

Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome: The Modern Cases of Trump, Putin, Madoff and Musk

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Abstract

This article suggests that the neural supercircuitry of the prefrontal cortical Self-Ken, central medium of the human Soul, can undergo pathophysiological changes leading to Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome. The four symptoms of this syndrome appear to be: Abnormal Conscience, Abandoned Mission, Abused Will and Deformed Identity. These symptoms were examined with looking at the cases of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Bernard Madoff and Elon Musk, as their lives—which they chose to be public—unfolded or still unfold in the digital media of billions of people with impact on the societies of all. The article was not written against these individuals, but for a future preferring freedom and decency.

Keywords

Conscience, Will, Mission, Identity, Soul, Prefrontal Cortex

1. Introduction

When George Washington wrote in his copy book as a schoolboy that “*Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience*” (see [Schlafly, 2002](#)), it showed he was born, as all true social leaders, to understand both the divine nature of Conscience and the obligation of following its commands. But with this sentence he also transmitted—however unknowingly—a challenge to the neuroscientists of future: the challenge of exploring and understanding the neural blueprint of Conscience.

This was a tall order. The monumental two volumes of *The Principles of Psychology* by the father of American psychology, William James ([James, 1890](#)), didn't even have the word “conscience” in its subject index. Perhaps Sigmund

Freud was the first to pay attention to the problem. The below passages from Chapter III of his classic “*The Ego and the Id*” (Freud, 1962)—originally published in 1923—summarized his opinion:

“It is easy to show that the ego ideal answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of Man...it contains the germ form which all religions have evolved... As a child grows up, the role of father is carried on by teachers and others in authority; their injunctions and prohibitions remain powerful in the ego ideal and continues, in the form of conscience, to exercise moral censorship... Social feelings rest on identifications with all other people on the basis of having the same ego ideal.” (p. 27).

Scientific investigations of the 21st century opened new windows to this recognition. According to Schalkwijk, three subsystems participate in the functioning of ego ideal, also called as Super-Ego by Freud. These subsystems are: “...*the capacity for empathy, the proneness to experience self-conscious emotions, such as shame, guilt, and pride, and the capacity for logic, moral thinking*” (Schalkwijk, 2018, Abstract). Others pointed out that “*cognitive neuroscience investigations have begun to reveal the distributed neural networks which interact to implement moral judgement and social decision-making, including systems for reward learning, valuation, mental state understanding, and salience processing...*”, all fundamental to morality (Yoder & Decety, 2017, Abstract).

Finally, Patricia S. Churchland, founder of neurophilosophy, produced a comprehensive book on Conscience (Churchland, 2019). She dedicated a full chapter, Chapter 6 titled “Conscience and Its Anomalies”, to discuss the overlaps of these anomalies with psychopathy, sociopathy and obsessive-compulsive disorders. At the same time, her book concluded that “*If we seek a precise explanation of why a seemingly decent person acted against conscience by taking a bribe or molesting a child or lying under oath, we have to acknowledge that neuroscience cannot yet provide such a precise neurobiological answer.*” (p. 187).

The aim of this article is to move science and philosophy a step closer to that neurobiological answer by looking at the anomalies of Conscience. Specifically, the article focuses on the anomaly that can be called Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome.

2. Thesis

The thesis of this paper is that the prefrontal cortical neural circuitry of Conscience, as defined and fine-tuned for this paper by the author, can often undergo pathophysiological changes even in highly successful politicians and businessmen, resulting in the Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome of which profound social impacts justify its scientific examination.

The referred definition of Conscience is that it may be the cosmically originated evolutionary product of a both genetically and environmentally regulated domain within the prefrontal cortical neural supercircuitry of Self-Ken—that highly evolved self-awareness/self-knowledge system forming the central medium of the

human Soul—where this domain, interacting with the other Self-Ken domains of Mission, Will and Identity, develops during early childhood in response to the care experienced in this period to assure a lifelong drive to reciprocate these early experiences with the right acts of social goodness and love instead of the wrong acts of social harm and hate whenever the challenge of this choice—indeed, the choice between right and wrong – is encountered (Ludvig, 2022a, 2022b).

This definition is consistent with Churchland’s opinion that “*Conscience is an individual’s judgement about what is morally right or wrong, typically, but not always, reflecting some standard of a group to which the individual feels attached.*” (Churchland, 2019: p. 5). Though the addition that Conscience may be a cosmically originated function of the human Soul is a—good or bad—cosmological neuroscientific suggestion.

Obviously, since neural circuitries in brain can work abnormally in neurological and psychiatric patients, the prefrontal cortical neural circuitry of Conscience can also work abnormally in affected individuals, leading to the mentioned Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome.

These thoughts are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

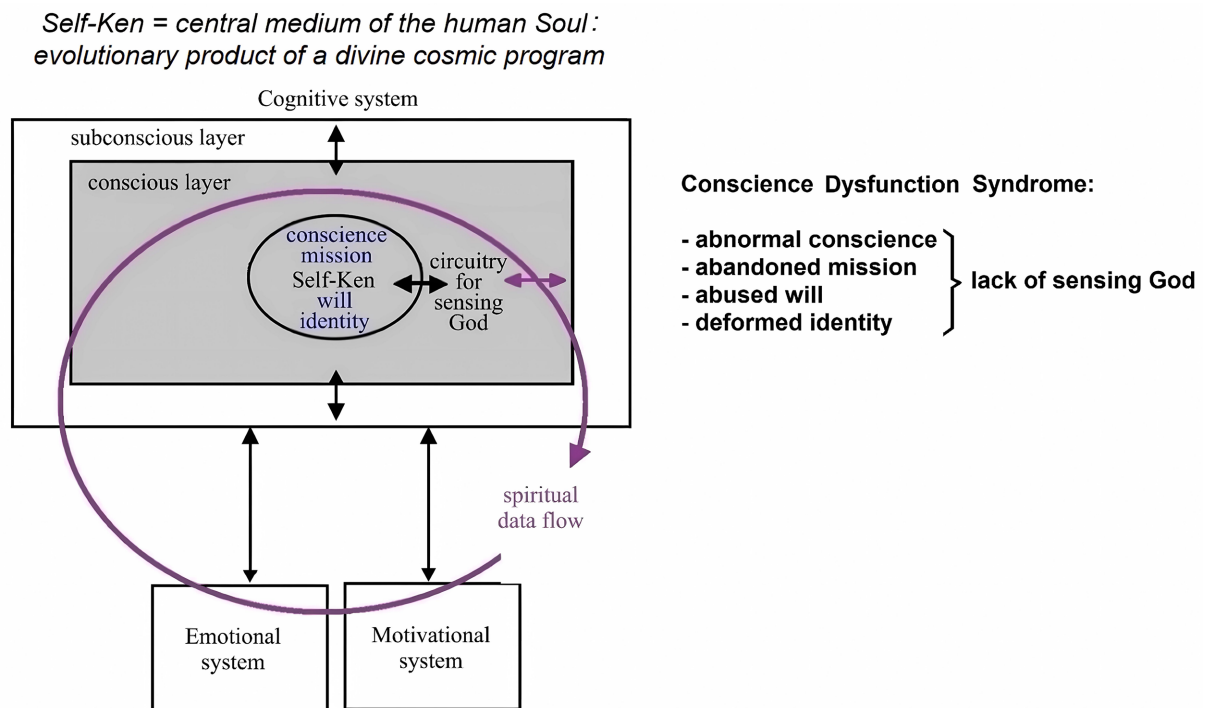


Figure 1. Schematic illustration of the neural networks in brain that include Self-Ken, central medium of the human Soul and processor of its God-sensing inputs (Ludvig, 2022a, 2022b, 2023a, 2023b). One of the four functional domains of Self-Ken is Conscience, of which abnormalities can lead to the indicated Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome. In fact, a malfunctioning Identity domain might be involved in schizophrenia as a malfunctioning Will domain in major depression.

The existence of a God-sensing neural circuitry in the cognitive system is consistent with Freud’s opinion that the ego-ideal/Super-Ego—can relay religious thoughts (Freud, 1962: p. 27). Though the addition that this ego-ideal/Super-Ego

is associated with the prefrontal cortical neural supercircuitry of Self-Ken, central medium of the human Soul, is another cosmological neuroscientific suggestion. This suggestion is not an alternative to the concept of the evolutionary development of morality, it just expands that concept with the reasonable thought that the essence of evolution itself must have come from a higher organizing system, perhaps the one Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer of the evolution of life by natural selection, attributed to “a superior intelligence” guiding the “development of man” and his noblest faculties (Wallace, 1870: p. 359).

Nevertheless, the most recent edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—Fifth Edition, Text Revision, DSM-5-TR* (American Psychiatric Association, 2022), lists 919 different, ICD-10-CM-coded psychiatric diagnoses with not a single one including the term “conscience”. Indeed, the Manual’s 45-page Subject Index doesn’t even have the word “conscience”.

But Conscience is clearly a manifestation of the human psyche, and its possible dysfunctions have been recognized by thinkers since ancient times.

According to the New Testament, St. Paul warned in his 1st letter to Timothy about the “*insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared*”. Canto XI of Dante’s *Inferno* describes the “...*scophants, hypocrites, falsifiers, thieves...pimps and all such filthy cheats...*” punished for their lives led by “*fraud, which is the canker to every conscience*”. Shakespeare’s Richard the Third couldn’t avoid the recognition in Act 5, Scene 3, of the play that “*My conscience hath a thousand tongues, And every tongue brings in several tales, And every tale condemns me for a villain.*”

Hitler’s architect and Minister of Armaments and War Production from 1942 to the end of World War II, Albert Speer, admitted after 20 years in Spandau’s prison and 10 more years of thinking in the renewed Germany that “...*a quarter of century after these events, it is not only specific faults that burden my conscience, great as these may have been. My moral failure resides in my active association with the whole course of events. I had participated in a war which...was aimed at world dominion.*” (Speer, 1979: p. 523). Apparently, Speer’s Conscience didn’t function normally when he worked for Hitler. Conscience Dysfunctions exist.

3. Methods

The books shown in **Figure 2** were used as the major inputs to this study. Churchland’s “*Conscience*” was a guiding material as the first comprehensive book dedicated specifically to this mental phenomenon (Churchland, 2019). Freud’s classic “*The Ego and the Id*” helped to see Conscience in the context of conscious and subconscious brain events (Freud, 1962). The *DSM-5-TR* (American Psychiatric Association, 2022) was used partly as a reminder of the need of integrating the phenomenon of Conscience into the awareness of psychiatrists, while it was also used to learn about their likely view on the relationship between Conscience and the variety of personality disorders.

To provide good examples for the suggested Conscience Dysfunction Syn-

drome, this article presents the modern cases of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Elon Musk and Bernard (Bernie) Madoff.

The case of Donald Trump was primarily examined with the book of his niece Mary L. Trump (Trump, 2020). The case of Vladimir Putin was primarily examined with his own book (Putin et al., 2000). The case of Elon Musk was primarily examined with the world-renowned Walter Isaacson's biography of him (Isaacson, 2023). And the case of Bernard Madoff was primarily examined by the unbiased book of Andrew Kirtzman titled "*Betrayal: The Life and Lies of Bernie Madoff*" (Kirtzman, 2010).

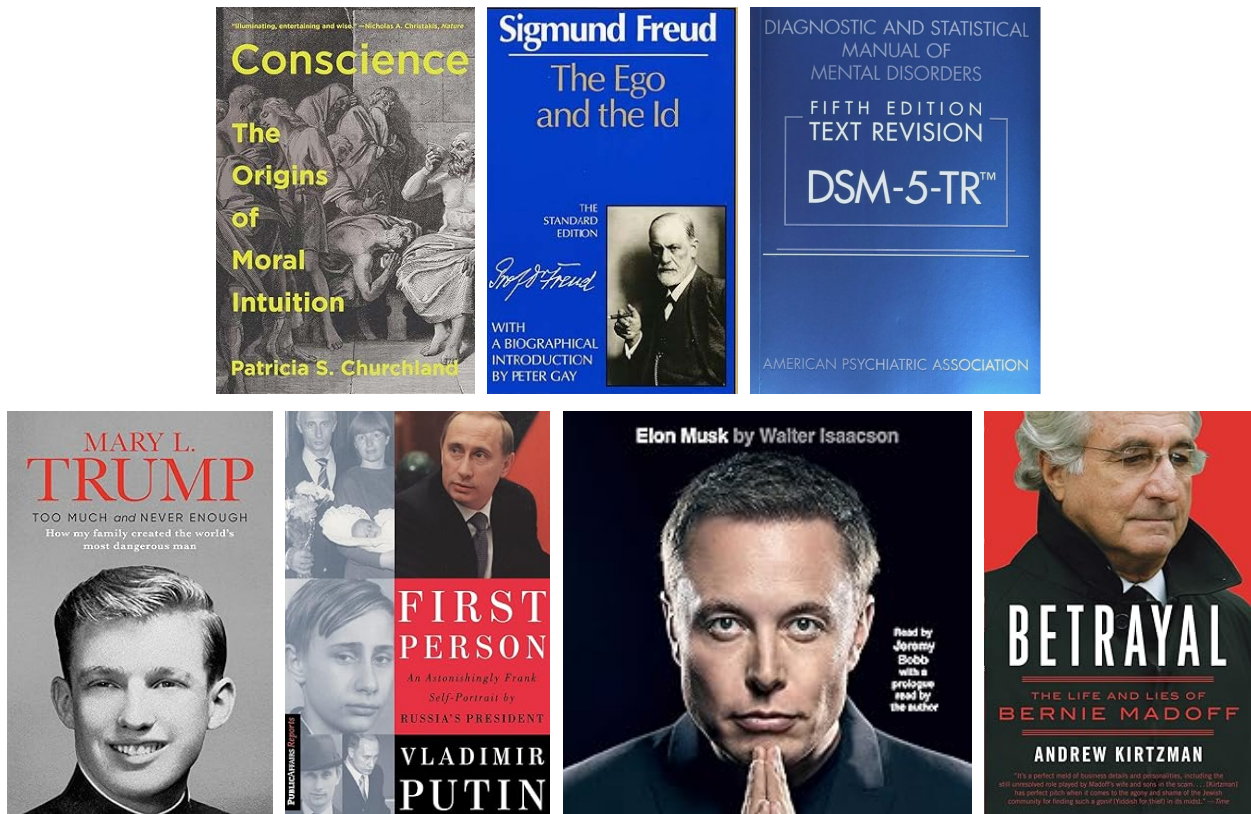


Figure 2. List of the primary aids for this study.

Besides, I used my MD and PhD in neuroscience background (see <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6782-4253>) to evaluate the virtually unceasing flood of information pouring from the entire spectrum of digital media on Trump, Putin and Musk in the last 10 years and the somewhat less but still enormous amount of data on Madoff from his arrest in 2008 through his death in 2021.

4. Arguments

It is argued here that Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome (Figure 1), seemingly affecting many successful politicians and businessmen (Figure 2), is manifested in abnormal Conscience and the associated symptoms of abandoned Mission, abused Will and deformed Identity.

4.1. Abnormal Conscience

One of the most obvious signs of this symptom was experienced by the entire world when Donald Trump, at his joint press conference with Benjamin Netanyahu on February 4, 2025, (**Figure 3(A)**), presented his idea of transforming the war-torn Gaza (**Figure 3(B)**) to an American-owned “Riviera” while evicting all of its 2 million Palestinians to neighboring Arab countries.

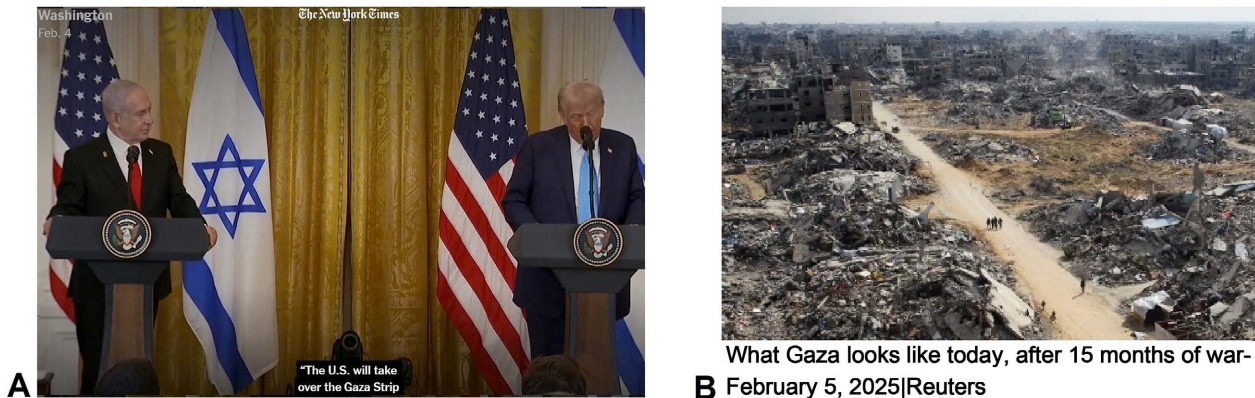


Figure 3. (A) Trump’s news conference where he announced his “Gaza/Riviera” plan. (B) The look of Gaza in the same 24-h period.

This abnormal Conscience was not without history. According to his niece, when Donald Trump set his sights on the University of Pennsylvania in 1966, “...he enlisted Joe Shapiro, a smart kid with reputation for being a good test taker, to take his SATs for him” (Trump, 2020: p. 72). Twenty-five years later Donald Trump opened a casino for gambling and prostitution in Atlantic City, was not shamed to name it Trump Taj Mahal—and followed it with founding Trump University to educate the youth to this way of business. Both organizations had to be closed after damaging hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

As for Putin, he joined the KGB in 1975 without having any problem in his Conscience with the known roles of the agency in crushing the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968 or infiltrating Asian countries with agents (Putin et al., 2000). Regarding Musk, ABC News reported on February 16, 2025, that the already Trump-advisor businessman “...starts mass governmental layoffs, targets roughly 200,000 employees”. But his media appearances on that day all showed a smiling man without any sign of giving much thought to the fates of the threatened thousands facing unemployment. And Bernie Madoff’s Conscience was surely abnormal during his decades of stealing billions of dollars from his clients—as his upbringing (Kirtzman, 2010) assured he knew the eighth of the Ten Commandments: “You shall not steal.”

4.2. Abandoned Mission

Isaacson writes in his book on Musk that one of his friends at the University of Pennsylvania in the early nineties, Robin Ren, always remembered how Musk “...kept talking about making rocket that could go to Mars.” (Isaacson, 2023: p.

51). To another friend, Adeo Ressi, Musk also confessed: “*I’ve always wanted to do something in space.*” (Isaacson, 2023: p. 91). Indeed, in May 2002, Musk incorporated Space Exploration Technologies, later renamed as SpaceX. This was his Mission—and now everybody saw it.

But then Musk started Tesla in 2003 to capitalize on the electric car achievements in the nineties (e.g., GM EV1, BMW E1, etc.), years later even expanding Tesla with The Boring Company as a subsidiary to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles with an underground transportation tube (along, albeit a bit east of, the San Andreas Fault Line). He then reorganized (without medical or neuroscientific education) Neuralink in 2017 to make brain implants and bought Twitter in 2022 (changing the expressive company name “Twitter” to the letter “X”). Sure, the SpaceX Starships started to explode one after another (Figure 4(A)). Yet Musk’s next step was to join Trump’s political campaigns (Figure 4(B)).



Space X Starship SN10 explosion
March 3, 2021.

SpaceX Starship SN11 test flight soars high and explodes in the fog

A launch in zero visibility comes to a dramatic but unclear end, “At least the crater is in the right place,” Elon Musk says.

Space X Starship SN11 explosion
March 30, 2021



A Space X Starship flight test 7 explosion
January 16, 2025



Space X Starship flight test 8 explosion
March 6, 2025



B

Figure 4. (A) Four of the many explosions of Musk’s spaceship he undertook to develop for missions to Mars as the CEO of SpaceX. (B) Instead of using Conscience to acknowledge and correct the serious engineering and strategic errors in his Mars expedition program and the waste of billions of US dollars because of the related spacecraft explosions, Musk started to spend more of his time since 2024 on all kinds of political shows, like this one on February 21, 2025, waving a chainsaw with the promise of “cutting waste” in US governmental funds for national and international social causes.

This symptom of abandoned Mission certainly characterized Trump too, as he dreamed from his childhood to succeed in his father's real estate business then in his own, as the builder of skyscrapers with his name on each – yet starting to target the office of Presidency since 1999, however his psychologist niece herself saw him as a man with “*increasing hostility to others*” (Trump, 2020: p. 26-27). Putin's Mission as President was articulated in his speech (<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21399>) at his Inauguration Ceremony on May 7, 2000: “...we want our Russia to be...a country that its citizens are proud of and that is respected internationally...and what I promise is that I will work openly and honestly.” Did he keep this Mission when secretly poisoned his political rival Alexei Navalny and commanded military operations leading to his arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court in 2023? We don't know how Bernard Madoff exactly saw his Mission in life, but it was unlikely the one that resulted in his life imprisonment and the suicide of his son Mark.

4.3. Abused Will

Since in the healthy brain Conscience uses the Will to keep the host's Mission on its track and his/her Identity as a coherent whole, it is obvious that dysfunctions of Conscience impair the performance of Will. Which was likely behind Madoff's ability to run his colossal financial fraud for more than 30 years (Figure 5), as his Will, abused by his dysfunctional Conscience, was too weak to make him recognize his crime while strong enough to give him the mental power to cheat ceaselessly, day and night.

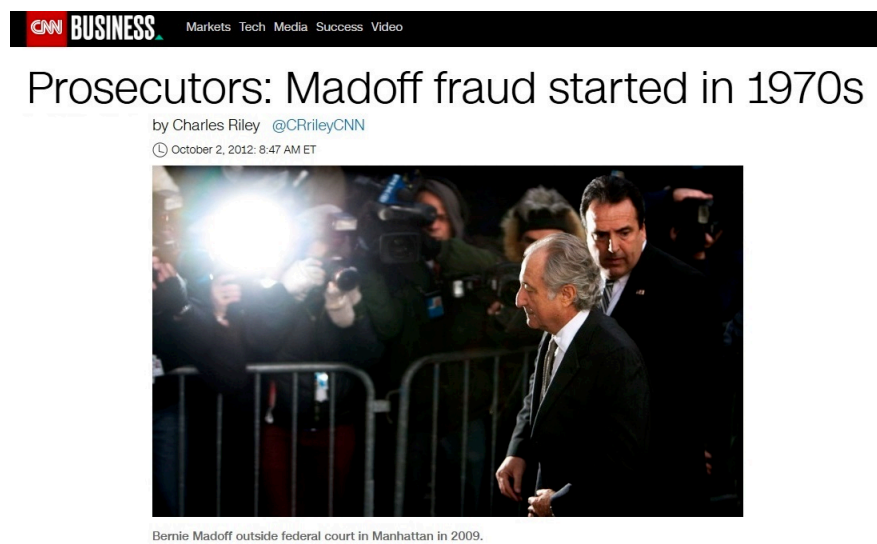


Figure 5. Photograph of Bernard Madoff outside federal court in Manhattan in 2009. He would be sentenced for life in prison.

But it is also true that from 1971 Madoff was “...regaled as the King of democratization on Wall Street... No one was asking how Madoff or his minions could bankroll the returns they were guaranteeing... No one seemed to mind that there

was scant paperwork to go with his orders...no one questioned whether trades were being made at al...” (Kirtzman, 2010: p. 51). So, it was in May 2000 when Harry Markopolos was given “*his moment to expose Madoff as a crook... That the discrepancies of Madoff’s business fit in with the patterns commonly found in Ponzi schemes.*” (Kirtzman, 2010: p. 99-101).

A similar mechanism appears to work in the minds of Trump, Putin and Musk, with their Will, abused by their dysfunctional Conscience, ceaselessly furnishing the mental power to force their social environment to serve—exclusively and without thinking—their personal interests.

4.4. Deformed Identity

The detrimental effects of Self-Ken’s Conscience on the host’s Mission and Will necessarily breaks down the psychic structure of Identity, as the affected person leaves behind the whole of his/her original personality to copy some envied others or even develop the evil version of who he/she had been before.



Figure 6. (A) Meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin, 1999. (B) Meeting between the already Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron in the Kremlin on February 7, 2022. (C) Russian military attack on Kyiv, February 24, 2022.

Consider the example of Putin. He himself, not yet corrupted with absolute so-

cial power, said in 2000: “*Russia is a very diverse country, but we are part of the Western European culture. No matter where our people live, in the Far East or in the South, we are Europeans.*” (Putin et al., 2000: p. 169). Yet 22 years later, however he knew how to behave in a political conference (**Figure 6(A)**), he forced his visiting French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, to sit at the other end of his long conference table designed for 10 people—however surreal this was and humiliating for his guest (**Figure 6(B)**). In fact, while in this meeting Putin promised peace with the neighboring European country Ukraine, he ordered its attack with full military force within 3 weeks (**Figure 6(C)**).

The deformed Identity of Madoff was active whenever he worked for social causes, like working as the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees at Yeshiva University. The deformed Identity of Trump, whose SATs were taken by a paid friend and whose New Jersey casinos filed for bankruptcy and Trump University closed amid lawsuits, was on display when he said in front of cameras at a NATO summit that “I’m a very stable genius”. And what else showed better Musk’s deformed Identity than his march into the sanctuary of the Oval Office with wearing a T-shirt under a black trench-coat and having one of his 14 children, named X AE A-Xii—from one of the four mothers of these children—sitting on his shoulders while he spoke in front of cameras on the need of cutting government jobs, that is, disrupting the careers of thousands of others (instead of creatively inspiring them and expanding their duties).

5. Suggestions for Diagnosing and Treating Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome

This section was inspired by Reviewer 2 of the paper’s manuscript, as he or she asked me to propose observations and tests that “...could be used to identify or measure Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome.” The below **Figure 7** is an initial sketch of my proposal.

The first step of diagnosing Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome would be to categorize the subjects of this mental problem. The key here is to accept the inclusion of powerful political and business figures, if appropriate. This would be helped by Robert Jay Lifton’s published argument that in the Trump-era “... we must recognize the urgency of the situation in which the most powerful man in the world is also the bearer of profound instability and untruth.” (Lifton, 2017, Foreword).

The second step would be the process of differential diagnosis, as Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome can certainly be dominated by mental diseases like Anti-social Personality Disorders with or without psychopathic features or Narcissistic Personality Disorder. If these latter conditions are clearly identified, then the examined subject should be transferred to the experts of these disorders. Thus, his/her case severity and treatment options are no longer applicable, N/A, to the immediate general strategy for Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome, though consultation with the psychiatrists and/or psychologists who take up the case will be important.

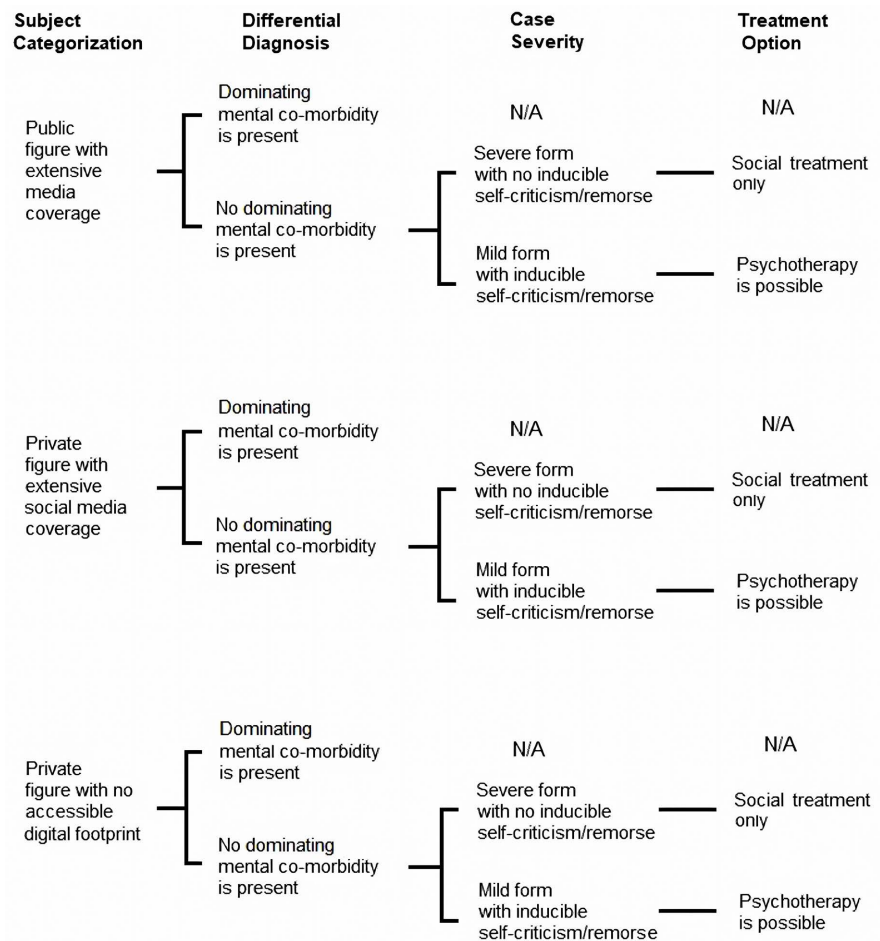


Figure 7. Outline of the general strategy of addressing the mental health problem of Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome.

The third step is the assessment of the severity of the case of the now diagnosed subject of Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome. I believe severe, dominating cases are characterized by the lack of self-criticism and remorse however the subjects are confronted with their actions betraying the rejection of conscience. During these therapeutic confrontations, wearable EEG devices this author recommended to capture the unique electrophysiology of religious inspirations and creative acts (Ludvig, 2023a, 2024) might also be useful to capture the likely abnormal prefrontal cortical EEG signs as objective measurements. People with mild cases, on the other hand, are probably responding to such confrontations by showing some signs of self-criticism and remorse.

The fourth and final strategic step is to devise the right therapeutic option for the subject. Mild cases can hopefully be treated with psychotherapy as much including traditional procedures as analyzing with the subject such genius insights into human conscience as Shakespeare's "Macbeth", Pasolini's "The Gospel According to St. Matthew", Mozart's "Don Giovanni" and other works of this kind. However, treating the severe cases of Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome, like those presented in this article, is problematic. The option of removing the affected

subject from his or her social leadership position is too naïve to consider. This author believes that the only realistic therapeutic solution is the preventive one, to introduce into elementary and high school education the new subject of Mental Health Science (along with the also new subject of Physical Health Science) letting the students understand, more and more deeply and among other key neuroscientific facts—the superiority of life guided by Conscience.

6. Discussion

The 2024 edition of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy emphasized in its entry on Conscience that this mental phenomenon “...can only find its proper place in philosophical and in public discussion if its philosophical and psychological aspects are teased out, defined and addressed.” The present article intended to contribute to this intellectual process by (1) including a refined, cosmological neuroscientific definition of Conscience in the Thesis section, and (2) elaborating the idea of Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome within the text and figures of the entire paper. Both are concepts not yet mentioned or alluded to in the above Encyclopedia.

The article specifically examined some key features of the political and business lives of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Elon Musk and Bernard Madoff. The virtually continuous presence of the lives of the first three and the last 12 years of the fourth in every form of media for most of humankind made not just feasible this examination for a medically educated neuroscientist like this article’s author (Moshé & Ludvig, 1988; Ludvig & Kovacs, 2002; Ludvig et al., 2004), but it was also an intellectual obligation due to the global impacts of these four lives.

It seemed that all of these individuals developed the similar mental alteration here called as Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome. Thus, their partly hereditary and partly acquired difficulties in operating a healthy Conscience had the severe consequence of impairments in the Mission, Will and Identity domains of their Self-Ken, central medium of the human Soul. The hereditary component could be the best recognized in Madoff’s life: “*Illegal activities were taking place inside the Madoff home,*” as Madoff’s parents, Ralph and Sylvia, and apparently Bernie, “*were running rogue stock trading operations out of their living room.*” (Kirtzman, 2010: p. 34). On the other hand, the acquired component was clearly present in the life of Trump, grown up in the family atmosphere of competition favoring winning at all costs in business over following the guidance of Conscience (Trump, 2020).

Indeed, the dysfunction of Conscience was observed by close family members in the case of Trump, reflected in imprisonment in the case of Madoff, expressed in assassinations and wars in the case of Putin, and revealed in the lack of self-criticism after SpaceX failures and aggressive interferences with the federal government in the case of Musk.

That this dysfunction of Conscience was accompanied with abandoned Mission, abused Will and deformed Identity in all four examined individuals justified

the addition of the term “Syndrome” to this condition. Though this term belongs to the vocabulary of medicine, whether the described Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome can be considered as a mental disease depends on how we define the biological malfunction of “disease”. If we define it as a condition causing such a suffering to the affected individual that he/she looks for treatment, then the described syndrome is not a disease, as none of the individuals examined here has ever looked or sounded in any media as a sufferer from Conscience-related problems. If we define “disease” as a condition that can also cause such a suffering to the affected individual’s social environment that the people of that environment look for treatment for the individual, then the described syndrome might be considered as a psychiatric entity.

One counterargument might be that Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome is just a version of Antisocial Personality Disorder with or without psychopathic features. But these disorders are characterized with such failures to conform social norms that they often lead to arrests (American Psychiatric Association, p. 748, 884-885). This is not just absent in the lives of people like Trump, Putin or Musk, but their character’s key feature is the exact opposite: the overwhelming drive to social success and popularity. And Madoff’s life didn’t lack social success either as a member of various boards of directors and country clubs.

Another counterargument might be that this syndrome is just a symptom of Narcissistic Personality Disorder. But the humanity of the admirable lives of such artists as Pablo Picasso, Herbert von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, Maria Callas and the likes, however not without narcissism, cannot be compared with the approach to the world of those examined in this article.

Yet another counterargument might be that the pathophysiology responsible for Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome is unrelated to prefrontal cortical functions as indicated in **Figure 1**. However, the fact that patients with prefrontal cortical lesions undergo significant personality changes including changes in their Conscience supports the crucial role of prefrontal cortex in this mental phenomenon. Even in describing the famous case of the prefrontal cortically damaged Phineas Gage, John Harlow noted that the patient “...*will not yield to restraint when it conflicts with his desires*” (Harlow, 1868). Prefrontal cortical involvement in this patient’s symptoms was later confirmed by neuroimaging studies (Damasio et al., 1994).

Whether **Figure 1** is correct in indicating the association of Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome with the lack of sensing God is difficult to prove, as this sensation is among the most private and closed mental phenomena. But certainly, using Presidential power to separate immigrant parents from their children (Trump), ordering the assassinations of political opponents (Putin), stealing billions of dollars from unsuspecting clients (Madoff) or willfully ruining others’ business and livelihood (Musk)—are not performed by people following the basic, however differently worded, commands of the Torah, Gospels, Quran, Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching or the Sermon at Benares.

This article cannot be finished without the lesson Conscience Dysfunction Syn-

drome teaches us via the modern cases of Trump, Putin, Madoff and Musk. It teaches us that the similar historic cases of Crassus, once the richest man in Rome; Mehmed II, destroyer of Constantinople; Trotsky, Lenin's superintelligent comrade or Charles Ponzi, role model of fraudsters, are not simply cases of the past, but ever-renewing social threats unless their control will be learned. And to learn it, Mary L. Trump's lesson about his uncle Donald must be absorbed: "*The deafening silence in response to such blatant display of sociopathic disregard to human life... fills me with despair and reminds me that Donald isn't really the problem after all. That is the end result of Donald's having continually been given a pass and rewarded not just for his failures but for his transgressions against tradition, against decency, against the law, and against fellow human beings.*" (Trump, 2020: pp. 204-205).

How did Patricia S. Churchland finish her profound book on Conscience? She finished it with these words: "*None of us are morally perfect, but the level of dishonesty and the lack of shame among many of our leaders predicts disorder and heightened conflict. Norms are being shifted away from virtue and toward greed and hard-heartedness. There are many exceptions to this trend at all age levels, and the courage of such people is admirable.*" (Churchland, 2019: p. 191).

The hope of this article is that the people of this courage will once form their alliance—NOT AGAINST the world of Trumps, Putins, Madoffs and Musks, BUT FOR the alternative world of freedom and decency.

7. Conclusion

In the human brain, distinct neural networks can undergo specific pathophysiological changes, like the changes of the nigrostriatal network in Parkinson's Disease, the changes of the association cortical network in Alzheimer's Disease, or the changes of the hippocampal network in Mesial Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Thus, the neural supercircuitry of the prefrontal cortical Self-Ken, central medium of the human Soul, can also undergo pathophysiological changes. One of these pathophysiological changes may be the Conscience Dysfunction Syndrome introduced in this article. The four symptoms of this syndrome seem to be: Abnormal Conscience, Abandoned Mission, Abused Will and Deformed Identity. That this syndrome often appears in highly successful politicians and businessmen, like in those examined in this article, shouldn't cause fear in the interested neuroscientists and neurophilosophers, rather it must inspire them so that they can help to design the future led by as morally right as intellectually capable representatives.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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