).

Now the point to be made with the utmost clarity is that Lenny has an emotional blind-spot. He cannot talk on a certain point. So many factors can confuse the issue beyond logic, that a certain simplification is in order. Here's something I call the Talk-Tetrad, four points which impact on every emotional blind-spot you are ever likely to meet. They are presented here, not for their clinical or therapeutic aspect, but for their logical simplicity. This Simple Science needs first to be understood, before it can be accepted or discarded.

So here's the Talk-Tetrad. (1) Is Lenny an adult? YES. (2) Can he tell his mother this? NO. (3) Should he be able to? YES. And (4), does he know that all his symptoms of violence came from his inability to tell his mother? NO. The delightful consequence is that when he can, they go.

The other two illustrative cases take matters further. Lenny is an adult—his self-dis-belief on this fundamental point landed him with a life prison sentence. Mary, the second case, takes us into the arena of psychotic symptoms—which so far, have lacked any sensible psychiatric rationale. Mary suffered an abusive childhood. In adult life, she developed savage hallucinations—while she was dropping off to sleep, she was afflicted by illusions of men coming through the bedroom door, to rape her all over again, as her father had done. In her desperation to remedy this intolerable situation she began saving up for a double mastectomy. This didn't really make sense, but then nor did the horrendous nightmares her psychotic symptoms imposed upon her.

Then later, her therapist changed her strategy and advised her she was old enough to shout back at these abusive, illusory men. The impact was dramatic. The next day she phoned in, saying she had cancelled all plans for her erstwhile drastic surgical “remedy”, and would now rely on her own (adult) self-confidence. Her blind-spot had, at first, prevented her seeing that her childhood torture was past. Until she could see through her emotional blind-spot, as Lenny was beginning to do with his, only then could she cut her abuse loose, following which all her symptoms which arose therefrom, evaporated.

So here's the Talk-Tetrad for Mary. (1) Was her father wrong to rape her? YES. (2) Can she tell him this? NO. (3) Should she be able to? YES. And (4), does she know that all her psychotic symptoms come from her inability to tell her father? NO. As with Lenny, when she could, her toxic, psychotic symptoms evaporated, as if they'd never been. This is not a clinical exposition. If logic underpins the first three points, then the fourth follows as day follows night. It all turns on point (2)—and for this we have to be real. Blind-spots do occur in our retina—they too, are utterly invisible to their owners without special expertise. But once they are observed, they are impossible to refute, both retinal and emotional. The former is demonstrated by the cross and the circle above, which is irrefutable; the second is underpinned by brainscan evidence described in the next section, which, though easily overlooked, once seen, cannot be doubted.

The third case is Alec. His talk-blind-spot was his inability to verbalise his emotions regarding his father throwing his mother down stairs, when he was too small to do anything about it. Aged 24, he planned to kill father-figures every two years, in prison, while serving his life-sentence for murder. There was no discussion about it—it was something part of him wanted to do, and as long this part was there, he “would let it”. His

blind-spot empowered especially horrendous crimes, as can happen without restraint in Homo non-sense (This is from line 194 in the dialogue, as published in *Verbal Psychotherapy*, Johnson, 2018a).

Applying the Talk-Tetrad to Alec, we have—(1) Was Alec’s father wrong to throw his mother down stairs? YES. (2) Can he tell his father this? NO. (3) Should he be able to? YES. And (4), did he know that all his symptoms of serial-killing came from his inability to tell him? NO.

In Alec’s case, talking too soon about either parent triggered the only vocabulary he then knew—murder. Here the emotional blind-spot is not only filled in automatically, unthinkingly, as it is with the retinal one—it also evokes an emotive tsunami, which floods the present with all the anguish, and agony, bottled up from long, long ago. Indeed, once you familiarise yourself with the Talk-Tetrad, and the broken-talk, and blocked-thinking which is intrinsic to it, then every time you come across any inhumanity—you won’t reach for superficial explanations—you’ll delve, *carefully*, into which particular items drive point (2), and how reversing point (4), cures. Again, first establish the logic in your own mind, grasp how blank that particle of non-thinking really is, but then make sure you take extra care before leaping in—garrotting comes in many guises.

3. Brainscans Show Where Broken-Talk Comes From

Pause here, to recapitulate where this discussion is heading, and review the wider context in which it is taking place. This is a philosophy paper in a philosophy journal examining the philosophy of the mind. The term “philosophy” comes from the Greek, love of knowledge or of wisdom. It is not a “psychiatry” paper—i.e., one on “doctoring the mind or soul”. But it seeks to place that worthy activity in a sensible, logical realistic context. And the number one philosophical error which currently afflicts today’s psychiatry, is what is best known in philosophical circles as a “Categorical Error”, that is to say, an error related to placing one topic in two contrary categories at once.

Philosophy concerns itself with the wider issues—if you get them wrong, then your project is doomed from the very start. Which is why, for me, philosophy remains the Queen of the Sciences. Whatever you do, you won’t make sense. Categorical Errors contain their own inherent futility from the outset. Only the blindest of blind-spots allows you to continue—and something very close to this has got today’s psychiatry in its grip.

Let’s take an elementary example, miles away from psychiatry. Suppose you were interested in bipedal locomotion. You observe that humans walk about on two legs. Fossil evidence from three million years ago, suggests they’ve been doing this since then. So you devote your energies to how legs work, which muscles pull them forwards, which back. You are intrigued as to how most other vertebrates resolve the challenges of balance by having four legs, once at each corner, the better to maintain physical stability. So you pore over the structures, the detail, the different leg components. What’s missing?

What’s missing, is what the legs are for. Where do they take you? What can you not do when they go wrong? What does leg disease prevent you doing? Concentrating on the obvious physical structures will tell you nothing about any of this. It can’t. It’s a Categorical Error. You are asking the wrong question, you are missing out on the wider context. Legs are remarkable. Bipedal progression is vastly more difficult to accomplish than it looks—ask any two-year-old, or any robotics expert. But the really interesting thing about our lower limbs is what you do with them—*where* you want to walk, takes precedence over *how* you do it. The latter is important, but it’s the former that is *interesting*.

So it is with the mind. The mind is something which happens in the brain. Obvious, irrefutable—and *limited*. But who is interested in the philosophy of the brain? It quickly becomes boring, or rather, it misses out

the crucial element that makes the whole thing worthwhile. You need a brain to think with—just as you need legs to walk with. But vastly more interesting is where you want to walk, and why. The same applies to what you do with thought, with talk—where do you want to go with them, where does your functioning brain allow your mind to travel?

Don't confuse what the brain is and does, with what the mind is and does. To do so is like spending all your energy and enthusiasm on looking at leg bones instead of where you want to walk. And if you think this is an idle conversation, bear in mind that we've recently had the "Decade of the Brain"; we have ever increasing ways of looking at the brain; brainscans now come in a vast range, even radiations from the very water molecules therein, have been enlisted into service for scrutinising what happens inside our cortical tissues. All very dramatic, and innovative—but if you really want to know why the mind goes wrong, then you need to look elsewhere, you need to avoid the number one philosophical mistake—the Categorical Error.

Take Polly's problem, for example. She continues in life the same way she's been taught in infancy—"you are an idiot". She has yet to meet (and trust) anyone powerful enough, but also safe enough, to change. So she stumbles along, nothing makes much sense to her—her low self-confidence, her absent self-esteem curtail everything she puts her mind to. Nothing works. Depression is a crucial symptom, though never a diagnosis. It's a software problem, nothing to do with the hardware. The Category in which her difficulty arises is no longer her brain circuits, her brain chemical—it's her programming, what she's been taught. Giving her yet more chemicals is like overfilling the fuel tank in a car, when it's really the flat battery that's at fault.

Here's a banal but recent example of just such a Categorical Error. Bleach kills all known viruses—this places it correctly in the Category of Effective Antiseptics. However, if you inject it into yourself, it will also kill you, taking it *out* of the Category of Safe Medicines. This is obviously an error in categorisation. It is also an obvious example of failure to think-through—in other words, it's a blatant example of broken-thinking, broken-talk—and, as far as this paper is concerned, it comes from one place, and one place only—tortured childhoods. Thinking is there to keep you safe, to help you survive longer in a generally unsupportive world—think wrong, and your health, even your life is at stake. And what goes for you, goes for all—no-one-is-safe-until-we're-all-safe.

Sadly, Categorical Errors are common enough among politicians. A recent example is this year's meeting of several world leaders (the G7). They solemnly decided to distribute one billion doses of vaccine against Covid-19, which sounds a lot, if delivered. This falls easily enough into the Category of Good Works. But since the best medical estimate maintains that the world needs ten times as many, it also falls into the Category of Wishful Thinking. I leave it to the reader to follow through on the childhood origins of all such broken-thought. Until the world is vaccinated—a single super spreader can reinfect us all. Any pool of untreated virus, anywhere on this globe, is an active breeding ground for deadlier versions. 10 billion doses seems a small price to pay—that is, if global health were the aim—the virus tells us more loudly than most—no-one-is-safe-until-we're-all-safe. *Homo sapiens* is a social species, fending off extinction by being sociable—you don't have to accept the logic in this—that is, if you don't mind having no one left to listen to you.

The current United Kingdom (UK) government gives similar examples as a matter of routine, almost daily—report after report comes out advising we should spend more on a particular project, to which the standard reply is—we're already spending a lot—the point being (deliberately) missed is that current outlays are woefully inadequate. This is technically known as an *ignoratio elenchi*—Latin for answering the wrong

question—giving a perfectly good answer to an entirely different point. Cleverness of reply is given higher priority than solving the problem raised—something else has intervened. Two opposing Categories have been mingled—why? Could it really be yet another instance of broken-thinking, even of toddler-thinking?

Reality is the one Category that trumps all others—at least it is, if you wish to live longer in it. Mixing your thinking between what you'd like, i.e., Wishful-Thinking, and what threatens us all, is a recipe for disaster, and in medical terms, death. Pausing the campaign against a lethal virus, for example, because you favour a break for Christmas, inevitably costs lives. The real virus doesn't observe political timetables. "Reality" is in a special Category of its own—it needs rather particular handling as we explore later, and bears directly on longevity, as it does with all living organisms.

Categorical Errors are often difficult to visualise, they are easy to fall into, and once established, difficult to dislodge. However, there is solid, objective, irrefutable scientific evidence, available to anyone who wishes, doctor or otherwise, to support the notion that thought-block, broken-talk is readily triggered by trauma. This has been available, scientifically, since 1996 (van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 1996).

Place a person in a brainscan machine, play them an audio tape of the car crash or gun shot, or whatever the trauma was for that individual, and their frontal lobes and speech centre cease working. This is solid objective reproducible evidence, for both types of break—thought and talk. It is equivalent to having a stroke, or, in van der Kolk's phrase it is "speechless terror".

Here is concrete evidence that brain circuits are blocked, and therefore can no longer function—namely, what's broken is both thought (the frontals) and talk (the speech-centre)—neither can work, any more than they can, if you've had a stroke. Paralysis stops function. It simply ceases to do anything. It's exactly as opaque as the retinal blind-spot described earlier. This is concrete scientific evidence to support point (2) of the Talk-Tetrad. Perhaps the weight of this will percolate through more widely, in due course. The main thrust of today's psychiatry is brain-study—here is concrete "brain" evidence, available to any with the appropriate equipment—though not, it would seem, to those whose minds are already closed. Or should that be "blocked".

I didn't use a brainscan machine to clarify my breakthrough patient in 1986—I used careful clinical reasoning. Since I started in family medicine in 1967, I soon noticed that people would suddenly become ultra-cautious when discussing certain emotive topics—as if there were a third party in the room, who they didn't want to hear what they were talking about. I noted this, but had no notion of where, or why. It did occur when discussing childhoods, but there was nothing further forthcoming at the time—so I observed it, pondered it, while puzzling what it could mean. The last thing I dreamt it would be, was that they couldn't tell me, or themselves, about the worst time of their lives—not because they didn't want to, but because their terror had rendered them speechless—talking about it was beyond them. They wanted help, but couldn't tell me where. Their talk-centre was broken. No wonder psychiatry today is in such a mess.

Then in September 1986, a pivotal point was reached in which a 40-year-old finally, after an inordinate length of time, related how her life had been threatened, aged 6, by her father waving an axe as if to kill her (see "Flora", Johnson, 2020e). This was like a Rosetta Stone. Once out, I realised she had been unable to think or talk about it at all before—and given this involuntary opacity with her, I reasoned the same might apply to all cases of childhood trauma. My subsequent clinical experience confirms that it does, whence the Talk-Tetrad above. Convincing enough for me take it into a maximum security prison with high risk prisoners, to see if it worked there, reasoning that if it did, it'd work anywhere. Others, however have been harder to convince.

There's been a decided lack of interest and of enthusiasm, especially from those upon whom it should impact most, my fellow psychiatric colleagues, and assorted editors of medical journals.

I can't resist including here another similar case, also in 1986, when a 45-year-old woman turned and repeated to me, verbatim, my then current phrase "Hello parent, I'm terrified of you—but I don't need to be because I'm an adult". Whereupon, turning to the empty chair across the room, on which we had agreed to seat that parent (in role play), her mind went blank, and she, speechless. On turning back to me, she repeated, word for word and fault-free, exactly the same words that had just failed her. On and off within a few seconds. Dramatic. And highly encouraging—our mutual objective was then clear—to empower her to say where her parental figments could hear, that she was now adult. The Talk-Tetrad in embryo. [HOWEVER—please do bear in mind, the earlier health-warning. This sounds simple—it has to be, else I couldn't follow it—BUT retraumatisation is always just an inch away, and retraumatised people can garrotte you (and perhaps will), on the slightest whisper—do take care.]

4. Psychodrugs Slur Talk

CONSCIOUSNESS IS ALTOGETHER UNIQUE throughout the entire universe. Nothing else even comes close. Many other things vary, some very swiftly—but consciousness does so in a *flexible, organised* manner. Trees and flowers grow into beautiful *organised* patterns—every spring, for example, the cherry "is hung with bloom along the bough" (Housman, 1896). But it all takes time. Growth, remarkable growth does occur, but at glacial speeds, when you compare it with consciousness. Other things in the animal world snap shut in microseconds—bee stings, or crocodile jaws for example—but, unlike any of them, consciousness can reverse itself in a trice. You are thinking one thing, jogging along in a rational path, when suddenly, a new idea occurs to you, and you are immediately speeding in quite a different direction altogether. This intrinsic flexibility is the very heart of consciousness—it's what shows you that you are still alive—indeed it is the very essence of life itself.

Two things must be said immediately. Point One—Consciousness is so exceptional, it is quite impossible to define—even describing it, with any precision is beyond us. Point Two—It goes wrong—and it does so for one, and only one simple reason, one already mentioned.

Taking Point One first—its ineffability explains why it is far more reliable to re-focus our energies onto **talk**, rather than waste a life-time fretting about what consciousness "is". Better to focus on what comes out of the mouth, rather than what can be "seen" with the "inner eye". At least the words can be looked at, they appear static, if only for a time and at first glance. They don't stand up well to sustained scrutiny, they are an unreliable foundation for any philosophy, as Wittgenstein and his acolytes found—but, for a while, they do seem fixed, they do seem solid and repeatable—which is precisely what consciousness is not.

Consciousness is where words come from—but how, why, or what their interconnections are, is simply not available to us—it is utterly lost in the swirling dynamics of living organisms. Once fixity is achieved, you're dead. And however fanciful your thoughts, they die with you.

So that's Consciousness Point One—the first thing to register about consciousness is that you cannot put it into words—not safely, that is. Experience it, enjoy it, take care of it—but defining it is a dead end, a black hole. Indeed its very indefinability is its crucial, not to say vital characteristic. It's there to keep us alive. The Reality in which we live is in constant flux, it is Uncertain at its very core. Only lively minds have even half a chance of getting through—and none at all when we stop thinking-straight, i.e., stop talking-straight. Distorted verbal

descriptions of Reality show just how toxic Fake-News is, and why murdering truth so glibly, kills.

So to Consciousness Point Two—which follows immediately—when consciousness goes wrong, we're in trouble. Not trivial trouble, but life-threatening trouble. We are conscious, only and exclusively because we are alive. And in the biosphere, in the “scheme of things”, within the present scenario—that's what it is for—to keep us that way. Evolution is just as elusive of definition as consciousness, or life itself—but, just as words do come out of the mouth, so too, evolution does occur. Nothing flew before the insects—but they do it all the time now—and flourish as a result. Just because evolution doesn't fit into nice neat static pigeon holes, this does not mean it doesn't happen. Like consciousness, we wouldn't be here without it.

However, despite its astonishing, and ultimately indefinable qualities, consciousness does go wrong—Consciousness Point Two. And contrary to expectations, why it does so, is remarkably obvious. And if you are in the business of putting it right (and who is not?), then this simplicity is a godsend—grasp what's obvious, what does make sense—put that right, then see how far you still need to go.

So consciousness works by fleeting along, ahead of Reality, the better to prepare us for the worst, so as to live longer in it. We plan ahead for our next meal, our next sleeping spot—if we don't, we starve, or get left out in the rain. Consciousness, remember, is there to enable us to survive longer—without it, we don't.

Now in order to make things better, rather than worse, we need quality data. If, for example, we assume—for whatever reason—that the world is flat, then circumnavigation doesn't exist for us. It simply doesn't come into the picture. There's no point even thinking about it—the edge of the world is there, and only an idiot would try and sail past it.

But look more closely at that example. Your captain, perhaps named Columbus, tells you to sail on. However, you are convinced, from all the data you've ever been taught—that the edge/end of the world is next—how do you feel? You “know” the world is flat, therefore from this elementary fact, you conclude that it has an edge, over which you can fall without trace. Your emotions rise up to protect you—that's what they're for. You get angry, you get frightened, you exert yourself—massive mental energies suddenly become available and you look around for suitable pressures to raise against certain death. This is how emotions, consciousness, and talk combine to prolong your existence. Don't knock it—but do understand it.

So consciousness is wonderful, it's live-saving, life-enhancing—the pinnacle of the biosphere, which itself is the zenith of our cosmos. But there's a catch, a glitch—feed it the wrong data, and like that bull in the proverbial china shop, it'll ruin you—and with you, all the people around, everyone who relies on you—no-one-is-safe-until-we're-all-safe.

It's that Categorical Error all over again—if you reason, with your ineffable consciousness, that the world is flat, then it is lunacy to suggest circumnavigation. Not only lunacy, but blasphemy, heresy, treachery, a “hoax”, or any of a number of other undesirables which stir the emotions, cloud the mind, and alienate our fellows. Fake-News first burns Truth at the stake, and then everyone else—Reality is King, and if you cross it, or defy it, or pervert it, or ignore it, then you (and we) suffer the consequences, not because I say so, but because Reality does. Get that Category wrong, and you're finished—no-one-is-safe-until-we're-all-safe. Reality stands in for our environment, that bit of the biosphere we currently struggle to live in—and to which the Iron Law of Evolution applies relentlessly—adapt or perish.

And how does Consciousness Point Two come about? Education, or rather mis-education, that's how. The human mind is huge, it can store innumerable, almost an infinite number of items—all of which take time to come in. Consciousness is indescribable, Point One, but it takes a while to fill, generally decades. And if it's

filled wrong, Point Two, then that's where it goes wrong. Alert readers will anticipate what's coming next—childhoods, that's the key.

Your masters, your commanders, your line managers, your catering suppliers, your boss—at the age of two—tell you what you are like, what is expected of you and what you should best do about it. If they are convinced that the world is flat, who are you to gainsay them? Do you want to eat, to keep warm, to stay alive?—then listen to their every word, their every nuance, but especially to their deeply held beliefs. In other words, to *their* emotional foundation stones, the very bricks on which *their* consciousnesses are founded. Go against these, and being left out in the rain will be the least of your worries—you simply won't survive that long. Or, like Polly above, it'll continue to seem like that, until you meet someone confident and trustworthy enough to nudge your very own ineffable consciousness into a better grasp of Reality.

Let that sink in. From the year dot, you have been regularly and uniformly informed that you are an idiot. It's the same as being informed that the world is flat. Who are you to question it? It goes in. How does it come out? It's those emotions again—being an idiot is loaded, it raises as least as much of an emotional tempest as going over the edge of a flat-earth—lots. So guess what?—the last thing you do is have a look. Once bitten, twice shy. You “know” both items are fraught—far safer, to keep your head down—don't think for yourself, it never helped before—just keep battling on in the ordinary way, like it's always been, and what you can't see, can't hurt you.

People come along and tell you to smile, they keep going on about how wonderful life is, how ineffable consciousness can be—they don't know you're an idiot, you don't even like to think/talk about it at all—all far too painful to bring to the surface. Check out Lenny, Mary and Alec, above—the last thing they allowed even to whisper into their consciousnesses, was that their appalling childhood no longer called the shots. It was over. Consciousness needs to be flexible enough to deal with the next problem, rather than being befuddled by the last. BUT, as this paper continues to emphasise, when emotions are explosive, then crucial, indeed vital items are “forgotten” or “denied”—thought/talk by which consciousness moves on, becomes frozen. It doesn't work any more. Trauma is the key to Consciousness Point Two. Turning off frontal lobes and speech centres puts a stop to Consciousness Point One. Your mind then becomes a burden, not an asset. Brainscans prove this—if only today's psychiatry would allow them to.

Put yourself in Polly's shoes. You've learnt, deeply, that you're an idiot—so any time it might come up, you change the subject—it's all too loaded, too painful. You meet people you like, people who want to help—but all the most powerful people you ever met, always told you only one thing—you're garbage—so that's what you've learnt to expect. Powerful people are dangerous people—they don't help, they don't want to help, they can't be trusted—they will always denigrate you—if not at first, then inevitably later, crushing your hopes, just after they've been raised.

The circle has been closed. Consciousness Point One is lost beneath Consciousness Point Two. Broken talk prevents healing. And it's painful. No wonder humanity has craved innumerable ways of easing mental pain—psychodrug use and abuse is ubiquitous. The commonest of all, is of course, alcohol. If you meet someone whose speech is slurred—the most likely cause is alcohol. You can understand it, in a way—if your leg is too painful to take you where you want to go, you might well resort to painkillers to ease your path—so too, if your mind keeps letting you down—turn it off. Alcohol is readily available, and socially endorsed, while remaining medically and socially hazardous. Slurring thought might appear half-way reasonable, when mental

agonies persist—but for doctors to adopt this as the best they can do, then that must surely be 100% unacceptable (Moncrieff, 2007). Tranquillise and sedate short term, of course—but long term, is that really the best a self-respecting “profession” can do? And “fully informed consent” is now obligatory in Britain (Montgomery & Lanarkshire Health Board, 2015). And among the clinically established facts you need to know is that heavy psychodrug usage not only shrinks brain tissue within 12 months (Moncrieff, 2007), but leads to early onset dementia in later life (Nordström, Nordström, Eriksson, Wahlund, & Gustafson, 2013). Who knew? (For a fuller account, see Johnson, 2018b).

5. Towards a More Talkative Psychiatry

TALK SAVES LIVES. “I’ll be there for you”. “You can rely on me”. “I’ve got your back”. “I’ll never betray you, sneer at you, undermine what you’re trying to do, or attack you for something you haven’t done”. Just let these simple phrases percolate. Let your tongue play over them, and note how they make you feel. Philosophy makes a big issue over value—what is the “good” life, what the bad? Would you, personally, label these as “good”, as valuable?

Or, commonly enough—is this just talk? Does it fail to follow through? Do you instantly react by doubting it? Have you, like Polly, been fed a steady diet of Fake-News—every single *powerful* person she met in her early years consistently and invariably, undermined her trust.

Try a few more. “I will be here to support you every Monday and Thursday at 11 o’clock, unless I break my leg”. “My word is my bond—I agreed the price beforehand—I will not take advantage of you, deceive you, or let you down”. “I’ve learnt that honesty pays, and that trust is the antidote to fear”. “You can believe what I say”. “I will do-as-I-would-be-done-by”.

Again the words are clear enough. They emerge from the mouth as if it were the most natural thing in the world—but do they signify? Do they carry significance, meaning? Or are they just mutterings in the wind, make-weights, time-fillers, Fake-News?

Because unless words are valid, then they confirm Consciousness Point Two—consciousness goes wrong. Consciousness is vast. It’s unwieldy. It veers about all over the place. Its very flexibility means it needs anchoring, it needs somewhere consistent to move forwards from. Without secure stepping stones, then progress is faulty, even fatal.

And where can such foundations, such consistent reliabilities, possibly come from? Not from “Science”—the inanimate world has proved too Uncertain for that (Johnson, 2017 & later). It doesn’t come from knowing everything there is to know—that sounds lovely, but it doesn’t work. No, the only source of reliability we can any of us ever reach, comes from each other, from other people. Two heads are better than one—trustworthy emotional support is indispensable for every man, woman and child. Reality relies on it. This is the crux behind—no-one-is-safe-until-we’re-all-safe.

Homo sapiens has one, and only one, evolutionary talent to assist it avoid extinction. Other animals have fleetness of foot, wings to fly them out of trouble. Human beings rely exclusively on consciousness. Like every other living organism, we react to changes in our surroundings—if we didn’t, we wouldn’t have a chance. It gets hotter, we move to cooler; it gets drier, we seek more water—not because we’re pernickety, but because if we don’t, we cease to be living organisms.

And here is homo sapiens fatal flaw—and it’s a flaw that applies to every member of our species. Every single life form that ever existed or will exist, needs the ability to react to their surroundings. We are

exceptional in being required by evolution to react not to one environment, but to two. Other species, such as poultry, can run about as soon as they're born or hatched—we can't. We are quadriplegic at birth. If we're not fed and comforted, we cease. Only later, can we take over responsibility for our own survival. This is likely to have come about because we were once aquatic apes (Johnson, 2020d). Being born into water helped us not be dropped—clinging to parental hair was an effective life-line. Moving back to being a terrestrial animal, could prove to be our undoing—as it will, unless we take vigorous and clear-sighted actions, soon, that is, very soon.

The first Reality we encounter, even before we're born, is TODDLER-REALITY. In it, we are 100% dependent—we know what's going on, as the 17 minute old baby in the video proves (Johnson, 2021a)—but we can do nothing about it. We're helpless. Our very life-span is in the hands of others. They either feed, house and talk to us—or they don't. BUT are they friendly, or unfriendly? Are they reliable? Can we trust them? If we can't, if they wobble, if they impose their blocked-talk on us, as they did to poor little Polly—then we are passive recipients of doom. Consciousness needs stable stepping stones—its very fluidity calls for constant reassessment, reassurance—this much follows from Consciousness Point One. If we are fed reliabilities, we have a chance to avoid Consciousness Point Two—if we're not, we don't.

TODAY'S REALITY differs markedly from TODDLER-REALITY. Different rules apply. Take breathing in and out—in adulthood, if you stop, you die—in infancy, if your carers stop, so do you. Your life-support system, then, is in the hands of others—and if all goes well, that's as it should be, and you take over as you “mature”. If not, then you are forever struggling to “take back control”, to head off more sneers—without “adults”, you're extinct. And you know it.

All being well, you are encouraged to stand on your own feet emotionally. You are taught you are capable, that you are not an idiot. If things go badly, then the trauma of life-or-death threats pushes maturation below the “thinking-line”—and you remain beholden to half-bitten infant strategies for the rest of your life. While it may be commonplace among toddlers in nursery school to play such games as “I'm The King of the Castle, get down you dirty rascal” (or in Stalin's case, not only “down”, but die, as with Trotsky). Such strategies can persist long after they are outdated. Well, not forever—if you are fortunate enough to meet someone strong enough, who knows what they're talking about, and is there long enough for you to *trust* them with your life—then you can grow up emotionally—Lenny and Alec showed that this was possible, to both their and my delight.

This is why the opacity of broken-thinking matters—Consciousness Point Two. Childhoods, and all that sneering and jostling for life-support is over—except, being a highly charged “memory” it struggles to get above the “thinking-line”. Once bitten, twice shy. Don't discuss idiocy, it's far too painful—sadly that ensures it continues unspeakable, untalkable, unthinkable, indefinitely.

At this point in the paper, I must issue a weather warning—we are about to embark on seriously choppy and tempestuous waters. So I would ask the reader to prepare for the forthcoming controversy, by reviewing the current status of consciousness in their mind. Is it as glorious, delightful and as vital as depicted here, or is it merely hot air, to be discarded as easily as stale breath? Because we are about to meet an opposing viewpoint that is astonishingly robust, well financed, and almost ubiquitously in power. This is where philosophy meets psychiatry—and where the latter is currently being sabotaged and betrayed, drastically. Readers who prefer a quieter life might wish to skip to the next section where more delightful topics are aired.

The fact is that the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the prevailing psychiatric authority in the United States, has, since 1980, come to dominate world psychiatry in a way that not even Freud, in his heyday,

achieved. Consciousness features not at all in the APA's view of things. Indeed this is a prime example of where psychiatrists fumbling with half-baked philosophical notions, brings us all, first futility, and then woe. A Categorical Error on a massive scale. Consciousness Point One is used to disguise as big an abandonment of Human Rights as any in our troubled world. "Choice", "intent" and "agency" all disappear down the plug hole of psychiatric expediency—and who is there left to complain?

Take the inept phrase—"a reductionistic anachronism of mind/body dualism". Ask a high-school philosophy student to unpack its meaning, and s/he would do so with ease. But there it is at the heart of the APA's "bible", the DSM—short for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (on DSM-IV, 1994, p. xxi). The first two editions, DSM-I (1952) and DSM-II (1968) are low key affairs, which bow to the inherent complexity of human beings and their troubled mental worlds. But the APA's third edition, DSM-III (1980) had an entirely different purpose in mind. Not only did it set out to simplify consciousness and its travails, it deliberately disparaged *talk*. Indeed one authority (Breggin & Rowe, 1993) maintains that at the APA board meeting in 1978, only the treasurer objected to the diversion of psychiatry away from talk, and on to chemicals, a tactic that has been outrageously successful, at remarkable cost all round.

There are of course, stalwarts who strenuously oppose this approach—doctors, and many others, who struggle heroically, but with precious little impact, against the prevailing wind. Notable among them is Robert Whitaker, a pioneering science journalist, who describes today's psychiatry as suffering from "institutional corruption" (Whitaker & Cosgrove, 2015). With my background in clinical medicine, I go further, and extend that corruption, not only to the institution, but also to the very practice of clinical medicine itself. If any doctor presented even one of the following four key points at a revaluation session, I would promptly withdraw their medical licence—wouldn't you? The DSM, since 1980, and explicitly in DSM-IV, breaks four cardinal medical rules, as follows.

Could you bring yourself to trust a doctor who did any one of the following? (1) Didn't believe in the "**mind**", let alone consciousness. (2) Expressed no interest in any possible **causative factors**—i.e., is happy to ignore entirely what it was that triggered the symptoms which brought you to the clinic in the first place. (3) Who eliminated all possibility that your medical problem was a **reaction** to an adverse event. And who (4) had arbitrarily decided, for undisclosed reasons, that all *mental* problems arose from **brain** diseases. No, nor would I. I would stress that not all DSM-doctors obey these precepts to the letter—it's quite difficult to do so, while maintaining a professional approach. But too many are trained—that this is the modern way to do psychiatry—which is as much anathema to me, as I hope it is to you.

Unpacking each of these in turn, here are the page numbers from DSM-IV (1994)—

(1) **Mind**—

"The problem raised by the term 'mental' disorders has been much clearer than its solution, and, unfortunately, the term persists in the title of DSM-IV because we have not found an appropriate substitute..." (p. xxi, emphasis added. This follows on from the "anachronistic" gobbledegook above).

(2) **Causative factors**—

"...DSM-III introduced a number of important methodological innovations, including ... a descriptive approach that attempted to be neutral with respect to theories of etiology..." (p. xvii. Etiology, or aetiology, is medical shorthand for causative factors; emphases added. Hippocrates would be spinning in his grave).

(3) **Reaction**—

"DSM-II was similar to DSM-I but eliminated the term reaction." (p. xvii. This of course, is a barefaced

lie, which murders the truth on a catastrophic scale. Not only is DSM-II as replete with “reaction” as is any surviving living organism, but it is precisely adverse “reactions” which distress each and every psychiatric patient who ever was, or ever will be).

(4) **Brain**—and without a smidgeon of objective evidence, we read on Page 10—

“... The term ‘organic mental disorder’ is no longer used in DSM-IV because it incorrectly implies that the other mental disorders in the manual do not have a biological basis.” (The word “organic” is medical shorthand, for “not from the mind”—goodbye consciousness).

As before, when we have what appears to be a blatant example of Consciousness Point Two, consciousness going wrong—we can usefully apply the Talk-Tetrad, as follows—(1) Does consciousness go wrong? YES. (2) Can DSM-psychiatrists say that consciousness goes wrong? NO. (3) Should they be able to? YES. (4) Do they know that until they can confidently discuss consciousness, especially Points One and Two, progress in psychiatry will be retrograde? NO. Who’ll tell them? Will you?

6. Delightful Talk

A SMILE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY. Here are eight simple words, none of them complex or difficult to understand, indeed six of them are monosyllables. You could translate them into any language in the world. Everybody knows what a day is, and what a doctor does, or tries to do. As for smiles, everyone has seen at least one. It’s even based on a time honoured saying—an apple a day keeps the doctor away—and tweaking a well known phrase just a little, is intriguing, and allows a bit more light into complex issues. BUT is it true?

Not only is it true? Does it also make sense in your life? Do you believe it? Or not? Does the meaning vary over time? Would you have agreed with it before? Now that you have read them, does it make you think? Will you see a different meaning in them, *because* you’ve thought about them. You know what the words mean—but from these questions, you can see that that meaning is slippery, it isn’t fixed. It means something today, but could mean less or more, tomorrow. It’s that Point One again—consciousness is so fluid, it slides all over the place. We desperately need some fixity, some security—but not too much, or, along with the words, we’re dead.

And one of the deeper meanings behind these eight words is that stability comes from smiles. Sounds a bit flimsy, which it is. But then all words are fragile—hammer them too hard and they break. This doesn’t mean that they’re useless, just that you have to handle them with skill, with care—note what they can do well, and what they can’t (And avoid Fake-News like the plague).

And what words do most, is enable talk. And talk entails someone else. You use words to convey meaning, ideas, thoughts, notions—to another human—as I’m doing on this page, and you are doing reading it. We are communicating—or we are in a manner of speaking. The most common use of talk is between people in real-time, that’s to say at the same time. You talk, I listen, or vice versa. Sometimes we understand each other, other times we don’t. This isn’t saying anything new—we all know that words are slippery, and need deft handling if they are to make more sense than not.

One of my favourites comes from Jane Austen. If she wrote “please make love to me in the hall”, it would mean something rather different in 1800, that it would today—practices vary, today differs from yesterday, and always will—though the requirements for rational thought remain the same. And, to go from the sublime to the everyday, rational thought, coherent talk, in the ultimate, is there for health, for surviving longer than we otherwise would—words are wonderful, or they can be—but talk, when you really get down to it, has an overriding purpose—to help us stay alive, longer. Or, as I will insist, on doing so more delightfully.

Humans talk. Indeed if we called ourselves *Homo loquens*, then that would be greatly more appropriate than *Homo sapiens*. We humans can be quite idiotic. Or, as I would prefer, emotionally immature, i.e., childish. But on a more positive note, humans like talking to each other, or they do when they are happy. In fact, I'd press that harder—talking can make us happier. Not all the time of course, but some of the time—and that is a bonus we don't always appreciate.

"I LIKE talking to you". Can you say that easily?—it's only five words long. Or does it stick in the throat? Does it depend on whether you can trust me or not? Indeed, perhaps it turns on whether you like me, or not? And does liking me impact on what the words I say, mean?

Chase that thought a little and you come to delight. At least you do, if you've been trained in the right way. Experiencing delight is an acquired taste—it isn't a given. You need to learn it, you need to try it out for yourself, you need *education*. But again, that is no surprise—you need practice, support and encouragement to go from trundling about quadrupedally to going bipedal—which we all generally do, a year or so after being born. So it is with delight. First off, are you allowed it? Does your worldview include it? Did those who taught you the language you think/talk with, include delight in their vocabulary? Did they experience it everyday? Or at all? And if they didn't, do you?

Well, this paper argues that delight is there for us all. It comes from a whole range of different sources—the most readily available is delightful talk. But in the ultimate (which is where I press to go as much as I can), it comes from being alive. It is the upside to combatting entropy. In other words—we inhabit a universe which is intrinsically chaotic, patternless, lawless, and meaningless. Living processes create, impose, generate, organise patterns. I don't know how they do this—but I do know that they do. And some of those patterns are incredibly beautiful. Delight comes from imposing a degree of order on the disordered.

Back to that opening phrase—a smile a day keeps the doctor away—the words mean more at some times than at others—this much we've discussed. Is it true? This is another aspect of this 8-word phrase, which we need to expand further. Truth is vital. Fake-News the opposite. So why? And if truth is so important, why isn't it more widely valued, and where do its most obvious flaws come from?

Again, the standard by which truth, meaning, and so much else, is best judged is Reality. Reality here is the world in which we find ourselves. The surroundings in which, as with all living organisms, we have to make our way, from one breath to the next, one place of rest to the next. Views vary as to what Reality is, indeed Reality itself varies all the time, every second or less. This is the fact. This is the fact of life. And somehow living organisms need to continually counter the incessant battering by "events". To stay alive, we and they need to impose a degree of order on the fundamental chaos which is "outside". This "order" is never permanent—it needs renewing every day, every minute. At it's most basic and most pressing for every one of us—do our surroundings, our immediate Reality, contain sufficient oxygen to allow us to continue, or not? Reality has a way of overriding all other considerations.

So when we talk about the truth or otherwise of an 8-word phrase, we need to do so with care. Is it true that—"a smile a day keeps the doctor away", or not? Let's review the various answers that can come up for this important, even vital, question.

Firstly let's take a scientific approach. How would you find out, in the best scientific manner of them all, whether it was true that a smile a day does keep the doctor away? Well, traditionally you set up an experiment. Take 100 people, divide them into two groups, preferably by a randomised computerised algorithm. You then expose the target group to the full phrase, and the control group to something less (such as "A sneer a day

brings the doctor dismay”). It’s difficult to keep a straight face when describing this—science doesn’t work well here—it doesn’t give us a clear answer. It makes things cloudier not clearer. And it always will—too many other factors are going on at the same time—we live in a multithreaded universe, and cutting them out, one by one, which is what Science tells us to do, works, but only with severe limitations.

So “scientific truth” isn’t very helpful here. Let’s try a different approach—take legal practice. Here long experience with the more challenging aspects of Reality has lead lawyers to divide Truth into two groups—(1) true beyond reasonable doubt and (2) true on a balance of probabilities. The first is a higher standard to aim for, and various legal tussles take this into account. Admonishing witnesses to deliver the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth, is a wonderful aspiration, but nothing more (The Whole Truth simply doesn’t exist in our Uncertain world).

Is it true that there’s enough oxygen in this room for you? If it’s false, you are first distressed, and then dead. So the question of truth is relative. It’s an application of Relativity that Einstein would have resisted—but which we would be wise to accept, if we want to live longer.

So back to delight. My contention is that life combats entropy, that is to say the inanimate world is intrinsically chaotic, and always will be—but that living organisms, including ourselves, can make headway by introducing an element of order, organisation, meaning—accompanied by delight.

Now whether that last addition is true for you, will depend on what you’ve learnt about this curious planet, or have been taught. For me, for example, Schubert is a constant source of delight—especially when I play his piano duets. When I follow his advice, his prescription as to what to play next, something in me, and in my playing partner changes, something is lifted up, things seem lighter, more real, more delightful. I don’t know what it is, and I know that many others have different sources of delight than Schubert—he has grown with me over the years. So much so that I can now rely on him, in the sense that I know I will delight in playing his duets with my trusted friend. I can’t say how this happens, nor how it follows from the ingredients. At least it does this, when I can get my fingers to do what he wants—not as often as I’d like.

So what do I conclude from this? Delight is an acquired taste. It’s often hard work, at least to start with. And you have to persevere to get anywhere. But when you do, you find that being alive is a constant, consistent source of peace-of-mind, also known as delight. That’s my truth, at least as I see it at this moment in time, and it is beyond all reasonable doubt, for me. Is it for you?

Sex is oversold. We live in an over-sexed society which has unfortunate consequences for delight. Space is limited here, but sex is transient and is weaponised more often than it helps (Johnson, 2019). Violence too is over-blown, too much of the media consistently endorse it, indeed videos are generally judged too feeble without it. The Reality is that all violence is unfriendly and predisposes to war. From working closely with Lenny and Alec, it is clear that all violence is childish, and arises from badly run kindergartens, and friendless childhoods. It has no place in well run, adult, civilised societies. As for tolerating it as “entertainment” (see especially Medved, 1993)—this merits the very opposite of an Oscar. Cash too wreaks havoc—a point discussed in relation to politics in an earlier paper (Johnson, 2021b).

7. Conclusion

WAR IS AN INTENTIONALLY LETHAL, MAN-MADE DISEASE—few diseases kill as many humans or cripple as many livelihoods. War is plotted, planned and willed upon us by people who stopped thinking-straight decades ago. Doctors work hard to heal our global plagues, but not hard enough to cure our

inexcusable, self-inflicted *political* pandemics. Covid-19 is a seriously anti-social viral infection. It attacks the very sinews of society. By masking our faces and pathologising our hugs and hand-shakes, it undermines our social cohesion, grievously. But we know how it spreads, and where it comes from—if only we knew the same about war, we might all survive longer on this glorious blue planet.

War is equivalent to a long-standing virulent infection. The First World War led to the Second, which spawned the Polish Ghettos, which drive the Israel-Palestine wars, the United States-Iraq war, and now the impending Pacific Wars—one war foments the next, all driven by toddler-thinking—no-one-is-safe-until-we're-all-safe. Must we merely sit on our hands, and suffer the consequences of emotional immaturity? Or can we become less Homo *non-sense*, and more Homo *loquens*? In time?

Edward Jenner observed in 1796, that cowgirls didn't get smallpox, so by injecting cowpox, he initiated vaccination—as a direct result, smallpox no longer exists. No one dies from it any longer—we have global immunity against it. There is no reason in logic, why the same should not apply to war—find out where it comes from, and inoculate against it. But as these viral diseases have taught us—everybody needs curing, the poor as well as the rich, the neglected as well as the cossetted—pockets of humanity left untreated foment new variants, both of viruses and of wars—no one is safe from war (or terrorism), until we're all safe.

But before doctors can prescribe, they need an accurate diagnosis—which in turn, depends crucially on understanding the causative factors involved. Therefore, just as Jenner studied low-esteemed cowhands, we need to do the same for war. And whatever else war is, or does, its priority is killing people. Not persuading them, not discussing with them, not offering them a better life—kill them first, and hang the consequences—the more, the speedier, the better. In fact innovation in lethality is hailed as masterly, and a matter for huge congratulation, whatever the cost.

Killing is therefore the final common pathway for any and all wars. If you spend time with low-esteemed humans who also kill routinely, i.e., serial killers, the first thing you find is that they don't know why they do it. The emotion and the reason that drives them, has sunk below their “thinking-line”—they simply cannot say. At least not before a great deal of talking about painful, terrifying, unspeakable topics. But when they can, it goes. Why not try out the following—using-social-delight-to-defeat-social-harm-for-all (Johnson, 2018).

Listen to Alec, for instance. Once he could think straight, he explained to me that if you have a tantrum when you are four years old, you stamp your foot on the floor—BUT, have one when you're 24, and somebody dies. This number grows to hundreds of thousands of deaths, when toddler-thinking politicians mishandle Covid. That's in peacetime. In war, clouds of radioactive dust exterminate all life, PERMANENTLY, whether friend or foe—can we grow up soon enough?

This paper argues that life survives by overcoming entropy in the teeth of an unordered, unpatterned, lawless, inanimate world—when it falters, it dies. Chaos is inimical to life. But this doesn't apply in infancy where “others” take every responsibility, and you are simply too small and too weak to take any. Where toddler-thinking persists, then you find prominent people, such as the current British Prime Minister, declaring that—“Chaos isn't that bad”. The broken-thinking, the *ignoratio elenchi*, behind this becomes clearer, when he adds—“Chaos means that everyone has to look to me to see who's in charge” (As reported in *The Economist*, 24 July 2021). Being King-of-the-Castle in infancy ensures catastrophe in adulthood. Chaos kills—as on Capitol Hill in the United States on 6th January 2021, and avoidably in Northern Ireland—politicians who lie propagate a lethal public health disease, which democracies tolerate at our peril.

Which is where that war time slogan pays dividends—“Loose Talk Costs Lives”. It highlights

toddler-thinking for us. Democracies generally provide themselves with a means to limit such damage, either in the form of a vote of no-confidence, or an impeachment. But of course, we need grown-ups to enact them for us before they can do any good. Irresponsible emotionally-immature adults, in the United States Senate, or elsewhere, merely exacerbate the mayhem—sadly they’ve never been taught to think for themselves, let alone for the rest of us.

So here’s the closing Talk-Tetrad—(1) Is war a thoughtless way of making *everything* worse? YES. (2) Can we even whisper this in our political dialogues? NO. (3) Should we be able to? YES. (4) Are we aware that only thoughtful *talk* can prevent war extinguishing us altogether? NO.

Who knew? Do you? Now?

Health Warning

As before, never stop psychiatric drugs abruptly—seek expert help. I closed my clinic when I retired, to devote my time to writing and training. I no longer see individual cases, privately or otherwise.

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