

Is FEMICIDE Optional?

—Breuer’s “Momentous Discovery” Explains All

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Abstract

VIOLENCE DEFIES LOGIC, as philosophy can readily show. From which it follows that brutality, being intrinsically illogical, cannot escape also being self-contradictory and therefore self-defeating. Worse, as Breuer showed, we shun painful truths—which leads to our active neglect of abundant evidence that violence itself can be eliminated 100%—an omission as perverse and illogic (and as unhealthy) on our part, as is violence itself. This paper explores both themes—firstly, where’s the logic in killing? And secondly, why suppress evidence that violence can be cured? Starting with: **1) Breuer’s insight** into how human reasoning comes to be blocked, the discussion then proceeds to **2) how clarity** of itself, enables healthier thinking. This is something which Freud initially championed enthusiastically, before falling victim to his own paternal trauma. The next section **3)** outlines **good news**, i.e. practical evidence in support of this philosophy. The role Breuer’s insight plays in suppressing **4) painful truths** is then emphasised. In particular, the childhood root of **5) revenge** is exposed, by reference to the insight offered by a “cured” serial-killer. The counter-cultural notion is then presented that—**6) delight** is not only every human’s birthright, without exception—but that empowering it, defeats social harm—an outcome which, *necessarily*, benefits us all. In **7) conclusion**, the paper asks the reader whether she or he personally believes that FEMICIDE *is* optional—and if it is, what policies does every alert citizen need to promote, vigorously and in person, in order to eliminate it 100%, along with all other domestic and communal violence, including war.

Keywords

Reasoning, Breuer’s “Momentous Discovery”, Irrationality, Freud’s Early Enthusiasm, Freud’s Later Non-Thinking, Violence, Delight, Revenge, Retribution, War

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1. Breuer's Fundamentals

FEMICIDE—the slaughter of women—is senseless. There's no logic in killing the woman you love. Why does our vaunted human reasoning let us down so badly? And, worse, why do the rest of us shrug our communal shoulders and insist that murderousness, i.e. the impulse to kill, is inherent in human nature, so there's nothing we can do about it? Neither makes any sense. Some of us kill, while the rest of us sink into emotional inertia. If we can fly ourselves to the moon, why not implement known cures for the illogical, yet intentional, destruction of our fellow human beings?

Philosophy examines rationality. It has rightly been called the Queen of the Sciences, because it explores the very foundations stones on which all other human knowledge is built—whether scientific, psychiatric, economic, religious or otherwise. This paper argues that philosophy has never been more urgently needed than now—unless we find rational answers to both devastating flaws in human reasoning—we are about to self-fossilise. 1) Why kill? And 2) why suppress known cures?

The “Momentous Discovery” which Breuer made in the 1890s, and which Freud noisily celebrated in April 1896, is one that too many have still to learn. Put simply—we deliberately avoid thinking-through painful truths. Worse—extreme pain inflicts extreme non-thinking. It's not that we can't see sense—it's that, *reflexly*, we don't. We shy away from truths that we've been taught are too painful, too scary, too risky to think about, to face down. Past pain paralyses rational thought—thereby imperilling us all.

Happily, Breuer prescribed a fool-proof (and entirely logical) approach to unpack this. Unhappily for the rest of us, 18 months later, in 1897, Freud abruptly sabotaged it, and continued doing so for the following 40 years. Full discussion of this catastrophe in psychiatry (and elsewhere), is available in a series of papers, referenced in a recent paper, entitled—“*A rationale for irrationality, based on Breuer's 'momentous discovery'*” (Johnson, 2025a).

Philosophy preoccupies itself with “ethics”, “morals”, “The Good Life”—as do politics, governance and the vast majority of religions. What they have all yet to learn, is that Breuer's insight collides with, and thereupon contaminates, the very essence of reasoning itself. The worm in philosophy's apple.

Which leads to an apparently insoluble conundrum, both philosophic and psychiatric. Once your very own personal homegrown *thought*-taboo becomes embedded (through no fault of your own)—how can you possibly *think* your way round it?

We, as a species, resolve the innumerable challenges this inclement planet repeatedly throws at us, by thinking ahead—it's our one and only evolutionary advantage. But here it meets its Waterloo—how can you possibly *see* past your own thought-*blind* spot? How do you even tolerate a philosophy which suggests, as Breuer did, that there is not only an answer for this impasse, but a cure.

Even Freud himself, that colossus of psychiatry, quailed. Initially, he endorsed Breuer's “momentous discovery”, as every right-minded person would—but later

betrayed it, both ferociously and comprehensively (and illogically), as Ferenczi found to his cost. Since 1897, Freud's very own mental pain stopped even a man of his stature and prowess, thinking straight.

The blockage Breuer describes is hard to think about—essentially because you need your thinking muscle to do the heavy lifting. Painful truths can require you to think through the thoughts you've long ago been taught are simply too deadly even to bring to mind, let alone draw conclusions from. The non-thinking that persuaded you to kill the love of your life, is unable to offer you much hope of a secure well-thought-through future—unaided.

This is the illogic, the machinery underpinning the blockage—here renamed Breuer's Blockage. Bring this perilous thought to mind, cogitate on this danger, ponder the best available solution—and it'll be the last thing you'll ever do, let alone think. Here is the enigma in a nutshell—here's something it's not possible for you personally to find out is untrue—until you break your own survival rule—and think it. Here future-planning dislocates future-planning—thereby necessitating urgent practical (and political) action to ensure we all still have a future to plan for.

Our thinking Waterloo indeed—Breuer's Blockage becomes inevitable, once our normal escape hatch becomes mislabelled as “deadly”, “terminal”—“don't open this, if you want to see tomorrow”.

Clarity is essential—so let's try illuminating the whole toxic process by starting with a comic strip, next.

2. Putting Clarity Foremost

It is essential to keep the thread of the argument intact. It is so easily broken. Either my verbiage becomes turgid, or the topic itself, miasmatic. So it's worth going through this Feiffer strip (Figure 1), line by line, so as to draw the thread ever clearer as we do so.

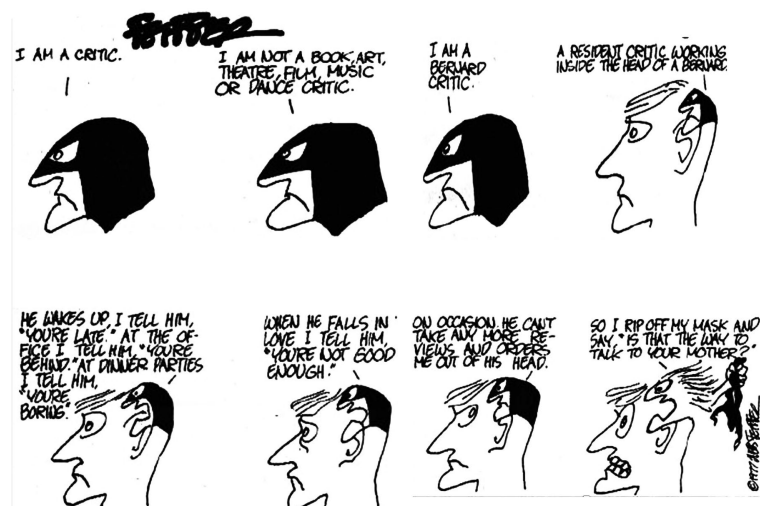


Figure 1. Jules Feiffer. Reproduced by permission.

Let me assure the reader that the process which Feiffer describes here so graphically, is precisely the same as I found universally during my 5 years' work in Parkhurst Prison, UK, and indeed the same one that my trainees unpack nowadays, generally in a couple of sessions.

He wakes up, I tell him "You're late". At the office I tell him "You're behind". At dinner parties I tell him "You're boring".

Note how this poisonous advice is delivered where it matters most—inside the mind of a long-suffering Bernard. It arrives, raw, straight in, and hits him before he even has a chance to doubt it, let alone evict it.

Obviously, it doesn't help. Anyone else (excepting Bernard) can see that it harms him. None of it can ever be 100% true, all the time—but there it is, unexamined, unthought-through, unmoderated.

Feiffer goes the full nine yards—

When he falls in love, I tell him "You're not good enough."

None of us is perfect, but inserting this where it can do most damage, exaggerates any peccadillos Bernard might already have acknowledged. But note too, how it closes off future supportive emotional relationships—a deadly consequence. It is precisely these that have already been sabotaged, long before femicide hits. Femicide will not become optional, until this deficit is first acknowledged to occur—and thereafter given the urgent priority it deserves. If Feiffer can see this—what stops the rest of us? (i.e. theme (2)).

Therefore, if it's so obvious to everyone else—why can't Bernard see it too? And here Feiffer hits the target, spot on—which is why I paid out good money 40 years ago, purchasing permission to reproduce it. Here it ceases to be merely a comic strip, a bit of fun poked at a worrisome audience—here we see the door slammed shut on any possible cure. Please note—it is Bernard himself, doing the slamming.

On occasion, he can't take any more reviews and orders me out of his head. So I rip off my mask and say, "Is that the way to talk to your mother?"

And this provides us with the clearest possible account of the "cure" that Breuer "discovered", which illuminates both where the thought-block comes from, and what, simply and logically enough, is all that is needed to cure it (simple to say, if not always to deliver). And since clarity is paramount, both to sufferer and health-care worker—this simplicity is uniquely precious.

The heaviest authority in the sufferer's head is the one which held sway long ago—in infancy. Obviously, it would be lunatic for any 5-year-old to order their mother, or indeed any adult carer "out of their head"—it would guarantee that person's suicide. It's a solid evolutionary fact of human life that no infant can survive, without adequate adult aid. So the peril which Bernard's fictive mother appears to threaten, is withdrawal of parental *LIFE*-support—fatal for infants, irrelevant for emotionally mature adults.

How to get from the one to the other? That again is the subject of a number of papers, referenced already. It is the essence of a practical skill that cannot necessarily be transmitted via printed words on a page. [Please note—the infant, con-

trary to Freud, is gender-neutral—either parent can provide emotional stability and reliability. Or not.]

Let's recap. How clear was the above? What needs to be emphasised is that this is not part of my idiosyncratic philosophy, nor yet a personal religious crusade. To emphasise this, and to bring out its full philosophical relevance—I train my trainees to resist telling their client *what* to think—but to put all their weight behind coaxing them *to think*. I tell them—don't be interested in what they *can* tell you, solely in what they *cannot*. A prime philosophic posture if ever there was one. Human Rights could not be more therapeutic.

What Bernard suffers from, would be obvious to any who spent time in the average doctor's clinic. Its remedy does not rely on superstition, symbolism, dream-interpretation or something obscure that I know all about, but which you cannot understand, nor acquire just as clear knowledge of. Quite the contrary—clarity as to which persisting figment inflicts the trouble, within the client, is indispensable to the cure. What makes these symptoms so toxic, is precisely that the one “memory” which clarity alone can bring up to date, has been strategically befogged, by being erroneously labelled as instantly lethal—bring it to mind, and you're dead. Breuer identified it as “inadmissible” (*bewußtseinsunfähigen*, see below).

Humans do suffer low self-esteem, too often. Bernard is, if anything, hyper-normal. In fact, many go throughout their entire lives, however long, with similar castigations reverberating in their heads, without let, or hindrance, or the remotest notion of where they might persist in coming from. Accordingly, neither they, nor their health-worker has the tiniest idea of how to eliminate them. Time for a change.

Which is why clarity is vital. What is required to enlighten the Bernards of this world, is to provide them with enough confident and trustworthy emotional support, so that they can see for themselves that they can safely order their parent-figments out of their head, and yet survive (thereby removing all possible need for them to slaughter stand-ins of them, as discussed below).

This is quite the opposite of what they have learned, ever since their friendless childhoods. What they still believe is what they learnt then, and all too deeply—i.e. even thinking of emotional independence will *automatically* terminate their very existence.

Relevant in infancy—grossly unrealistic, and therefore counter-productive in adulthood.

Show them with unmistakable clarity, that their emotional survival strategies can safely be updated from those they've clung to, since infancy—then they, and you, can celebrate even more enthusiastically than Freud did, in 1896. (See also, “Nora” below).

Clarity needs not only to be foremost in a philosophy paper—it is quite essential to any Bernard who might be suffering from what is basically an obsolete untruth, persisting because overly painful, from his past. Whatever faults or assets he might

have, or indeed not have—he is no longer dependent for survival on a twisted figment from the past. Emotional maturity cures—just as Breuer told us it did.

Now, if you know this, but he does not—then *lack of clarity* accounts for his disaffection. The good news is that we do not need to convince him about the presence or absence of Determinism, of Free Will, the morality or religiosity of parental observances, the constituents or otherwise of what constitutes a Good Life, what the “purpose” or the “meaning” of life is—or innumerable other contentious issues that have so troubled philosophers (and religions) over the millennia.

No, what’s needed is clarity in his mind, that childhood is over, that he can himself, develop enough social skills to tackle most if not all, the issues our complex lives throw at us—explicitly, without remaining dependent on yesterday’s parental opinions, prejudices nor approval. Nor requiring him to believe some endlessly opaque gobble-de-gook which so many authorities, including the later-Freud, insist upon.

Bernard would need to be convinced (and indeed convince himself) that removing adverse parental influences, if there are any left over, would bring him the most delightful news he has ever heard. My trainees call it the “light-bulb moment”. Because of Breuer’s Blockage, such non-thinking necessarily requires safe, trustworthy emotional support—leading, in this case perhaps, to Feiffer needing to find himself another anti-hero.

Here we need to gird our loins for the undoubted battles ahead—both where Breuer’s Blockage undermines individuals, and also where it hobbles our coordinated communal efforts to curtail today’s rampant inhumanities, i.e. themes (1) and (2) noted above.

3. First the Good News

“I WOULD HAVE KILLED THREE TIMES ON THIS WING—if I hadn’t been talking to you.” So said “Sammy”. He knew homicide from the inside—he was one of the more dangerous prisoners in the Special Unit in Parkhurst Prison, UK, where I was then working as the consultant psychiatrist. Sammy had already killed in prison before, so he knew well enough how to do it, and had, up to that point, seen no reason why he should ever stop killing, for the rest of his life. That’s what he had learned to do. And that’s what he did. Except—now that he’d consented to talk perilous things over with me, he’d discovered a different view of human beings—one that he had never seen or heard of before, and one which, at last, made better sense to him than any he’d ever known. What’s wrong with consensually educating emotions?

In sum—he had been offered, and only after some 6 months prevarication, consented to accept—enough trustworthy emotional support to unpack Breuer’s Blockage. For those who are alert, this prompts the question as to why this doesn’t become standard penal policy? If our societies would like to be rid of violent crime, especially the quite inexplicable femicide—then how long will it take us to imple-

ment what happened to Sammy? Themes: 1) and 2) are not merely medical, psychiatric or philosophic—but increasingly global, in our war-torn world. If there is a way through that works—how irrational is it to not-see it?

Current prison policy is to lock such as Sammy up, and throw away the key. What else can you do when the wrong-doer refuses point blank to even start thinking they could possibly be wrong? Or when those responsible for civic peace, which is all of us—turn a blind eye to successful emotional maturation. Happily, it wasn't a philosophic question of disputed morals, different interpretations of theology—it was the way he, and all other killers, saw the world—much as Bernard did, only more so.

It would help the current thread if I could back up this therapeutic optimism with hard data. And since it is already 30 years since I left Parkhurst, in 1996, then that is long enough to establish whether or not the “emotional education” I taught then, has proved durable. I return to this, in the next section, where I label it the “Parkhurst Proof”.

At this juncture, we have further good news—and from an unexpected part of the world—Nicaragua. On March 13th, 2021, *The Economist* published research which, again, if it were more widely known and more enthusiastically put into practice, communally, would guarantee the end of femicide, and indeed of domestic violence as a whole. It's not that we don't know what to do, it's that either we don't look, or we don't see, or we find the whole topic too painful to think-through. Breuer would know why—and it's time the rest of us did too.

The data from Nicaragua is impressive. In 1995, when asked, some 28% of women said they had suffered physical violence from their partner in the past year (*The Economist*, 2021). Oh well, you might say, that's what humans do to each other. However, *government policy* changed, and by 2016, 20 years later, this figure had fallen to 8%, a reduction of 70%. From a medical viewpoint, any intervention which achieved an efficacy of 70% would be welcomed with open arms. Can it be that violence is not regarded as a medical disease? It certainly kills too many, and as this paper highlights, especially women. Here again are the two themes—1) Why kill? And 2) why suppress its cure?

I've road-tested this approach for 40 years, which cements my confidence. But easily the most succinct session I had was with a prisoner, here called “Ahmed”. After only a 70-minute interview (which that prison allowed me to audio tape) he declared in his own handwriting—

“Dr Bob Johnson has changed my life. He asked questions that I had never been asked before and was able to give my fear and trauma a form which I could tackle. Until I met Dr Johnson I suffered from insomnia as well and had to take medication to sleep. However, since the high impact trauma technique Dr Johnson showed me, I am now able to sleep every night and I am no longer on medication. Some questions was hard to hear and answer, but every question had a purpose, and Dr Johnson was and is incredible. ... I now accept the past for the past and no longer let it control my life, there is no longer ‘what ifs’ and buts—no paranoia,

no sleepless nights—and I have recently got married, and me and my wife truly believe that most of the change and assertiveness in me now, come from the help of Dr Johnson and I'm so grateful for everything he did, done and has taught me. Now I can look at my life without fear—and focus on having my happily ever after.”

This is a philosophy paper, not a clinical one. But Ahmed illuminates so eloquently the whole topic I am describing here. Note especially—“*Some questions was hard to hear and answer*”. And “*I now accept the past for the past, and no longer let it control my life.*” Even Breuer could not have phrased it better. No mystery, no mystification—just enough emotional support, and clarity, to see that childhoods, however beastly, are now over. How many others would like to “*focus on having their happily ever after*”? And who, as a matter of policy, would set out to stop them?

Breuer's Blockage afflicts sufferers—but it also hampers doctors and too many others. Can the rest of us persuade them to look again? Their obduracy needs to be seen to be believed. Who would credit that even Government policy intentionally befogs things? As follows.

4. Next, the Painful Truth

“IT'S QUITE WRONG FOR DR JOHNSON TO CLAIM HE DID ANY GOOD”. This was a Press Office statement authorised by the UK Government, referring to my 5 years' work in Parkhurst Prison. I include it here not to argue its clinical validity—that's for contesting in medical contexts. No, here I deploy it, to exemplify the same sort of illogicality, and irrationality that powers femicide, and indeed all crimes against humanity. These are essentially philosophical problems, which, until they are resolved, leave us all stymied, communally, into emotional inertia—themes (1) and (2) above.

Just look below the surface, at what might really underlie this negativity. Look especially for any evidence that Breuer's Blockages might be at work, promulgating self-contradicting irrationality. Look at the abundant illogic in this official government statement. First, did the State really pay me good money for five years, expecting nothing of any value in return? Is it Government policy to employ *useless* employees? Orthodox psychiatrists vehemently opposed my work, and did so in several official publications—is it really Government policy to promote therapeutic nihilism as well? Are conventional doctors therefore to be equally strongly praised, when they explicitly claim they can do no good at all—which, disastrously, too many do? Philosophy concerns itself with “values”—what's going on here?

Written evidence of this event has not survived the three decades. But a newspaper article has. Alan Travis (Travis, 1997) wrote—

“DOCTOR MUST RETURN JAIL TAPES”.

Prison Service ready for action over filmed medical records.

“The government is using the Official Secrets Act to demand the return or de-

struction of 700 hours of video recordings during five years' work by a senior Parkhurst Prison psychiatrist with Britain's most dangerous prisoners'.

Here we have prodigious emotional energy dissipated on an explicit national policy of destruction, pressing as hard as governmental powers will allow, to extirpate evidence that is seen by some as being emotionally taboo—i.e. intolerable under any and all circumstances. Why? Is it really Waterloo, all over again? Since this again sabotages an optimistic approach, who does it threaten? Where's the harm, the upset, the risk? Surely we all welcome evidence that murderers can reform? Don't we? Does femicide really have to stay incurable, solely because of excess impervious Breuer's Blockages? If so, they really do have much to answer for. Again, isn't it time we worked, communally, for a change?

And here comes a perilous warning from a most unexpected quarter—Freud himself. The contrast between his exuberance in April 1896, and his later 40 years of therapeutic nihilism—this too, needs to be seen to be believed. And Breuer would advise that we take that commonplace phrase, literally.

Freud's self-betrayal is so gross that you have to work hard to not-see it. In April 1896, his *medical delight* is impossible to deny—he writes—

“The new method of research gives wide access to a new element in the psychical field of events, namely, to processes of thought which have remained unconscious—which, to use Breuer's expression, are ‘inadmissible to consciousness’. Thus it inspires us with the hope of a new and better understanding of all functional psychical disturbances. I cannot believe that psychiatry will long hold back from making use of this new pathway to knowledge.” (Freud, 1896)

In the original German, this appears as—

Indem die neue Forschungsmethode den Zugang zu einem neuen Element des psychischen Geschehens, zu den unbewußt gebliebenen, nach Breuers Ausdruck “bewußtseinsunfähigen” Denkvorgängen breit eröffnet, winkt sie uns mit der Hoffnung eines neuen, besseren Verständnisses aller funktionellen psychischen Störungen. Ich kann es nicht glauben, daß die Psychiatrie es noch lange aufschieben wird, sich dieses neuen Weges zur Erkenntnis zu bedienen.

Then, without so much as a nod to global sanity, nor to “scientific” integrity—18 months later, and for the following 40 years, he buries it, as if doing so were the most rational thing in the world. UK government policy to delete unprecedented clinical video evidence unseen, rivals what Freud did in 1897, and later. Watch carefully, putting emotional taboos to one side, at least as far as possible. In 1937, aged 81, after 40 years' not-thinking-straight, he wrote—

The decisiveness of thought, the strength of will, the forcefulness of his deeds, belong to the picture of the father, above all other things, however, the self-reliance and independence of the great man: his divine conviction of doing the right thing, which may pass into ruthlessness. He must be admired, he may be trusted, but one cannot help being also afraid of him. (Freud 1937)

Again, in the original German—

Die Entschiedenheit der Gedanken, die Stärke des Willens, die Wucht der Taten

gehören dem Vaterbilde zu, vor allem aber die Selbständigkeit und Unabhängigkeit des grossen Mannes, seine göttliche Unbekümmertheit, die sich zur Rücksichtslosigkeit steigern darf. Man muss ihn bewundern, darf ihm vertrauen, aber man kann nicht umhin, ihn auch zu fürchten.

This overlaps with a recent paper (Johnson 2025b), where the inability to show a deceased parent the exit door, inflicted grossly disabling pathology. How do today's psychiatrists explain why Freud too, threw away any reasonable claim to be the world's pre-eminent psychiatrist? It is painful to read how sycophantic this robust titan became, once memories of his long-dead father seeped into his consciousness—Breuer's Blockage in full display. (If only his father had lived a further 10 years, perhaps we'd have, long ago, uncovered the cure for femicide, let alone war.)

Worse came later. For the last 45 years, your doctor has believed that psychotic symptoms arise because your brain chemicals go awry. However, for 20 of those years this has been shown to be untrue, unreal, or more accurately in the present context, irrational.

This graph (Figure 2) was published in 2014, 11 years ago, with zero impact on either orthodox medical practice or mental health legislation (Harrow, 2014). Talk about not “doing any good”. What this shows (but sadly only to those capable of overcoming any prevailing emotional taboo), is that if you actually examine what happens to those patients complying with what doctors coerce—the black blobs—you cannot escape the reality that these patients suffer up to 10 times *more* symptoms, than those who manage to defy “doctor's orders”, and swallow none of these zombifying drugs—as in the white squares. How can psychiatrists tolerate this painful truth? And how long will the rest of us allow them to ignore or block it?

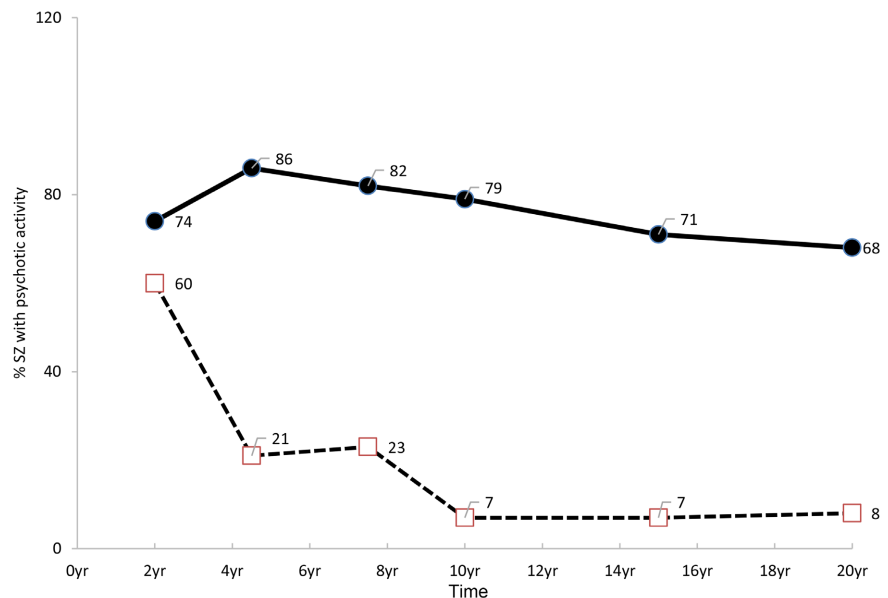


Figure 2. Twenty-year longitudinal assessment of psychosis in schizophrenia patients (SZ):
 • always prescribed antipsychotic medications; □ not prescribed psychiatric medications at any assessment.

If Breuer's Blockage paralysed only healthcare, that would be one thing. The evidence that it impacts the whole social environment is shown in a paper by (Tippet & Wildauer, 2023). Again, philosophy concerns itself with the characteristics of logic, the structure of knowledge, and whether causally based reasoning, is valid or not. The graphical data shown there, demonstrates as much illogicality in economics and wealth management, as figure 2 does for medical practice.

These researchers note that, in 1995, the total sum of public wealth in the UK was zero. Thereafter, during the Conservative Party occupancy of Number 10, this figure falls to negative, such that by 2021 the total UK non-wealth, i.e. UK State Penury, is almost double the wealth owned by the 200 richest UK families. Fuller details, with a clear graph are included in that paper, to which interested readers are referred. How can this be "rational"? Democracy is government for and by all the people—plutocracy is not—such economic, governmental and political illogic would seem to call for further philosophy papers.

And here painful truths about finance meet unthought-through prison policy, and indeed what we need to do about femicide—themes (1) and (2) from above. If it costs at least £500,000 per year, to keep each of the most dangerous UK prisoners locked up, then those who assert that no good came out of Parkhurst Prison are suffering fiscal illogic too (see also Bronson, 1996).

For fully a year now, I have petitioned the UK government to run a straightforward computer programme on the Home Office computer system—inexpensive in cash, but so far, too costly in emotions. The C-Wing Special Unit in Parkhurst Prison UK, 1991-1996, handled some 50 long-term prisoners, especially selected for their ill-discipline, instability and violence—among them, some 6 serial killers intent on repeating their slaughter. Running their case records through the prison computer system would represent what is known scientifically, as a "waiting-list-control".

For astonishingly little expense, and zero conflict of interest, the number of antisocial infractions that this would objectively and scientifically prove, would irresistibly exemplify what this philosophy paper is all about. My expectation is that "violence", and killings would decrease in number by even more than the 70% that Nicaragua achieved. I label this the "Parkhurst Proof"—and remain optimistic it will see the light of day, thereby providing unexpectedly hard, computerised, evidence that Breuer was indeed right, all those 129 years ago.

Could Breuer's insight really account for why this data has yet to see the light of day? Is curing violence, including femicide, simply too painful a thought to think through, among those in charge of our Criminal Justice System? How many will need to agitate, and what sort of status would they have to acquire before Parkhurst Proof becomes self-evidently cost effective? Breuer's Blockages do cost us all, in more ways than one. And most are as hidden, and as camouflaged as the painful truth which powers them.

5. Revenge Weaponises Childhood

"HAVE A TANTRUM WHEN YOU'RE 4, AND YOU STAMP YOUR FOOT ON

THE FLOOR. But have one when you're 24, and somebody dies". This was how "Alec", the most meticulous serial-killer I worked with in Parkhurst, eventually explained (notably to himself) both why he had earlier dedicated his future life to killing a fellow human, every two years—but more—why he never needed to do so again. I label this "Alec's Axiom". It is recorded for posterity among the 700 hours video that the then UK government deployed wartime legislation to destroy (i.e. theme (2)).

To me, what Alec tells us, is the equivalent of a "Black Box" for slaughter. When an airliner crashes, there is a desperate search for hard data, to unpack precisely what happened just before the catastrophe, especially what was last said. Here "Alec", the most articulate serial-killer I worked with in Parkhurst, is offering us the equivalent for why he killed—i.e. his answer to theme (1), why kill?

He points out, in this telling observation, that toddlers have less muscle power than adults. Of course, they can pull triggers as easily at either age, as happens all too frequently in gun-riddled societies—but in more civilised contexts, they are limited to stamping their smaller feet on the ground.

In the conventional handling of murderous catastrophes, this type of spoken record is simply unavailable. The verbal data which precedes suicide bombers, dies with them. Serial-killers are regarded as such horrific members of the human race, that they are either decapitated, which silences them forever, or incarcerated beyond access to listening ears. Or, in the case of the UK government of the day, subject to wartime legislation to be deleted, just as if they were indeed dead, without a word. As if what they had to say, would be contagious, and any doctor who managed to elicit it, needed silencing, before his dangerous optimism spread (whence theme (2)).

Here, Alec's verbal account of where his plan to kill every two years came from, is as clear as the best preserved Black Box could possibly be. Theme (2) asks why people want to censor this. Why are we not as keen to uncover these murderous catastrophes as we are to repair the flaws in airliner mechanics, precisely so as to limit their recurrence? How can we know why people kill, unless they tell us? Or, as with Alec, allow his account of why he stopped, and will never kill again, to be both more widely known, and indeed taught?

How can otherwise logical, rational people even entertain the very possibility that it's in the public interest to deliberately obliterate this unique data, and extinguish it from view? They'd be howled out of court, if they implemented the same prohibitions and deletions on actual Black Boxes. The only logic available to them (which is why philosophical exposure is currently so vital), is that they have opined that people will continue to kill as they always have—there's nothing new here, keep it dark. Worse, Breuer's Blockage might need to be acknowledged too—and there simply wasn't enough emotional courage to consent to that—then. Is there now?

I keep having to remind myself that this is a philosophy paper, not a clinical one—the brutal medical reality is that none of my profession's leading journals

any longer even have the courtesy to reply to my correspondence—medical ex-communication can be unduly purblind. I need to limit myself here to referring interested or sceptical readers to *Friendless Childhoods Explain War* (Johnson, 2023) which gives fuller details of what finally persuaded Alec to gift his Axiom to me, as above. Verbatim dialogues, both before and after are printed there. Also described is how it took him close to two years to confront his child-fears, without which he could never have overcome his Breuer's Blockage. Noted too, is the difficulty we both had with handling the possibility that his father threw his mother downstairs when he was 4.

Clinical CURES are close to my heart, which is why I give further prominence below, to Freud's early enthusiasm for it. But to keep the thread coherent, it is advisable to point out the illogicality of the well-known concept of revenge—of “getting your own back”. Or even when the same impulse masquerades under the false colours of political and legal justification, as “retribution”.

As Alec testifies, there is a connection between stamping your foot as an infant and killing people as a consequence, in adulthood. It is only not-thinking-through which allows this deadly sequel. Everyone else has no difficulty in seeing, believing, and acting as if what happened 20 years before should have faded with time, along with all the other mishaps, broken bones, or whatever happened in childhood. Breuer could see that these particular “scenes” were different—they didn't fade, they couldn't, they were just too perilous to contemplate. What needs to happen, is for such as Alec to accept sufficient emotional support against an obsolete peril, to add 2 and 2 together, or in his case, 4 and 20.

The illogic of revenge is that you are hitting, hurting and coercing the wrong target. Post 1896, Freud could never bring his father-image into full consciousness—something he could see clearly enough, before his father died, and while working supportively with Breuer. Give him his due, he does attribute the breakthrough to “Josef Breuer's momentous discovery”. His single pithy sentence sums up what's needed, succinctly.

“With our patients, those memories are never conscious, but we CURE them of their hysteria by transforming their unconscious memories of the infantile scenes into conscious ones.” (Freud op cit.)

In the original German this appears as—

*“Bei unseren Kranken sind diese Erinnerungen niemals bewußt, wir HEILEN sie aber von ihrer Hysterie, indem wir ihnen die unbewußten Erinnerungen der **Infantilszenen** in bewußte verwandeln.”*

These “infantile scenes” self-perpetuate. Without adequate emotional support, those afflicted by them cannot remove them, unaided. The closer they come to them, i.e. to thinking them through, themselves, the nearer they come to repeating the original end-of-life terminal panic that was imposed on them from the outside, by oversized people who had their very life in their hands, and were toying with it.

Being too small at the time to defend themselves in any other way—they could

only block the whole “infantile scene” from any further thought. Later, as we see, they implement “ways to get their own back”, by an ingenuity in homicide that is as staggering as it is fossilising.

This is where revenge comes from—it’s unreal, it’s out of date, it’s non-thought-through. Like the “infantile scenes” it comes from, it too takes on a life of its own—punishing, inflicting pain, even, as with Alec and all warmongers—terminating our fellow humans, if not our species. It doesn’t work. It never has. Hurting others cannot conceivably lessen your own pain. How could it? It only persists as a human pathology, because logic is amiss—think straight, as Alec began to here, and you open up space for delight—too often, as never before.

Think back to Bernard. He couldn’t see a survivable way of evicting his resident mum—suppose in his exasperation, he kicked the cat, sacked the wrong employee, or even killed someone—again, everyone else can see that this is hitting the wrong target. It is illogic. It’s twisted justification, arising, as with all femicides, from the fact that it is the only one they can see. Which, looked at calmly, even clinically, obviously makes no sense—making it a prime topic for a philosophy paper. However, if we once permitted ourselves to look for Black Boxes for the emotions—then that would, at least, make more sense, and bring better results than anything tried to date. Philosophically speaking, it would begin to justify the epithet *homo sapiens*, an accolade we might be about to sacrifice in more ways than one. Have we left enough time to ameliorate matters?

6. Using Social Delight to Cure Social Harm

“*Thou shalt BOMB thy neighbour, as thyself*”. This would be a more realistic representation of what we actually do to each other, than the religious ordinance mandated by the Holy Bible, a text nominally subscribed to by all three major religions of our planet—Judaism, Islam and Christianity (Lev: 19:18 in the latter).

“Love thy neighbour as thyself” has always sounded rather too good to be true. Easily mocked, swiftly betrayed, all too frequently blocked. So why doesn’t it happen? This has vexed philosophers, gurus, church-goers of any and all varieties, even politicians, since the dawn of time. This is a philosophy paper, not a religious one—but I bring to it, a clinical perspective, and medical skills. If you regard intrahuman injury as a disease, then you look for causes, remedies, even cures if you can find them. But above all you seek clarity, i.e. realism—what is really going on? Which unreal, or unsanitary choices have been taken? And how best can we rectify them?

This is an inclement planet, and we humans can be highly cantankerous. So let’s look at other areas which *do* work, which do not rely on weaponry. Take commerce. “I’ll BOMB you until you buy my goods and/or services.” Who would give this the time of day? If you ran your business on these lines, you’d be bankrupt in short order. Customers don’t relish coercion. Force and market share do not go hand in hand. No—successful business folk would never dream of threatening clients to buy more. They well know that bullying is decidedly counterproductive.

It guarantees the contrary to what you plan to achieve. So why do we forget this, when dealing with the most vital aspect of our lives, vital for any of us—longevity, security, a healthy future—even peace-of-mind, if available?

If you look carefully, you can see the bones of this behind that tail piece—“as thyself”. What would you gain by loving your neighbour? Well as commerce shows, if you offer people a good return, a healthy “profit”—in philosophic terms, a fruitful or healthier reason for doing something—then they are more likely to engage, and to invest what resources they do have, in exchange for yours. This is quite obvious in any market place—if you treat customers as autonomous, then they’ll be more likely to buy, than if you don’t. Human Rights are business-friendly.

Note in particular the element of choice—the customer chooses, or doesn’t. They don’t argue with you as to whether they are Fully Determined or not, whether Free Will is illusory, do they have the Human Right of choice? No, they either agree to buy your product, and you prosper. Or they decline, and so does your business.

Two further points must bring this overfull paper to a close. First—how did Breuer’s Blockage impact on me personally. Second—delight. As regards Breuer, it was through a series of circumstances, some of which were well outside my control, that I uncovered the central reason why delight, generally, has proved routinely out of fashion—Breuer’s Blockage. Until I was 49, I would fiercely deny I was blocking anything—but two decades consistent emotional support as a family doctor, had dented what had been my very own unseen “infantile scenes”. Up to that point, this had been totally unbeknown to me, indeed I would energetically see to it, that it remained so. Bernard would slam the clarification door to, himself—and prior to 19 years unstinting emotional support, so would I.

Without this insight, this clarity that I did not know I lacked (nor therefore needed), I would never have been able to release an otherwise fully determined 40-year-old, from her “infantile scenes” of which, up to that point, she had been quite unable to enlighten herself, let alone me. The worst event her violent father had inflicted on her, continued to dog her adulthood, even though it had ceased to be real, fully 34 years in the past.

Her persistence, and mine, coaxed her into revealing the axe-attack by which, when aged 6, he had threatened her life. The illogic of this persisting, despite his having died 4 years before we began, assisted me enormously, though as with Freud, it did nothing to enlighten her. The problem existed, not in today’s reality, but solely in her mind. Happily for both of us, by September 1986, I was, at last in a confident enough position to empower her to “unblock” herself.

So I know full well, from the inside, just how impervious Freud’s later blockage was. And I delight in his earlier championing of “Josef Breuer’s momentous discovery”. Given blockages of this order, it is no surprise that “delight” can come to be seen as suspicious, a hoax, a snare, a folly. In fact, in practice, the opposite is the case, but only if you can once melt Breuer’s paralysing Blockage. Human beings love it, we all do—even a fixed serial-killer like Alec, came to not only relish

it, but embellished my approach, as described above.

Once having decided that parental castigations, such as those that afflicted Bernard above, could continue to interfere with how we saw the world, i.e. our human reality, I was afforded an extraordinary opportunity to ask the UK's most violent men, if they would agree. Unsurprisingly, those in charge of penal strategies, did not favour delight, did not see their fellow humans as the most potent source of it—so moved in unprincipled (even unlawful) ways to block me. Throughout it all, the customers I could gain access to long enough since then, have “bought” my product/services, thereby keeping me supplied with enough of that elusive, and oh-so-fragile, item, delight. As have my trainees, in the last 18 months.

So let's modify that Biblical doctrine—assuming, as I do, that the Quaker Testimony to Equality empowers me to venture into these religious sanctuaries—in place of “Love thy neighbour as thyself”, or indeed “Thou shalt BOMB thy neighbour”—let's put the more rewarding “Cherish your neighbour, s/he is your richest source of delight” (so for Heaven's sake don't kill her/him). If you and I can see this, let's persuade all to say it too [Quakerism has much else to offer philosophy, see [Johnson \(2020\)](#)].

You don't choose to kill people, if it pays you not to—why bomb productive co-workers? But first you have to learn that other humans (without exception) can bring benefits to you—but only as in commercial reality, when they see the point in doing so, and freely give their consent. Delight is scarce enough on our troublesome planet, that it makes no sense, or carries no logic to expect that coercion, violence, let alone femicide will ensure or nurture it.

Unhappily being marooned in infancy has multiple impacts on how we perceive human social relations, and thereupon on philosophy. There is only enough space in this closing section to touch on a few.

As a child, your reality, your future, your truth is in the hands of others. Post-parental philosophy is perforce at a premium. Among the elements in short supply is delight. Perhaps solid evidence, even computer-based data, as in Parkhurst Proof, might nudge doubters to take a second look. Or it might not.

Delight has played a crucial part not only in my work, but, as here, in my understanding of philosophy, of how life works. Thus, I cannot resist including two brief excerpts that have brought delight to me—perhaps they will to you. The first is a poem, sent to me in 2000, by a 14-year-old, who grasped from my confidence in the above, that there was realistically, a less deadly escape hatch for her, from her then life-threatening anorexia. She wrote—

*Then, just as the ice freezes, and blood red snow begins to fall,
Just before the last time comes,
A new horizon forms a scene.
There is an escape, a tunnel to fresh air
And, though a long one, a path to find the truth.
This one exception sits there, in between the screen,
Neither here nor there.
But he understands, he can see what they're going through,*

He can heal the minds that wander and support the bones that fall.

Now aged 35, and the happy mother of 5, and she delights in helping others (Holden 2024). Look hard and try to see, line 2.

Last year one of my trainees, deploying a closely identical approach, was able to help a 58-year-old who, on seeking relaxation, had contacted her via her website (Randell, 2025). In the course of only the second session, a long-buried “infantile scene” was finally de-toxified.

The impact, as Breuer would have predicted, was, in a word, delightful. 14 days later, “Nora” texted in 10 points reporting that she was now—1) *sleeping better*; 2) *has more energy*; 3) *has lost 3kgs*; 4) *feels excited about every day*; 5) *is handling stress better*; 6) *a tic I had apparently developed when stressed has now disappeared*; 7) *but most amazing is that I have not used my Asthma medication since our session...* [solid use for 40 years, now none, for almost a year]; 8) *I can Breathe!!*; 9) *I cannot thank you enough*; 10) *and will be forever grateful*.

How many health workers receive such eulogies? If it was possible for Nora, why not for everyone else? Just look at the range of pathologies (including (4), the antidote to all varieties of “depression”) that unpacking Breuer’s Blockage, empowers. The blind-spots of the caring professions have much to answer for—perhaps this good news, this delight, will increase the pressure from medical “customers” to turn the tide. Here’s hoping.

7. Conclusion

FEW PHILOSOPHY PAPERS seek to bolster their points by citing first Einstein and then the Dodo. In 1932 Einstein asked Freud to explain, and hopefully thereby to deflect the Armageddon, that both could see was then imminent. Unhappily, neither the leading scientist of the day, nor his equivalent in psychiatry could explain why the mass slaughter of 1914-18 was about to be intentionally self-inflicted, all over again. Are we any better placed today? Is failure to think-through painful “memories” still blocking available cures? Do we still agree with Freud, post 1897, that Breuer’s breakthrough, wasn’t.

The Dodo warns us that the Iron Law of Evolution applies to the entire biosphere, including ourselves—adapt or perish. Are there enough emotionally robust inhabitants of our inclement planet to deflect our forthcoming Nuclear Winter? Or are we, like Freud was in 1932, still too preoccupied with past pains to plan ahead, logically?

Everyone knows that our one evolutionary asset is human reasoning—without it, we’re fossils. Neoteny is the term used in biology to describe when adult forms of a species retain features of their infancy—the example usually cited is newts retaining the tails that tadpoles customarily lose. This paper argues that *Homo sapiens* risks turning into *Homo neotenous*. Is this a “hoax”? A false alarm? Are we really prepared to let Evolution decide for us? Is our communal emotional inertia really too overwhelming to rescue us?

What resources will you personally devote to this challenge? How robust are

you prepared to be, to avert the same fate which befell the Dodo? Femicide (and warfare) is either built into our genes—or it's optional. If Alec can grow up emotionally—can we?

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Consent

Pseudonyms have been used for patients. Those who have been named have consented.

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The author declares that he had no conflict of interest in reporting and publication of this paper.

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