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# *‘Death Drive’*

*A Literature-based Heuristic Study of the Influence of the  
Freudian Death Drive on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Counselling and  
Psychotherapy Literature.*

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## Abstract

The theory of death drive has been controversial from the very start. It has been identified as a myth that had been out of favour in modern psychotherapy and counselling. Such is the dynamism of this 'dead subject' that it has been infused with life from 1920 to 2011; as this study will show sometimes by its adherents other times by its dissidents. Through this heuristically informed literature-based research, I endeavour to show the impact of the death drive on the present psychotherapy and counselling literature.

Within much of the literature the death drive is perceived as a destructive or daemonic force, only achieving quiescence and Nirvana through addiction. Three emerging themes of Aggression, Quiescence and Narcissism have been further elaborated in chapters 4, 5 and 6. Written from a psychodynamic perspective, with keeping in mind its roots in psychoanalysis, this study concludes that like the phenomenon of death in life, the death drive is also inescapable in counselling and psychotherapy. By not getting mentioned in training and with covert references in literature its 'unconscious pressure' is difficult to ignore.

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## Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of any qualification or course.

Signed: -----(Maninder Bains)

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## Acknowledgements

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And all staff members at Freud Museum (London) who allowed me the use of library and helped with finding books.

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*For my parents, S. Bant Singh Bains & Late Mrs Balbir Kaur Bains who inculcated the value of life in the face of its 'impermanence'.*

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## Chapter 1

*The circle in which we ebb  
And we flow,  
Neither beginning nor an End  
Does know,  
The riddle stands as posed long ago:  
Where do we come from?  
Where do we go?  
Hazhir Teimourian (2007)*

‘The hypothesis of the death instinct had enthusiastic adherents as well as fervent opponents’ (Van Haute & Geyskens 2007). Jacob called it ‘another of Freud’s pessimistic ideas’ (2009: 60). Phillips, in introduction to *Wild Analysis*, refutes it by adding: ‘Freud was not a pessimist, but he was a great writer about the nature of dismay. It was the contemporary frustration that fascinated him, the obstacle course of everyday life’ (2002: xxv).

The concept of death drive has been so controversial in the field of psychoanalysis that apart from Melanie Klein, many of Freud’s ardent followers either strongly qualified it or rejected it. But controversy is an integral part of Freudian concepts. In 1972, Anna Freud stated that there is ‘no single ---- theoretical item which has not come under attack in the literature by one author or another’ (p. 152). Yet there is also ‘a need for critics’ who compel us to ‘ransack ourselves and speak responsibly’ (Lothane; 2001:113) about psychotherapy.

By trying to balance these forces my aim in this literature-based, heuristic research study is to *understand the impact, influence and relevance* of Sigmund Freud’s ‘**Death Drive**’ on 21<sup>st</sup> century’s counselling and psychotherapy literature. Heuristic

construct of death drive is supported by Ricoeur (1970:281). He called it the ‘most speculative of Freud’s essays’ in which hypotheses plays an enormous part and are ‘pushed to their extreme consequences’. To construct a personal depiction of heuristic experience, I needed to ‘enter into the material in timeless immersion until it is understood’ (Moustakas; 1990:51). This process started with Freud and his definition of the death drive.

In 1920 Freud expounded this concept as: *If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes*

‘the extreme complexity and remarkable novelty’ of Professor Freud’s ideas on the ultimate problems of life. And then follows a warning: *the style is one of exceptional difficulty* (italics added). When presented for the first time to the Vienna Society on 16 June 1920, this ‘highly speculative’ and ‘difficult text’ aroused ‘substantial reservations’ (Quinodoz; 2006:186).

I have explored different meanings attributed to the ‘*death drive*’ in this dissertation. In addition to its ‘speculative’ nature and Freud’s difficult style; reading it out of context also adds more ambiguity. Eagleton validates this concern. ‘*Freud set out by believing that the meaning of life was desire, or the ruses of the unconscious in our waking lives and came to believe that the meaning of life was death. But this claim can have several different meanings. For Freud himself, it means that we all are ultimately in thrall to **Thanatos**, or the death drive*’ (2007:156). On similar lines Laplanche confirms my concern by emphasising: “the death drive is a concept which can only be correctly situated at a specific moment in

the drama of Freudian discovery. Outside of that context it becomes an empty formula” (1999:49).

To explore this concept in depth a number of questions helped me to form the foundation of my dissertation e.g.: *Why Freud felt the need to develop dual instinct theory? What was his dissatisfaction with ‘pleasure principle?’* These type of questions seem to challenge Freud’s coveted ‘dream analysis’ after first world war. Reflections on the posed questions embed this research into Freudian thought and as literature research study I felt its need.

My interest in *Death Drive*, as I understand it now, emerged from my private existential musings to decipher the meaning of life. ‘Everything conspires to silence us, partly with shame, partly with unspeakable hope’ (Rilke in Barrows & Macy, 2005:40-41). In the impermanence of life, death seemed to be the only certainty. English, Panjabi and Urdu Poetry was and still is, a source of great solace and equanimity for me. In counselling (teaching and discussion groups) I seldom felt that subject of ‘Death Drive’ being discussed comfortably (Yalom, 2008). From a psychodynamic point of view, I feel, that the death drive could be repressed, projected on to others but could always be exerting influence on one’s life. Through this inquiry my aim is to bring it more into open, for myself and other interested therapists, trainees and trainers, for whom this could be a smouldering issue but untouched, exerting smoke and confusion but refraining from turning into a real ‘fire’.

To conclude my brief introduction, my intended topic of inquiry is **‘Freudian ‘Death Drive’s’ impact on 21<sup>st</sup> century’s written Counselling & Psychotherapy**

**literature'**. The intended audience in mind are therapists and counsellors, who love or loath Freud, trainee counsellors, trainers in this field and anyone who has a general healthy interest in finding out the meaning of life. Presentation of this document would be to meet M.A. in Counselling Studies (University of Chester) requirements. This dissertation is primarily based on counselling and psychotherapy literature review from January 2000 to December 2010, but to support or refute various points of view I have used literature prior to year 2000.

As a 'heuristic researcher' I am not only intimately and autobiographically related to the research question but 'learn to love the question. It becomes a kind of a song into which the researcher breathes life not only because the question leads to an answer, but also because the question itself is infused in the researchers' being' (Moustakas; 1990:43).

The emerging themes from the literature search and analysis were complex. From analysis of the potential impact of the death drive on counselling and psychotherapy literature three themes emerged strongly that are elaborated in chapters four , five and six. Prior to that and following chapter two on methodology, chapter three illustrates death drive's brief journey from 1920 to end of twentieth century. Chapter four deals with the 'paradoxical pathology of mind' aggression. That's how the curbing of the death drive by strict laws and moral codes is supplemented by 'the qualitative alteration of that instinct, which finds ---- first expression in the form of useful aggression' (Zilbesheid, 2009:84). In chapter five I explore the death drive as a protest against the pain of life and how humans have tried to address it through *addiction* and its many routes. Addiction is an

‘unconscious attempt to maintain a precarious inner equilibrium’ through drugging (English, 2009: 341). Chapter six covers pathology of self-love, Narcissism and explores that people dominated by narcissistic currents fail to separate between themselves and others (Symington, 2006:18). Chapters seven and eight cover my discussion of this topic and conclusion. References are followed by two appendixes charting my journey through ‘death drive’.

*We look before and after,*

*And pine for what is not:*

*Our sincerest laughter*

*With some pain is fraught;*

*Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.*

PB Shelley

## Chapter 2

### Philosophical Perspective

*Researchers have long recognised the importance of incubation, the process whereby a problem is consciously ignored for a while, after which the unconscious offers a solution. (Ap Dijksterhuis: 2004, p. 588)*

My study topic is concerned with theory. Theory in this context is philosophies, beliefs, attitudes and ethics rather than structured models of personality. Establishing my affinity with qualitative research, I justify my choice by stating that my purpose in this study would **not be** *to establish an objective truth* but to find the impact of the '**Death Drive**' on counselling & psychotherapy literature from January 2000 to December 2010. Although my main focus will be on this 'set period' but to validate or negate the emerging findings I will be using material prior to year 2000, as well.

'Researchers bring their own world views, paradigms or set of beliefs to the research project, and these inform the conduct and writing of qualitative study' (Creswell, 2007: 15). Without fail it is applicable to me and I cover its implications in the section on ethics and limitations of my chosen path in the qualitative field. In a similar vein Morrow's views highlights the 'entrenched ethnocentrism and colonisation of research' (2007: 220) of the last century and I am not expecting to be immune to this influence.

### Methodology for my dissertation

*'The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspective of inquirer.'*

*Sometimes the research questions change in the middle of the study to reflect better the types of questions needed to understand the research problem'* (Creswell, 2007: 19). Clarity is a wonderful gift but living with uncertainty of findings has its own allure. Hence my choice of 'Death Drive' under inquiry and choice of research methods would probably be esoteric but rewarding.

Andrew Brook's (2007) observation is that Psychoanalysis is a hermeneutic science; hermeneutic because it interprets meanings; scientific because the meaning connections it deals with are also usually causal connections. It is a truism to say that interpretations are the stuff of clinical psychoanalysis. Rycroft's influential argument (in Brook: 2007) that psychoanalytic explanation is not any kind of mechanistic explanation at all; rather, it is one type of semantic explanation. The following paragraph substantiates my claim to use hermeneutics, initially, and my understanding of this term.

### **What is hermeneutics?**

The term *hermeneutics*, a Latinized version of the Greek (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy) *hermeneutice*, has been part of common language from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Dannhauer (in Grondin: 1995) proposed that 'the reading of religious, legal and classical texts required not merely a literal reading but interpretation'. Mautner (in Jarvis: 2004, p. 9) used the term hermeneutics for the first time in the seventeenth century. He was of the opinion that 'truth can be gleaned not merely by observation but by the subjective interpretation of narrative'. Its history stretches back to ancient philosophy. Plato used this term in a number of dialogues, contrasting hermeneutic knowledge to that of *sophia* (*Sophia- the overall*

*understanding of eternal truths that's the goal of the philosopher's quest in Kenny, 2004: 272).*

Aristotle carried the use of this term a step further, naming his work on logic and semantics *Peri hermeneias*, which was later rendered as *De interpretatione*. Only with the Stoics, and their reflections on the interpretation of myth, do we encounter something like a methodological awareness of the problems of textual understanding. For the purpose of this dissertation I will keep this introduction brief, as Hermeneutics is not only a subject in itself, but a controversial one. Stephen Frosh's application of hermeneutic understanding to psychoanalytic practice guided me in my data analysing (Jarvis: 2004; Frosh: 2006).

Qualitative methods of research are based on the premise that, when it comes to understanding human experience, the separation between researchers and researched, between subjects and object, is a fiction (Hunter, 2004). Paul Ricoeur suggested a different approach; *that the text needs to stand alone as an objective reality since the mind of the author is inaccessible to the reader* (in Hunter, 2004). I would like to take an intermediate position that does take seriously the author's intent and life situation, but which also takes seriously the reader's **capacity to derive contemporary meaning from the text** that may go beyond the understanding of the author and the original readership. A final word about the methodology of hermeneutics relates to what is called a **'hermeneutic of suspicion'** that approaches a text asking **the question about what is missing and what is false, recognising the human capacity to interpret the same material in a variety of ways** (Hunter, 2004). Ricoeur (1991) recognised that the desire for objectivity creates a distance between the reader and the text, particularly if some false assumptions or understandings are recognised in the world-view of the author. However he wanted to preserve the

sense that the truth in a text can still be discerned provided the methodology used is able to identify and clear away whatever arises from a false consciousness of the author - a process he described as 'demystification'. A hermeneutic approach to a text written when the predominant world view was that the earth is flat, does not mean that the text is incapable of being a vehicle for truth for a modern reader, merely that the world view of the author needs to be recognised and accounted for in the hermeneutical process. In the process of interpretation, one must also take into account the world-view of the interpreter and recognise that it has limitations and errors, as does the author's. The corrective to the interpreter's bias is 'bracketing' which Van Manen (1990) described as *'the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world'*.

When it comes to analysis Steiner's (1995) views are sobering to absorb that for a qualitative researcher it is difficult to distinguish between data gathering and data analysis. Especially from a 'hermeneutic perspective it is assumed that the researcher's presuppositions affect the gathering of the data – the question posed to informants largely determine what you are going to find out. The analysis affects the data and data affect the analysis in significant ways (Steiner, 1995). Being made aware of this snare I will use the term 'modes of analysis'. From many modes of analysis my interest is in 'hermeneutics'; that 'can be treated as both an underlying philosophical and specific mode of analysis (Bleicher, 1980 in Steiner).

Reading through the selected articles to find the meaning of that text is the basic question in hermeneutics (Radnitzky in Steiner: 1995) I also felt the strong emergence of 'autobiographic' element in my research (Moustakas; 1990: 15). That

was a period to have ‘timeless immersion inside the data, with intervals of rest and return to the data until intimate knowledge is obtained’ (Moustakas; 1990:49). This realisation only emerged during discussions with my supervisor. Like Hiles (2001) I also had a late awakening that I have been doing ‘heuristic inquiry’ all along. ‘The heuristic inquiry paradigm is an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the *researcher*, to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research. The researcher really needs to feel passionate about the research question (West in Hiles, 2001). I recognised the personal significance of the research question to my life (Devereux in Etherington: 2004). For heuristic research methodology Kleinig & Witt (2000) suggest to follow four basic rules:

1. *The research person should be open to new concepts and change his preconceptions if the data are not in agreement with them.*
2. *The topic of research is preliminary and may change during the research process.*
3. *Data should be collected under the paradigm of maximum structural variation of perspectives.*
4. *The analysis is directed towards discovery of similarities. These points are further explored in appendix.*

Articles were read, dated and reflections jotted down in a note book. Free flowing writing is less intrusive for my thoughts than typing. There was also a feeling in me that methods were emerging for me (McLeod: 2006). I was negotiating ‘my personal route through this methodological terrain’ (2006:119). The research process in itself was becoming a learning experience. Denzin & Lincoln’s explanation of ‘researcher as – *bricoleur*’ was making sense (in McLeod, 2006: 120). As a bricoleur these readings were becoming an ‘interactive process’ for me

shaped by everything that has contributed to my existence, now. Staying, dipping and moving between two terrains of hermeneutics and heuristic I was not producing any ‘grand theories’ (Denzin and Lincoln in McLeod, 2006:120) but just ‘cobble together stories’. This ‘analytic induction’ principal first developed by Florian Znaniecki in 1934 helped me to find ‘the best fitting theoretical structure’ for my ‘research material’ (Bryman: 2008; Wester, 1995 in Boeije, 2010:86).

### **Data Collection**

Published work on the ‘Death Drive’ that I was familiar with are: Paul Ricoeur (1970); Laplanche (1985); O’ Brown (1987); Roazen (1992); Becker (1997); Weatherhill (1999); Dufresne (2000); Schmidt-Hellerau (2001); Van Haute & Geyskens (2007); Baudillard (2007) and Yalom (2008). In addition to these twelve quoted references there are twenty four additional books in my collection that deal with the theme of ‘Death Drive’, ‘Death Instinct’ and /or ‘Thanatos’ in some detail. A number of these publications are associated with Sigmund Freud, hence references to drives is apparent. The main theme of my dissertation does not demand to be lead away by Freudian drives but focus on Freudian ‘Death Drive’. Hence all the other knowledge gained about drives acted as a platform and guide for my further research rather than to be a part of my research.

Mawkishness of reading research articles kept me away from research for some time. Help always arrived in some disguise and in my case it was Lees (2005) article ‘A history of psychoanalytic research’ that provided a fresh perspective to look at psychodynamic research as a ‘*narrative research strand or hermeneutic strand*’. To gain a ‘thorough critical evaluation of existing research’ (Hart, 2005:2) I

started my task of collecting data. My searching was not ‘separate from the review of the literature’ (Hart, 2005: 7) but for the sake of this dissertation I will outline my data collections findings first.

Initial Google search on the definition of ‘Death Drive’ yielded 17,600 results. Upgrading it to Google Scholar produced 9,260 results. These numbers registered the enormity of this subject and the need for clear and defined precincts was imminent. ‘Freud is inescapable’ Peter Gay (1995, XIII) retorts in his introduction to ‘Freud’s Reader’ and his ideas and expressions ‘pervade contemporary ways of thinking about human feelings and conduct’. Freudian philosophies have permeated into various disciplines and their nuances can be felt in nearly all climates: “*to us HE is no more a person now but a whole CLIMATE of opinion*” ... (Auden, 1937). Viereck (1927) concluded his interview with Freud describing him as ‘*a cultural force to which we can assign a definite historical place in the evolution of civilization*’. Wading through this atmosphere and to ward off the over generalisation of my researched terms I turned to EBSCO, selecting IBSS, CINAHL, PsyINFO and SocINDEX. Initially no parameters of dates were set; it was only restricted to English language. Results from it once again signified the vastness of ‘death drive’ and its shades. A systematic search was needed to make my study effective and robust. Computer data bases offer access to vast quantities of information and it can also be retrieved more easily and quickly than using a manual search (Younger: 2004); it is both a boon and a burden.

Initial searches yielded a considerable range of results and it was clear that it would be possible to fail to access relevant data through an inconsistent or inaccurate use

of terminology. The words ‘death instinct’ and ‘death drive’ were both used and truncating these terms was not fruitful nor would searching the words ‘death’ and ‘drive’ separately was practical for my research. Primary results also signified the synonymous usage of the terms, ‘death drive’; ‘death instinct’ and ‘Thanatos’. I was keener to use the first two terms and omit Thanatos completely as Freud never used this term in his academic writings. Reasons: ‘his aversion to Stekel kept him from ever using “Thanatos” in his writings (Letter from Edoardo Weiss to Ernest Jones, August 22, 1956 (Jones Archives) in Roazen, 1992: 218). Searching ‘death instinct’ and ‘death drive’ together and separately yielded similar results in numbers and contents. I decided to stay with the term ‘Death Drive’ and use it in my dissertation. This decision is based upon my reading of Bruno Bettelheim’s ‘Freud and Man’s Soul’ (1989). Freud used the term ‘*Trieb*’ and its translation to English is disputed. “--- regrettable is the translation of *Trieb* as “instinct,” because the concept it denotes has such an important role in the Freudian system” (1989:103). Bettelheim even quotes James Strachey’s ‘uneasiness’ to discuss this term in length in his notes for the Standard Edition. Peter Gay in Freud’s biography only uses ‘death drive or *Todestrieb*’ (1995:792) in the index logging.

By limiting my search between years 1920 to 2010, on controlled EBSCO, anywhere in the article, produced 16,500 results. Research in hand demanded to look more rigorously, for work produced between years 2000 and 2010. Eventually I settled for the articles dealing with ‘death drive’ rather than including books and reviews from this period. I adopted this approach for two reasons: firstly more recent material was available from articles and secondly, the articles also covered to an extent what was in the books. Final search with ‘Death Drive’ in inverted comas

produced 21 results.

These results were shared and discussed with my supervisor. This exercise was to make my work 'systematic and thorough' (Gash in Ridley 2008:29) and to obtain these results I did go through 'all types of published literature in order to identify as many items as possible' on death drive. My endeavour is to produce 'holistic not atomistic' (Willis, 2007: 211) research. Willis further elaborates that 'traditional empirical research breaks the subject matter down into small units and studies them in 'clean', often artificial environments. Qualitative research tends to look at the subject matter holistically and within the larger context in which it resides (2007:211). To attain desired results I needed an 'immersion' (McLeod, 2006: VIII) in my selected collected data, 'an attempt to capture the wholeness of that experience, followed by an attempt to convey this understanding to others'. Agreeing with McLeod (2006: 54) again I needed 'a set of procedural guidelines' as I felt that for my topic in hand one 'method can never be enough'. I needed my methodologies to be 'like a dome of many-coloured glass' (Shelley: 1821) to radiate my research findings. This may not be an easy task but it's the 'struggle to know that generates new and useful insights (McLeod; 2006: 54).

### **Inclusion and exclusion**

Following the promise of discovery from qualitative inquiry and to generate 'new insights into old problems' (McLeod: 2006) I need to tap the nuances of 'Death Drive' in my articles. Choice of exclusion and inclusion was again a testing task. McLeod's dictum: 'in human affairs reality is constructed' (2006:6) was at the forefront of my mind. It raised ethical issues that were applicable to my inclusion

and exclusion of articles as well. Also Hiles' (2001) pronouncement: 'exclusion by whom, on what grounds, and at what expense to humanity does conventional research make such limitations' acted as an internal supervisor (Casement:1997) for me.

Being aware of the fact that 'Freudian notion of the 'death drive' has attracted scholarly attention throughout psychoanalytic literature' (Sophocles Kitharidis — *Diasporic Literature Spot*) this study does not purport to be a comprehensive analysis. However as the data collection section indicates every endeavour was deployed to collect literature from different sources (journals and books) to represent as authentic sample as possible. Inclusion was performed upon the given guidelines:

- Ψ Central theme of text is 'Death Drive'
- Ψ 'Death Drive' and 'Death Instinct' has been used as synonymous terms
- Ψ Articles are mainly related to therapeutic work one way or another
- Ψ Years of these publications are between 2000 to 2010 (Publications before 2000 are used to support or refute arguments)
- Ψ Language of text is mainly kept to English, including texts translated to English (All Freudian works have been translated from German, so translations are unavoidable)

To maintain manageability and to avoid overgeneralization my intention was to limit the data to psychotherapy and counselling only; however Freudian concepts have been infused into literature, media, movies and songs. This material was not included into primary analysis but was kept as a backdrop or sometimes used for supporting different ideas. The majority of the literature was accessed via the

search methods outlined and other extracts emerged through my personal immersion in the data; clearly a significant aspect of the heuristic approach. It was difficult to set clear boundaries with respect to duration and scope and to gain maximum out of Heuristic inquiry but at the same time it required the highest degree of rigour and thoroughness. As there are striking similarities between doing psychotherapy and heuristic inquiry, particularly with respect to the use of 'self' (Hiles: 2001), the research process evoked many emotions in me that I jotted down in my personal journals. Some of these are expressed in the form of 'sweetest songs' that tell 'our saddest thoughts'; at the end of chapters and in appendix II. Heuristic research procedure is not linear but dialectical. The text was 'interrogated from as many different perspectives as possible' and the answers were analyzed according to given heuristic procedures (Kleining & Witt: 2000).

### **Data Analysis**

To capture the essence of collected data I needed to enter the writer's world; a phase of active engagement with the data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin; 2009:82). Repeated periodic readings made me connect with the script. I applied the technique of attending to a client's free association, to my data narrative, and imbibed the landscape of that narration rather than concentrating on external descriptions (Thomson & Cotlove; 2005:95). Immersing myself in the raw material of my research question (Hiles: 2001) and staying in the realms of heurism I applied Moustakas' guidelines for my inductive data analysis (1990: 51; Hiles: 2001), which allowed research findings to emerge from the "frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in the raw data" (Thomas; 2003:2).

## **Succinct synopsis of my data analysis**

The research question emerged and lingered with me for a while till I gave it my disciplined commitment to reveal its underlying meanings. Its intense interest and passionate calls held me with 'glittering eye' and I felt I 'listened like a three years' child' (Coleridge: 1798). My life started to become 'crystallized around the question' (Moustakas, 1990: 28).

**Immersion:** My timeless immersion in the research question has been lived in waking, sleeping and even dream states. This required alertness, concentration and self-searching. Virtually anything connected with the question became raw material for immersion.

**Incubation:** a retreat from the intense, concentrated focus, allowing the expansion of knowledge to take place at a more subtle level, enabling the inner tacit dimension and intuition to clarify and extend understanding; this happened for me during my five weeks stay in India to disperse my mother's ashes. She died after two years of terminal illness.

**Illumination:** a breakthrough, a process of awakening that occurred naturally when I was open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. It involved opening a door to new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or new discovery. Above mentioned period provided instances of individual and family reflections. While reading the articles I listened to myself and the writers' voices with a therapeutic ear. Illuminations during this period removed 'the invisible blanket between the world and me' (Lewis: 1966) - painful, concussed but perhaps worth it.

**Explication:** is a full examination of what has been awakened in my consciousness. It required the organization and a comprehensive depiction of the core themes that are listed below.

**Creative synthesis:** is getting familiar with the data, and following a preparatory phase of solitude and meditation, I put the components and core themes into the form of creative synthesis, in my case poetry and a narrative account in my personal journals.

The question of validity is one of meaning. Does the synthesis present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience? I returned again and again to the data to check whether they embrace the necessary and sufficient meanings. As the research question chose me (Hiles: 2001) trusting heuristic practice I acquiescently gave myself to the above given process; allowing my 'knowledge that has been incubating over months ----- to develop the themes and essential meaning' (Moustakas; 1990: 52) from my data. Interrogation of the texts (Kleining & Witt, 2000) also helped to precipitate the themes. I identified key units of meaning within each (McLeod, 2001) until it became apparent that the data was saturated (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007; Finfgeld-Cornett, 2006). There has been a transformative effect of this inquiry on me that I have documented in my journals; and I hope my results were achieved by the process that Hiles (2001) called discernment. The following threads started to emerge again and again from my collected data and were the most common themes identified:

- i. **Aggression**
- ii. **Quiescence through Addiction**
- iii. **Narcissism**

Initially there were six themes of – Fear – Internal Drama—Protecting Self – Quiescence --- Love and Aggression. Upon closer analysis it was realised that some themes were splinters of the above mentioned headings. Narcissism was silently embedded in internal drama and protecting self. Similarly other themes precipitated from these six themes. Apart from achieving quiescence and stating death drive as a ‘protest against the pain of life’ other views on death drive are mainly destructive. Goldblatt & Maltzberger try to put a positive slant on death drive by stating that when the annihilation anxiety becomes unbearable, the ego feels under attack and there is a danger of self-disintegration and the individual may turn to ‘bodily self-attack’ for ‘self-preservation’(2010). Self-mutilation for self-preservation is one of the many paradoxes of this drive. Certain texts embraced many facets of death drive but were unable to formulate a full theme in itself. I have included references from those publications that emerged as a result of my heuristic journey. These reflections provide supportive element for the themes covered in this dissertation. Nuttal (2006:438) hypothesizes that: ‘dependability is demonstrated by direct engagement with text, providing an accurate and extensive audit trail’.

Staying faithful to heuristic inquiry was daunting. To discover the nature and meaning of death drive I needed to engage in my internal self-search, exploration and discovery. Its methods demanded me to follow a creative journey that needs to initiate in me. For this purpose I took the aid of my personal journal. In this new process lack of boundaries as I initially perceived it threatened me. This part is covered in the appendix II.

### **Ethical considerations in my research**

There are no whole truths; all truths are half truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that play the devil (Whitehead in Watson: 2005). In qualitative research although physical manipulation or intrusive procedures may not be involved, but to deem that it poses minimal risks to participants could be a misnomer. There are three areas of potential harms to participants that must be addressed in any qualitative research proposal: *assessing harms and benefits, informed consent, and privacy and confidentiality* (Denscombe: 2007). As the above mentioned aspects are less applicable to literature based research it poses diverse challenges to identify all the 'possible ethical dilemmas' (Grafanaki, 1996: 333). That means I need to be aware of more subtle aspects that affects the authors and writers whose work I would be reviewing. Commenting on ethical issues related to scholarly work, Heppner (1999: 83) states that "accurate information promotes the professions' knowledge bases and that inaccurate and misleading information may distort or even falsify the profession's knowledge bases".

Using heuristic investigation my 'research involves self-search, self –dialogue and self discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning and inspiration (Moustakas, 1990: 11). This increases my ethical responsibility toward the research project and toward psychotherapy as a profession. I also needed to be aware of my piety towards Freud and be vigilant of being panegyric. 'Knowledge is intimately connected with power and can sometimes be used to oppress (Foucault in Etherington, 2004: 27), especially when knowledge is withheld'. It is easy to be a victim of 'ethical self-deception' as I am the deceiver and the deceived (Kirsch: 2007). To confront this view I take responsibility for my work by using the first person pronoun 'I', thus losing the security of the anonymous third person – 'the researcher'- or 'the passive voice that distances subject from the object' (Crotty in Etherington, 2004: 27). I took this responsibility while managing my data; that accountability was also present while conducting my reading and during deliberations on previous debates. Acknowledging the fusion of literature-based and heuristic research and hoping that this blend would produce a 'rich narrative' (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 46), of valid original and profound text (Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007) I recognized the importance of sustaining a balance between 'imagination' and 'scholarship', remaining acutely aware of the ethical and political (Elliott & Williams, 2001) within the debate.

## **Validity**

Concerns about validity of qualitative research have increased recently (Cho & Trent: 2006). 'Like other parts of the NHS, psychology service provision has been

substantially affected by demands for accountability, both in terms of cost effectiveness and measurement of clinical outcome' (Gelman, et al; 2010: 347). 'The hallmarks of authentic, trustworthy, rigorous constructivist inquiry include fairness and four types of authenticity: ontological, educative, catalytic and tactical' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:567). This definition of validity exerts some responsibility for me, for conducting a literature based study. Especially when as a heuristic researcher I am not only 'intimately and autobiographically related to the question' (Moustakas; 1990: 43) but breathe life into my question and the question has been 'infused' into me. To remain objective and validate my Promethean research is a Herculean task. Transparency and objectivity in reading and writing was kept at the forefront to avoid personal prejudices as far as possible. It is wise to stay with realistic approach of Guba & Lincoln (2008: 275): "*any action on the part of the inquirer is thought to destabilize objectivity and introduce subjectivity, - ----- . The problem of subjectivity and bias has a long history ----- it is enough to say that we are persuaded that objectivity is a chimera: a mythological creature that never existed, save the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower.*"

From the two emerging approaches to the validity question transactional approach seems more akin to my work (Cho & Trent: 2006). It is 'grounded in active interaction between the inquiry and the research participants by means of an array of techniques such as member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1995, 2000), bracketing (Moustakas, 1994) and triangulation (Seale in Cho & Trent: 2006). These two authors define transactional validity in qualitative research as: an interactive process between the researched and the collected data that is aimed at achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy and consensus by means of revisiting facts, feelings, experience and values or beliefs collected and interpreted. Its role varies

to the extent the researcher believes it achieves a level of certainty. Techniques and methods take a prime position in transactional validity. In my literature research study I used bracketing and triangulation by interacting with the data as in other researches it would be with the participants.

Guiora places the responsibility with the researcher ‘to make the fruits of their labour public, demonstrable and accessible to all’ that they have learned about complex human behaviour (1972: 139). To support this point he quotes Heinz Hartmann: “an observation an analyst makes may seem entirely credible to another analyst who possesses the necessary experience ----- while the same observation may appear hardly credible, ----- to one who approaches the field with a different method and in a different setting”.

To remain true to this rigour I kept a researcher journal. Parts from it are produced in the appendix. These entries testify the record of my thinking and feelings as I collected and analysed the data (Willis, 2007:221).

### **Limitations**

Although heuristic methodology has many strengths, it also has limitations. A key consideration is that heuristic inquiry is mostly characterized with little or no control or restraints placed on its procedures. For example, Frick (1990) pointed out that although creative freedom often represents a positive element in the heuristic research, it could lead to irresponsibility of the researcher and undeveloped research. But due to its subjective nature, heuristic methodology challenged the depth of my ability to remain a researcher while reading difficult human experiences.

Heuristic methodology requires the researcher to have a solid knowledge in the

philosophical roots of heuristic methodology, which may be a difficult process for inexperienced researchers (Creswell, 1998). Interestingly enough, this was perhaps one of the biggest challenges I had to face before commencing my research. Upon deciding that heuristic methodology would allow me to do the research I wanted, I engaged in a lengthy learning process about the guiding philosophy (Creswell; Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990; Polanyi, 1964). However, exploring the philosophical tenets of heuristics paid off because this knowledge allowed me to challenge one of my biggest fears — looking at myself and my own experience. It allowed me to build courage to not only change the way I was looking at the world but to find treasure in other people's stories experiences.

Another potential limitation is that heuristic methodology places importance on the subjective experience of the phenomenon in question. As such, it increases the researcher's bias. The synthesis of the meaning and the essence of the phenomenon in heuristic methodology are solely based on the researcher's interpretation. The researcher has a direct experience of the phenomenon of interest, which may subjectively influence the study and interpretation of the findings. For example, the researcher's bias could affect the selection of material that interests him. While I tried to control for this problem through unbiased selection methods, I often struggled with losing the direction in which I was going. Reading against Freud was occasionally difficult but eventually rewarding, to form a holistic view.

### *Chapter 3*

*Being able to listen to other theoretical view points is also a way of exercising our listening capacities in the clinical field. This means that the listening should support a space of freedom that would allow us to hear what is new and original.* Leticia Glocer Fiorini (2011:viii)

Freudian concepts still arouse strong passions, even from his grave, and are too often approached from extreme, polarized, positions (Lemma: 2006). There is still a healthy interest in Freudian concepts from different schools of thought (Akhter: 2011). In this chapter my endeavor is to illustrate a brief journey of the ‘Death Drive’ from 1920 to January 2011, highlighting its highs and lows. At its inception it induced ‘a turn in the history of psychoanalysis and is still ‘somewhat unfathomable’ (Akhtar;2011:1). Practitioners and theorists have tried to obliterate its presence as if "this did not happen", or "let us forget about it", or "it does not matter in the long run"(Akhtar;2011:1). Weatherill (1999) even pronounced ‘the myth of death drive out of favour’ in psychotherapy and counselling. But Akhtar’s hypothesis makes more sense: ‘the very fact that we are traumatized by them makes us revisit them. We bring renewed epistemic vigour to them’. This thesis is also the result of my inquisitiveness to learn more about this new ‘epistemic vigour’. Why and how this ‘notion of "death instinct" have indeed cut through the skin of psychoanalysis’(Akhtar: 2011).

Nagera (1970:26-28) divides the historical development of death drive into four phases: These segments take us to Freud’s mortal demise.

1. **1894-1911:** During this initial period Freud’s views were dominated by the

biologists ideas of self-preservation of the individual and sexual instincts working toward species preservation. It can even further be sub-divided with the discovery of the Oedipus complex but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

2. **1911-14:** Narcissism was introduced in this period and it blurred the distinction between the sexual and the ego instincts; since it seemed that they have a common libidinal origin. A distinction could be made only in terms of the object on which to the libido was directed; an external object or the own ego. Freud still thought that beside the libidinal component of the ego instincts there was also a non-libidinal one, which he termed interest.
3. **1915-20:** In this phase aggression previously considered to be a component of the sexual instinct and considered mainly in the context of sadism was now ascribed to the non-libidinal ego instincts, in the form of the instincts for mastery over the external world. This greater emphasis on the importance of aggression arose out of Freud's consideration of ambivalence, the opposition between love and hate.
4. **1920-39:** This period maintains the antithesis between the sexual and aggressive instincts and they now become part of larger entities, respectively the life and death instinct. The self preservative instinct is grouped with the sexual instinct as part of the life instinct. Aggression is no longer considered as belonging to the ego instincts. The theory remained throughout a dualistic one, ----. What changed were the categoriers of instincts he (Freud) assumed.

Freud's 'heuristic leap', to develop the second dual-instinct theory by adding 'death drive' to it, profoundly transformed his theory of human motivation. According to Freud's original view (Freud in Akhtar: 2011)"sexual instinct" and "self-preservatory instinct" were the two fundamental motivational forces:

*The former sought erotic pleasure through discharge and served the goal of species propagation; the latter sought safety and growth and served the goal of self-preservation. ----- this perspective came to be retrospectively known as his "first dual-instinct theory". His "second dual instinct theory", enunciated in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, classified*

*instincts into "life instinct" and "death instinct". The former subsumed the prior categories of "sexual" and "self preservative" instincts. The latter was a new concept: it referred to a "daemonic force" (p. 35), which searched for psychosomatic quiescence and, at its deepest core, sought to reduce the animate to its original inanimate status. (Akhtar;2011:1-2)*

The shift from the first to the second dual instinct theory sent a seismic shock wave through the foundations of psychoanalytic theory. Even Freud 'struggled with this ambiguous and contradictory awareness' (O'Neil;2011:265). Many concepts now warranted reconsideration. The operative supremacy of the 'pleasure principle' in mental life was also brought into question. Indeed, the definition of "pleasure" itself became muddled. If the aim of the death drive was to make the subject inanimate, then how and by whom could the discharge of this drive be felt as pleasurable?

This second dual instinct theory elevated the status of aggression. Freud (Jones;1957:266) declared this aggressive drive to be the derivative of the death drive, which, together with the life drive, formed the two main forces in the struggle of life. Over the following years Freud became progressively committed to this view. His '*The Ego and the Id*' (1923b) repeated this theory. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he emphasized that "aggression is an original, self-subsisting disposition in the man" (1930a, p. 122 in Akhtar,2011:4).

This illustrious status of aggression led succeeding psychoanalysts to pay more attention to it. Prominent theoreticians (e.g Hartmann, 1939; Hartmann, Kris, & Loewenstein, 1949; Brenner, 1971; A Freud, 1972), who did not

concur with Freud's proposal of death drive, found the "aggressive instinct" to be a face-saving compromise that allowed them at least partial loyalty to the master' (Akhtar,2011:4). The securely established central place of aggression also provided an anchor to the view that man was inherently destructive; an idea upon which Freud elaborated further a decade later, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930a). Freud's grim take on the nature of man, in turn, discouraged generations of psychoanalysts from studying the positive and "good" aspects of human beings (Akhtar, 2009a). All in all, the elevated status of aggression had major consequences for the subsequent development of psychoanalytic thought.

Freud often had recourse to biology to ground his theorizing. Biology is the study of dead living things. It is no wonder that that he found death drive at the heart of living systems. This position was rejected by object relations theorists who based their ideas of psychological life on the earliest social relations in the family. Consequently, as Winnicott says, there is no need to posit a death drive, as such. Similar positions were held by Harry Stack Sullivan, Erich Fromm, Clara Thomson and Karen Horney (Weatherill, 1999). The group saw all pathology stemming from interpersonal relationships and largely dispensed with Freud's libido theory. Erickson's work on *Childhood and Society* (1965) makes no reference at all to death drive. Anna Freud (1936) refers to death wishes rather than death drive. Otto Finchel (1954) deplores the complete biologisation of neurosis.

Kleinians accepted death drive unquestionably. In it the death drive takes the form of envy and overshadows the life drive; it becomes the ultimate source of paranoid,

persecutory and depressive anxieties which will shadow the human subject throughout its life. According to Hinslewood (1994:135) the death drive is the hatred of life--- every individual has to struggle with a wish for life against a deathly wish to return to a state of disintegration, the silence of the grave.

At the turn of century Dufresne (2000) was interested in following Freud ‘down the different paths of his text reading *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* against his other works and against the social historical and intellectual context of his time – just as one would approach any figure in the history of ideas’ (XIV). He draws the ‘psychoanalytic century’ to a close but the references from the present dissertation ascertain that even the most controversial concepts like ‘death drive’ are still alive.

Freud grew very attached to his new dualism, especially the death drive, later admitting that “I can no longer think in any other way” (Freud in Dufresne, 2000:15) . If Freud himself could express public and private caution about the death drive, both during and after its inception, we can’t be surprised that his speculative revisions were often rejected by many observers, including his most loyal followers. For Wilhelm Reich (1952) “—nothing good came out of it”. Ferenczi, an ardent Freudian, considered the death drive to be a ‘mistaken idea’. William McDougall concludes that Freud’s notion of a death drive is “the most bizarre monster of all his gallery of monsters” (1936:64, Dufresne;2000:16). Ernest Becker echoed these sentiments years later that ‘ death drive theory can now be securely relegated to the dust bin of history’ (1973:99).

But then like so many other Freudian concepts the idea of the *death drive* seems immune to criticism. Like Omar Khayyam’s couplet Freud moved on and so is

probably death drive, still casting its shadow on the present counselling and psychotherapy literature. This dissertation aims to paint different shades of 'this shadow' and its complex interpretations. Next three chapters explore the emerged themes from literature analysis of 'Aggression', 'Addiction' and 'Narcissism' respectively.

*"The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."*

*(Omar Khayyam by Teimourin: 2007)*

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## Chapter 4

*Aggression is understood as an affect, action or affective action in relation to these, as an expression of the intensity with which a drive- whether it be the sexual drive with its libidinal cathexes or the self-preservative drive with its lethic cathexes – seek to attain its object.* *Schmidt-Hellerau (2002)*

‘Aggression is one of the most complex and important phenomena of human behaviour’ (Schmidt-Hellerau, 2002:1270). It emerged as a strong theme of the death drive in my literature analysis (Waska, 2001; Mikhailova, 2005; Mills, 2006; Aleksandrowicz, 2009; Kernberg, 2009 and Goldblatt & Maltzberger, 2010 etc.). Kitapondya addresses it as a ‘paradoxical pathology of mind’ (2006/7). Asser describes it as ‘an affect that links the subject to the object’ (2008). Psychological aggression could be physical or verbal and Kitapondya attributes its vigorous pursuit of preservation to satisfy needs in animals mainly. And in human behaviour “aggression ensues when the death instinct is dominant over its counterpart, and sets out various manifestations, which are simply termed as violence” (2006/7: 36). This hypothesizes that aggressive behaviour encompasses all forms of violent acts, e.g. sexual abuse, domestic abuse and criminality etc. A wide variety of affective states include aggression as a constituent part: ‘hate, contempt, derision, revulsion, abhorrence and detestation etc. and its clinical importance is emphasized by Mizen & Morris: “the location of the source of aggression is important not only in the construction of theoretical models, but more importantly for how aggression and related phenomena are treated clinically” (2007:15). They describe how aggression orientates the individual to the objects in his or her environment.

Freud's drive theory underwent another revision when he postulated 'side by side with the sexual drives, the existence of an aggressive, destructive and above all self-destructive drive which worked at times in opposition to love or eroticism and at times in concert with it (sadism) (De Lauretis: 2010:23). Kernberg links 'aggression' strongly with the death drive and highly supports and validates its application in clinical work. Freud's theories, especially his stress on the 'infantile origin of sexual' orientation and particularly its sado-masochistic components, have raised shock and 'efforts at denial in the general culture'. "The death drive runs deeply against more optimistic views of human nature, based on the assumption that if severe frustrations or trauma were absent in the early development then aggression would not be a human problem" (Kernberg, 2009:1009).

Bonwitt (2008) examines the relationship between life and death and the clinical meaning of walking the line between them while maintaining it. Agreeing that as an inner entity the death drive's main function is 'disintegration and destruction', he further postulates, differing with Kitapondya, that although death impulse aims inwards, originally, but 'at times it is routed to the outside and then turns into the motivation behind aggression, domineering and destruction'(2006:222). Applying it to his clinical work Bonwitt illustrates the relationship between the death drive and aggression as the 'inner violence, to which Freud attributes the ability to dismantle, kill ourselves and thus kills our consciousness. Quoting a clinical case of a mother whose child had a violent death he says 'perhaps this happens in the very same way that the death of a child violently enters our consciousness and threatens to

overtake ourselves and annihilate it' (2006:222).

When the annihilation anxiety becomes unbearable, the ego feels under attack and there is a danger of self-disintegration, the individual may turn to 'bodily self-attack' for 'self-preservation' (Goldblatt & Maltzberger: 2010). This paradoxical affect is explained by these authors through clinical examples, that clients self-attacking mechanisms are life preserving and it enables them to create a sense of self-cohesion in the face of affective dis-integration. They compare it to Kernbergs' (2010) description of malignant narcissism syndrome. Clients suffering from this syndrome would treat themselves and often their therapists with utmost scorn and intense disdain that arises from a core of severe narcissistic pathology marked by envy rage and eroticized hate (p.59). The pleasure derived from self- torturing helps to defend against the terror of disintegration and abandonment. Theme of 'Narcissism' is developed fully in chapter six. Goldblatt & Maltzberger attributes this self-attacking phenomenon to the vicissitudes of death instinct; manifestations of the failure of ego control; fusion with the victim; developmental breakdown; and fluctuations in self-state.

Comparing the death drive to Macbeth's witches leads Black (2001) to propose that it might be unreal like 'bubbles of the earth', but it plays a significant part to move psychoanalysis forward. By 1923 in the Ego and the Id Freud stated: 'I have lately developed a view of the instincts which I shall here hold to and take as the basis of my further discussions' (Freud in Black, 2001:194). Black feels that by this time the death drive has totally become silent and finds its expression through being 'directed at the external world', by means of the

muscular apparatus. And it seems to express itself ‘through probably only in part,’ ‘as an instinct of destruction directed against the external world and other organisms’ (Black, 2001: 194). This late recognition of the destructive drive is ascribed to Freud’s ‘reluctance to recognize his own capacity for violence and aggression’ (Gay, 1988: 397).

Waska clearly distinguishes the death drive’s theoretical form from its clinical application (2001). He is of the strong belief that ‘death instinct serves a useful way to understand and treat certain clinical situations’ (P. 26). Illuminating internal aggression ensued from the death drive Waska concludes:

*“As the result of a combination of external distress, internal aggression and excessive reliance on projective identification to satisfy primitive oral needs, certain patients seem to be struggling with overwhelming phantasies of loss and persecution. Via projective identification, the death instinct is the minds’ best effort at eradicating parts of itself that threatens loss and safety. A vicious circle is created that becomes externalized in the transference”* (2001:38).

Assigning the propagation of ‘aggression’ to Kleinian school, who made it a viable part of its theory, Waska further illustrates that the constitutional and environmental influences converge and the normal life and death drives are intensified. It is overpowering for the ego with more distorted phantasies regarding desire, fear and aggression. Normal mental process of projective identification and splitting are likewise intensified and produce self-destructive stand-offs between conflicting aspects of the personality.

Melanie Klein took Freud's discovery of death drive seriously. She felt, in line with aggression, 'envy was the direct manifestation of death instinct and as such envy was sought to spoil and devalue whatever seemed valuable or connected to life' (Waska, 2001: 24). Under normal development of a human personality the ongoing internalization of good, forgiving and supportive objects balance with a normal level of competitive and envious aggression; 'the super-ego emerges as an understanding confidence building, contemplative agency' (P. 25). Here the death drive and super-ego are operating in conjunction with the life force. Where the super-ego becomes punitive and vicious force and takes on pathological properties, with exaggerated use of guilt and self-threat the death drive will try to eliminate this ego threat.

In his response to Albert Einstein's letter published under the title 'Why war?' Freud confirmed that there is a 'drive for hatred and destruction' (Schmidt-Hellerau, 2002:1269). Schmidt-Hellerau has driven her own conception of aggression: 'Aggression is understood as an affect, action or affective action and, in relation to these, as an expression of the intensity with which a drive – whether it be the sexual drive with its libidinal cathexes or the self-preservative drive with its lethic' *{(term lethe is introduced by Schmidt-Hellerau to denote the energy of both the self-preservative drive and the death drive) is cathexes seeks to attain its object' (P. 1269). This term borrowed from Greek mythology- meaning oblivion – (P. 1273)}*. While agreeing on the premise that aggression is one of the most complex and important phenomena of human behavior and its understanding plays a prominent role to the development and progress of therapists' clinical work; Schmidt-Hellerau takes 'aggression as a primary drive that seeks satisfaction

and must be tamed' (p.1270). This is Schmidt-Hellerau's post-1920 view of Freud and Melanie Klein. Second aggression may be seen as a secondary reaction to frustrations of all kinds or to a danger confronting the self and third aggression may be regarded, at least in part, as an energy that promotes psychic development or the 'motoric element' of that energy, used for the purpose of self-assertion, adaptation and exploration of the world.

This gives us the diversity of our understanding of the same phenomena which could determine the focus of our attention and interpretation. This author does not dispute that 'aggression is something 'driven', inherent in human nature and it is biogenetically based' (P.1270). It originates from frustration and danger and is within object relationships; 'and it is virtually self-evident that besides hostile (malignant) aggression there is also useful (benign) aggression'. This acknowledgement of nonthreatening or protecting side of aggression is less obvious in my literature research.

To elaborate her hypothesis Schmidt-Hellerau (2002: 1274) evaluates Laplanche & Pontalis's definition of aggression as: the tendency or cluster of tendencies finding expression in real or phantasy *behavior intended to harm other people, or to destroy, humiliate or to constrain them etc.*' According to this definition aggression primarily constitutes an action within an object relationship, conforms to ordinary linguistic usage, in which aggression is something bad, malicious and negative. However, it is tendentious and limiting. Contradicting this view this author believes that 'an aggressive act may also be 'controlled' and then in every way be constructive and good'. Examples of

spontaneous reflexive action in the face of danger for survival support this point of view. This type of reaction is expected from an ideally mature personality structures in psychotherapy. Here we are mainly concerned with neurotic aggression.

Schmidt-Hellerau adopts a value-neutral approach to the question of aggression, based on the meaning of the Latin *aggredi*, which signifies ‘going towards’, ‘approaching’ or ‘seizing’ in the descriptive sense of these notions. Neutral approach is adopted to avoid biases on the conceptualisation of aggression. Understood in this way, aggression *per se* is neither something bad nor something good but instead an indication of the degree of firmness or vigour with which a drive tendency, of whatever kind, is pursued, or ‘aggresses’. Any drive tendency may be pursued or implemented with *more* intensity or *less* intensity; this applies equally to the libidinal tendency, which corresponds to the sexual or life drive, and to the lethic tendency, corresponding to the death drive.

Klein espoused Freud’s notion of the death drive as a destructive drive primarily directed against the subject’s own organism; this inward directed destruction is regarded by the ego as a danger’ (Klein, in Schmidt-Hellerau, 2002:1276) which triggers annihilation anxiety. Klein concludes: ‘Therefore anxiety would originate from aggression’. If we regard aggression and destruction in general terms as the intensification of a drive impulse, and see the death drive as a basic drive directed inwards, on the subject himself or herself and his/her organism, it becomes clear how our conception can be linked to Klein’s, even if it is formulated in a different language. What is feared as

potentially destructive seems to be the intensity of the tendencies directed towards both the self and the object?

Aleksandrowicz proposed that the urge to master the environment is a powerful human motivational force and it presents challenges to psychoanalytical theory of drives (2009). In this supposition while discussing various psychoanalytical interpretations of mastery, Aleksandrowicz connects it to Freud's concept of 'component instincts', sublimation of the libido, and expression of destructive and non-destructive aggressions (p.13). Freud implied, according to Aleksandrowicz, in all his writings that 'the different manifestations of the urge to master or manipulate the environment to one's advantage are components of either one of the basic drives: libido and the 'self-preservative instinct (in his initial writings) or the death drive' (p.14). Interpreting the term 'mastery' as in master race, and it implies social domination and forceful imposition Aleksandrowicz is in no doubt that the 'urge for mastery is initially related to aggression'. To elucidate this point further Parens study of 'The development of aggression in early childhood' (1979) is quoted. Parens covers the developmental vicissitudes of aggressive drive and categorizes them into four components: (1) unpleasure-related destructiveness, which is an innate disposition in a child to tear down a structure against its resistance; (2) non-affective destructiveness, an activity that which results in the destruction of the object but is devoid of any hostile intention and is not related to any unpleasure. Feeding could be an example, which Parens (1979) points out is that it cannot be assumed to derive from destructiveness, in fact it serves self-preservation, (3) 'non-destructive aggression' which is explained as

determination to assert oneself and (4) ‘pleasure related aggression’ is the last one in this list. This manifestation of aggression appears to alter during the development and includes various forms of sadistic behaviour. Aleksandrowicz concludes ‘the urge to mastery’ by attributing it to a biological imperative, an evolutionary product of a basic characteristic that became imbued with a positive affect at some point. It is closely associated with aggression but it cannot be equated with aggression. And it deserves its own place in the theory of drives as it is not analogous to the two basic drives but is served by both of them.

Agreeing that oversimplified interpretation of Freud’s concepts of life and death sometimes colours the presentation, Abel-Hirsch (2010) elucidates the effects of ‘life instinct’ if it becomes defused from death instinct. Taking quotes from Freud’s paper on Negation (1925) Abel-Hirsch postulates that ‘death instinct’ is no less essential than the life instinct to the phenomena of life (P.209). Highlighting the importance of death instinct Freud suggests that ‘judgements has its roots in the ‘two groups of instincts which we have supposed to exist’ (p. 239). He links affirmation to the life instinct and negation to death instinct:

*Affirmation – a substitute for uniting – belongs to Eros; negation – the successor to expulsion – belongs to the instinct of destruction- ---. The creation of the symbol of negation has endowed thinking with a first measure of freedom from the consequences of repression and, with it, from the compulsion of the pleasure principle.*

*(Freud, 1925h, p. 239)*

In this chapter I have tried to establish links between the death drive and aggression to validate Freud’s hypothesis that ‘human beings are driven by basic instincts, which

constitute the source of the dynamics of their mental life' (Zilbersheid, 2009: 81). For authors like Mills it is 'inconceivable to argue that mankind's externalised aggression is not inherently self-destructive for the simple fact that it generates more retaliatory hate, aggression and mayhem that threatens world accord and the progression of civil societies' (2006:374). Keeping in mind the global ubiquity of war and genocide it would not be a surprise to surmise that human race may die by actions brought about by itself 'rather than the impersonal forces of nature'.

*One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,  
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste --  
The Stars are setting and the Caravan  
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing -- Oh, make haste!*

*Omar Khayyam in Teimourian (2007:299)*

## *Chapter 5*

*In the end each man kills himself in his own selected way, fast or slow, soon or late. -----  
The methods are legion and it is these which attract our attention. Some of them interest surgeons, some  
of them interest lawyers and priests, some of them interest heart specialists, and some of them interest  
sociologists. (Dr. Karl A. Menninger in Slovenko; 2005:5)*

*The death instinct is a protest against the pain of life: retorted Hanna Segal to Quinodoz during her interview (2008:78). Humans have tried to address 'this protest' in their own unique ways. Addiction is one of many routes and has been used as an analgesic and a sedative. Despite its unpleasant consequences, 'compulsion to repeat ---overrides the pleasure principle' (Quinodoz; 2006:188) and that is where it meets Freudian death drive. The theme of achieving **quiescence** through addiction emerged, with some other listed themes in methodology, during my literature study (Davar, 2004; Baker, 2005; Slovenko, 2005; Mills, 2006; Dodes, 2009; English, 2009 and Kerberg, 2009 etc.). Dodes (p.383) attributes 'narcissistic rage' as 'the drive behind addiction' that propels an addict on to the path of repetition and compulsion to gain control and hoping to achieve quiescence. Slovenko (p.125) postulates the 'strong propensities towards self-destruction' as a resultant of the death drive and relief of emotional tension. Kernberg (2009) speculates that through repetition and compulsion the patient engages in an endless repetition of the same, usually destructive behaviour that resists the interpretation of assumed and very often well-documented, unconscious conflicts involved.*

Rather than staying with the 'originally described as a 'resistance of the id', which is a somewhat mysterious force from the dynamic unconscious, clinical experience has

demonstrated that repetition compulsion may have multiple functions that have different prognostic implications' (Kernberg,2009:1011-1012). One of these implications is that if such a repetition compulsion is tolerated and facilitated in the context of a safe and protective environment, gradual resolution may obtain. To understand it fully delving into the insidious nature of addiction is essential.

### **Addiction:**

My understanding of addiction is an irrepressible repetition of the same to gain different results; one of those desired result is returning to original foetal position to feel '*neither noise nor silence, but one equal music*' ( *Donne in Seth: 1999*). This trait of repetition and compulsion connects addiction with the death drive. Conventional view of addiction quoted by West (2006:3) is: 'impaired control over a reward seeking (usually drug taking) behaviour from which harm ensues'. As an abstract concept and also being socially defined it is not easy to agree at one definition (West: 2006). Rightly connecting it with motivation West states it as a 'disorder of motivation'. Without directly quoting Freud, (Covert reference to it is: Drives come in various guises and can follow some rather complex dynamics, 2006:149) West proposes that 'motives and impulses derive from *drives*-----'. The strength of a given motive derives from the strength of associated emotions and drives' (2006:7). Heller defines drives in a similar fashion but using 'instinct' as 'motivating most behaviour, the instincts, which reside in the id, supply the psychic energy to get the mental apparatus running' (2005:147). All these researchers' themes around addiction seem to converge to the locus where the aim of addiction is to attain internal peace (or in Freudian terms returning to inorganic state); but at what cost? -

-- Sometimes life. ‘Why didn’t we choose less toxic means of dealing with emotional experience?’ echoed McDougall (1995: 186). Perhaps that is the paradox of the death drive?

‘All sources of pleasure are potentially addictive: sex, sport,----eating and drinking’ (Parrott, et al; 2004:144). McDougall supports this view and explains further that ‘although the addict may feel enslaved to tobacco, alcohol, ----, psychiatric drugs or other people, these objects are far from being the goal of the addictive guest (1995: 184). The goal of this pursuit, that becomes repetitive, is to initially ‘escape briefly from the painful affective situation (1995:185); to get rid of feelings’, again it reminds of embracing the inorganic, a resultant of the death drive.

This theme runs like an undercurrent of a river in my analyzed literature on the ‘Death drive’. Understanding drugs from behaviour point of view the term ‘addiction’ is substituted by some researchers, to a more acceptable and value free concept of ‘dependence’ (Parrott, et al; 2004:36). As Godstein (in Parrott, et al: 2004) noted: “The objection to [such] phrases is not a matter of mere semantics; incorrect use of language shapes and reinforces incorrect ways of thinking”. Fully supporting this view for clinical work but for the sake of my dissertation I will be using the term addiction and addict as they represent my ideas better in relation to the death drive.

Freud used cocaine and nicotine and although he managed to stop using cocaine, he was unable to stop smoking. He developed a cancer of the jaw, which gradually killed him over a long and painful period (Parrott et al; 2004:69). Despite numerous

attempts at quitting and ‘thirty-three facial operations’ (Kaufmann, 1980:325) on his cancerous jaw, he remained a smoker until his death. How much was Freud a victim of his own theories remained to be a topic for another time but Roazen states: ‘at the University of Vienna, Freud was a ‘slave’ to his books; he developed an urgent need to buy and collect them’ (1992:35).

Davar (2004) claims addiction as a ‘destructive idealisation’ to annihilate self and the object. Wanton destruction of the First World War made Freud give a prominent role to death drive (Davar, 2004). As it is suggested that Freudian ‘psychoanalytic concepts had to be understood in the context of their historical development’ (Roazen, 1992:7); historical time was ripe for the inception of ‘this drive’. Mills (2006: 373) calls this Freudian thesis as ‘one of the most original theories in the history of ideas that potentially provides a viable explanation to the conundrums that beset the problems of human civilisation, subjective suffering, collective aggressivity and self destructiveness’. Subjective suffering and self destruction are the corollaries of addiction or vice versa.

McDougall’s thesis also advocates: the psychic economy underlying addictive behaviour is intended to dispel feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt, depression or any other affective states that gives rise to insupportable psychic tension’ (1995:184). It sounds like humans are condemned to this suffering as ‘the tension between two drives (Eros & Thanatos) is the source of ambivalence, duality and strife, which permeate human behaviour through and through (Carel, H. University of Essex). It leads to the vicious circle created by addiction – longing for peace – ‘creating a

smoke screen over' affective states' 'thus neutralising or dispersing a vital part of my inner world' (McDougall, 1995: 185).

Dodes (2009) sums up current attitude towards addiction as: psychological views of addiction centred on addictive behaviour as a self-medication, as a substitute for a lost person, as a rebellion against self-punishing thoughts and as a solution for narcissistic injury, among others. From this could it be surmised that 'the addict' is creating 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell'-----'as a kind of treatise on how to think beyond confining limits, on how to value energy and excitement and not to be restrained by conventional patterns of thought' (Blake in Punter: 2001); believing that 'the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom and to prove that 'The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction'. Mills (2006:375) validates this view: 'despite the psyche's inherently evolutionary nature, death becomes the fulcrum of psychic *progression* and *decay*' (italics and emphasis added).

Slovenko (2005) proposes that self- destruction through addiction is common place; linking it again with the death drive. An individual engages in these activities for four different reasons and one of them is *regulation of emotions*. That pertains to regulate the threatening emotions; to be at peace with oneself and longing for a stillness – 'the absolute stillness of the indivisible being' (Skelton, 2007: 211) or to 'convert freely mobile cathectic energy into a mainly quiescent (tonic) cathexis' (Quinodoz, 2006:191); and in Freudian language 'The inanimate was there before the animate' (Freud; 1922:47) returning to inorganic state. Quinodoz addresses it as a paradox: *the pleasure principle in service of the death drive* (p.191). Christine

English sums up this regulatory function of addiction as: an unconscious attempt to maintain a precarious inner equilibrium by destroying contacts with parts of the personality, literally through drugging' (2009:341). It lends an extraordinary power of changing one's state of mind. This illusionary control empowers the addict to 'make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven' (Milton: 1952:8).

Joseph (in Ryle: 1993) established this thesis of addiction to near death in his clients but Ryle (1993) repudiated it and offered an alternative understanding of it from Cognitive Analytics' perspective. In his paper Ryle has simply 'rejected the emphasis on drive theory and the notion of death instinct'; no explanation for it has been offered. English (2009) suggests that drugs allow the addict to 'maintain internal cohesion'. Where the individual is 'encapsulated in a feeling of blissful buoyancy where there is no real time but a sense of being held in a suspended, containing place which can go on and on forever (Sprawson in Baker, 2005: 312). It is akin to what Freud called as 'oceanic feeling': a return to the wateriness of the maternal womb. Ross Skelton while evaluating Matte Blanco's views on death drive proposes that for Freud 'timelessness and repetition are linked' (2007:207).

Kernberg's (2009: 1009) hypothesis is more in agreement with Slovenko when he postulates that Freud considered sexual drive and death drive as the 'fundamental motivational principles determining unconscious conflict and symptom formation (Freud, 1920)'. And Kerberg's conclusion is that this drives human beings towards the search of happiness and gratification, initially, and also to severely destructive and self-destructive aggression. Slovenko (2005) offers further reasoning for the individual to carry on with this vicious cycle as: The tension reducing qualities of self-

mutilation serve to reinforce the behaviour. As self-mutilative behaviour becomes habitual, the risk to the individual increases. Addiction also creates a sense of being ‘invincible to death’ (Davar, 2004: 444) and all that happened to his fellow addicts would not touch him. McDougall advocates that severe addiction ‘seeks to repair a damaged self image that invariably includes an attempt to settle accounts with the parental figures of the past’ (1995:188) under this threefold defiance: Defiance of the inner maternal object; defiance of the inner father and defiance of death itself.

‘Denying that this type of ‘profound dependence is enslavement’ (Davar: 2004) the person still longs for ‘harmony through exclusive worship of the object of the veneration and subservience to it’ (p.444). This ‘symbiosis’ with an inner object which is addiction, pertains to be defending against many anxieties including the ‘*annihilation anxiety*’ (Hurvich: 2003). Zilbersheid (2009) attributes this trait to the nature of drives. According to him there are three instincts --- sexual instincts (Eros), the death instinct (Thanatos) the self-preservation instinct (P.81-82).

To these three instincts there are three corresponding principles, which express the special characters of these instincts as inner forces determining the general trends of life and modes of behaviour that originally dominate the human organism. The pleasure principle corresponds to the sexual instinct; the nirvana, or constant principle corresponds to the death principle; and the reality principle corresponds to the self-preservation instinct (Zilbersheid: 2009). Nirvana principle leading to quiescence through addiction, as stated in this chapter, is summed up as: “--the inner drive of the organism to return to the state that preceded life, namely to the

inorganic, lifeless state, out of which life evolved. This conversion of life into death is achieved by liberating the organism from stimulations and tensions, which characterize life” (Zilbersheid; 2009:82).

To conclude this chapter a reminder from Feldman (2000: 53) would be appropriate that this drive is ‘anti-life’ but ‘its aim is not literally to kill or to annihilate, but the patient feels compelled to maintain a link with the object that often has an evidently tormenting quality’.

*Hateful is the dark-blue sky,*

*Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.*

*Death is the end of life; ah, why*

*Should life all labour be?*

*All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave*

*In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:*

*Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.*

*Alfred Lord Tennyson* <http://www.bartleby.com/42/638.html> retrieved 20.01.2011

## **Chapter 6**

*“Narcissistic disorders arise when there is a failure of containment in infancy and childhood that gives rise to an ego-destructive super-ego leading to the evolving of a narcissistic organization. (Britton, 2004:477).*

The theme of ‘Narcissism’ also emerged strongly for me from literature research and analysis (Holmes, 2001; Britton, 2004; Perrulli, 2005; Quinodoz, 2008 and Kernberg, 2009, 2011; etc.). In ‘On Narcissism: An Introduction’ Freud describes narcissism ‘as a form of sexual perversion as well as a characteristic of all perversions, as a stage in libidinal development, as an underlying characteristic of schizophrenia because of the withdrawal of libido from the external world, and with reference to a type of object choice in which the object is selected because it represents what the subject was, is, or would like to be’ (Kernberg, 2004:47). These multiple applications of the same concept has generated significant investigation in psychotherapy and also added sufficient confusion. My chapter is not immune to this muddle but my endeavour has been to provide a spectrum of ‘Narcissism’ either originating from the death drive or contributing to it.

Hanna Segal linked narcissism, specifically, with the death drive (Quinodoz, 2008: 80) and was confident that the theme was missed by Melanie Klein. For Segal: ‘Either I am the source of all life or there is no life’. Where narcissism is treated as primary, envy is left as secondary and that’s where Hanna Segal finds its beauty. She expounds it further as:

“If you are in a primary narcissistic position, you are the enviable object. ----  
--- From that point of view we could say we are born totally narcissistic. That

would be Freud's primary narcissism. There the encounter with the object produces envy, in which case envy is secondary.

On the other hand -----the primary thing is the life and death instinct, and the narcissistic structure is defence against envy. The object has to be destroyed in order to feeling envious about it: *'I shall for ever be the enviable object!'* I unconsciously project that envy into other people – so that they then become envious and destructive. *'All that is good is in me, and all that the bad things are in you!'* (Segal in Quinodoz, 2008: 80).

A brief historical development of 'Narcissism' from Freudian point of view would be useful and helpful in tracing its connection with the death drive. Freud pointed out that narcissism was first introduced by Havelock Ellis (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Nagera, 1990: 107; Holmes, 2001) in 1898 as a description of a psychological attitude; mainly regarding considering homosexuality as pathology of self-love, which was regarded as a perversion then. According to Raskin & Terry (1988:890) the idea of narcissism made a deep impression on Freud. By 1914 it was a pivotal hypothesis in his meta-psychology and clinical thinking. To establish narcissism's centrality 'contemporary historians of the psychoanalytic movement generally agree that Freud's explorations into narcissism were central to the development of his (a) structural model (id, ego, and superego); (b) concept of the ego ideal and subsequently the superego; (c) shift from an id psychology to an ego psychology; and (d) object relations theory' (e.g., Fine, 1986; Moore, 1975; Sandier, Holder, & Dare, 1976; Tiecholz, 1978 cited in Raskin & Terry, 1988:890). What Freud means

by the term narcissism in his clinical work is delineated by Raskin & Terry (p.890) as:

- (a) “A set of attitudes a person has toward oneself, including self-love, self-admiration, and self-aggrandizement;*
- (b) Several kinds of fears or vulnerabilities related to a person's self-esteem that include the fear of loss of love and the fear of failure;*
- (c) A general defensive orientation that includes megalomania, idealization, denial, projection, and splitting;*
- (d) Motivation in terms of the need to be loved, as well as strivings for self-sufficiency and for perfection; and*
- (e) A constellation of attitudes that may characterize a person's relationships with others”.*

This collection includes exhibitionism, feelings of entitlement involving the expectation of special privileges over others and special exemptions from normal social demands, a tendency to see others as extensions of oneself, feelings and thoughts of omnipotence involving the control of others, an intolerance for criticism from others that involves the perception of criticism as a demand for changing oneself, a tendency to be critical of others who are different from oneself, suspiciousness, jealousy, and a tendency to focus on one's own mental products (1988:890). These trends clearly indicate the propensities for self-destruction that are tools of the death drive to gain its objective of returning to inorganic state.

Psychoanalytic ideas about narcissism can be placed under three headings: libidinal narcissism, destructive narcissism and healthy narcissism (Holmes, 2001; Britton, 2004; Kernberg, 2009). Psychoanalysis and psychology have always struggled with the meaning of ‘Narcissism’ (Perrulli, 2005: 50). The intended meaning is not always clear and it is used to refer to different aspects and levels of self. Freud’s

views on narcissism are important as the roots of all other off shoot definitions incline towards that base, in one way or another. In his drive theory Freud divided the term into primary and secondary narcissism (1914; Gay:1995). Primary narcissism is the hypothetical state of the infant in which all pain and discomfort are allocated to the outside world so that the self maintains the illusion of embodying all that is pleasurable. It is described as the original libidinal investment that focuses entirely on the infant's own comfort and negates the outer world. When the child starts to recognise the external objects as separate beings, initiates the secondary narcissism. After the experience of frustration with the object, the libido is withdrawn from the object and it turns back into the self. Narcissism is generally referred to as the libidinal investment of the self (Perrulli, 2005).

Sydney E. Pulver (in Perrulli, 2005) in his seminal work 'Narcissism', postulates: the term and the concept classifies narcissism in four different ways, as a: sexual perversion, object relationships, in terms of developmental stages and lastly in terms of self-esteem. From the clinical point of view Ronald Britton (2005) finds narcissism not only large but also 'muddling'. For his own clarification and usage he divided the term narcissism in three ways: "First it denotes a turning away from interest in external figures to self-preoccupation: I will call that *clinical narcissism*. Secondly the word *narcissism* is used to describe a *force or innate tendency* within the personality that opposes the relationship outside the self. And thirdly it is used to designate a specific group of personality dysfunctional cases called *the narcissistic disorders*" (2005:478).

While trying to integrate the concepts of ‘self’ used in psychoanalytic literature and Buddhist tradition, Fredrik Falkenstrom (2009) connects the concept of self to ‘narcissism’. Reviewing definitions of narcissism (Pulver, 1970; Stolorow, 1975; Westen, 1990) he concludes that the term has been used for a number of phenomena not necessarily related to each other. Although he refuses to use the term ‘narcissism’ for a sexual perversion (the original use), a developmental stage or a mode of relating to objects but his elucidation of it in ego-psychological traditions is worth pondering over.

Kernberg (2009) wrote a guest editorial for ‘Narcissistic personality disorder’ and highlighted its four dominant disorders ‘at the second or intermediate level of severity’. Succinctly they are: *Pathology of the self*: these patients show excessive self-centredness, over dependence on admiration from others, avoidance of reality that could deflate their image of themselves and bouts of insecurity. *Pathology of the relationship with others*: These patients suffer from inordinate envy both consciously and unconsciously. They lack in real empathy and are shallow in their emotional commitments rather find it difficult to commit to goals or relationships. *Pathology of the superego*: these patients display their incapacity to show sadness and mourning. Mood swings control their self-esteem, hence unsettled. And for the last category their basic self-state is a ‘chronic sense of emptiness and boredom, resulting in stimulus hunger and the wish for artificial stimulation by means of drugs or alcohol.

These clients pose major challenges of different types to their therapists. These could be: ‘incapacity to depend on the therapist’ that would be deemed as humiliating for the patient; treating the therapist as a “vending machine” of interpretations, which the client would make his/her own and accuse the therapist for not receiving due attention; or to show a ‘defensive idealisation of the therapist (Kernberg, 2009:106).

One problem with these definitions of narcissism is how to distinguish normal from pathological narcissism. Narcissism is either equal to self-love or to regulation of self-esteem in general. The Kleinian tradition, in contrast, defines narcissism as a pathological phenomenon qualitatively different from self-love or self-esteem (Rosenfeld, 1964; Spillius, 1983). Narcissism is seen as a structure based on a pathologically idealized self-image, upheld by omnipotent defences, projective identification and denial of reality.

In a person with a narcissistic personality disorder the narcissistic organization dominates all other parts of the personality (Rosenfeld, 1964). The destructive aspect of narcissism was also introduced by Rosenfeld (1971). It is a structure in which a destructive part of the personality attacks and devalues the needy while the dependent parts are idealized. This destructive aspect of narcissism is contrasted with the traditional libidinal aspect of general self-idealization. Narcissism also destroys separateness; it is the hatred of the relational in it. Symington concludes (2006:18) that people dominated by narcissistic currents fail to separate between themselves and others. Their assumption is that others think the same way as they

do. Kernberg takes the narcissistic personality a step further by relating its impact on time. In the 'destruction of time in a pathological narcissism' (2008) he proposes: Repetition compulsion has many sources and functions: but one consequence relevant here is the implied denial of the passage of time: 'nothing has changed, the repetition indicates that time is frozen.' ----- This shrinkage of time is even more accentuated in the case of patients with narcissistic personality disorders. Here the devaluation of significant others as a defence against unconscious envy is reflected in the dismantling of internalised object relations. The pathological grandiose self is experienced in isolation, and self-esteem regulation is dependent on the external admiration from others, rather than on the security of an internalised world of significant object relations. The failure to develop significant object relations results in a chronically empty internal world, depleted of emotionally deep and meaningful experiences, that condenses, retrospectively, the experience of time: nothing significant has happened in the past apart from the ongoing efforts of shore up self-esteem and confirms the grandiosity of the self. The narcissistic patients will often find themselves waking up at milestone ages of, 30, 40 or 50 and with a desperate sense of years lost (2008:301).

Abraham (in Kernberg, 2004:47) was the first to describe the transference resistance of narcissistic patients. During therapy they display their defences against dependency on the practitioner by an unconscious devaluation of what they receive during sessions thus warding off envy of the therapist they need. This process may bring about a stubborn resistance against change, as interpretations fall on sterile ground. Here there is an active, unconscious effort that 'nothing should happen', the

direct expression of a self-destructive triumph (and clear pull of death drive) over the analyst, that reinforces the regressive effects of free association in them. It is as if time was standing still in the analysis, and patients typically complain at such points that nothing is helping them. One aspect of the function of the grandiose self is precisely the denial of the passage of time, the fantasy of eternal youth, and the very denial of death as an ultimate threat to their grandiosity.

While the fantasy of eternal youth and the denial of death may be a universal manifestation of normal infantile narcissism, in the narcissistic personality it becomes grossly exaggerated, an aspect of the pathological grandiose self that interferes seriously with a realistic adaptation to the objective passage of time. All this reinforces the function of the unconscious destruction of time in the analytic relationship of such patients, the assertion of their invulnerability to the influence of the treatment, the defeat of the analyst's work as an expression of unconscious envy of him. The emptying out of the narcissistic patient's life experiences during analysis, in fantasy, becomes a triumph over the analyst's capacity to influence them. Andre Green (2007) has pointed to the function of repetition compulsion, when it is employed as a form of 'murder of time', as an expression of the death drive. This certainly applies to some cases of narcissistic personalities.

The most severe cases in which destruction of time becomes dominant are those who almost wilfully destroy their opportunities, and manage, eventually, to attach themselves to highly destructive partners, with whom they establish a sadomasochistic relationship that, in turn, tends to further reduce their possibilities

and potential. Couples of this type may hold on to an eternal repetition of self-defeating fights and mutual accusations, thus neglecting the impoverishment of their life through this fixation to a destructive object. The absence of the sense of the passage of time may be expressed in the unrelenting fixation to a relationship in which the patient binds another person to himself or herself, in an unconscious need to maintain a fantasy relationship that, while destructive to both parties, replaces a real one, sometimes over many years without any real content or interaction. In some cases, what looks on the surface as being in love with an unavailable person turns out to be a disguised self-condemnation to loneliness and emptiness as time seems to collapse in the permanent uncertainty of their lives. Ruminating over months – and years! – Over whether or not they should have engaged in a certain love relationship may dramatically obscure their awareness of the passage of time.

In the analysis of patients where the destruction of time is an expression of narcissistic denial of the reality of the passage of time and severely restricts the possibilities of life, unconsciously the patient may repeat the pattern of destructiveness of object relations in the transference by maintaining himself in an analytic situation that on the surface is supposed to treat his difficulties but that unconsciously is used to maintain the equilibrium of narcissistic emptiness and triumph over a parental figure, the therapist who is trying to get the patient out of this bind.

The Kleinian description of narcissistic organization is reminiscent of Winnicott's (1960) concept of a false self. There is, however, a difference in emphasis in that

the function of the false self in Winnicott's theory is to defend against environmental intrusion, while the Kleinian concept of narcissistic organization has a more intra-psychic defensive function directed against dependency and the experience of envy. Her work, based essentially on the assumption of the life and death drive, expanded Freud's postulates both on a theoretical and a clinical level.

Klein saw the death drive as a primary source of innate aggressive impulses. Her understanding of the mind and how it develops was closely linked to the ever-present conflict between aggression and libido and how this interplay affects the way external and internal reality are perceived and built. If the death drive is prevalent, phenomena like sadism, masochism and pathological envy predominate; conversely, where the life drive is dominant, love and gratitude towards the external and the internal objects outweigh feelings of hatred and envy (Klein 1957). To add another dimension to this already knotty problem, Nagpal (2011:247) proposes that that 'the death drive is a correction on Freud's earlier overemphasis on narcissism'. And he further postulates that this moving away from pleasure principle is more akin to 'suffering' and 'renunciation' in line with Hindu mysticism.

To conclude the patients with severe narcissistic pathology 'repetition compulsion may have the function of an active destruction of the passage of time, as an expression of denial of aging and death, combined with the triumphant destruction of the work of envied therapist (Kernberg, 2009:1013).--- Repetition compulsion, in short, provides clinical support to the theory of a relentless self-destructive motivation, one of the sources of the concept of the death drive (Segal in Kernberg, 2009:1013).

*Narcissus*

*forever he endures*

*the outrage of his too pure image*

*contemplating its own sap, the flower*

*becomes too soft, and the boulder hardens...*

*It's the return of all desire that enters*

*toward all life embracing itself from afar*

*Rainer Maria Rilke*

## Chapter 7

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

*T.S. Eliot*

This experience of arriving at the same place and ‘knowing’ it for the first time, repeated itself many a times for me as I endeavoured to capture the death drive’s enigmatic nuances. I encountered its different forms and shades during my literature study. The precipitated themes explicated in previous chapters established how different authors either abstained from or imbibed the unique gradations of this inexplicable drive or ‘daemonic force’ (Freud in Akhtar: 2011) that is still exerting its influence. In this chapter my aim is to discuss the impact of the death drive on 21<sup>st</sup> century’s counselling and psychotherapy literature; bringing my focus to three already discussed themes. And as mentioned before, the enormity and controversial nature of this theme drags me for a wider discussion on the death drive, which I found is as inescapable as the topic itself.

But before that ‘does the death drive theory of aggression hold up?’ is the question posed by Parens (2011). Repudiating its full impact on aggression Parens’ is forced to admit that ‘Freud’s death drive model is *still widely used today* by clinicians who base their work’ on Melanie Klein (P. 161<sub>emphasis added</sub>). And in the same chapter he admits that he has ‘not *proven* the death-instinct-based theory wrong’ but have

‘replicated’ it following recommendation of Kris, Hartman and Anna Freud (p.169). Concluding his argument more in favour of independence of aggression from death drive and stating that ‘not all aggression is bad’ Parens’ : makes it clear that *hostile destructiveness* is amenable to prevention measures and that ultimately war is not inevitable- as Freud conferred with Einstein (p.171).

Caropreso & Simanke (2011) have reservations of linking aggression with the death drive. It creates complications and according to them, ‘Freud himself recognised --- a close relationship between sexuality and aggression’ (p.98). Wiltshire (2004) admires Freud’s candidness about admitting that his movement ‘so probing and clear eyed, and relentless --- could have missed the true dimensions of human aggression and in general the actual complexities and perversities of human motivation’ (p.183). Wiltshire exposes the link between the death drive and genocide; suggesting that ‘the enduring fertility of Sigmund Freud’s thought’ (p.194) is needed to investigate our intricate identities.

Controversies surround Freud's theory of the death drive and also its relation to aggression but Kernberg (2009:1010) relates it “directly to the social and cultural problems of the 20th century and the beginning of this new century. The fundamentalist regimes of the last century were unprecedented in their primitive and brutal aggression, both systematic and daily. The tens of millions killed in the name of German National Socialism and Marxist communism are beginning to be replicated under new banners in this century. But no society, no country is free of the history of senseless wholesale massacre of imagined or real enemies.

The relative ubiquity of these phenomena throughout the history of civilization cannot be ignored. The question of the existence of the death drive as part of the core of human psychology is, unfortunately, a practical and not merely a theoretical problem". Mills' (2006:373) echoes Kernbergs ideas stating that Freudian death drive is the only original theory 'that potentially provides a viable explanation to the conundrums that beset the problems of ----- collective aggressivity, and self-destructiveness'. Kernberg concludes his argument "*that the concept of the death drive is clinically relevant, but that this condition needs to be traced to the general dominance of aggressive affects as the primary etiological factor; only under severely pathological circumstances does this dominance lead to a focused drive to self-destruct*" (2009:1009).

The clinical experience gathered over time (Kernberg: 2009) in support of 'the prevalence of severely self-destructive psychopathological constellations, indirectly supported the theory of a death drive. The phenomena that led Freud to the establishment and, later, to the reinforcement of the hypothesis of the death drive as opposed to a simple aggressive drive include the phenomenon of *repetition compulsion*. Endless repetition of the same and compulsion to consume (drugs), sometimes against will , gives rise to addiction and connects it with the death drive that usually leads to destructive behaviour and self-destruction. It is difficult to get an agreement on the definition of addiction, let alone about its origin or motivation.

‘The force of the negative is so prevalent in psychoanalytic practice that it becomes perplexing why the death drive would remain a questionable tenet among psychoanalysts today. From a phenomenological standpoint, it is impossible to negate the force and salience of the negative’ (Mills, 2006:374). Even those who claim a pure trauma model of self-destruction or externalized negativity in the service of explaining human aggressivity must contend with inherently destructive organizing elements that imperil the organism from within. If we consider the paradoxical processes of sleep, that how it is both regressive yet restorative, and particularly how going to sleep is associated with wanting to return to a previously aborted state of peace, tranquillity, or oceanic "quiescence"-perhaps a wish for a tensionless state, perhaps a return to the womb. Excessive sleep is also one of the most salient symptoms of clinical depression and the will toward death. An addict wants a long sleep. Death is a tensionless state an unadulterated peace. Addiction could also aid to develop suicidal tendencies but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Bell (2004) argues that when discussing the death drive, Kleinians and some other British psychoanalysis make ample use of clinical material. According to him this material neither serves to prove or disprove the existence of the death drive, ‘which of course it cannot do, as ‘clinical material is always interpretable, but more serves to illustrate how the model functions in the analyst’s work’. He then comments on Freud’s concept of primary narcissism, ‘which brought in its wake a deep conceptual difficulty – it threatened the duality on which much of Freud’s theorizing depended. The philosopher Richard Wollheim put it as follows: ‘Remove

the duality and the whole theory of the psychoneurosis would surely crumble. And it was precisely this duality that the discovery of primary narcissism appeared to threaten' (Wollheim in Bell).

'This difficulty remains as a tension that is not resolved until the introduction of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud 1920) which restores a fundamental duality (that between the life and death drives) that dominates mental life. This gives the model a particular value, at least if one accepts that such a duality is necessary to our model of the mind' (Bell, 2004: 20). A different point of view on this issue is presented by Kernberg. He would agree connecting narcissism to death drive but considers 'the question of the existence of the death drive as part of the core of human psychology is unfortunately a practical not merely a theoretical problem' (2009:1010). By providing client examples Kernberg establishes death drives' clinical perspective in service of narcissism: A much more frequent and more severe, although eminently treatable, form is the negative therapeutic reaction out of unconscious envy of the therapist, particularly characteristic of narcissistic patients. It is an expression of the humiliating envy on the part of the narcissistic patient of the therapist's capacity to help him, of the analyst's creativity in his efforts to help the patient (2009:1014). Discussions on these three topics could be endless as volumes have already written about them. Now some wider discussions on the death drive.

Discussion on death drive's impact on present day counselling and psychotherapy has also an entwined element of 'Freud's meta-psychological speculations' as well.

It emerged from my literature study and embraces the death drive. To provide healthy evaluation of multi-facet death drive I need to bring meta-psychology into equation. Fulgencio (2005) elucidates Freudian psychoanalytic theory as composed of ‘an empirical part’ which is the psychology of clinical facts and also of a speculative part that is metapsychology. Freud considered meta-psychology, to which death drive belonged, as being ‘a speculative superstructure, of value that is only heuristic, capable of being supplanted by other superstructures of the same type’ (2005:99). Garica-Catrillion Armengou (2009:265) validates Freud’s acknowledgement of the speculative nature of drive theory and also testifies that it is based on various clinical observations, ‘such as post traumatic dreams, the ‘fortada’ game and patient’s compulsion to repeat painful experiences. The usage of the adjective ‘daemonic’ is to describe motivational forces that recurrently lead to behaviour patterns resulting in frustration, misfortune and tragedy. This adjective ‘daemonic’ could easily be used with my three themes of *Aggression*, *Addiction* and *Narcissism* in this dissertation. The explanatory inadequacy of the pleasure principle allowed for the emergence of the hypothesis of the death drive:

*Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units, there must be another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primaeval, inorganic state [...] It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the activities of this supposed death instinct.*

(Freud in Garica-Catrillion Armengou (2009:265))

The controversy triggered by this notion in the psychoanalytic field has been such that it was chosen as the theme of the First Congress of the European

Psychoanalysis Federation in 1984 in Marseilles (Garica-Catrillion Armengou; 2009:264) The papers presented accepted the death drive (Segal), rejected it (Yorke), qualified it (Rechartt), or explicitly reinterpreted it (Laplanche, with his notion of sexual death drive). My research study shows that it has not changed much regarding the division of views on this subject. Nor has all three mentioned parties have let the concept of the death drive, die; as references from year 2000 to 2011 validates it. Positive, negative or neutral; the death drive's shadow is ominous on counselling literature. Razinsky (2010) gives death drive a limited success as Freud failed to persuade the analytic community to embrace his 'speculative' ideas. Kleinians, Jacques Lacan and his followers, notably Green adapted the salient features of this concept fully or partially. Once again my study substantiates it.

The large part of the debate emerging around this concept is not only scientific or clinical, but also ideological. The speculative nature of this concept and ideological differences enriched my study but complicated the research process. Belief in the death drive has tacitly been used as a sort of label that differentiated Kleinians from other groups within the British Psychoanalytical Society, becoming a 'hallmark' for the Kleinians School (Spillius, 1994). Meltzer (1978) remarked that the disagreement with regard to this notion had not harmed psychoanalysis. It is a rather trivial matter that has become the stage for psychoanalytic politics and might very well represent our "present-day still rhetorically compartmentalized theoretical pluralism" (Wallerstein in Razinsky: 2010). It is imperative to highlight reasons of these differences as they contributed to embryonic themes in my dissertation chapters.

Susan Budd comments in 'Reading and misreading': Truth is frequently paradoxical; it changes over time, as different things are remembered and seen in different ways. 'Truth and falsehood be near twins', Donne thought 'Truth stands, and he that will reach her, about must and about must go' (Donne: 1593)' (2007:42). Budd's words make sense to me that we do not need to agree with Freud; but we do have to understand what he said; and that has been my endeavour in this literature study.

Garica-Catrillion Armengou (2009:264) elaborated it succinctly: When arguments in a controversy persuade one psychoanalytic trend but bear no value for the other, it is because each group follows different *premises*. Premises are the general principles and concepts that organize a theoretical perspective (Bernardi in Garica-Catrillion Armengou: 2009). It compounds the debate by the fact that practitioners' viewpoints do not stem exclusively from their theoretical training only but are also driven from the analysts' personal history and analytic experience, both as patients and as analysts. While questioning our theories, it is not just an intellectual endeavour; it entails a challenge to our vital perception of our science as well. In this process, emotional forces come into play that does not facilitate dialogue. If we add the narcissism with which we over invest in our theories (Rothstein in Garica-Catrillion Armengou: 2009) and the institutionalized nature of scientific activities, with the 'loyalties and dissents' that develop within each organization, dialogue often becomes an unreachable goal. Examples of 'loyalties and dissents' are unequivocal in chapters on 'Aggression', 'Addiction' and 'Narcissism'. Thoreau's truism: *If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away* (1906: 366) helps to maintain peace. In psychotherapy

Green's dictum: "For my part, during my psychoanalytic experience I have never heard any productive dialogue taking place between two authors who subscribe to conflicting theories" (Green in Garica-Catrillion Armengou:2009).

These difficulties are further deepened by the very *nature* of our object of study, *unconscious processes*, which must be inferred rather than observed. Our object of research, therefore, is subject to interpretation, posing a new challenge. Russell describes it as follows: "Even the words that we most desire to render scientifically impersonal require for their interpretation personal experiences of the interpreter" (1948:104). In this way, the validation of psychoanalytic theorization is hindered.

My chapters on aggression, quiescence through addiction and narcissism are clear indicators of how different authors viewed, interpreted and presented the 'death drive' in their work; but without fail acknowledged its manifestation. Diverse interpretations of the same concept make it complex as well as classic. Another look at how Freud viewed this theory would be relevant here.

A drive for Freud is force equivalent in dignity to the physico-chemical forces that act on matter. As in other natural sciences, the forces are not empirical concepts but theoretical speculative constructs of only heuristic value. Freud clearly says that the concept of drive [*Trieb*] is nothing more than a convention, an abstract idea without definite empirical content, although a necessary one: 'A conventional basic concept of this kind, which at the moment is still somewhat obscure but which is

indispensable to us in psychology, is that of “the instinct” [*des Triebes*]’ (Freud in Fulgencio: 106).

Shortly after that definition of the drives, Freud states that he will attempt to *fill up the contents* with empirical data, associating them, however, with the biological body, by means of analogies. His objective is to make that concept more intelligible and operational, but he knows that he will never succeed in accomplishing that in an acceptable form: ‘Instincts [*Die Triebe*] are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness. In our work we can never for a moment disregard them, yet we are never sure that we are seeing them clearly’ (1933a: 95). This elusive element of death drive is difficult to *pin down* for concrete discussion but always present as a water mark, exerting its presence. So, just as in all myths, there is no question of coming upon an empirical referent that adequately corresponds to it and that may be objectively acceptable (Fulgencio: 2005).

Freud reformulated the concepts of metapsychology (Fulgencio; 2005:114). He replaced his auxiliary constructions by proposing a new pair of drives, which would be conceived as basic impulses that drove the psychical apparatus as much to set up ever greater units—and to maintain them (Eros or drive of life)—as to try to banish the tensions internal to that apparatus to their lower level, at the limit carrying the living being to its zero state of tension, or maybe to its inorganic state (the drive of death). That new meta-psychological model showed itself more efficient for searching out explanations about clinical phenomena like hypochondria, narcissism, the tendency to repetition, sadism, masochism etc. Off shoots of death drive are so

many, that for focussed discussion I need to concentrate on the main rather than on splinters.

Fulgencio (2005) further illustrates that referring to his ‘second model, Freud declared that the concept of the drive of death ended up by imposing itself upon him as a mode of thought: ‘But in the course of time they have gained such a hold upon me that I can no longer think in any other way’ (1930:119). Here I fully identify with Freud. Death drive’s hypnotic power and my heuristic inquiry did colour my evaluative ability that I have acknowledged under limitations.

Speculative slant has been a hallmark of Freudian concepts, but he considered the concept of the death of drive useful for resolving his clinical problems; these speculations ‘provide that simplification, without either ignoring or doing violence to the facts, for which we strive in scientific work’ (1930:120). It is possible to surmise that, for Freud, the drives were not facts but just conventions, abstract ideas that organised the facts (Fulgencio: 2005). It is not metapsychology that defines psychoanalysis but its empirical foundations, its shibboleths. For Freud, talking in analogous terms, metapsychology corresponds to the scaffolding or apex of the theoretical edifice of psychoanalysis. The death drive is an integral part of this framework sustaining concepts like aggression, addiction, narcissism (elaborated in previous chapters) and many more that are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

With a particular emphasis on the death drive Sanches Faveret & de Janeiro (2002) discuss Freud's theory in the context of the redefinitions in contemporary biology. Their

hypothesis is that Freud's ideas and his notion of mental illness are profoundly grounded in the paradigm of evolutionist biology, which prevailed during his lifetime. And the recent contributions of contemporary biology could re-signify the clinical practice. “We have witnessed, in the last half of the twentieth century, the emergence of a new paradigm in biology — *the informational paradigm* — that has deeply modified the understanding of living beings we had had up to that moment” (p. 202, emphasis and italics added). I agree with these authors that ‘contrary to what is commonly imagined, some aspects of contemporary scientific thought in no way undermine or threaten psychoanalysis; on the contrary, they may contribute to a reassertion of the specificity of psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice’. And this endorses the death drive’s influence on the current counselling and psychotherapy literature.

Examining the death drive, it is understood that the Freudian postulation of this concept demanded, a course determined by clinical observation of recurrent traumatic dreams, the negative reaction to therapy and the compulsion to repeat. Sanches Faveret & de Janeiro remark: Freud's thinking was obstinately dialectical and demanded the introduction of this concept for he sensed that there was, between life and death, something more intimately imbricated and contradictory than the mere opposition of contraries. But this proposition was not sufficient enough to free this concept from ambiguity and controversy (2002: 203-4). I would like to conclude my discussion by supporting controversy: *If psychoanalysis is destined to prosper and advance it must be open to revising controversial ideas that gave it radical prominence to begin with* (Mills, 2006:374).

*The time will come  
when, with elation  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror  
and each will smile at the other's welcome,  
and say, sit here. Eat.  
You will love again the stranger who was your self.  
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart  
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you  
all your life, whom you ignored  
for another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,  
the photographs, the desperate notes,  
peel your own image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.*

*Derek Walcott*

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## Chapter 8

*I know better and better that the only valid knowledge is that which feeds on uncertainty, and that the only living thought is that which keeps itself at the temperature of its own destruction. (Morin in Garcia –Castrillon: 2009)*

The concept of death drive ‘unleashed a great many polemics among psychoanalysts’ (Caropreso & Simanke; 2011: 86). The art of polemical argument has intensified since 1920, on this subject. References from nearly all eras in my dissertation substantiate this point. Agreeing with Monzani that ‘the reaction to this paper were disparate, however the majority had one point in common: a sort of ‘theoretical shudder’, an uneasiness and a frank negativity’ (in Caropreso & Simanke; 2011: 86).

The ripples of that ‘theoretical shudder’ are still felt, some ninety years after its inception. ‘The myth of death drive is out of favour in modern psychotherapy and counselling’. Retorted Rob Weatherill in 1999, in the preface to ‘The Death Drive’ – New life for a dead subject? Razinsky’s (2010:393) hypothesis is that ‘Freud's three most important biographers clearly see the theory of the death drive as Freud's personal solution to the question of his mortality (Gay, 1988:394; Jones, 1957:301-302; Schur, 1972:344, 373). In the article Razinsky refutes the claim that ‘through the death drive psychoanalysis genuinely meets the challenge of death’. Further on it is claimed that it ‘is not to say that the idea of the death drive is not transformative: Indeed, it is a remarkably complex theoretical work which adds depth and sophistication to analytic theory and which, on certain readings, might be useful as a basis for an analytic theory of death-but not in the way in

which it is presented by Freud and interpreted by most of his followers'. Consensus on this subject was neither expected nor is desirable, as the nature of my research indicates. Various views allow me to widen the horizon of this concept and intensify debate. Keeping in mind Mills' (2004: ix) warning: Freud's theories have become so fundamentally distorted and misinterpreted by generations of English-speaking commentators that he is radically misunderstood even within psychoanalysis today. This warning could be used as a defense both by the Freudian 'believers' and 'bashers'.

To conclude my dissertation I start with a brief synopsis of 'death drive' from Freud's writings. Introduced in 1920, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* the death drive is the tendency of the organism to return to a pre-organic, inanimate state (Freud, 1920:38). This tendency is inherent to life, and was born the moment life first emerged from the inorganic (p. 38). The Nirvana principle, the principle behind the death drive, aspires to zero or constant stimulation (pp. 55-56). At the basis of the death drive is a fundamental inclination to repetition. This repetition is not in the service of the pleasure principle, as it persists, regardless of the issue of pleasure and is manifested, for example, in the dreams of trauma neurosis. The death drive is first directed toward the self and is later deflected outward (pp. 54-55; Freud, 1924:163). It is mixed with the sexual drives, themselves repetitive as it turns out, and is not easily discernible (Freud, 1923:46). It is easier to detect when aimed at others and manifested as aggressiveness. These manifestations are described in Freud's later texts.

Discussions of this theory abound in the psychoanalytic literature as chapter seven indicates. Critiques of it have been voiced as well, whether regarding its adequacy in explaining phenomena, its clinical value or justification, its speculative nature, or its moral consequences. One of the problems is that it is not clear to what extent there is such a concept of a death drive independent of three different entities, namely, the tendency to alleviate tension, human innate destructiveness or primary masochism, and the repetition compulsion. Also noteworthy is the empirical fact that most uses of the death drive tend to remain within its more "earthly" aspect, the tendency toward destructiveness. This aspect is central to Freud's (1930, 1933 [1932], 1937) own later presentations of the death drive.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, however, a different picture is presented. What the essay outlines is a philosophical, metaphysical concept, one that is indeed, as its name implies a death drive and not a drive to destructiveness. Freud is engaged in an immense theoretical effort to encircle death, to grasp something that keeps slipping away. The attempt ends in failure-not only because death remains, outside the circle, but also because no stable outcome is achieved. In the final analysis, *the riddle remains*. The nature of the text itself is revealing here. It is complex, confused, self-contradictory, and full of doubt. Freud's confidence in his theoretical voyage fluctuates from a view of it as a thought experiment, a sheer play with ideas (1920, pp. 24, 59-60), to a belief so strong. Although difficult to distill and harder to grasp the full impact of death drive, I felt following points emerged for me during this research process:

1. Freud introduced 'Death Drive' to generate debate not to resolve any issues. That debate is still ongoing (Akhtar: 2011) and is as relevant in the social, clinical and socio-cultural context, now, as it was in 1920's and it's following decades (O'Neill; 2011:267).
2. Translations generate its own meaning and the fact is often forgotten that Freud's English version is read more widely (O'Neill; 2011:267). It has added richness, ambiguity and complexity to Freudian concepts; especially to Death Drive (death instinct/Thanatos).
3. 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the marginalization of Freudian psychoanalysis in counselling and psychotherapy textbooks and the proliferation of competing theories (Reppen; 2006:215). Even if Freud had been put on the shelf he is still 'a whole climate of opinion'. Just by calling repression **cognitive avoidance** and parapraxis **retrieval error** only changes the words not the phenomenon (Bornstein in Reppen: 2006). Human conflict by any other name is still conflict.
4. By proposing death drive, Freud perhaps unwittingly, tapped into an unconscious conflict inherent in our profession (O'Neill; 2011:277-78)
5. Freud considered suicidal tendencies in melancholia as another expression of the death drive (Kernberg, 2009:1015). This theme appeared many times during my literature study and I feel it could be pursued as a further research project.

Adam Phillips (2000) presents Freud's ideas on death as a significant contribution and Freud as a mentor in mortality, puts specific stress on Freud's claim that the organism wants to die in its own way. Dying in our own way becomes our primary project, even when achieved at the price of suffering (p. 9). One of Phillips's main messages is that of death's indifference to us. "The intention that man should be happy has no part in the plan of creation," he quotes Freud as saying (p. 16). Yet it is precisely the death drive that Phillips

celebrates as a sign of indifference that constitutes a denial of death. The concept of a death drive makes death a *very* personal issue, and therein denies its impersonal character.

Repetition not only negates the finality of death, but also the entire time orientation. Death, an event that subjectively is always in the future, becomes the remembrance of things past, time regained. Therefore, perhaps the death drive theory is still part of the modern cultural conventional view in which death is denied. Ostensibly, with the introduction of the death drive, death is posited at the center of the psychoanalytic theory. In reality, much of what is threatening in it is neutralized, while only the shell of the term "death" is taken in by the theory. That being said, the theory of the death drive remains a sophisticated, challenging attempt to theorize death, even if it evades the major difficulties surrounding it (Razinsky; 2010:406).

As documented that in spite of the death drive's reserved reception and classed as 'most problematic' in Freudian metapsychology this concepts seems to be an 'internal necessity to the theory' (Caropreso & Simanke; 2011: 105). Sulloway's emphatic assertion appeals me that: Freud's conception of the death drive was a 'logical tour de force that has rarely been understood in its proper perspective (in (Caropreso & Simanke; 2011: 107). I would like to conclude with Mills' views on the death drive (2006: 373) as 'one of the most original theories in the history of ideas that potentially provides a viable explanation to the conundrums that beset the problems of human civilisation, subjective suffering, collective aggressivity and self-destructiveness'.

*The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.*

*Thomas Gray*

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## Introduction

Main points of my dissertation:

Aim of this research is to **understand the impact, influence and relevance** of Sigmund Freud's following statement on 21<sup>st</sup> century's counselling and psychotherapy literature:

*If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say, 'The goal of all life is death', and, casting back, 'The inanimate was there before the animate'* (Freud, 1921, p 47).

Why Freud felt the need to develop dual instinct theory? ---- His dissatisfaction with Pleasure principle.---- New challenges to dreams theory after WW1. --- Compulsion to repeat not only pleasurable emotions but also unpleasurable one's as well.

Different definitions of Death Instinct or its understanding by its critics and adherents.

**Chapter 1** Data collection methods and sources

**Chapter 2:** Historical development of Death Instinct.

*Sub-chapters:*

*1 1920 to 1939 : Its reception, acceptance, rejection, Freud's position on it from its inception to Freud's death. Impact on Psychoanalytic society*

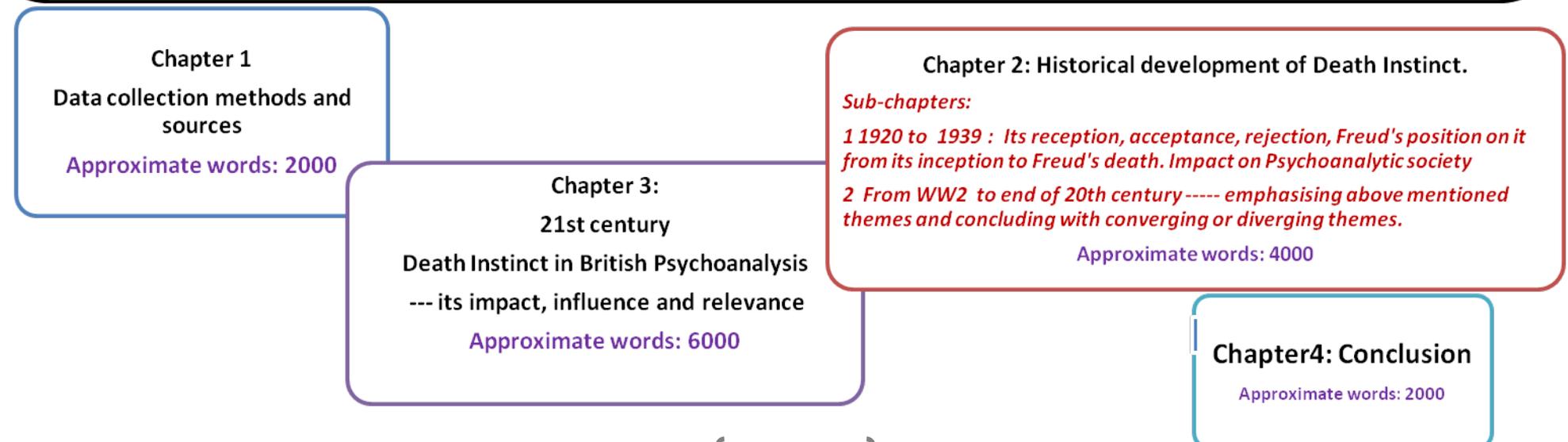
*2 From WW2 to end of 20th century ----- emphasising above mentioned themes and concluding with converging or diverging themes.*

**Chapter 3:** 21st century----- Death Instinct in British Psychoanalysis --- its impact, influence and relevance

**Chapter4:** Conclusion

09.06.09 First draft

Approximate words: 2000



## *Appendix*

*For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one*  
(Khalil Gibran: 111)

This appendix includes some of my journal extracts that I maintained throughout the heuristic process during this research. To choose extracts from three years personal journals was as daunting as it was for the articles inclusion and exclusion task. This synthesis of literature based research and heuristic study was rewarding but an arduous task. These extracts offer some insight into the process of my work.

Freud declared: *Everywhere I go I find that a poet has been there before me* (Freud in Berlin, 2008). To express my intricate emotions I have always taken refuge in English, Panjabi and Urdu philosophic poetry or poetical prose. Quoted references have also been kept separate from dissertation work and are at the end of this document.

*Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.*  
*And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.*  
*And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance*

(Khalil Gibran: 112)

**May 2007: Friday**

Death, martyrdom, Thanatos, death drive -- are they my morbid fascinations or am I trying to discover something? Without doubt my life has been lopsided----- most of the time --- according to whose standard; I don't know? Balanced things bore me; equanimity attracts me. -----In psychotherapy I endeavour to get individuals feel the full potential of their lives. -----

Is it all a fraud? Am I a fraud? Or is it an imposter syndrome? If life is false; it's a fraud? If it's real then it's a part of reality? Whose reality and how is it real?

Is this dissertation an excuse to get my 'morbidly' on to paper?

Like ordinary and normal people why don't I just respect and revere the Gurus who sacrificed their lives for their principles; to support what they believed in? Why do I entertain doubts that they were victims of circumstances?-----

Two names come to my mind: Guru Arjun Dev Ji and Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (5<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Sikh Gurus who surrendered their lives to protect their religious principles).

All life comes to end, even according to Sikh scriptures; so why one ending should be revered and called a martyrdom? Perhaps the way it ends or its purpose?

Where does my fascination about this topic originate from? -----

**A Note:** for a year I toyed with the idea of researching the Death Drive and Martyrdom. During supervision discussions it was realised that this topic was too vast and beyond my grasp. The following year it changed to Victor Frankl's logo therapy and death drive. And eventually I settled with the present title or the title settled with me.

**July 2009:**

Preoccupation with the subject of death gives a different perspective on life – a sense of freedom – an idea of impermanence – a will not to be clingy in life – A unique type of freedom that brings richness, depth and meaning to life. It takes out the possessive nature, hoarding and to an extent greed out of life's equation.

Like Moustakas 'I did not set out consciously to study' (1990:91) death drive. Many questions over the last two years are still unanswered for me to choose this subject. I may get some sort of answer by the end of this research. Staying with heuristic research has clarified for me that 'to search for the solution of a problem is an absurdity' (Moustakas, 1990:92). At this stage through immersion in data I am feeling the 'power of heuristics in its recognition of the significance of self-searching and the value of personal knowledge as essential requirements for the understanding of common human experiences' (1990:90). Reading heuristic research, especially, Moustakas' is like reading poetry for me. It allows me to get inside the research question.

*To enter into that gate and dwell in that house,  
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light;  
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;  
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;  
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity;  
in the habitations of thy glory and dominion,  
world without end.*

*John Donne*

**August 2009:**

Is my research getting dictated by my reading or my reading is being influenced by my research? I suppose both sides are prompting each other. I am re-reading certain chapters and books before or after reading my selected articles. Dave Hiles (2001) presentation of Moustakas' core process of heuristic inquiry is a good, step by step guideline for me. Reflective reading has always been a part of my life, now I am learning to 'immerse' in the material more. `

'All man's miseries derive from not being able to sit quietly in a room' (Pascal in Dyer: 1998, p2). 'Learn to be silent; let your quiet mind listen and absorb' (Pythagoras in Dyer: 1998, p2). Pascal is responsible for inventing the syringe and the hydraulic press; exerting pressure, injecting drive for positive and negative, inwards or outwards are the many themes that are staying with me after reading these articles. I am aware of my self-chatter; the need to quieten it; to entertain a self-dialogue; to gain the maximum from my reading. I date my articles; write reflections, re-read, compare notes; to attain tacit knowledge. This tacit dimension is ineffable. It does become overwhelming from time to time. I am reasonably getting used to it, assuming, perhaps this is the nature of heuristic inquiry. Self-doubt is the worst part of it----- reading allied literature and poetry is helpful to address it.

*Say not the struggle naught availeth,*

*The labour and the wounds are vain,*

*The enemy faints not, nor faileth,*

*And as things have been things remain.*

*If hopes are dupes, fears may be liars*

*It may be in yon smoke concealed,*

*Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers*

*And, but for you possess the field.*

*Arthur Hugh Clough (1995:31)*

### **October 2009:**

Good intentions are not just good enough to carry on with research. It was unrealistic on my part to expect the same engagement with my research in September. New courses, new students, old results, enthusiastic and struggling trainee counsellors; all this affects my life. Once again I am looking for the space in between the notes that makes the music; that emptiness that silences that gives birth to music. On the other hand Polanyi's (in Moustaks, 1995:21) elements of tacit knowledge makes more sense now. Especially the third type of tacit knowing; groping my way in the dark; with occasional flashes of guiding light in my life's dramas; space, shadow and light as guides.

*When you are inspired by some great*

*Purpose, some extraordinary project,*

*All your thoughts break their bonds;*

*Your mind transcends limitations*

*Your consciousness expands in every direction,*

*And you find yourself in a new, great*

*And wonderful world.*

*Dormant forces, faculties and talents*

*Become alive, and you discover yourself*

*To be a greater person by far*

*Than you ever dreamed yourself to be.*

*(Pantajali in Dyer p. 17)*

Challenging aspects of articles and heuristic methodology awakens my dormant emotions. There is a sense of engaging with the literature, becoming a part of that writer's world while reading; to the extent of arguing with the authors where I disagree. But sense of connection is still there that does not allow me to shy away from challenging ideas. Still there is a struggle to accept fully the tacit knowing and intuitive knowledge; as if I do not deserve this depth or consider myself to be worthy of it. I need to do some work on it.

### **November 2009 to January 2010:**

Using psychoanalysis's trans-therapeutic function I engage myself in self-analysis for three months to increase my self-awareness and hopefully some 'inner liberation'. Eric Fromm's 'The Art of Being' is my guiding text. This is the second time I am using it without consulting my previously jotted down reflections. Repression, resistance and transference are the core concepts that I am keeping at the fore front for my self-analysis. Is it possible? Yes. It may sound arrogant and narcissistic, and it could be. Having gone through my personal therapy and engaging in the habit of rigorous journal writing, I find this exercise rewarding.

I am aware of my innate conflicting tendencies, their significance, and the power of resistance to fight against these conflicts; the rationalizations that make it appear that there is no conflict (I am a trained therapist, have regular clinical supervision, had my personal therapy and write regular journals etc.); and

eventually the liberating effect of becoming aware of the conflict again. These types of paradoxes force me or invite me to look at myself again; every time from a different perspective. This time it's the acceptance or resistance to 'tacit knowing'. Self-doubt is healthy for research inquiry and analysis of data as long as it does not impede the process. Eric Fromm has simplified Freud's method of self-analysis (2007: pp. 66-86) and following those techniques/steps again, I feel, within these three months I am more close to what Polanyi refer to as 'speculative skills' in tacit knowing; like a chess player using 'subsidiary and focal factors that operate in tacit knowing'. This also allowed me to have a 'secure immersion' in collected and read data as well as the research question. It is probably the first time I am feeling that I am using myself fully as a 'touch stone' to feel what I have been reading and alternatively using the written material to validate my feelings. I am getting more comfortable and accepting of this fusion of self with 'data'. Etherington has given her own version of 'what keeps her going through dark nights' (2004: 246) and in my case it is TS Eliot and Ghalib's poetry.

*Between the idea*

*And the reality*

*Between the motion*

*And the act*

*Falls the Shadow*

*For thine is the Kingdom*

*Between the conception*

*And the creation*

*Between the emotion*

*And the response*

*Falls the Shadow*

*Life is very long*

(TS Eliot, 2002: 69-70)

**March 2010:**

Trip to India—memories—pleasant-- poignant and enriching. I am reading the wisdom of Tao. 9<sup>th</sup> verse:

*To keep on filling  
Is not as good as stopping.  
Overfilled, the cupped hands drip,  
Better to stop pouring.  
Sharpen a blade too much  
And its edges will soon be lost.  
Fill your house with jade and gold  
And it brings insecurity.  
Puff yourself with honour and pride  
And no one can save you from a fall.  
**Retire when the work is done;**  
This the way of heaven.*

(Dyer, 2007: 44)

Excess is eschewed by Tao. This is applicable to me and my research project. I grew up with GB Shaw's dictum in *Man and Superman*: The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom. We do not know what enough is until we know what's more than enough. These thoughts are attributed to his hero John Tanner in 'Revolutionary's Handbook'. Unconsciously it became a part of my life and I paid dearly to recover from it. This period has served as 'incubation' period for me. Taking my mother's ashes to India, with the rest of my family and standing at the sacred place in Panjab where our ancestors' ashes have been dispersed; was an experience for me, especially in light of what I have been reading and writing (*Death Drive*). On the banks of the river I felt human impermanence slipping through my hands to join the running water that I would never come across again.

*Isiratey-qatra hai dariya mein fana ho jana*

*Dard ka hud se guzarana hai dawa ho jana*

*Literally translated it means that the greatest ecstasy for a drop is to fall upon a river and become one with it. And after a point, sorrows become their own medication.*

(Ghalib translated by Kuldeep Saini, 2008: 84-5)

If incubation is ‘when the research is put on the back burner’ for a while, creating space for new understanding to unfold, or emerge through ideas, dreams and images;’ then it was happening for me. In my disbelief of what was happening was my belief; a truth. Feeling no outside emotions was a defence for me to absorb and contain my inner turmoil. In Moustaka’s language ‘a seed has been planted’ (1995:29) and my reading of poetry and poetical essays were nourishments for it. My pain was the breaking of a shell that enclosed my understanding.

*Much of our pain is self-chosen.  
It is the bitter potion by which the physician  
Within you heal your sick self.*

(Gibran, 2008: 72)

**May 2010:**

There is so much and so little of this concept. I feel it to be sprinkled over so many areas and it has been absorbed by them to make it a part of their fabric. Its shades are still very distinct in each fabric and are recognisable. Taking it apart from that fabric would be destroying the pattern and damaging the fabric. This is the process of emerging themes. Moustakas calls it ‘illumination’ (1990:29) – ‘clustering of qualities into themes inherent’. It has also been helping me to address my distorted understanding of death drive. It’s not all negative. I also feel it is the right moment:

*If you trap the moment before its ripe  
The tears of repentance you will certainly wipe  
But if you once let the ripe moment go  
You can never wipe off the tears of woe*

(Blake, 1995:50)

I have noted down six emerging themes. As my reflections indicate they merge into each other. I am not going to separate them from the original theme of death drive.

Use of poetry and other reading is supportive and also gives me respite when I feel overwhelmed. Over the next few weeks I will do some more in-depth reading and writings about these themes of: fear --- internal drama --- protecting self – quiescence--- love and aggression.

I am reading Rollo May's Freedom and Destiny. 'It is only in the face of death that a man's self is born'; May quotes Saint Augustine. Am I trying it through this dissertation to redeem myself? To an extent yes. Am I an outsider? Ghalib says:

*Let us go and live at a place now where nobody goes  
Where there is none to speak to us, nobody our language knows.  
Sans door, sans wall, a house should be built where  
There is nobody to look after us, no neighbour there.  
If I fall ill there should be none to nurse me back to health  
And if I die, none at all to mourn my death.*

**June 2010:**

Phases of heuristic inquiry and process, I am also using to explore my feelings. Every stage in it has directed me towards a text that I have already read; it is like connecting my past knowledge with the present. Explication or De Profundis (out of the depths of misery or despair) – I re-read this Oscar Wilde's text for its profundity. On the precipitated themes I am reading the articles again. This time to articulate the themes and making sense of the material, without consulting my previous notes on the same article. With some passages I feel as if I were reading them for the first time. Textures of phenomenon are presenting different nuances in the same writing. Some themes are shining more than the others; and also by merging together they are creating a new theme. Internal drama and theme of love now looks more like Narcissism. Fascinating and bewildering, but I am getting used

to it. During this process my title theme changed dramatically, as stated before. This process produced new views, alternative explanations and new patterns. It is interesting to notice how some themes belonged together and others are making little sense now. There is a reasonably clear picture of three themes now that I will discuss in my next supervision meeting with my mentor.

*The soul walks not upon a line, neither*

*Does it grow like a reed?*

*The soul unfolds itself, like lotus of*

*Countless petals.*

*(Khalil Gibran, 2007: 74)*

### **December 2010:**

This work of synthesis is more gradual. Creativity for me is to trace similar feelings in poetry. A long time ago I wrote poetry; when I was young. Now I recall it, or it sprouts out while reading or writing something. My collection of books and internet is a great source to check the exact lines. Occasionally I have also surprised myself by remembering what I read in school or college days. ----- Following passage is not a summary of my work but a depiction of this topic's and my journey together, our fusion, our conflicts, moments of elation and frustration.

*I am very close to the end of this project and end is that I have been reading and researching about. With this sense of satisfaction, relief and achievement is also mixed feelings of sadness, letting go and some sort of void. I also wonder how I would fill this void. And this raises another question for me: that what I have been getting out of this project or what this project has been getting out of me.*

*It started as a complex fascination for me and it still is a source of curiosity. I have not been able to resolve the riddle of death drive nor was it my intention. My*

*understanding is that opinion of experts on this Freudian concept is as divided in 2010 as it was in 1920. Peter Gay's observation that 'Freud is inescapable' seems truer, now. Neither his adherents nor his opponents leave him in peace. My fascination is also with this conflict. It would not be wrong to admit that by dealing with these theoretical conflicts I try to salvage my inner conflict. Or comparatively inner conflict becomes less significant. It is still there but its intensity is manageable. Re-reading Oscar Wilde's De Profundis these lines make more sense now: I saw then that the only thing for me was to accept everything. Since then – curious as it will no doubt sound ---- I have been happier. It was of course my soul in its ultimate essence that I had reached. In many ways I had been its enemy, but I found it waiting for me as a friend (1987:169).*

*As this study has affected my personal life and world view it also has made an impact on my clinical work. I am more aware of clients thought undercurrents; hidden and unconscious fears expressed in coded words, gestures or statements. And feedback from clients has been of feeling connected with me during the sessions and comfortably contained to open up their Pandora's Box.*

*Every year last week of December is a time for reflection. This year rather than looking back at the year only I am more engaged with my journey up to now and vicissitudes faced during that journey. Start of that journey is hazy; I am not sure why; but I am comfortable with it.*

*What has this bugbear, death to frighten man,  
If souls can die, as well as bodies can?  
For, as before our birth we felt no pain,  
When Punic arms infested land and main,  
When heaven and earth were in confusion hurled,  
For the debated empire of the world,  
Which awed with dreadful expectation lay,*

*Sure to be slaves, uncertain who should sway:  
So, when our mortal fame should be disjoined,  
The lifeless lump uncoupled from the mind,  
From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;  
We shall not feel, because we shall not be.*

*(Lucretius translated by Dryden in Kenny, 2004:249)*

**January 2011:**

Late at night when I finished tweaking my dissertation, I threw a last glance at my books. Different colour markers were propping their heads – where I had marked the chapters, references to death drive, in support and against it. Curiosity forced me to sneak a look, where and why I marked a particular page, paragraph or a sentence. After going through two to three books, sadness descended upon me – I could have used this material if I had more time. Immediately a question shot up: Is this how am I living my life? ----- When the end is near I think I could have done more. Like Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus pleading his last hour to ‘be but a year, a month, a week, a natural day; that Faustus may repent and save his soul!’ (Marlowe in Barber, 2007:299).

Once again I reminded myself to ‘live life’ – engage with life – how? I suppose we all have our own ways.

For me there is not a better way to sum it up than to quote Firaq Gorakhpuri:

*Ab tum se rukhsat hota hoon, aao sambhalo saaz-e-ghazal  
Naye taraane chhero, mere naghmon ko neend aati hai.*

*Its English translation is:*

*Now I beg leave of you, take over this lyre,  
My songs are feeling sleepy, sing thee newer songs.*

*(2000:265)*

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