

**Biological psychiatry and reductionism**

SIR: Karlsson & Kamppinen (1995) suggested that biological psychiatry is in a "confused state" partly because it lacks a "sound conceptual framework", and partly because "the levels of organisation are not explicated with sufficient clarity" in modern biological psychiatry. They hypothesised that the concept of "emergent materialism" clarifies problems associated with reductionism in biological psychiatry. The presupposition of emergent *materialism* that "everything is material" (Karlsson & Kamppinen, 1995) is untenable, because it disallows the non-material, irreducible concept of "intentionality," which all human behaviour and existence presupposes (Polanyi, 1958; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Issues such as intentionality, meaning, and free-will are likely to prove problematic for biological psychiatry for some time to come.

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**AUTHORS' REPLY:** From the viewpoint of emergent materialism, intentionality is truly the toughest feature of the world, as Mr Daniel points out quite correctly. The Austrian philosopher (and the founder of phenomenology) Franz Brentano aptly characterised the appearing reality as divided into two mutually exclusive regions: physical and psychological phenomena. The latter is intentional, the former is non-intentional (Sajama & Kamppinen, 1987). Materialistic and naturalistic philosophies – like the one we are expounding – try hard to get rid of such absolute dichotomies. We think that modern naturalists like John Searle or Daniel Dennett have proposed elegant solutions. They construe intentionality as a biological property, which is, in principle, no more mysterious than other higher-level biological properties like, for example, digestion (Revonsuo & Kamppinen, 1994). Searle and Dennett differ from each other in that Searle seems to think that intentionality has interesting lawful properties of its own (Searle, 1992), whereas Dennett thinks that personal level intentionality is reducible into sub-personal

information processing (Dennett, 1991, 1995). We think – on the basis of empirical evidence – that the level of intentionality is lawful and worth studying.

We agree that intentionality will prove to be a highly problematic issue in biological psychiatry. However, in emergent materialism, intentionality and other such features are treated as challenges, not as mysteries.

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**Antipsychotic drug-induced dysphoria**

SIR: We have reviewed the paper of King *et al* (1995) in our journal club. In our view the study has a number of serious flaws that invalidate its conclusions. The flaws are:

- (1) Absence of a control group. This is important given that the rate of adverse placebo effects can be as high as 25% (Grahame-Smith & Aronson, 1992).
- (2) The absence of blind investigators and subjects.
- (3) The study population was inadequately defined, particularly in terms of their knowledge of the effects of haloperidol.
- (4) Dysphoria was not defined and objective rating scales were not used.

Non-compliance with medication is a major cause of relapse in psychotic illness, and any factor which may influence it warrants investigation. Anti-psychotic drug-induced dysphoria might well be such a factor but this area deserves more rigorous investigation than that described by King *et al*.

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