

# Let's Cure Violence—Using Willpower to Control our Electrons

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YOU CANNOT SUCCUMB TO CHOLERA, unless the sewage system breaks down—likewise deaths from *violence* vanish, as long as emotional support networks are working properly. Gut hygiene eliminates the one, societal hygiene the other. Cholera was an inexorable plague—until Germ Theory was accepted and implemented. Violence too, will persist—until we agree and accept its equivalent in Societal Theory.

The scientific method, especially Quantum Physics, sabotages philosophy—it cannot cope with the living fact that the elephant in the room is alive. Quantum Mechanics describes itself as being (1) more incomprehensible, (2) weirder, and (3) more uncertain than anything we've met before. But that's chickenfeed, compared to what you find in clinical medicine, which though portrayed as being intrinsically woolly and subjective, wilfully aims to enhance life, whatever that might be.

This paper re-examines violence, its causes and cure, by first clarifying two entities—*willpower* and *consciousness*. These two defy our human reasoning far more succinctly than “Entanglement”, “Decoherence”, “Superposition”, or anything else that Quantum Mechanics can throw at us.

What's the point of being ever so scientific, if your next politician takes no notice? What could be (1) more incomprehensible than squandering our bounty preparing to fight a world war, against ourselves, all over again? What's (2) weirder than applauding trillionaires? Or (3) more uncertain than not knowing whether we have already melted our only two polar ice-caps, or not?

Curing violence, which this paper explores, requires *willpower* to be placed centre stage. Objective scientific evidence is readily available to do this, but it requires you to step outside your science lab, into your nearest self-respecting hospital. There you'll find an EMG, an Electro-Myo-Gram. Fit one to your arm, and while resting, little happens. However, once you actively *will* your fist to clench, then the thing starts rattling away, 19 to the dozen. Whether your electrons disport themselves as waves or particles or both, is immaterial—if they do not do what you wilfully command them to, it's not Quantum Theory that's at fault—it'll be your brachial plexus.

This is nothing short of action being initiated by *willpower*, and taking place in an everyday, non-subjective, observable way, that you'd think was obvious to all. Too often however, willpower is dismissed as being so unscientific, that it does not merit serious scientific consideration. Yet without it, violence will remain incurable. As for consciousness—it's the most intriguing entity in the entire cosmos, but unhappily it is afflicted by blindspots, which alone allows violence to spread, like any other global contagion.

The paper has seven sections—(1) House Rules Corrupt Scientists. (2) The “Disbelief” House Rule. (3) The “Revenge” House Rule. (4) Non-fake-News. (5) Curing Fears. (6) Cementing Certainties. (7) Conclusion. Appendix—a lived

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experience, eloquently described.

In the 1890s, “Germ Theory” struggled to gain credence—today we would not be without it. Can we propagate “Societal Theory” to cope equally successfully with violence—in time?

*Keywords:* consciousness, willpower, emotional blindspots, Quantum Mechanics, psychopathy, psychosis, crime, scams, bullies, war, civilisations-six-blindspots

## 1. House Rules Corrupt Scientists

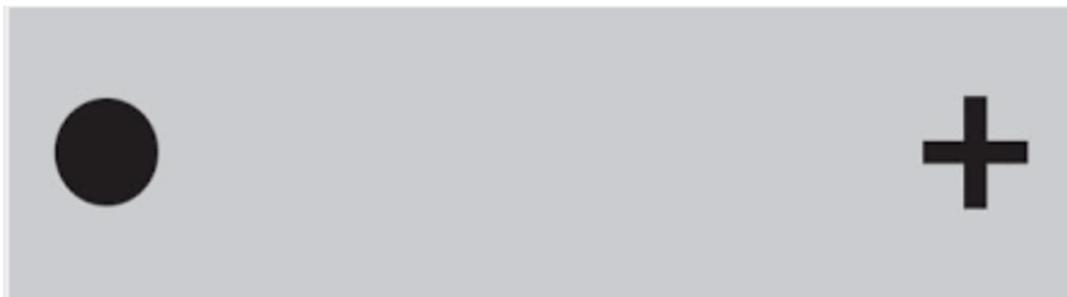
CONSCIOUSNESS FLOWS—WITHOUT LIMIT. It can be anything you dream up. The key characteristic of our one and only evolutionary advantage is its very indefinability. There are one or two ground rules which this paper explores, but in principle—if you think you can define what *consciousness* is, then you have already lost the plot, which too many have repeatedly done, over the millennia. Unhappily, what we cannot define rigidly, we find difficult to talk about—but this is serious.

The second theme running through the paper, is *willpower*. And since this itself is part and parcel of the essence of consciousness—without which it cannot occur—it too suffers from excess shapelessness, leading to undue neglect, even taboo. “First-define-your-terms” works well enough elsewhere—but comes to unhappy grief, with these two themes.

The notion that you can deploy this second elusivity to stabilise the first, has, so far, proved a bridge too far. But since it has sustained my clinical practice, with unprecedented delight for over 60 years, this paper represents a further expedition into the very heartland of philosophy—thereby seeking to clarify, and indeed to link together, such unaccustomed arenas, as psychopathy, psychosis, and crime plus scams, bullies, and war—here labelled “Civilisations-six-blindspots”.

The first essential is to ground ourselves in what we can readily see, or can try out for ourselves. If you are proposing to launch yourself into unfamiliar territory, it makes overwhelming sense to equip yourself with items you can trust and rely on for yourself. At this point we need to shift somewhat from philosophy into physiology—not too far (we do not want to get our feet wet), but close enough to begin to unpack that telling phrase—*there are none so blind as those who will not see*.

And if I am proposing myself as a more knowledgeable guide into these unchartable regions, it is appropriate for me to disclose something of my training for this demanding role. Looking back over the last nine decades, I can safely conclude that my own personal decisions accounted for less than half of the illuminating education I received. That's to say, I was privileged in innumerable ways—albeit on several occasions, not always with my full-hearted consent. But I will be the first to admit that I have suffered from blindspots. I have consciously tried to limit these to their absolute minimum, as I recommend you do too, but there remains one that will be with me forever, and, I hasten to add, with you—it's a consequence of us both having mammalian eyes.



*Figure 1.* Blind spot test kit.

The way the optic nerve leaves our retina, is such that each eye cannot see a small region of the visual field. Normally we compensate, either by enlisting the other eye, or by our consciousness noiselessly filling in the inevitable gap with what it thinks should most likely be there, so as not to disturb our comforting notion that we see things as they are. But enough verbalising—why not try it now, using the figure?

1. Close your left eye.
2. Stare at the circle.
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 does not disappear from the page—but it might just as well do so, because it's no longer visible. Move your eye, or open your other eye, and lo and behold, there it is in its full glory. Try the same with your left eye, closing your right, 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 blindspots. Not only are items in a vulnerable emotive area just as un-visible, but your consciousness obligingly fills in the gap, so as not to destabilise your notion of omniscience. This is the root of all irrationalities, up to, and including, war.

So how does Quantum Mechanics, currently our cutting-edge science, handle these retinal unseeables, let alone their more troublesome counterpart, emotional blindspots? Well, in a word, it doesn't. This point is explored further below. Here the way too many scientists cope with the inherent shapelessness of, say, consciousness, is to develop, and then accept what are best described as House Rules. These are ways of going along, which duck these discomfiting definitional challenges. Not everyone complies—but since the majority accept, and abide by them, those wanting promotion or research funds, keep their unorthodoxies dormant. Can we wake them up?

The basic and most worthy axiom of the scientific approach is that everything is open to exploration—no shibboleths are immune. Let's see if we can apply this to DNA and violence. Sadly, we humans are essentially tribal, so if one of us rocks the boat too unacceptably, then the rest of us tend to close ranks, noiselessly, and exclude them. Intangibles such as consciousness and willpower are especially vulnerable to this omertá—the majority view is that exploring them asks too much. So House Rules are invisibly applied, thereby, sadly, evading rigorous scientific integrity, which is the one and only thing that can rescue us.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that evolution require us humans, to adapt not to one environment, like every other member of the biosphere, but to two—infancy and adulthood. And the House Rules in each differ radically. Put bluntly, we are all born needing an emotional umbilical cord which it can take rather longer than two decades to wean from. Chickens do not have this problem—on hatching, they can peck. We cannot. And

some of us, like me, can be unduly slow learners, especially after what happened to one of my parents, as follows.

## 2. The “Disbelief” House Rule

AGED 4, MY FATHER WAS BOMBARDED WITH ARTILLERY SHELLS from Kaiser Wilhelm’s battleships. While he cowered under his parents’ bed, his near neighbours were blown to smithereens, as was his town’s lighthouse. That was on Wednesday morning, 16th December 1914, in Scarborough, UK.

This snippet of biography relates to an event that occurred over a hundred years ago—so what relevance can it have for a philosophy paper, whose twin themes are consciousness and willpower, and how these two elusivities relate to curing violence, if they do? Now, since House Rules tend to operate regardless, and close off promising avenues without a second thought—let’s take this extremely slowly.

First consciousness. Let’s assume, for the sake of argument that my father, let’s call him by his initials, GWJ, was conscious at the time. Assuming he was, what would you (1) expect him to do as a consequence of being alert? And, further, (2) what impact would you expect this threat to his life, to have in the longer term? (Perhaps even (3) on the writer of this philosophy paper?)

Being alive and awake, you would expect GWJ to note the agitation on his parents’ part, and to react. “React”. That sounds such a simple verb. But it only becomes remotely applicable because he was alive. It simply could not apply in the least, were he dead. No—then the Laws of Physics would insist he disintegrate, like his hapless neighbours, and the innumerable inanimate objects around him at the time, including the lighthouse.

Technically this is The Second Law of Thermodynamics, and if High School students misremember it, they are sure to fail their exams. In practical terms it means that entropy, or disorganisation, continues to increase, unabated, merely by the passage of time. So were GWJ already dead in 1914, there is simply no possibility of his reacting at all, certainly not in an attempt, however ill-suited, of saving his life by hiding under a bed.

I make no apology for labouring matters. To the non-scientist the next point will come as a surprise, even a shock. GWJ broke one of the fundamental laws of the universe. You can hear minds slamming shut even as I write it. What presumption! What authority can GWJ possibly have had to upend the whole structure of Science? Well none, really, except that like all other members of the biosphere, which he was at the time, that’s what life does. It reacts. It does not follow the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It moves, in order to save its life—which he did.

Note how the Disbelief-House-Rule operates, and impacts even when you were being lulled by a few picturesque biographical details. Once you open the door to the possibility that living organisms can react, then much of what we think we know about the universe is put up for grabs. High School students are not the only ones to be castigated for such scientific heresy.

So to the second question just mentioned—what impact did this threat to his life have on him, in later years? Indeed, in 1994, on its 80th anniversary, pictures of the Scarborough atrocity were printed in the local newspaper. When, aged 84, GWJ was shown these, he shuddered. He closed off any further discussion of the event—which is what happens almost invariably, as a consequence of life-threatening trauma, whether in childhood, or not. Yes of course, he admitted, he had been frightened. What he failed to add was that this fear had been there ever since, lurking just out of sight, in what could reasonably be termed, an emotional blindspot.

But it had not gone away. During the 80 years that had passed, including yet another world war—nothing had penetrated deep enough into his mental furniture to erase the event itself. His traumatic memory persisted. The lighthouse had been rebuilt, as had his neighbours’ houses—but the wound in his consciousness was still

inflicting much the same pathology as it did then.

How did this manifest itself? Well, we are all unique individuals, and the side-effects of long-ago trauma vary from person to person. My own assessment would be that he spent much of his time waiting for the next artillery shell to fall—he could never account for why they had arrived in the first place, and, sadly for all, he never received enough emotional support to lay them to rest, and grant to himself that whatever did happen in childhood, was happening no longer, 100%. This latter sounds simple to say, which it is—but emotional blindspots can be the very devil.

So to the third question just cited—what impact did my father's buried terror have on me? Well, though I was quite unable to say so, or indeed to see it, at the time—it too lurked in the offing. Looking back, I can see a number of less rational decisions I took, and avenues I did not pursue, because of this phantom artillery shell that was always and inevitably about to explode. That I was enabled to overcome it to the extent that I did, I describe briefly in an earlier paper, upon which this one (and much else) is based (Johnson, 2025a). As discussed in some detail there, Freud too suffered in the same fashion, well into his 80s.

What we need to turn to now, is what happens when certain individuals, instead of just suffering their childhood terrors in-house, find themselves unable to resist visiting these pains on those less fortunate—i.e. the perennial problem of revenge—which is what, in a sense, Kaiser Wilhelm did to my dad.

### 3. The “Revenge” House Rule

KAISER WILHELM HAD A MISERABLE CHILDHOOD. His difficult birth left him with a withered arm, a disability which haunted him throughout, and which, unlike phantom ordnance, would remind him of its devilment every time he took his shirt off.

We need to unpack the Disbelief-House-Rule more, because otherwise the prospect of linking the two elusivities, consciousness and willpower, to build a flexible and lasting certitude, will shrink ever further from view. However, before we lay the Kaiser to rest, I cannot resist mentioning two events which intrigue me. Firstly, the Navy Laws, which he had ordered to be enacted as his government's policy in 1899 and 1900. These furnished his new nation with the necessary gunboats to enable the later demolition of Scarborough's lighthouse. Though quite how this North Sea aid to safer maritime navigation could be portrayed as a mortal threat to Wilhelm, under any circumstances, is difficult to see. Again, if we could shine a bright enough light on what was going through his mind in the early 1900s, that might assist us in preventing further global conflagration.

The other item which I will indulge myself by mentioning, is his August 1914 telegram, announcing to the UK government that he had just ordered his troops to pull back from invading Belgium, which up to that point they were mustering to do. Being an unelected Commander-in-Chief, this was entirely within his remit, as his military supremo Moltke, knew too well. There are more than 1,001 “causes” of how the First-World-War started—here we have one man's action that could have ended it before it began, by an order which no one else could countermand. Indeed, its finality reduced Moltke to tears.

I float these two items out, not as conclusive “facts”, but as items on the side-lines of history which I find fascinating. After all, whatever consciousness is, if it self-contradicts, then it self-nullifies—taking our single evolutionary advantage with it.

Before taking up the Disbelief-House-Rule again, perhaps I could be allowed to cite the August 1914 telegram as further evidence of willpower in action. The Kaiser took a decision to reverse his military buildup. Had he let this reversal run, he would have altered the course of human history. That he then reneged on it,

allowing his planned carnage to proceed, plunged our world into the disarray from which we have yet to recover. Surely neither act could be said to have been previously programmed, either into his DNA, or elsewhere. Willpower may be difficult to tie down—but compared to its even more obscure alternatives, it at least carries the weight of common folk lore. Which is significant, so far as the tenet in this paper goes, since it gives us the chance of improving matters for all, merely by talking things through. What else is philosophy for?

Back to the heavy lifting—we humans are required by evolution, to adapt not to one environment, but to two—childhood first, then adulthood. And though you may still be struggling to accept elusive notions as germane verbal tools for philosophical discourse, these two scenarios differ radically. Even the most opaque Disbelief-House-Rule can never be used to justify the claim that infants and adults are 100% alike. And here we come to the crux of this paper, and it all turns upon the notion of revenge.

In the preceding section, living processes were distinguished from inanimate ones, by their ability to “react”, that is to exhibit an element of spontaneity, something that was not there in the preceding chains of cause and effect. *Sui generis*, is one tag for this. Here we need to beef this notion up to the term “agency”, which adds the ability to do something more than just note the change—i.e. do something about it. “Reaction” is phenomenal—but “Action”, even more so.

And here, for the purposes of argument is the central distinguishing factor between human infants, and adults—in round terms—infants have zero agency, adults excess.

And of course, the whole essence of parenting is to transfer the one to the other. This is covered elsewhere by such phrases as “standing on your own two feet, emotionally”. And indeed, it is precisely where this transfer fails, or falls too far short of being sufficient, that all manner of mental, and indeed societal problems arise—parenting-keeps-infants-alive, and-adults-insane.

What now needs to enter the discussion is that infants know this. They have reactions, they have needs which they can yowl freely about—but if they want something done, some action taken to relieve their distress, then the only available source of agency is irretrievably and exclusively lodged in those bigger, older, and more muscular than they are. It's not that infants do not know they are impotent; it's more that they devise highly imaginative strategies to acquire a big enough share of the available parental agency.

If there is enough parental agency to go round, to adequately service the number of emotional dependents calling on it, then all are happy and emotional blindspots are eliminated at source—humans are endlessly resilient.

Sadly, however, where there is a shortage, there you have sibling rivalry, and an impetus to hamper or destroy competitors for this child-currency. And underneath that, lie the roots of revenge, of all and every revenge.

Two things follow. Adults who still need weaning with respect to agency, resort to name-calling, verbal denigrations, childish taunts—since this is all that was available to them in infancy. Secondly, any means to bolster the “importance” of the child-adult is seized upon with glee—adulation, especially military parades, uniquely wonderful attributes—all are hungrily swallowed in a desperate, though futile attempt, to fill the agency-gap their friendless childhoods have left them with. My 2023 book exemplifies this—“Friendless Childhoods Explain War” (Johnson, B., 2023).

Treating agency as currency opens up an invaluable new avenue in understanding our woes. Thus in agency-deprived individuals you find prodigious ambitions to acquire more—whether in the shape of excess wealth, property, power, sex, accolades of all varieties—but especially relevant here, revenge. And without revenge, violence simply does not occur.

Revenge is a strategy to disable (or eliminate) competitors. It's aimed to reduce the supposed consumption

of agency by others, which has been misperceived in infancy as being in short supply. In reality, confident mature adults can generate more than enough agency to flood the world with material support, including the elimination of global famine. But to those still labouring under infant-House-Rules, this enlightened philanthropy is merely wishful thinking, much as you find, again especially in infancy, in fairytales, to which we now turn.

#### 4. Non-fake-News

FAIRYTALES KEEP CHILDREN AMUSED—and adults bemused. Try this modern fairytale, for size. Once upon a time, there was a beautiful blue planet, with a number of interesting puzzles and mysteries that seemed to be asking to be worked out. Many were solved. But with some of them, the harder you worked, the more baffling they got. Impenetrability went up, not down. Built into the system seems to be the “Law of Pure Cussedness”—a view originating with James Clerk Maxwell, a pioneer of electromagnetism.

It was as if some wicked witch had put a dire spell on the whole performance. It all sounded so promising. And certain categories of problem did fall neatly into place, as if they were meant to. But all the time, a major chasm was opening up, into which far too many precious “truths” have fallen. People in charge did not like to admit that anything was wrong—who does? A number of House Rules grew up, like pestilential weeds—but those who called them such, were not treated very politely.

Even from the earliest days of science, there were signs of trouble, deep trouble. Take Isaac Newton, often thought of as its founding genius. He did brilliant experiments on light, which he firmly insisted consisted of minute particles, nowadays called photons.

However, even as he did so, Newton’s main rival at the time, Gottfried Leibniz, disagreed—he maintained that light was nothing like a particle. It travelled more as a wave. Now any non-scientist can readily tell you that these two conceptions are radically different. Waves come along at a predictable speed—if you know how fast it’s travelling towards you, you can calculate when it will arrive. With a particle, you cannot—just as with packets in today’s postal service, it could be subject to any number of delays—its time of arrival would depend on many factors, other than its speed.

So here we have, in the 1690s, a radical inconsistency in the most scientific view of what light really is. Waves, we well understand, any pond has them—particles too, are commonplace, from sugar lumps onwards. But merging them into a joint notion—a wave-particle—just bends our words past breaking point—something has to give. And it has.

Science has advanced phenomenally—no question. You can no longer gain kudos from walking on water—nor for turning water into wine—but in other respects, the bottom has fallen out. One of the unspoken objectives of all scientific endeavour was to provide some of the certainty that religions offer. And then, 100 years ago, at its very heart appeared something which, by any reckoning, is exactly the opposite—the “Uncertainty” Principle. Not the best foundation stone you could wish for.

It is essential that non-scientists understand what’s happening here. Electrons and other subatomic items defy logic. The more you know about where they are, the less you can possibly know about the speed with which they are rendering that information out-of-date. Einstein could never accommodate himself to this—God does not play dice with the universe, was his theocratic moan. But, the cosmos, sure as heck, does play dice with Einstein—and indeed with any who take the trouble to look closely enough. This may disconcert House Rules—but subatomic physics then goes from bad to worse.

Quantum Mechanics compensates by oversupplying us with incomprehensibles. These go by fancy labels

such as “Entanglement”, “Decoherence”, “Superposition”—which merely add linguistic confabulations to already incomprehensible characteristics. Electrons and their ilk can not only be in two states at once—“superposition”—but can lose this at the drop of a hat—by “decoherence”—or more strictly by the application of willpower—how’s that for an own goal?

So if everyone of us needs to take on board the full implications of the “Uncertainty” Principle—then here Quantum Mechanics stands in desperate need of a more workable philosophy. This paper is happy to supply same, by offering “willpower”, which can only take place in an equally elusive concept “consciousness”. A case of breeding Certainty out from a wealth of elusivities.

As a family doctor, I found myself advising—“do the best you can with what you’ve got”. A similar pragmatism is in play in Quantum Physics. So let’s leave what electrons actually are, and focus more on what they can do. And about time too, for when they no longer do what you want, or “will” them to do, then this calls your health into question.

Any reputable hospital or clinic will have a bevy of electronic machinery—ECGs, EEGs, EMGs—each designed to tell you how well your heart, cortex, and muscles are managing, respectively. Fit an EMG, an Electro-Myo-Gram to your arm, and it will flawlessly demonstrate your willpower in action. Or it will to those who are awake. At rest, little happens—but command your fist to clench, then the thing bursts into action proving that at least your brachial plexus is OK.

How can scientists swallow without question say, “entanglement”, but draw the line at “willpower”, which can save your life—surely this represents bemusement not enlightenment? And it matters. What could be more tragic than allowing our precious blue planet to drown, because we melted the polar ice-caps while we were looking the other way? Talk about misplaced agency.

Fake news may be rampant, but there is an answer, a workaround. But it involves a change in House Rules. Truth can never be 100%—but we can sift the wheat from the chaff, the true from the fake, by seeking as many truths as we can, which leads to trusting another’s truth. This however requires an even clearer view of that five-letter word—trust—to which we now come.

## 5. Curing Fears

IF YOU FRIGHTEN ME, I CANNOT HELP YOU. I found myself delivering this unlikely line to one of the most feared prisoners in the UK prison system. It represents perhaps the highpoint of my entire career—certainly it was an exceptional occasion, in which I put not only my philosophy but myself where my mouth was. But the fact remains—there I was, a consultant psychiatrist, sitting alone, in his prison cell with undoubtedly the most notorious serial-killer in the current UK prison system. I’ll call him RM.

I was not surrounded by muscular bodyguards, nor wearing a stab proof vest, nor yet armed with a taser or a gun—just myself, my notes, and latterly my video camera. It’s a long story, best told as a narrative in *The Prison Psychiatrist’s Wife* by Sue Johnson (Johnson, S., 2023). Why include it here, three-quarters of the way through a philosophy paper? Well, primarily it’s an exemplar of the power of *trust* over all manner of impedimenta.

There was a long and significant pre-ambule to this singular event. By then, I had been working in Parkhurst Prison for some 18 months. This meant that I had acquired the necessary medical skill of noting when the person in front of you was contemplating violence. Secondly, I had accumulated something of a reputation among the prisoners. But overriding all, was the constructive relationship I had gone to some trouble to build up with RM,

well before I began, and without which I would never have dreamt of sitting alone with him on the end of his bed, nearest the door. Not in a million years.

So let's take a more careful look at that opening phrase—"if you frighten me, I cannot help you". The first part tells RM that if things were not going to his liking, I knew that his reflex action was to threaten the source of his displeasure. I was thus giving him good warning that fear was no longer a currency he could use between us. If he ever he did, that meant closure.

Secondly, by that time, and during our earlier intermittent and more indirect conversations, I had convinced both him and me, that there was likely to be some merit in the relationship for him. I.e. if he could curb his automatic threats, he stood a reasonable chance of benefitting from it. Note this required exceptional emotional investment on his part—he needed to take on trust (that word again) that someone in this otherwise negative prison system could offer him something of benefit. The standard prison policy, what you might almost call its primary House Rule, was to deliver pain, not cure.

Essentially I was entirely confident that, if we could work together, I could, in my chosen term, "help" him. It is precisely this that is missing in today's plague of violence. The antagonists cannot see any alternative other than battering their opponents into submission, or to smithereens, as in Section 2.

So this provides us with a working definition of that elusive concept—trust. Trust is where you judge your companion will not harm you, will not let you down. This invaluable commodity coexists with help, but not with hurt.

The logic goes further—if you fear your opposite number, then that is pathognomonic of the absence of trust. Conversely, as RM subsequently showed, trust cures fear. I am well aware that this breaks so many House Rules that it stands a good chance of being slammed shut, before it's even a few hours old. But the logic is impeccable—you only fear something or somebody, if you're anxious they are going to do you an injury. So if you can build up a trustworthy relationship, then, by definition, you have established a non-dangerous one—not an easy thing to do, but quite essential if we set ourselves the achievable goal of curing violence.

And of course, if we can once move out of the emotional blindspot arena, then this is an elementary foundational principle of all and every particle of commerce you can possibly name. Trade, even buying from your nearby convenience store, relies on trust. You trust them to supply what they say they will. They make honesty pay. You trust them not to purvey a deadly or destructive item. Once trust goes, then so does wealth, along with any hope for peace-of-mind.

The contrast here between warring nations and trading ones is so stark; it is surprising that it has not been more widely acknowledged. The cost of war, violence, even of incarceration, is staggering—if we humans did really operate on the "bottom line", we'd have rid ourselves of these social extravagances, long since.

So something else is in play here. Something which blocks our ineffable consciousness, and manages to persuade a normally sociable species that a dead neighbour is better than a friendly one.

What a travesty. I could rumble on about us being a social species, or we're extinct. Or I could say it makes no sense to spend £½ m a year treating RM as a social leper—quite apart from breaking the one principle that we want him to abide by—behave socially, while we do not. But House Rules run deep, which is why I have spent much of this paper emphasising the un-see-ability of emotional blindspots, which we explore further, next.

Society needs a better way of going on, if it is to survive the next world war intact. I do not prescribe anything radical—just a radical reappraisal of what we already well know, in our hearts, but are blocked from seeing by our Disbelief-House-Rule, our Revenge-House-Rule—i.e. by our removable emotional blindspots. Take revenge

away and violence goes too.

So the aphorism which I took with me into that cell with RM was “Truth, Trust and Consent” (to which RM, himself, later added “& Magic”). Truth is the degree to which our mental picture of the real world models it—never 100%, but as near as we can responsibly manage. Trust is relying on another’s truth, as well as being the remedy for fear. And Consent cements the whole thing together, as the next section explores. These three elusives offer a far better Societal Theory than any prevailing.

## 6. Consensual Certainties

A SMILE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY. To which my friend responded—“if I meet someone without a smile, I give them one of mine”. Before you go any further, ask the next scientist, psychologist or psychiatrist you meet, to define the term “smile”—then smile at their response—not in a sneering way, too easily done, but in a sympathetic “I know what you mean”, kind of way, i.e. in an encouraging, health-giving, spontaneous manner, so as to support this opening aphorism. If they are philosophically inclined, it might be of interest that I am thinking of writing a paper on why smiles are epistemological glue.

But, as before, when entering unchartable territories, it pays to keep one’s feet firmly on the ground, to link the new topic to what is readily understandable, and clearly “correct”, or at least acceptable. So let’s have a brilliant description of what it is like to suffer from an emotional blindspot, and how life becomes radically different, once it’s removed.

“Nora” is the pseudonym of a 58-year-old who attended one of my trainees, Joan, for “relaxation” therapy. More details are given in an earlier paper (Johnson, 2025b). But I include Nora’s own personal account in the appendix, since it so obviously rings true. Bear in mind, this utterly dramatic change in her life, needed only two sessions, which could never have happened had this approach not enlisted the sufferer’s own (considerable) willpower to unpack what had previously been ruled off-limits.

Nora opens by comparing what life was like before insight dawned.

1. “In August 2024, I found myself overwhelmed, overstressed and a spectator in my own life—I could barely function,—at the time I was 58 years old, happily married, working long hours in healthcare, and 50 years into childhood trauma subconsciously controlling every aspect of my life... and I didn’t realise the impact this was having on me. In fact, I had buried it so deep that I barely acknowledged it”.
2. “As a child I was trauma conditioned to be hyper-vigilant. I grew up learning to study people, and knew instinctively what kind of person they were before we even spoke. I learned to hide my emotions and feelings, and to always be busy. To me busy equalled safe”.
3. “This sets you up for a life of solitude, a life with trust issues, filtering everyone and everything through your gut instinct, always looking for the exit”.
4. “I again contacted Joan, and booked a second session. I felt safe and comfortable with Joan, safe enough to finally delve into the real issues”.
5. “This session lasted several hours, and I can actually pinpoint the exact moment that my conscious mind decided to put my past to rest, and this only happened because I felt safe enough to do so”.

Bear in mind, I have never myself, set eyes on Nora. Her therapist, Joan, had attended some six months of weekly webinars, and had added my teachings on emotional blindspots to her regular therapy work.

This account is so revealing. Look at the second paragraph quoted—“I knew what kind of person they were before we even spoke”.

What clearer explanation could you have for why House Rules remain so persistently unexamined. This shows why emotional blindspots are fundamentally difficult to remove—they self-perpetuate. People suffering from them, myself included until I was 49—we do not even let the conversation start. We've pre-judged the outcome, pessimistically, without even touching the lid of the box, let alone opening it.

Here is an indefinable circumstance that must be fulfilled before clarity, and cure can even begin. Nora here is communicating so clearly that “even before we spoke—I hid my feelings”. How can you expect help, or cure, if you cannot un-hide the “feelings” that are causing all the trouble? If your scientist friend had difficulty defining a smile, *scientifically*, suggest they might find putting this elusive, yet vital, circumstance into words, utterly beyond them (and me). Let's call it a Nora-bond—something which has to occur pre-verbally, before words, to indicate to sufferers that it's safe to talk about exploding phantom ordnance, or any other (past) life-threat.

But look at that telling phrase—“I can actually pinpoint the exact moment that my conscious mind decided to put my past to rest”. This paper pursues two elusivities—consciousness and willpower—then adds the notion of agency. Here I am happy to conclude that Nora applied her potent agency to ridding herself of past trauma. Once she could bring herself to “decide to put my past to rest”, she had not the least difficulty in so doing. It had long been obvious to everyone else that what happened 50 years ago, was no longer happening. Civilisations-six-blindspots arise in the first place, and will persist, until enough of us “decide to put their past to rest”.

Nora closes by saying her life was “already lost”, prior to this. Wouldn't it be wonderful, if this discussion could lead to more lives being “found”, consciousness and willpower too. The earlier paper (Johnson, 2025a), indicates that Freud never managed to find his Nora-bond, nor did I, prior to September 1986.

## 7. Conclusion

WILLPOWER IS WHAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS FOR. This paper began by setting out to explore two entities whose very elusivity has tied some of our best scientific brains into knots. Does what we do make any difference? Can we exert ourselves to change our very own circumstances for the better?

Because we have lost confidence in our more creative abilities, our imaginative powers—largely through still suffering from the painful effects of past trauma—whether from World War One or from disastrous childhoods—our confidence in other human beings has been badly shaken. Trust is easily corrupted, and hard to re-build—yet without it, we become too timid to put our next foot forwards.

As infants, we have no agency—if philanthropy is in short supply at the time in our lives when we are at our most vulnerable, at our most dependent, some of us never forgive the world, and set out to revenge our obvious (childhood) wrongs.

All around we see astonishing willpower in action—not to mend things, but to keep recycling the harm that was all they knew. They do not let anyone near enough to remedy matters, in case they suffer worse than they did before. The paucity of Nora-bonds cripples our futures. Inside every anti-social is a Lovable, Sociable and Non-Violent trying to get out.

Scientific proof that violence vanishes, awaits us, in the UK prison computer. Follow up of 50 violent men who were treated 1991-96, works as a “waiting-list-control”. I call it the “Parkhurst Proof”—why not run it?

Let's recap briefly. We lift our drinking cups to our lips when we choose to—this is willpower in action, without which we die of thirst. Do we really need to fit an EMG to our arm to prove to ourselves that electrons do what we tell them to? (Perhaps I'll have to garner a supply—one for every sceptic.) Quantum Mechanics will never be the same again, once it manages to admit willpower into its machinations as noiselessly as we take it

for granted in our commerce, legalities, elections. We've learnt how to tame electrons in our semi-conductors—why not inside our skulls?

Emotional blindspots can be traced to the simple phrase—once bitten, twice shy. “I've asked for help before—and all I got was a good kicking”. “Why should what you say/write be any different?” “Nothing seems to work—it becomes too painful to even begin, anew”.

And it matters. By accepting that willpower is what consciousness is for, then Civilisations-six-blindspots all become curable. The following citations indicate where the problem lies. Each can be cured on being furnished with their own, much-needed, Nora-bond. (1) Psychopathy—“I've learnt that being sociable is a mugs game—why should I change? I've invested too much in being asocial, being antisocial (can you persuade me otherwise, (please))?” (2) Psychosis—“the world I was born into, had no reliable pattern. Even thinking straight or realistically made things infinitely worse—willpower doesn't work for me”. (3) “Crime is an unthinking way of making ‘society’ pay, in the coinage I was supplied with as an infant”. (4) Scams—“fraud, deceit, dishonesty—this was the social vocabulary I was taught”. (5) Bullies—“grab what you can, the weakest go to the wall—force wins”. (6) War—see below.

Your upbringing should empower you to trust—both in yourself, in others and in your own willpower and agency. Otherwise you'll tend to seek coercive powers and insist the rest of us join you in your Nursery Nightmare—where consistency, reliability and affirmation evaporate, as do Truth, Trust and Consent. Blindspots cripple our warmest impulses—but all can be melted, if we put our minds to it. If you doubt it—listen to Nora, next, and cheer up.

On war—the bottom line is—do we really believe a dead neighbour is better than a friendly one? And if we can cut the death rate from cholera using our consciousness—can we also cut the death rate from ourselves, using our agency? Here's mine. Where's yours?

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interests—my clinic has been closed since my prosecution by the GMC, the UK Medical Licensing Authority, in 2016.

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### **Appendix—A Lived Experience, Eloquently Described**

*[This is “Nora’s” Story—50 years of childhood purgatory—healed in 2 sessions.]*

In August 2024, I found myself overwhelmed, overstressed and a spectator in my own life—I could barely function, and then my life path crossed with the most incredible Conversational Hypnotherapist, Joan.

But first... let me fill you in on my backstory.

My name is [*“Nora”*], at the time I was 58 years old, happily married, working long hours in healthcare, and 50 years into childhood trauma subconsciously controlling every aspect of my life... and I didn't realise the impact this was having on me. In fact, I had buried it so deep that I barely acknowledged it.

As a child I was trauma conditioned to be hyper-vigilant. I grew up learning to study people, and knew instinctively what kind of person they were before we even spoke. I learned to hide my emotions and feelings, and to always be busy. To me busy equalled safe.

This sets you up for a life of solitude, a life with trust issues, filtering everyone and everything through your gut instinct, always looking for the exit.

In my teen years I was again subjected to trauma, only this time I began smoking. It was around this time that I also developed Asthma.

My Asthma continued, requiring daily doses of preventative medication, relievers and courses of steroids up to 4-5 times a year.

I had everything nicely under control until 2020, and the world changed. At work the pressure and unpredictability of each and every day had me reverting back to my hyper vigilant ways. Add to this the work stress levels and I was in a permanent state of hyper focus.

As with the rest of the world, my work life became about protecting not only myself and my family, but my work colleagues, and others. It became a life of protocols, routines and safety, and I dared not waiver.

Fast forward to 2024, and although the world had moved on in what was needed, I wasn't able to—I was permanently stuck in this state of hyper vigilance. I could not relax, I was burnt out.

My partner found Joan's website on the internet. I contacted her and booked my 30 minute consultation to see if we could work together—and I held my breath hoping she would say yes! She did.

I completely blamed the pressures of my job for the way I was feeling, and my first session with Joan had me leaving feeling incredibly light, positive and free. But I still couldn't completely relax, and Joan had said it could take some time for everything to slowly fall into place, to get your lightbulb moments... So, I waited. One thing I did find strange at the time was that Joan asked me what my childhood was like? What did this have to do with my work stress??

It turns out it has everything to do with it. A handful of days later and I had to pull over while driving to be physically ill, such was the impact of my realisation that I had been here before, in this exact mental position, with the exact same feelings... How did Joan know?

I again contacted Joan, and booked a second session. I felt safe and comfortable with Joan, safe enough to finally delve into the real issues.

This session lasted several hours, and I can actually pinpoint the exact moment that my conscious mind decided to put my past to rest, and this only happened because I felt safe enough to do so.

I left that session emotionally drained, physically exhausted and forever grateful.

I had said I would do a testimonial for Joan, and when I sat to write it, I had another lightbulb moment... I

had not used any of my Asthma medication since I walked out of that session. None! After 40 years of daily use I hadn't used it for weeks... I could breathe! 9 months on from that session and I am still Asthma free...

So that is a brief history of my story, my journey, the change in my life. "A life that was already lost prior to this experience, but one that is now very much being lived".