

Laying the death drive to rest

Alan Michael Karbelnig

To cite this article: Alan Michael Karbelnig (2021): Laying the death drive to rest, International Forum of Psychoanalysis, DOI: [10.1080/0803706X.2021.1905179](https://doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2021.1905179)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0803706X.2021.1905179>



Published online: 17 May 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



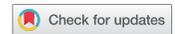
Article views: 13



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Laying the death drive to rest

ALAN MICHAEL KARBELNIG

Abstract

While respecting the ontological assumption of the unconscious, the author systematically critiques the concept of the death drive. It clashes with the dictates of contemporary biology, disrupting communication between disciplines. In clinical application, the death drive as metaphor demonstrates little utility. It also invites reductionism, risking oversimplification of extremely complex phenomena like aggression. Perhaps most importantly, the construct places the entire psychoanalytic project, already in an existential crisis, in peril. The author briefly introduces a complex alternative view of aggression, driven solely by eros but involving many complicated intrapsychic, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors. He suggests the death drive, however thoughtfully utilized, hinders the forward movement of psychoanalysis for reasons of consilience, incommensurability, clinical utility, cross-disciplinary communication, and political survival.

Key words: *aggression, eros, cross-theoretical, pluralism, Freud, Fairbairn, pleasure principle, drive.*

Like diabetes to internists or fractures to orthopedists, aggression regularly greets psychoanalytic practitioners. It presents as anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, self-mutilation, or other self-defeating behaviors when turned inward. It ranges from verbal abuse to lethal violence when outwardly expressed. The problem of aggression remains formidable – for psychoanalytic practitioners, for patients, for citizens of the world. For some psychoanalysts, the death instinct remains a foundational construct for understanding aggression. Others, particularly those influenced by the British object relations, intersubjective, and self-psychology schools, fundamentally reject the idea. As Bernardi (2002) notes, controversies in psychoanalysis move the discipline forward. They invite scholars to carefully consider alternative hypotheses; they lead them to develop better models. The concept of the death instinct or drive has been the subject of intense controversy since first introduced.

And the debate remains as unsettled as ever – despite its violating well-established, empirical findings from contemporary biology. It is of dubious clinical utility. It invites a reductionism prone to cause oversimplification. Further, the death drive as a concept disrupts crossdisciplinary communication,

and even impedes the field's efforts to progress as a cohesive discipline and profession. Its stubborn persistence, especially because of the political problems associated with it, calls for further investigation. In that spirit, I introduce readers to my longstanding personal interest in the death instinct, describe the concept's history, summarize scholarly arguments for and against it, and expand upon its conundrums. I conclude with the admittedly controversial recommendation that psychoanalysis rid itself of the archaic idea – a proposal consistent with my political and scholarly interest in organizing psychoanalysis into a more cohesive field (Karbelnig, 2014, 2018a, 2018b). The discussion contributes to other scholars' efforts, such as Wallerstein's (1990) quest for a "conceptual common ground" (p. 4) or Gentile's (1998) search for "an integrative identity for psychoanalysis" (p. 86); also, it adds to the work of those who similarly strive towards creating greater consistency in the psychoanalytic project, including Cortina (2016), Gedo (1983, 1997), Gill (1983), Greenberg (2015), Klein (1976), Loewald (1980), Rangell (1975, 2006), Greenberg and Mitchell (1983), Kernberg (2001, 2012), Modell (2013), Sandler (1983), Schafer (1975), and Wallerstein (1990, 2013).

A personal introduction

My interest in the death instinct is traceable to my first year in university. While feverishly studying biology, physiology, and zoology as a pre-medical student, I took an introductory course in western philosophy. It changed my life. After the brief exposure to what the ancient Greeks called *philosophia*, meaning love of wisdom, I dropped the hard sciences and turned to western and eastern philosophy, psychology, political science, and literature. A decade later, when I learned of Freud's (1920) concept of the death instinct during formal psychoanalytic training, I felt deeply troubled. It clashed with all I had learned about biology. The phrase seemed oxymoronic. Further, I wondered, how contemporary psychoanalysts I admire, like Otto Kernberg, André Green, Jon Mills, Rachel Blass, or Bruce Fink, could still believe we humans are driven by a desire to return to the inorganic. The problem with the hypothetical construct became a more urgent concern as psychoanalysis, as a discipline and a profession, faces a profound existential threat (Zagermann, 2017). With cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychotropic medication nipping at its heels, psychoanalysis resembles an endangered species. Well-educated persons might be taken aback to learn a phrase like *death instinct* still appears in print in professional journals or spoken aloud at psychoanalytic conferences.

Unlike the unconscious as a concept, little agreement exists on the legitimacy of the death instinct. Freud (1920) proposed it when his single-drive model (eros), guided by the pleasure principle, failed to account for aggression. Why would patients motivated by pleasure injure themselves or harm others? Freud's (1914) ontological assumption of the existence of the unconscious allows innumerable hypotheses to emerge, few empirically provable, and, therefore, many controversial. The death instinct, as a concept, requires a greater leap of faith than, say, the unconscious. Indeed, the unconscious itself has been firmly established within and without psychoanalysis, including by contemporary academic, cognitive scientists (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Psychoanalysts argue over how much drive, internal object relations, or early attachment relationships create it. Further, they may disagree about the role, if any, played by the collective unconscious (Jung, 1915, 1972, 1976). However, psychoanalysts agree that an unconscious exists. And they share an essentially universal belief in various phenomena emerging from it.

For example, three common manifestations of the unconscious, namely *transference*, *repetition compulsion*, and *dreams* (along with other signifiers of the

unconscious), are commonly encountered – even by nonpsychoanalytic practitioners of psychotherapy. Freud (1914) isolated these primary unconscious manifestations. Lacan (1973), by titling a book *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*, somewhat confusedly incorporates the unconscious with its three presentations. All psychotherapists, of any ilk, encounter patients with recurring self-destructive behavioral patterns, who idealize or devalue them, and who share dreams, parapraxes, or other displays of the unconscious. Aggression similarly manifests in many observable ways. Individuals consciously experience suicidal ideation, have homicidal fantasies, and display other aggressive thoughts or behaviors. While the death instinct cannot be completely disqualified as causative (because it is a hypothetical construct), many better, less reductive, and more consilient (Wilson, 1998) ways of explaining it exist. Before embarking on the promised investigation, a few assumptions and delimitations require delineation.

Binding the discussion

Any in-depth exploration of the death instinct risks falling into epistemological vortices. A delineation of basic assumptions will avoid, or at least minimize, the risk of such intellectual quicksand. First, I assume psychoanalysts concern themselves with human subjectivity, namely the conscious and unconscious cognitions, emotions, and behaviors comprising the human experience. Second, I believe no one psychoanalytic theory can completely explain subjectivity. Scholars must choose sides on the Parmenides (statis) versus Heraclitus (dynamism) debate. I assume the latter, concluding no map of the mind can keep pace with the ever-unfolding, and ever-interacting, process of human subjectivity. I concur with Mills (2012), who doubts “one coherent comparative-integrative contemporary psychoanalytic paradigm” (p. 22) will be possible, and with Greenberg (2015), who fears a unified psychoanalytic metapsychology “will elude us forever” (p. 30). Wallerstein (2013) mines the psychoanalytic opus for its “plethora of theoretical metaphors” (p. 36), Greenberg (2015) calls them “controlling fictions” (p. 17), and, just recently, Lament (2020) used the phrase “useful untruths” (p. 196). The mind, and its embeddedness in biological, sociocultural, economic, and other contextual factors, is unimaginably complex.

Theoretical pluralism represents a progression, not a regression. It is a humbling if realistic acknowledgment of the fate of psychoanalysis. Appiah (2017) writes: “Once we come to see that many of our best

theories are idealizations, we will also see why our best chance of understanding the world must be to have a plurality of ways of thinking about it” (p. x). Clinical pluralism rests on the philosophy of perspectivism, named by Nietzsche (1878), traceable to the ancient Greeks, and reflected in Appiah’s (2017) work. It considers complex systems, such as human subjectivity, from differing perspectives. Foucault (1970) used the term “discourses” (p. 31) to represent conversations or discussions – essentially viewpoints – rather than objective truths. The term *ideologies* equally applies. Pluralistic psychoanalysts can borrow models from extant psychoanalytic theories, or they can create unique analogies. Stolorow and Atwood (2016) proposed completely separating clinical psychoanalysis from metapsychology, describing it as “a form of phenomenological inquiry” (p. 185) (ideally) “purged of meta-psychological contaminants” (p. 184). Their goal, however admirable, is unachievable. Explaining unconscious themes in patients’ lives, or in understanding human subjectivity generally, requires *some* metapsychology – Freudian, Jungian, Kleinian, Fairbairnian, or even reference to a Shakespearean drama (Karbelnig, 2020). Addressing aggression, particularly when presenting bizarrely as self-mutilation or unconscionably as genocide, *requires* a cross-theoretical approach. Psychoanalytic models ranging from drives to attachment theory prove necessary to concoct even incomplete explanations.

Third, and more of a boundary than an assumption, perspectives on aggression from other disciplines – biology, sociology, cultural anthropology, or economics – stray far beyond my expertise. Suffice to say that theories exist, many empirically based, suggesting that aggression has a biological basis, correlates with income inequality, and vacillates along cultural and economic planes. An immense literature exists regarding psychopaths – so-called cold-blooded, lizard-brained humans – within the fields of neuroscience, criminal justice, and sociology. Although, later, I venture into biology, the foray is brief. These fields also inform the understanding of aggression, offering useful but different perspectives than the unique focus of psychoanalysis on the unconscious mind.

Fourth and last, the word *drive* calls for clarification. I use it, as Freud did, to represent the unconscious manifestation of instinct. Freud thought instinct manifested in humans as motive force, striving, drive, or impulse. The concept of drive, like the death instinct, is another unconscious construct. The death drive is thought to manifest consciously in ambition, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and the like. In the interest of clarity, I will hereafter use the phrase *death drive* instead of *death instinct*. Having

established four foundational boundaries to the discussion, I turn to the death drive itself.

The history of the concept of the death drive

The evolution in the psychoanalytic understanding of aggression parallels the field’s transition from one-person psychology to two-person and similarly dynamic models; it correlates with the history of Western ideas evolving from modernism to postmodernism. Freud (1920) introduced the death drive as modernism neared its endpoint. He sought to explain why patients who, motivated by the pleasure principle, behaved aggressively. Freud (1920) concluded a force other than libido causes ego unpleasure – namely the death instinct – because it represents “the most universal endeavor of all living substance, namely to return to the quiescence of the inorganic world” (p. 33). Freud (1920) credits Spielrein (1994), who first identified sadistic components of the sexual instinct, for the idea. She supported the death drive using “biological facts” (Spielrein, 1994, p. 156), noting how lower level organisms, such as flies, sacrifice their lives during reproductive processes. She acknowledged the greater complexity of multicellular organisms, but still believed their reproductive processes involve destruction, for example “a union in which one forces its way into the other” (Spielrein, 1994, p. 156). However, Spielrein (1994) meant these destructive features to explain the dissolution lying at the root of severe psychopathologies, not as a foundational death drive.

Freud (1924) found Spielrein’s explanation incomplete. He believed the desire to return to the inorganic was key. He believed the death drive, evacuated through self-attack, explained inwardly expressed aggression such as self-injurious behaviors. Alternatively, it was projected out through projective processes, that is, the enemy is bad, explaining war. Gay (1988) thinks Freud embraced the death instinct because of his personal experiences with trauma and loss. Specifically, Freud’s reaction to World War I, to his daughter Sophie’s death (from the 1918 influenza pandemic), and to the suicide of Victor Tausk, significantly influenced his devotion to the concept. All the while, however, Freud hesitated to adopt the construct. He feared his consideration of it “looks suspiciously as though we were trying to find a way out of a highly embarrassing situation” (Freud, 1920, p. 54). He accepted aggression as foundational, but equivocated about reducing it to a death drive. In a letter to Ernest Jones, Freud (1935) called the death instinct “groping speculation” he contemplated “until one has something better” (p. 741). He delved into biology and

philosophy for corroborative evidence. Despite finding little confirmation, Freud (1930) ultimately accepted the construct, concluding “in the course of time they [death instinct concepts] have gained such a hold upon me that I can no longer think in any other way” (p. 119). Residual ambivalence remained, however, evidenced in his adding, “it was not easy, however, to demonstrate the activities of this supposed death instinct” and acknowledging “the existence of an instinct of death or destruction has met with resistance even in analytic circles” (Freud, 1930, p. 119). His vacillation antedated abject disagreement within his original circle of psychoanalysts, inviting a transition into the thinking of those objecting to the death drive.

Arguments against the death drive

Disagreements over the death drive began early, notably with Jones (1957) and Fenichel (1945). Jones considered the concept “a leap from the reality of aggressiveness to an unwarranted generalization” (Gay, 1988, p. 552). Bettelheim (1991) believed it harmed psychoanalysis, thinking Freud meant instead “a mostly unconscious drive or impulse that provokes us to aggressive, destructive, and self-destructive actions” (p. 107). Others in disagreement included Hartmann, Kris, and Lowenstein (1949). Jung (1915, 1972) held to the nondualistic idea of the libido was consistent with Eastern traditions such as Chi energy. Fairbairn (1952) believed his concept of “dynamic structures” (p. 377) transcended the idea of the death instinct, writing “what Freud describes under the category of ‘death instincts’ would thus appear to represent for the most part masochistic relationships with internalized bad objects” (p. 79).

Subsequently, Fairbairn (1952), Winnicott (1960, 1965, 1971), and other British object relations theorists believed disrupted attachment experiences caused aggression. For example, Fairbairn (1952) believed infants, when neglected, abused, or abandoned by their caregivers, unconsciously assume blame. They sacrifice self-valuation to maintain the sanctity of the caregivers. Emerging as the next, major psychoanalytic model, Kohut’s (1984) self-psychology viewed aggression similarly, as a reaction to frustration by caregivers or internalized self-objects. The model discarded drive theory altogether. Extending Kohut’s (1984) concepts, Stolorow (1974) believed aggression emerges when “the child’s immature ego is overwhelmed by excessive external and/or internal stimulation” (p. 353). Stolorow’s (2011) thinking later evolved still further, towards “a phenomenological contextualism and a central focus on dynamic intersubjective systems”

(p. 25). Mitchell (1981, 1991, 2000), and his fellow relational psychoanalysts, also discarded the concept of the death drive. They attributed primitive emotional states like aggression and self-destructiveness to interactions between “unfulfillable childhood desires and longings and the necessarily human imperfections of parental caregivers” (Mitchell, 1981, p. 396).

Meanwhile, and earlier, Fromm (1964, 1973) had also joined the dissenting fray. Instead of instinctive theories of aggression, he identified two forms of aggression emerging from eros. The first consists of a “biologically adaptive aggression” (Fromm, 1973, p. 4) elicited by threat. The second type, “malignant-defensive-aggression” (p. 5), emerged when life-loving impulses failed to develop, when human-specific needs were thwarted. Instead of a universal, biologically based striving towards death, Fromm (1973) proposed the term *necrophilia*, meaning an attraction to death, decay, sickness, and destruction. Fromm (1973) coined his own term for the life force – *biophilia*. Anticipating the attachment theorists who followed him, Fromm (1955) thought necrophilia only developed in individuals whose desire to flourish was frustrated. Fromm (1973) also critiqued Freud’s death instinct because it failed to consider the social context of aggression. Similarly, Horney (1939) thought Freud turned motivation upside down by suggesting “we live in order to destroy” (p. 130–131).

Recent critics of the death drive abound. Refabert (2014) describes it as based upon “the assumption that the ego is a separate entity whose boundary is not dependent on the relation with the maternal environment” (p. 20). Schmidt-Hellerau (2002) laments the “heavy shadow of Freud’s death drive” (p. 1286). Razinsky (2010) considers the death instinct illegitimate. Lothane (2012) believes Freud confused “normal biological senescence with the fiction of a destructive death instinct to explain the social sources of hostility in real-life interpersonal relations” (pp. 531–532). Geyskens and Van Haute (2007) referred to it as “a cosmological or biological myth, the clinical relevance of which can hardly be demonstrated,” (p. 138), calling it “pure nonsense” (p. 16), “superfluous biologizing” (p. 19), and “confusing” (see pp. 135–136).

In sum, psychoanalytic theories featuring two-person, interactive developmental models explained outward aggression and self-destructiveness using primitive, internalized interpersonal interactions as metaphors. Their varied concepts, such as the idea of the “relational unconscious” (Gerson, 1996, p. 632), suggest that aggression, ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence, as well as self-destructive behaviors, ranging from anorexia to

suicide, always occur within broader contexts, for example interpersonal ones. They consist of internalized *relational patterns* instead of reductionist, intrapsychic instinctual tensions. The limitations of their models, however, lie in ignoring or minimizing the drives.

Arguments for the death drive

Klein (1932, 1946, 1948, 1959) expanded upon Freud's idea of the death drive. She believed children's primal experiences of anxiety – fear of annihilation, persecution, and attack – arise from it. Aggression towards the mother, and, later, towards others, results from death drive projections. Projection and introjection are parallel processes, Klein (1948) notes, writing, “any danger threatening from outside intensifies the perpetual inner danger situation” (p. 118). The death drive predominated, she believed, adding, “[...] perpetual activity of the death instinct, though never eliminated, is counteracted and kept at bay by the power of the life instinct. (Klein, 1948, p. 123). Klein darkened Freud's vision of life. Although Freud and Klein gradually assigned greater weight to environmental factors, they remained devoted to the death drive. Freud (1938) writes, “children are protected against the dangers that threaten them from the external world by the solicitude of their parents; they pay for this security by a fear of *loss of love*” (p. 200) (emphasis in the original). Later in her life, Klein (1959) also granted greater power to the effect of caregivers' interactions with infants. Subsequent Kleinian theorists, like Bion (1959, 1962, 1963, 1965), Segal (1997), Joseph (1982), and Rosenfeld (1987), joined her in viewing primitive emotions as resulting from the drives *interacting* with caregiver–infant relations. Over time then, the original, death-drive fueled intrapsychic force gave way to a more integrative perspective including interpersonal effects.

Contemporary proponents of the death drive reside mostly in Kleinian and Lacanian camps. Hinshelwood (2012), for example, notes the “Kleinian embrace of the death instinct” (p. 742) even while acknowledging the debate around it. He thinks aggression results from the defusing of life and death drives (Hinshelwood, 2007). Kernberg (2009) considers the death drive the dominant unconscious motivation towards self-destructiveness. Feldman (2000) believes it offers “deep biological resonance” (p. 64), manifesting as “a destructive *psychological* force (p. 64; emphasis in the original). For Bleger (2012), the death drive is foundational to psychoanalysis. Echoing Spielrein (1994), Hoffman (2004) compares programmed cell death

(apoptosis) to the death drive, believing such biological processes “enhance an understanding of the dichotomies, paradoxes, and dialectics that made the death instinct and related ideas so troublesome to subsequent authors in and outside psychoanalysis” (p. 63).

Reintroducing the death drive into psychoanalysis, Lacan (1954–1955, 1959–1960, 1973, 1991, 2002a, 2002b) conceived of it as signifying the universal desire to return to a state of peaceful equilibrium. As a signifier, he thought, death serves not as a will to destroy, but as a vehicle for starting over. In other words, it signals a negation leaving room for new ways of being. Lacan (1954–1955) notes that, even if “the game is already played, the die already cast ... we can pick it up again and throw it anew” (p. 218). López (1996) elaborates further upon Lacan's meaning of the death drive:

one can say that Lacan's understanding of Freud's *Todestrieb* is not that of an effective tendency toward death or a quasi-cosmic force that would lead us back to the inanimate. Rather, it is the essential manner in which the negativity introduced by the signifier as such is present in man. In this regard it is a 'productive' negativity to such an extent that Lacan finally relates its aim to that of 'creationist sublimation.' (pp. 14–15)

Green (1997) improvised on Lacan's view of the death drive, writing, “what has been called, probably improperly, death instinct, is based on a *disobjectalizing function*” (p. 1083) (emphasis in the original). He means here the process through which an object loses its specific individuality. In other words, the death drive links to nothingness rather than to aggression. As a related concept, Green (2002) maps the death drive onto “negative narcissism” (p. 631), which results from death drive turned inward. In contrast to positive narcissism, Green (2002) believes a negative narcissism exists “which strives toward the zero level, aiming at nothingness and moving toward psychic death” (pp. 636–637).

Interestingly, Rosenberg (1998) considers the death drive fundamental to understanding psychosomatic syndromes. It dominates in cases of somatization, he believes, because the counterbalancing life force of eros fails. He describes a “depulsionalization *that lies the cause of somatization, of the biological destructiveness* (Rosenberg, 1998, p. 1686; emphasis in the original), meaning, again, the disconnection between eros and thanatos. Like Green, he believes the death drive signals the loss of the ego or self. In the place of anxiety, an ego-experience, somatization, results. Aisenstein (2006), expanding upon these ideas, describes the death drive as “characterized by pure unbinding, to which is opposed Eros” (p. 678). She,

too, focused on somatization processes. Primitive splitting, combined with the unbinding of the defused death drives, explains replacement of thought by somatic symptoms, creating “a form of anti-thought which is concrete, cut off from its roots of its drives and disembodied” (p. 678). Later, Aisenstein (2016) adds, “Unbinding, destroying links, means destroying meaning, which triggers the mechanisms and processes of disobjectalisation and desubjectivization” (p. 146). These are fascinating ways of interpreting the death drive; they provide viable theories for somatization and unique psychological phenomena. They also highlight how the drives are arguably too marginalized in the more interpersonal models.

Many psychoanalysts continue to find the death drive useful in clinical work. For example, Mills (2006) considers it a “useful clinical heuristic” (p. 381), observing “organizing death-principles at work on myriad levels of unconscious experience” (p. 381). Blass (2011) considers it one of many “obstacles to change” (p. 1151). Kernberg (2009) believes character pathology provides “even further evidence to the fundamental nature of deep self-destructive tendencies in human beings that clinically would support the concept of a death drive” (p. 1017–1018). Bergmann (2011) also favors using the death instinct clinically, as does Meadow (2011), who writes that psychoanalysis strives toward “luring the death instinct away from the unfused state because in that state destructive action against objects may take place” (p. 142). Sheftel (2011) describes a patient as “totally dominated by the destructiveness of the death instinct” (p. 35). Reis (2011) hopes to “leverage the idea of a death instinct to allow for a reconsideration of clinical phenomena that may otherwise be lost” (p. 270). Segal (1997) believes psychoanalysts mobilize life forces by confronting the death drive in patients, observing that, in “more disturbed patients, we can often detect the operation of the death instinct in an almost pure form” (p. 18). Remarkably, none of these psychoanalysts utilizing the death drive clinically provides specific examples of, say, interpretations offered to patients.

Argument for eros in biology and psychoanalysis

Space considerations prevent in-depth exploration of an alternative explanation of aggression, namely eros’s status as sole driver of human motivation. Endorsed by psychoanalysts ranging from (early) Freud to Jung to Fairbairn to Laplanche (2019), eros may still be considered a primary human motivator. It also resolves questions about consilience,

clinical usefulness, reductionism, and the political future of psychoanalysis posed by the death drive. Consider, for example, how biology views the instincts. Darwin (1859) defined instincts as stereotypical behavioral patterns *not* acquired through experience, identically performed by one individual over time or by different individuals at different times. They serve adaptation; they evolve through natural selection. Fabre (1919) considered instinct to consist of any life-enhancing behavior not requiring learning to perform. Lorenz (1977) delineated differences between instincts and learned behaviors. Subsequent biologists confirmed and elaborated upon these themes. MacLean (1964), for example, identified two basic instinctual drives: self-preservation and species-preservation. Koestler (1967) extended self-preservation to include self-assertion (see p. 291). Spink (2010) believes human behaviors, like cooperation, sexual behavior, and childrearing, have instinctual foundations. These biologists share the view of instincts as promoting life. Pinker (2001) agrees, critiquing the idea that humans “harbor an inner drive toward aggression (a death instinct or a thirst for blood), which builds up inside us and must periodically be discharged” (p. xv). He notes it violates scientific, multicausal understandings of violence arising from “several psychological systems that differ in their environmental triggers, their internal logic, their neurobiological basis, and their social distribution” (Pinker, 2001, p. xxv).

Perhaps death drive proponents excessively emphasize drives; perhaps adherents to the intersubjective and relational models excessively sideline them. In any event, drives are experienced subjectively in myriad ways. They become part of the complex, dynamic tapestry of our lives. As Mills (2005) argues, we are embodied human beings with primitive needs for food, shelter, sex, and more. Scholars as diverse as Rousseau (1755) and Lacan (2002a, 2002b) remark upon the remarkable diversity in drive expression. Humans satisfy their hunger in ways ranging from eating raw vegetables to dining at fancy, white-tablecloth restaurants; they satisfy sexual needs through monogamy or polyamory, with homosexual, bisexual, or non-binary partners, using internet pornography or enhancements such as lingerie from *Victoria’s Secret*. The empirically based attachment theories (Ainsworth, 1967; Ainsworth & Boston, 1952; Bowlby, 1958, 1960, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c; Fonagy, 2001; Geyskens & Van Haute, 2007; Main, 1993, 2000; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Spitz & Wolf, 1946) demonstrate that attachment – a desire to connect to another – qualifies as an instinct. Their work is remarkably consistent with that of the biologists

just cited. Attachment is a nonlearned, genetically programmed behavior serving to promote life. Panskepp & Biven (2012) identified “fundamental neural substrates that are designed to forge secure social bonds” (p. 319). The attachment theorists conclude that insecure attachment patterns contribute to aggression.

Various systems theories, ranging from Stolorow’s (1997, 2011, 2013, 2015) phenomenological contextualism to Galatzer-Levy’s (1995, 2002, 2009) models, suggest aggression is an emergent, complex phenomenon irreducible to any singular cause. These nonlinear, dynamic, and other interactive systems models, such as those proposed by Baranger and Baranger (1979), Coburn (2002), Ferro (1993, 2009), Ferro and Basile, (2009), Katz (2013), and Miller (1999, 2008a, 2008b), are consistent with the cross-theoretical, perspectival psychoanalytic approach presented in the assumptions section above. These theories provide coherent models or metaphors that encompass the multifaceted, complex dynamism of the human mind. And no reason exists to not incorporate the drives into them. Schmidt-Hellerau (2005) writes, “A psychoanalytic model of the mind without drives is like a house without people who live in it, who use and invest in its equipment in a specifically meaningful way,” adding that, without the concept of drives, psychoanalytic understanding “goes rather flat; it loses its depth, its connection to unconscious strivings and fantasies and to vital bodily needs, its dynamics, and its directedness (pp. 1024–1025). Mirroring her work, Mills (2002, 2005, 2006, 2012) integrates drive theory into relational psychoanalysis. Reclaiming eros as foundational drive allows for much the psychoanalytic opus to survive unscathed. Kline (2018) proposes, as I do, a “nondualistic interpretation ... that both drives [eros and thanatos] are manifestations of one central current of energy defined as libido” (p. 68). Such a conclusion also comports with Erel’s (2020) organizing Winnicott’s varying concepts on aggression into a singular phenomenon, “love/strife” (p. 263n).

Concluding remarks

Illustrative of Lacan’s (1991) university discourse, controversies over the death instinct will linger forever. They demonstrate the problem with postmodern relativism, namely the ongoing struggle for an overarching truth. For example, although biology argues against a death drive, the ontological assumption of the unconscious allows for interdisciplinary contradiction. Fortunately, psychoanalytic scholars enjoy argument. Rich fodder remains – particularly for a subject as complicated as aggression.

However, the death drive concept poses five distinct problems for psychoanalysis. As just noted, it conflicts with the basic precepts of biology. Freud’s (1920, 1924, 1930) and Klein’s (1932, 1946, 1948, 1959) death drive solved a problem for a time – like aether did for physics. It explained destructive behaviors before psychoanalysis matured to better explain them. Justifying the death instinct with cell apoptosis, like Spielrein (1994) did and Hoffman (2004) and Ameisen (1999) do, adds more fuel to the argumentative fire. On the one hand, apoptosis *can* be interpreted in support of the death drive. Biological processes involve destructive processes. Hair cells die off and are replaced by new ones. The cells lining the tongue have particularly short lives, and are actively replaced. On the other hand, and violative of the death drive construct, the replacement of hair and tongue cells can equally be interpreted as life-enhancing.

Using the death drive in clinical work proves problematic. Many still use it, but more for interclinician dialogue than direct patient intervention. Mills (2006), Blass (2011), Kernberg (2009), Segal (1997), Bergmann (2011), Meadow (2011), Sheftel (2011), and Reis (2011) report they apply the death drive in their clinical work. None of their ideas, however compelling, included suggestions for making actual interpretations to patients. Consider an adolescent girl prone to self-laceration. The death drive cannot be entirely ruled out because of the previously discussed assumption of the separate register – the unconscious. However, many alternative ideas, such as self-injuring to communicate needs, to self-punish for perceived failings, or to compulsively repeat historical abuse, explain the behavior in clearer, more growth-promoting ways. Even if the death drive were one component of this hypothetical patient’s motivation, it would arguably be harmful to use it as an explanation.

Additionally, the phrase itself, *death drive*, invites a dangerous reductionism. It rolls easily off the tongue. The phrase “defund the police” elicits radically different meanings than the phrase “allocate law enforcement resources to community-based policing.” In the same vein, the phrase “death instinct” is also vague and ambiguous. It fails to encompass many other, relevant contextual factors. Mitchell (1979), for example, found ways of integrating psychoanalytic concepts such as object relations and drive theories. Ideas like unconscious internal dramas, social forces, or attachment models can be similarly integrated. Developing, or strictly adhering to, one metapsychology or another, or to the death drive, can be attributed to an understandable need to reduce the anxiety we psychoanalysts feel when facing the complexity of subjectivity. The greater

the terror of infinity, the greater the temptation to adhere to one belief system. Camus (1956) writes: There is not one human being who, above a certain elementary level of consciousness, does not exhaust himself in trying to form formulas or attitudes that will give his existence the unity it lacks (1991, p. 262). Perhaps the rigid adherence to the concept of the death drive represents psychoanalysts experiencing just such exhaustion. We all share a “nostalgia for the absolute” (Steiner, 2004, p. 5), which post-modernism long ago left behind.

Further, and as also noted previously, systems and related models improve cross-discipline communication, supporting the consilience promoted by Wilson (1998) and preventing the incommensurability feared by Kuhn (2012). He observed how problems whose solution were vitally important to an older tradition may disappear, become obsolete or even unscientific, replaced by newer paradigms. Ergo, death drive (older) transitions into complex, cross-theoretical, multicausal models (contemporary). Even if emerging from different foundational assumptions, that is, evolutionary biology versus the dynamic unconscious, the lack of a common language harms the efforts of psychoanalysis to move forward into a more cohesive and coherent discipline. The consilience and commensurability gained by adhering to eros-based, complex models serves the psychoanalytic project well.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the promotion of such complex, dynamic models enhances the likelihood of the survival of psychoanalysis. The entire psychoanalytic project, despite its thriving more than a century, faces extinction. For lack of a better phrase, the death drive harms psychoanalysis’ public relations. Space limitations preclude detailed exploration, but a cross-theoretical psychoanalytic model, featuring eros as fundamental drive and highlighting splitting, projection, and dissociation as primary defense mechanisms, explains aggression in a more complete, accurate, and consilient manner. In final conclusion, I argue that aggression – externally or internally directed – results from a complex array of intrapsychic, interpersonal, and environmental variables, all dynamically interacting with one another, and all grounded in preserving life.

References

Ainsworth, M.D. (1967). *Infancy in Uganda: Infant care and the growth of love*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ainsworth, M.D., & Boston, M. (1952). Psychodiagnostic assessments of a child after a prolonged separation in early childhood. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 25, 169–201.

Aisenstein, M. (2006). The indissociable unity of psyche and soma. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 87, 667–680.

Aisenstein, M. (2016). Destructiveness: New paths and new tools for understanding. *Romanian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 9, 139–148.

Ameisen, J.C. (1999). *La sculpture du vivant. Le suicide cellulaire ou la mort créatrice* [The sculpture of the living: Cell suicide or creative death]. Paris: Editions du Seuil: Paris.

Appiah, K.A. (2017). *As if: Idealizations and ideals*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Baranger, M., & Baranger, W. (1979) Spiral process and the dynamic field. In L.G. Fiorini (ed.), *The work of confluence: Listening and interpreting in the psychoanalytic field* (pp. 45–61). London: Karnac, 2009.

Bergmann, M.S. (2011). The dual impact of Freud’s death and Freud’s death instinct theory on the history of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 98, 665–686.

Bernardi, R. (2002). The need for true controversies in psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 83, 851–873.

Bettleheim, B. (1991). *Freud and man’s soul*. New York: Random House.

Bion, W.R. (1959). Attacks on linking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 40, 308–315.

Bion, W.R. (1962). *Learning from experience*. London: Karnac.

Bion, W.R. (1963). *Elements of psycho-analysis*. London: Heinemann.

Bion, W.R. (1965). *Transformations*. London: Tavistock.

Blass, R.B. (2011). On the immediacy of unconscious truth: Understanding Betty Joseph’s ‘here and now’ through comparison with alternative views of it outside of and within Kleinian thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 92, 1137–1157.

Bleger, J. (2012). Theory and practice in psychoanalysis: Psychoanalytic praxis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 93, 993–1003.

Bowlby, J. (1958). The nature of the child’s tie to his mother. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 39, 350–373.

Bowlby, J. (1960). Separation anxiety. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 89–103.

Bowlby, J. (1980a). *Attachment and loss*. Vol. 1. *Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1980b). *Attachment and loss*. Vol. 2. *Separation: Anxiety and anger*. New York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1980c). *Attachment and loss*. Vol. 3. *Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York: Basic Books.

Camus, A. (1956). *The rebel: An essay on man in revolt*. New York: Vintage, 1991.

Coburn, W.J. (2002). A world of systems: The role of systemic patterns of experience in the therapeutic process. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 22, 655–677.

Cortina, M. (2016). *Quo vadis? The future of psychoanalysis*. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 103, 793–817.

Darwin, C. (1859). *The origin of the species*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Erel, O. (2020). Vicissitudes in Winnicottian theory on the origins of aggression: Between dualism and monism and from back to front. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 89, 259–280.

Fabre, J.H. (1919). *The social life of the insect world* (B. Miall, Trans.). London: T. Fisher Unwin.

Fairbairn, W.R.D. (1952). *Psychoanalytic studies of the personality*. London: Routledge.

Feldman, M. (2000). Some views on the manifestation of the death instinct in clinical work. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 81, 53–65.

Fenichel, O. (1945). *The psychoanalytic theory of neurosis*. New York: Norton.

Ferro, A. (1993). The impasse within a theory of the analytic field: Possible vertices of observation. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 74, 917–929.

- Ferro, A. (2009). *Mind works: Technique and creativity in psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge.
- Ferro, A., & Basile, R. (eds.) (2009). *The analytic field: A clinical concept*. London: Karnac.
- Fonagy, P. (2001). *Attachment theory and psychoanalysis*. New York: Other Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things: An archeology of the human sciences* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Freud, S. (1914) *Remembering, repeating, and working-through*. SE12: 143–156.
- Freud, S. (1920). *Beyond the pleasure principle*. SE 18: 1–64.
- Freud, S. (1924). *The economic problem of masochism*. SE19: 155–170.
- Freud, S. (1930) *Civilization and its discontents*. SE21: 57–146.
- Freud, S. (1935) Letter from Sigmund Freud to Ernest Jones, March 15, 1935. In *The complete correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones 1908–1939*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 741.
- Freud, S. (1938). *Moses and monotheism: An outline of psycho-analysis and other works*. SE 23: 139–208.
- Fromm, E. (1955). *The sane society*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Fromm, E. (1964). *The heart of man* (R.N. Anshen, ed.). New York: Harper.
- Fromm, E. (1973). *The anatomy of human destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Galatzer-Levy, R.M. (1995). Psychoanalysis and dynamical systems theory: Prediction and self similarity. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 43, 1085–1113.
- Galatzer-Levy, R.M. (2002). Emergence. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 22, 708–727.
- Galatzer-Levy, R.M. (2009). Finding your way through chaos, fractals, and other exotic mathematical objects: A guide for the perplexed. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 57, 1227–1249.
- Gay, P. (1988). *Freud: A life for our time*. New York: Norton.
- Gedo, J.E. (1983). Saints or scoundrels and the objectivity of the analyst. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 3, 609–622.
- Gedo, J.E. (1997). Reflections on metapsychology, theoretical coherence, hermeneutics, and biology. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 45, 779–806.
- Gentile, J. (1998). Listening for deep structure: Between the priori and the intersubjective. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 34, 67–89.
- Gerson, S. (1996). Neutrality, resistance, and self-disclosure in an intersubjective psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 6, 623–645.
- Geyskens, T., & Van Haute, P. (2007). *From death instinct to attachment theory: The primacy of the child in Freud, Klein, and Hermann*. New York: Other Press.
- Gill, M.M. (1983). The interpersonal paradigm and the degree of the therapist's involvement. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 19, 200–237.
- Green, A. (1997). The intuition of the negative in playing and reality. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78, 1071–1084.
- Green, A. (2002). A dual conception of narcissism. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 71, 631–649.
- Greenberg, J.R. (2015). Therapeutic action and the analyst's responsibility. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 63, 15–32.
- Greenberg, J.R., & Mitchell, S.A. (1983). *Object relations in psychoanalytic theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hartmann, H., Kris, E., & Loewenstein, R. (1949). Notes on the theory of aggression. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 34, 9–36.
- Hinshelwood, R.D. (2007). The Kleinian theory of therapeutic action. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 76S (Suppl.), 1479–1498.
- Hinshelwood, R.D. (2012). Kleinian theory. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 93, 741–743.
- Hoffman, H. (2004). Revival of the death instinct: A view from contemporary biology. *Neuro-Psychoanalysis*, 6, 63–75.
- Horney, K. (1939). *New ways in psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton.
- Jones, E. (1957). *The life and work of Sigmund Freud*. New York: Basic Books.
- Joseph, B. (1982). Addiction to near-death. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 63, 449–456.
- Jung, C.G. (1915). The theory of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 2, 29–51.
- Jung, C.G. (1972). *Two essays on analytic psychology* (R.F.C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1976). *Symbols of transformation* (G. Adler and R.F.C. Hull, Trans., eds.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Karbelnig, A.M. (2014). The sanctuary of empathy and the invitation of engagement: Psychic retreat, Kafka's "A Hunger Artist," and the psychoanalytic process. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 101, 895–924.
- Karbelnig, A.M. (2018a) A perilous high wire act: Framing psychoanalytic relationships with severely traumatized patients. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 87, 443–478.
- Karbelnig, A.M. (2018b) Addressing psychoanalysis's post-tower of babel linguistic challenge: A proposal for a cross-theoretical, clinical nomenclature. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 103, 69–109.
- Karbelnig, A.M. (2020). The theater of the unconscious mind. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 37, 273–281.
- Katz, S.M. (2013). *Metaphor and field: Common ground, common language, and the future of psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Kernberg, O.F. (2001). Object relations, affect, and drives. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 21, 604–619.
- Kernberg, O.F. (2009). The concept of the death drive: A clinical perspective. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 90, 1009–1023.
- Kernberg, O.F. (2012). Suicide prevention for psychoanalytic institutes and societies. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 90, 707–719.
- Klein, M. (1932). *The psycho-analysis of children*. International Psycho-Analytical Library (Vol. 22). London: Hogarth Press.
- Klein, M. (1946). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 27, 99–110.
- Klein, M. (1948). A contribution to the theory of anxiety and guilt. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 29, 114–123.
- Klein, M. (1959). Our adult world and its roots in infancy. In *Envy and gratitude and other works* (pp. 247–263). New York: Free Press, 1984.
- Klein, G.S. (1976). *Psychoanalytic theory: An exploration of essentials*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press.
- Kline, M. (2018). Eros and thanatos: A nondualistic interpretation: The dynamics of drives in personal and civilizational development from Freud to Marcuse. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 105, 67–89.
- Koestler, A. (1967). *The ghost in the machine*. London: Penguin Group, 1990.
- Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kuhn, T. (2012). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1878). *Human, all too human* (R.J. Hollingdale, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Lacan, J. (1954–1955). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Book II. *The ego in Freud's theory and in the technique of psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1988.

- Lacan, J. (1959–1960). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Book VII. *The ethics of psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.
- Lacan, J. (1973). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan*. Book XI. *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis* (J. Miller, ed.; A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Norton, 1998.
- Lacan, J. (1991). *Seminar*. Book XVII. *The reverse side of psychoanalysis*. Paris: Editions de Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2002a). *Ecrits* [Writings] (B. Fink, Trans.). New York: W.W. Norton.
- Lacan, J. (2002b). *My teaching* (D. Macey, Trans.). New York: Verso.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lament, C. (2020). Useful untruths: Another look at pluralism in the clinical setting. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 89, 195–218.
- Laplanche, J. (2019). Should we burn Melanie Klein? *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 67, 825–838.
- Loewald, H.W. (1980). Psychoanalysis as art and the fantasy character of the psychoanalytic situation. In *Papers on psychoanalysis* (pp. 352–371). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- López, D.B. (1996). The enigma of the death drive. *Psychoanalytic Contemporary Thought*, 19, 3–27.
- Lorenz, K. (1977). *Behind the mirror: A search for a natural history of human knowledge*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Lothane, Z. (2012). Freud's civilization and its discontents and related works: A reappraisal. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 32, 524–542.
- MacLean, P. (1964). Man and his animal brains. *Modern Medicine*, 32, 95–106.
- Main, M. (1993). Discourse, prediction, and recent studies in attachment: Implications for psychoanalysis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 41, 209–244.
- Main, M. (2000). The organized categories of infant, child, and adult attachment. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 48, 1055–1095.
- Main, M., Kaplan, N., & Cassidy, J. (1985). Security in infancy, childhood, and adulthood: A move to the level of representation. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 50(1–2), 66–104. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333827>
- Meadow, P.W. (2011). Why a psychoanalytic code? *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 36, 141–157.
- Miller, M.L. (1999). Chaos, complexity, and psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 16, 355–379.
- Miller, M.L. (2008a). The emotionally engaged analyst. I. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 25, 3–25.
- Miller, M.L. (2008b). The emotionally engaged analyst. II. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 25, 257–279.
- Mills, J. (2002). *The unconscious abyss: Hegel's anticipation of psychoanalysis*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Mills, J. (2005). A critique of relational psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 22, 155–188.
- Mills, J. (2006). Reflections on the death drive. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23, 373–382.
- Mills, J. (2012). *Comundrums: A critique of contemporary psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, S.A. (1979). Twilight of the idols—change and preservation in the writings of Heinz Kohut. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 15, 170–189.
- Mitchell, S.A. (1981). The origin and nature of the “object” in the theories of Klein and Fairbairn. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 17, 374–398.
- Mitchell, S.A. (1991). Editorial philosophy. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 1, 1–7.
- Mitchell, S.A. (2000). *Relationality: From attachment to intersubjectivity*. New York: Analytic Press.
- Modell, A. (2013). Metaphor, meaning, and the mind. In *Metaphor and field: Common ground, common language, and the future of psychoanalysis* (S. Montana Katz, ed.). New York: Routledge, 59–66.
- Panskepp, J & Biven, L. (2012). *The Archeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions*. New York: Norton.
- Pinker, S. (2011). *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*. New York: Penguin.
- Rangell, L. (1975). Psychoanalysis and the process of change—an essay on the past, present and future. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 56, 87–98.
- Rangell, L. (2006). An analysis of the course of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23, 217–238.
- Razinsky, L. (2010). Driving death away: Death and Freud's theory of the death drive. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 97, 393–424.
- Refabert, P. (2014). *From Freud to Kafka: The paradoxical foundation of the life-and-death instinct*. London: Karnac.
- Reis, B. (2011). Zombie states: Reconsidering the relationship between life and death instincts. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 80, 269–286.
- Rosenberg, B. (1998). *Pulsions et somatisation ou le moi, le masochisme et le narcissisme en psychosomatique* [Drives and somatization or the ego, masochism and narcissism in psychosomatics]. *Revue Francaise de Psychanalyse*, 62, 1677–1698.
- Rosenfeld, H. (1987). Destructive narcissism. In *Impasse and interpretation* (pp. 105–113). New York: Routledge.
- Rousseau, J. (1755). *Discourse on inequality*. London: Aziloth Books, 2013.
- Sandler, J. (1983). Reflections on some relations between psychoanalytic concepts and psychoanalytic practice. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 64, 35–55.
- Schafer, R. (1975). Psychoanalysis without psychodynamics. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 56, 41–55.
- Schmidt-Hellerau, C. (2002). Why aggression? *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 83, 1269–1289.
- Schmidt-Hellerau, C. (2005). We are driven. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 74, 989–1028.
- Segal, H. (1997). On the clinical usefulness of the concept of the death instinct. In *Psychoanalysis, literature, and war* (pp. 17–26). London: Routledge.
- Sheftel, S. (2011). Turning points in modern psychoanalysis. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 36, 29–41.
- Spielrein, S. (1994). Destruction as the cause of coming into being. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 39, 155–186.
- Spink, A. (2010). *Information behavior: An evolutionary instinct*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Spitz, R.A., & Wolf, K.M. (1946). Anaclitic depression: An inquiry into the genesis of psychiatric conditions in early childhood. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 2, 313–342.
- Steiner, G. (2004). *Nostalgia for the absolute*. Toronto: House of Anansi.
- Stolorow, R.D. (1974). A note on death anxiety as a developmental achievement. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34, 351–353.
- Stolorow, R.D. (1997). Dynamic, dyadic, intersubjective systems: An evolving paradigm for psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 14, 337–364.
- Stolorow, R.D. (2011). *World, affectivity, trauma: Heidegger and post-Cartesian psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Stolorow, R.D. (2013). Intersubjective-systems theory: A phenomenological-contextualist psychoanalytic perspective. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 23, 383–389.

- Stolorow, R.D. (2015). A phenomenological-contextual, existential, and ethical perspective on emotional trauma. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 102, 123–138.
- Stolorow, R.D., & Atwood, G.E. (2016). Experiencing self-hood is not “a self.” *International Journal of Self-Psychology*, 11, 183–187.
- Wallerstein, R.S. (1990). Psychoanalysis: The common ground. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 71, 3–20.
- Wallerstein, R. (2013). Metaphor in psychoanalysis and clinical data. In *Metaphor and field: Common ground, common language, and the future of psychoanalysis* (S. Montana, ed., pp. 22–38). New York: Routledge.
- Wilson, E.O. (1998). *Consilience: The unity of knowledge*. New York: Knopf.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1960). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 585–595.

Winnicott, D.W. (1965). *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment: Studies in the theory of emotional development*. London: Hogarth.

Winnicott, D.W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. London: Tavistock.

Zagermann, P. (2017). *The future of psychoanalysis: The debate about the training-analyst system*. London: Karnac.

Author

Alan Michael Karbelnig PhD ABPP is in private practice in Pasadena, California, USA. He is senior faculty at, a member of, and a training and supervising analyst for the New Center for Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, California, USA.