#### That’s a worthwhile scholarly exercise.

Robert Tyminski 14. D.M.H., M.B.A. Volunteer Professor at University of California, San Francisco. “The Psychology of Theft and Loss, Stolen and Fleeced.” Routledge. June 1, 2014. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263504570\_The\_Psychology\_of\_Theft\_and\_Loss\_Stolen\_and\_Fleeced

Why do we steal? This question has confounded everyone from parents to judges, teachers to psychologists, economists to more than a few moral thinkers. Stealing can be a result of deprivation, of envy, or of a desire for power and influence. An act of theft can also bring forth someone’s hidden traits – paradoxically proving beneficial to their personal development. Robert Tyminski explores the many dimensions of stealing, and in particular how they relate to a subtle balance of loss versus gain that operates in all of us. Our natural aversion to loss can lead to extreme actions as a means to acquire what we may not be able to obtain through time, work or money. Tyminski uses the myth of Jason, Medea and the Golden Fleece to explore the dilemmas involved in such situations and demonstrate the timelessness of theft as fundamentally human. The Psychology of Theft and Loss incorporates Jungian and psychoanalytic theories as well as more recent cognitive research findings to deepen our appreciation for the complexity of human motivations when it comes to stealing, culminating in consideration of the idea of a perpetually present ‘inner thief’. Combining case studies, Jungian theory and analysis of many different types of stealing including robbery, kidnapping, plagiarism and technotheft, The Psychology of Theft and Loss is a fascinating study which will appeal to psychoanalysts, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, family therapists and students.

#### . Debate isn’t an insulated game, it’s an ecological system that responds to individual moments of attunement. Their interpretation attempts to enforce discursive norms, causing ‘psychological consequences’ and ‘collective narcissistic rage’ as the ideals of fairness and clash present themselves ever out of reach. That’s Davis.

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All systems are being experienced concurrently (Ancis & Davidson, 2013). The self constantly seeks empathic attunement through the roles, activities, and settings that an ecological system provides or withholds (Blau & Wagman, 2022; Heft, 2001; Strozier et al., 2022). Similar to how the self object functions in the dyad, selfobjects function in the environment to maintain an individual’s cohesive sense of self (Kohut, 1971). When the environment is conducive to self-affirmation, the ideals that pattern it are fluid and liberating (Brandchaft et al., 2010; Kassouf, 2023). The environment is able to be idealized via feelings of belonging and comfort. The self feels “at home” in engaged systems that afford the individual to develop freely with current capacities. In turn, the environment optimally reacts to the individual in ways that promote exploration, self-determination, and community involvement. The self is supported by the environment and creates ideal conditions for the self to grow without threat or fear of fragmentation (Kohut, 1977). Likewise, the environment is not fearful of its own disintegration or fragmentation throughout its interactions with the developing individual (Kohut & Strozier, 1985).

Conversely, failure to affirm ontological selfhood through empathic transference thrusts the individual into what Fanon calls “a zone of nonbeing” (Fanon, 1952, p. xii) or what Kohut would describe as fragmentation (Kohut, 1971). When rigid ideals are used to determine a macrosystem, which then pattern all systems beneath it, selfobject failure via the environment is likely to follow. Instead of selfhood being sustained, the environment operates with a collective narcissistic rage to affirm its own rigid grandiose ideals that can never be attained (Foucault, 2013; Kohut, 1977; Preciado, 2025). All systems are a unique area within the selfobject milieu that can empathically fail an individual even if other systems within the broader ecosystem are empathically attuned to them.

As the self acts, the environment reacts and vice versa. This is sensible in psychodynamic understanding and much more so in an intersubjective systems framework, specifically regarding the leading edge and trailing edge. The self is constantly having to navigate the hopes and dreads that are entangled within an environment (Zimmerman, 2019). The hope of one system may be the dread of another. Depending on power relations, these can be developmentally emboldening or catastrophic to the self-structure.

Take for example the Black Panther Party movement that took place in the late 1960s to the early 1970s. For many in the movement or those associated with it, the authentic self was optimally responded to by the environment thanks to the microsystems the BPP created. However, these microsystems tailored to the hope of black liberation and self-determination conflicted with the dread of fragmentation possessed by the exosystem and greater macrosystem of white hegemony that ruled United States culture, controlled federal resources, and launched numerous propaganda campaigns to control the discursive norms surrounding black liberation (Bloom & Martin, 2016).3 When revolutionary culture engaged counter-revolutionary hegemony, psychological consequences on the BPP members across the organization followed due to the malice of the systems that encased the BPP.

#### The impact is racial lashout.

Luke Wood 23. Dean's Distinguished Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Community College Equity Assessment Lab at San Diego State University. “Narcissistic Racism: Revisiting Carl Bell.” Psychology Today. May 5, 2023. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-psychology-of-racial-equity/202305/narcissistic-racism-revisiting-carl-bell

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition), narcissism is a personality disorder manifesting as “a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy” (American Psychiatric Association, 2022, p. 761). The concept of narcissism comes from Greco-Roman mythology, where Narcissus (son of the river god) falls in love with himself by looking at his own reflection in the water. He kills himself after realizing he could never achieve a beauty comparable to his reflection in the water (Bergmann, 1984). The term has been core to psychoanalytic literature as a long-recognized personality disorder.

Bell (1980) noted this disorder can manifest as racism in three ways.

First is the narcissistic racist, which Bell referred to as “a person whose racism is primarily a symptom of a narcissistic personality disorder” (p. 662). For instance, narcissistic racists may portray an elevated sense of self-importance via racial superiority. They may also be fixated on having unlimited power and success, another venue in which their views of racial domination can be apparent. Narcissistic racists may demonstrate exhibitionist behaviors for attention-seeking through overt acts of racism, such as displaying images of hate or using racially charged language. Although many narcissists may struggle with criticism, narcissistic racists respond to their feelings of inferiority and rage through White backlash (i.e., when White people lash out at people of color as a defensive mechanism). In addition to these qualities, narcissistic racists are prone to a lack of empathy toward the issues and pains experienced by people of color, a sense of entitlement to preferential treatment based on their race and exploiting people of color without regard for their rights.

#### 1NC Shah says that creates a cycle of self-exploitation, driven by the cultural fantasy of authority over the state. That causes psychological distress here AND turns the case thru worker exploitation.

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Based on the Lacan perspective (as cited in Bloom, 2013), it is argued that employability ends up in self-exploitation. The Lacan frame informed the conceptual model of the study. Lacan argued that we desire something that is missing in our lives. For completeness in our lives, we desire things such as power, prestige, wealth, status, knowledge, etc. Employees in contemporary organizations constantly desire employability and then positions of higher authority, status and prestige. This is followed by a desire for learning, growth, development and self-mastery. Bloom (2013) discussed that employability is a cultural fantasy that shapes the identity around the desire to benefit from an employable self and self-mastery. Fantasy happens via illusory strivings for a perfect and model/ideal future in which current troubles will not happen. Voronov and Vince (2012) argued that fantasies have a strong influence on a person’s actions and preferences in organizations. The cultural ideals of the marketplace and managers shape individual identities. Employees constantly engage in learning and developmental activities to improve and nourish their careers. Specifically, this paper argues that in this process, employees strive to remain relevant to their organization, engage in employability activities and end up being self-exploited. Ironically, despite the abundance of literature in the domain of employability, the different streams of research on employability have explored the various aspects of employability (Greco et al., 2019; Kassotaki, 2019; Maurer, 2002; McDonald and Hite, 2005; Van Dam et al., 2006; Van der Pol, 2011; Wilms et al., 2019), but the dark side has been ignored or overlooked. Thus, the picture of employability presented in the literature to date is incomplete.

Given the body of scholarly work in this field, it is appropriate to reflect on this debate, its themes and perspectives. It is a novel perspective on employability research because not enough research has explicitly investigated or explored the potential implications of employability related self-exploitation. The study has theoretical implications. This discussion will help us better understand the phenomenon of employability. It will give employability scholars a new road map. Furthermore, the research will help inform practice and improve policy and decisionmaking. Accordingly, this study was carried out to develop and test a theoretically comprehensive model that included learning, commitment, employability and self-exploitation.

The study employed the psychoanalytic approach to employability. Fantasies, according to Lacan (Bloom, 2013), play an important role in shaping people’s self-hood. People form an elusive vision of their romanticized self: a more appealing version of the socially endowed self that motivates individuals to strive for a perfect and model future in which current problems do not occur. The romanticized self is linked to culturally fabricated fantasies. People are constantly working on and attempting to master their socially provided selves. One such example is employability. Employees in work environments construct illusory self definitions. Their occupation choice ensures that current performance will meet the requirements of an ideal future, free of life’s existing hiccups.

According to Lacan and Alan (1981) framework, broad system-level (economic and social) factors shape micro factors. Individuals as units of a system are influenced by cultural and market ideals. The Lacanian viewpoint is applied to individual employability-related behavior in an organization. According to Bloom (2013), individuals strive to continuously improve their employability. They overcome their personal and financial estrangement by increasing their self-exploitation. Individual thinking and employability-related decisions are influenced by structural factors such as labor market conditions, etc. However, structural or systemic factors are outside the scope of this study.

#### Transgression DA. Fiat and framework engage in ritual ethical sacrifice to sustain the pursuit of an unattainable ideal. Vote neg to enjoin [X’s] transgressive enjoyment.

Jack Black 25. PhD, Associate Professor of Media and Sport at Sheffield Hallam University. “Revisiting the Sport Ethic: A Psychoanalytic Consideration of Sport’s Contradictions.” Sport Ethics and Philosophy. September 3, 2025. https://shura.shu.ac.uk/36093/

Furthermore, the significance of desire is that it incorporates the subject’s investment in a lack that is, in most instances, confounded by the subject’s lack of self-identity. Indeed, if the subject is constituted through lack, then, it is ‘This lack of self-identity [that] gives the subject distance from the conditions out of which it emerges’ (McGowan 2024, 3). As McGowan explains, ‘If I am not identical to myself, if I am at odds with myself, I cannot be completely determined by external forces’ (2024, 3). This lack of self-identity prescribes a margin between the subject and wider external forces, thus endowing desire a certain possibility and potential. In this regard, ‘it is precisely the subject’s persistent awareness of being less than fully realized that allows her to approach the world as a space of possibility’ (Ruti 2008, 489). Such possibility is not an unending point of unperturbed freedom, uninhibited by the constraints of the world. Rather, forged as it is in relation to the Other, and, thus, forever undetermined and unqualifiable, always assumed and never entirely confirmed (Fink 2025), desire remains both ‘disturbing and problematic’ (O’Callaghan 2024, 158). In fact, ‘desire functions as a paradoxical site of self-determination in the sense that it remains one of the few things about human life that stubbornly resists biopolitical conditioning’ (Ruti 2018, 157). Such resistance emanates from the fact that desire is a contradiction for the subject, indeed, ‘a contradictory being that wants to be other than it is’ (McGowan 2019, 77), for, as Lacan puts it, desire is ‘what we are as well as what we are not’ (Lacan 1997, 321).Though desire can never be fully satisfied, it is this persistent lack that gives rise to the excesses of desire.

Consider, for instance, the case of sex: as Žižek observes, ‘we almost never engage in sex to fulfill its natural goal (procreation) but for the enjoyment it provides—we became human exactly when sex leaves behind its “natural” goal of procreation and turns into an end in itself’ (2024, 63). In this way, desire is fundamentally distinct from need, which can be satisfied by its object. Instead, the object of desire is never fully attainable, precisely because enjoyment lies in its excessive pursuit (‘and end in itself’), rather than its fulfilment. It is, then, ‘the paradoxical, deviant, erratic, eccentric and even scandalous nature of desire that distinguishes itself from need’ (Lacan 2006b, 579). Ultimately, the subject is bound by a desire that is driven not by a rational, conscious judgement, but by an insatiability that goes beyond what can be demanded of, or requested by, the subject. In order to further explore how the effects of the sport ethic relate to desire, two key characteristics will need to be addressed: 1) the sacrifice of the ‘good’, and 2) the sacrifice of the useful.

As previously touched upon, the widely held belief that sport is inherently pure and good, and that participation in sport inevitably fosters moral character and personal development, goes beyond mere cultural assumption (Coakley 2015, 2017). For the sport ethic, it functions as a normative framework that shapes institutional agendas, public perceptions, and self-understanding. That is, while it underwrites popular narratives about sport’s capacity to improve character and promote social values, it simultaneously obscures the structural conditions and power relations embedded within sporting practices. Notably, McGee et al.’s (2025) reflections on athletes’ post-sport narratives demonstrates how even when athletes recount difficult or harmful experiences, the dominant cultural script positions sport as a vehicle for growth and virtue. The framing of adversity as character-building reflects the internalization of the sport ethic that depicts athletes as emerging from sport as all the ‘better’ for it. In this sense, the sport ethic operates not merely as a behavioral code, but as a moral telos, inasmuch as it remains a vision of the good that is tied to ideas of authenticity and self-worth.

Yet, this ‘good’ is not only pursued by athletes, but, at the same time, sacrificed, insofar as many of the goods commonly associated with sport, such as, physical and mental wellbeing, ethical conduct, and inclusivity, are actively transgressed in maintaining and adhering to the sport ethic (Žižek 2008b). As a consequence, what is sacrificed in the pursuit of the sport ethic is the very idea of sport as a space for health, mutual respect, and human flourishing. While fostering the normalisation of injury, the erosion of moral boundaries (e.g., through doping or cheating), and the exclusion of those unwilling or unable to conform to the sport ethic, alongside commercial logics and institutional demands that exploit athletes’ labour under the guise of commitment and professionalism, ultimately, what is surrendered is the ‘good’ of sport as well as its capacity to offer meaningful experiences beyond instrumental success.

It is in this sense ‘that the good can also serve as the vehicle for enjoyment’ (McGowan 2025, 167). McGowan clarifies: ‘The good doesn’t lead directly to enjoyment. Instead, it gives us something to sacrifice so that we might enjoy. The good is in effect a tool for structuring our enjoyment. We erect the good as an obstacle that we can subsequently sacrifice to enjoy’ (2025, 167). As a result, while the sport ethic appears to elevate the athlete toward an ideal of excellence via an assumption of the ‘good’, its sacrifice sustains the very loss (or lack) that keeps enjoyment in motion. By demanding a sacrifice of the good in order to generate enjoyment through transgression and excess (Žižek 2008b), the pain of playing through injury, the loneliness of obsessive training, and the narrow pursuit of victory above all else, are, in effect, not failures of the sport ethic but the very conditions through which our enjoyment in sport is sustained.

This suggests that enjoyment in sport emerges not from fairness or resolution, but from the very sacrifices, contradictions, and forms of suffering it stages and repeats, often unconsciously, for both athlete and spectator alike. Moreover, this reveals a contradiction at the heart of the sport ethic: that the sacrifices it demands are made not in the service of something strictly useful, but, instead, for sport itself—an activity whose value is sustained precisely through its inutility.

#### Competition breeds counterempathy---we prey on the failure of Others and are depressed by their success.

Alfie Kohn 16. M.A. in Social Sciences from UChicago. “What You-Know-Who’s Success Says About Our Country’s Addiction to Competition.” 2016. https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/trumped/.

And that’s not all. A number of studies have shown that the experience of competing makes us less sensitive to others’ needs and less able to imagine how the world looks from points of view other than our own. One experiment found that just growing up with a competitive parent was enough to reduce a child’s generosity; the toxic effects are analogous to secondhand smoke. Social psychologists even had to coin a word to describe an effect they kept finding: Competition breeds “counterempathy” — a tendency to feel elated by other people’s failures and depressed by their successes. And when groups (instead of individuals) compete, there’s a tendency to dehumanize and objectify those in the out group.

#### Bracketing epistemology is reductionist, screening out policy-relevant consequences of intent.

Anna Salamon 25. President and Founder of CFAR. Previously machine learning research for NASA and applied mathematics research on the statistics of phage metagenomics. “High-level actions don’t screen off intent.” Lesswrong. September 11, 2025. https://www.lesswrong.com/posts/nAMwqFGHCQMhkqD6b/high-level-actions-don-t-screen-off-intent

One might think “actions screen off intent”: if Alice donates $1k to bed nets, it doesn’t matter if she does it because she cares about people or because she wants to show off to her friends or whyever; the bed nets are provided either way.

I think this is in the main not true (although it can point people toward a helpful kind of “get over yourself and take an interest in the outside world,” and although it is more plausible in the case of donations-from-a-distance than in most cases).

Human actions have micro-details that we are not conscious enough to consciously notice or choose, and that are filled in by our low-level processes: if I apologize to someone because I’m sorry and hope they’re okay, vs because I’d like them to stop going on about their annoying unfair complaints, many small aspects of my wording and facial expression will be likely different, in ways that’re hard for me to track. I may think of both actions as “I apologized politely,” while my intent nevertheless causes predictable differences in impact.

Even in the donations-from-a-distance case, there is some of this: the organization Alice donates to may try to discern Alice’s motives, and may tailor its future actions to try to appeal to Alice and others like her, in ways that have predictably different effects depending on eg whether Alice mostly wants to know/care/help or mostly wants to reinforce her current beliefs.

#### The impact is ethical displacement.

Susanne Kappeler 95, lecturer in English at the University of East Anglia and an associate professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Al Akhawayn University, “The Will To Violence: The Politics of Personal Behavior,” p. 8-11

Moreover, personal behaviour is no alternative to `political' action; there is no question of either/or. My concern, on the contrary, is the connection between these recognized forms of violence and the forms of everyday behaviour which we consider `normal' but which betray our own will to violence - the connection, in other words, between our own actions and those acts of violence which are normally the focus of our political critiques. Precisely because there is no choice between dedicating oneself either to ‘political issues' or to ‘personal behaviour’, the question of the politics of personal behaviour has (also) to be moved into the centre of our politics and our critique.

Violence - what we usually recognize as such - is no exception to the rules, no deviation from the normal and nothing out of the ordinary, in a society in which exploitation and oppression are the norm, the ordinary and the rule. It is no misbehaviour of a minority amid good behaviour by the majority, nor the deeds of inhuman monsters amid humane humans, in a society in which there is no equality, in which people divide others according to race, class, sex and many other factors in order to rule, exploit, use, objectify, enslave, sell, torture and kill them, in which millions of animals are tortured, genetically manipulated, enslaved and slaughtered daily for `harmless' consumption by humans. It is no error of judgement, no moral lapse and no transgression against the customs of a culture which is thoroughly steeped in the values of profit and desire, of self-realization, expansion and progress. Violence as we usually perceive it is `simply' a specific - and to us still visible - form of violence, the consistent and logical application of the principles of our culture and everyday life.

War does not suddenly break out in a peaceful society; sexual violence is not the disturbance of otherwise equal gender relations. Racist attacks do not shoot like lightning out of a non-racist sky, and the sexual exploitation of children is no solitary problem in a world otherwise just to children. The violence of our most commonsense everyday thinking, and especially our personal will to violence, constitute the conceptual preparation, the ideological armament and the intellectual mobilization which make the `outbreak' of war, of sexual violence, of racist attacks, of murder and destruction possible at all.

'We are the war', writes Slavenka Drakulic at the end of her existential analysis of the question, `what is war?':

I do not know what war is, I want to tell [my friend], but I see it everywhere. It is in the blood-soaked street in Sarajevo, after 20 people have been killed while they queued for bread. But it is also in your non-comprehension, in my unconscious cruelty towards you, in the fact that you have a yellow form [for refugees] and I don't, in the way in which it grows inside ourselves and changes our feelings, relationships, values - in short: us. We are the war ... And I am afraid that we cannot hold anyone else responsible. We make this war possible, we permit it to happen.'

`We are the war' - and we also `are' the sexual violence, the racist violence, the exploitation and the will to violence in all its manifestations in a society in so-called `peacetime', for we make them possible and we permit them to happen.

‘We are the war' does not mean that the responsibility for a war is shared collectively and diffusely by an entire society - which would be equivalent to exonerating warlords and politicians and profiteers or, as Ulrich Beck says, upholding the notion of `collective irresponsibility', where people are no longer held responsible for their actions, and where the conception of universal responsibility becomes the equivalent of a universal acquittal.' On the contrary, the object is precisely to analyse the specific and differential responsibility of everyone in their diverse situations. Decisions to unleash a war are indeed taken at particular levels of power by those in a position to make them and to command such collective action. We need to hold them clearly responsible for their decisions and actions without lessening theirs by any collective ‘assumption’ of responsibility. Yet our habit of focusing on the stage where the major dramas of power take place tends to obscure our sight in relation to our own sphere of competence, our own power and our own responsibility - leading to the well-known illusion of our apparent ‘powerlessness’ and its accompanying phenomenon, our so-called political disillusionment. Single citizens - even more so those of other nations - have come to feel secure in their obvious non-responsibility for such large-scale political events as, say, the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina or Somalia - since the decisions for such events are always made elsewhere.

Yet our insight that indeed we are not responsible for the decisions of a Serbian general or a Croatian president tends to mislead us into thinking that therefore we have no responsibility at all, not even for forming our own judgement, and thus into underrating the responsibility we do have within our own sphere of action. In particular, it seems to absolve us from having to try to see any relation between our own actions and those events, or to recognize the connections between those political decisions and our own personal decisions. It not only shows that we participate in what Beck calls, ‘organized irresponsibility’, upholding the apparent lack of connection between bureaucratically, institutionally, nationally and also individually organized separate competences. It also proves the phenomenal and unquestioned alliance of our personal thinking with the thinking of the major powermongers. For we tend to think that we cannot `do' anything, say, about a war, because we deem ourselves to be in the wrong situation; because we are not where the major decisions are made. Which is why many of those not yet entirely disillusioned with politics tend to engage in a form of mental deputy politics, in the style of `What would I do if I were the general, the prime minister, the president, the foreign minister or the minister of defence?' Since we seem to regard their mega spheres of action as the only worthwhile and truly effective ones, and since our political analyses tend to dwell there first of all, any question of what I would do if I were indeed myself tends to peter out in the comparative insignificance of having what is perceived as `virtually no possibilities': what I could do seems petty and futile. For my own action I obviously desire the range of action of a general, a prime minister, or a General Secretary of the UN - finding expression in ever more prevalent formulations like `I want to stop this war', `I want military intervention', `I want to stop this backlash', or `I want a moral revolution.' 7 ,

We are this war', however, even if we do not command the troops or participate in so-called peace talks, namely as Drakulic says, in our 'non-comprehension': our willed refusal to feel responsible for our own thinking and for working out our own understanding, preferring innocently to drift along the ideological current of prefabricated arguments or less than innocently taking advantage of the advantages these offer. And we `are' the war in our `unconscious cruelty towards you', our tolerance of the `fact that you have a yellow form for refugees and I don't' - our readiness, in other words, to build identities, one for ourselves and one for refugees, one of our own and one for the `others'. We share in the responsibility for this war and its violence in the way we let them grow inside us, that is, in the way we shape ‘our feelings, our relationships, our values' according to the structures and the values of war and violence.

So if we move beyond the usual frame of violence, towards the structures of thought employed in decisions to act, this also means making an analysis of action. This seems all the more urgent as action seems barely to be perceived any longer. There is talk of the government doing `nothing', of its `inaction', of the need for action, the time for action, the need for strategies, our inability to act as well as our desire to become ‘active’ again. We seem to deem ourselves in a kind of action vacuum which, like the cosmic black hole, tends to consume any renewed effort only to increase its size. Hence this is also an attempt to shift the focus again to the fact that we are continually acting and doing, and that there is no such thing as not acting or doing nothing.

#### The demand to preserve stability operates in direct opposition to the laws of the universe and feeds into a violent cycle of repetition compulsion.

Ben Ware 23. Co-Director of the Centre for Philosophy and Art at King’s College, London, March 2023, “The Death Drive at the End of the World,” https://www.e-flux.com/journal/134/525929/the-death-drive-at-the-end-of-the-world

(iii) How, then, to account for this repetition compulsion, which, as Freud says, when it acts “in opposition to the pleasure principle,” often has “the appearance of some demonic force at work”?

(iv) First, repetition stands in place of remembering; and what is repeated is the moment of excitation related to the original trauma. Through repetition the subject aims to “bind” the unbound surplus excitation that produced the psychic wound, transforming it from a freely flowing state into a quiescent one.

(v) Importantly, however, the trauma that drives repetition is not—or not simply—something that has been consciously lived through. Rather, it is something that lies beyond the limits of possible experience: the trace of a primordial loss, which, in Freud’s speculative theory, is the interruption of an original inorganic state.

(vi) A drive, then, “is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier [i.e. inanimate] state of things”; it is “a kind of organic elasticity” that pulls the subject back towards the inorganic state that it once knew. In its clearest form, this hypothesis is stated as follows: “The aim of all life is death” because “inanimate things existed before living ones.”

(vii) Paradoxically, then, in the final analysis the pleasure principle and the death drive turn out to operate according to the same logic: while the former serves the purpose of “reducing tensions,” aiming at a zero-level of mental excitation, the latter marks the tendency of all life to return to the zero-point of the inanimate, a state of final repose.

To the extent that the death drive in Freud’s theory tends towards the absolute zero-level of inorganicity, it might be read as a metabiological extension of the second law of thermodynamics, the so-called entropy principle.

The physicist Rudolph Clausius first coined the term “entropy” in 1865. Clausius formulates the two laws of thermodynamics as follows: “The energy of the universe is constant”; and “the entropy of the universe tends to a maximum.” What entropy measures is the level of disorder or randomness within a given system—that is, how much energy is “disorganized” or beyond “use.” According to the second law, within any isolated system energy moves inexorably in the direction of increasing entropy.

Commenting on the second law, the character Sally (Judy Davis) in Woody Allen’s film Husbands and Wives says: “It’s the second law of thermodynamics: Sooner or later everything turns to shit.” This witticism turns out to be surprisingly accurate. When an isolated system reaches a point of maximum entropy, this is a state of thermodynamic equilibrium. In equilibrium we arrive at the so-called heat death of the universe: a state of affairs in which all usable energy has been expended and the system dies. This state of cosmological exhaustion is brilliantly captured by the poet Byron in the opening lines of his 1816 work “Darkness,” as if the poet had already discovered the second law half a century before its official scientific formulation:

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.  
The bright sun was extinguish’d, and the stars  
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,  
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth  
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air …  
The world was void.8

The entropy thesis might thus be thought of as the law of a universal death drive, as foretelling both earthly and cosmic extinction. The second law’s message of ultimate fatality no doubt goes some way towards explaining its enduring appeal for a certain strand of postwar pessimistic thought. In an extraordinary passage that appears towards the end of his 1955 memoir Tristes Tropiques, the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss transforms the entropy thesis into a discourse about the inevitable disintegration of human civilization:

The world began without man and will end without him. But far from being opposed to universal decline, [man] himself appears as perhaps the most effective agent working towards the disintegration of the original order of things and hurrying on powerfully organized matter towards ever greater inertia, an inertia which one day will be final … Thus it is that civilization, taken as a whole, can be described as an extraordinarily complex mechanism, which we might be tempted to see as offering an opportunity of survival for the human world, if its function were not to produce what physicists call entropy, that is inertia.9

While Lévi-Strauss’s pessimistic entropology sees culture itself as necessarily death driven, Norbert Weiner, in his study Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine, formulates a cognitivist version of the same hypothesis, applying the entropy law (somewhat bizarrely) to the human brain:

We may be facing one of those limitations of nature in which highly specialised organs reach a level of declining efficiency and ultimately lead to the extinction of the species. The human brain may be as far along on its road to this destructive specialisation as the great nose horns of the last of the titanotheres.

At this point, some political and historical framing is in order. Science, like philosophy, is its own time apprehended in thought. According to George Caffentzis, “Physics is not only about Nature and applied just to technology: its essential function is to provide models of capitalist work.” More than just a scientific law, then, the entropy principle betrays Victorian capitalism’s anxieties about its own extinction. For Caffentzis, “the second law announces the apocalypse characteristic of productivity-craving capital: heat death. Each cycle of work increases the unavailability of energy for work.”11

It is no surprise, therefore, that thermodynamics (the study of energy, primarily in regard to heat and work) becomes the science after the revolutions of 1848. It is also no surprise that the first formulation of the second law emerges directly out of the study of “inefficient” capitalist machines. Observing the waste of mechanical energy in steam engines, William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) concludes that (i) there is in the material world a universal tendency towards the dissipation of energy; that (ii) any restoration of mechanical energy is impossible; and that (iii) within a finite period of time the earth will be “unfit for human habitation,” thereby returning to an earlier state of thermal equilibrium.12 This leap from engine technology to cosmology, from non-perfect machines to a non-mystical apocalypse, introduces into early modernist science a double notion of time: time conceived as the eternally repetitive process of capitalist production and accumulation; and time conceived under the mythic sign of predestination—all life as mere being-towards-universal-death.

Dialectics of the Death Drive

The question facing us now is how to read Freud’s notion of the death dialectically against this background. While the second law expresses the irreversible tendency of all closed systems towards exhaustion and death, Freud speaks of the universal endeavor of all living things to return to the quiescence of the inanimate; and in this respect, as Michel Serres points out, Freud clearly “aligns himself” with the “findings” of thermodynamics.13 But here it might be better to say, picking up a line of thought in Althusser, that Freud has to think of his discovery in “imported concepts”—in this case, concepts borrowed from the physics of his time, which cannot help but bear the trace of “the ideological world in which they swim.”14

To think of the death drive in relation to the entropy principle is, however, to run up against an immediate problem: a blind spot in Freud’s own thinking. This is, quite simply, that the death drive cannot help but work against itself, resisting its own goal. If, on the one hand, the death drive aims at achieving a state of equilibrium or quiescence, then, on the other hand, the drives themselves are generators of internal tensions that permanently prevent the psyche from achieving a state of absolute rest. In this respect, the death drive turns out to be a kind of “self-defeating mechanism,” and as such an anti-entropic force.15

We can see this very clearly if we return to the so-called compulsion to repeat. According to Freud, the subject is driven to relive particular traumas in order that the psyche might “master” the experience of overwhelming pain, “bind” the surplus of excitation, and reinstate the “authority” of the pleasure principle. It is through repetition, on Freud’s account, that the subject is able to bring about a reduction of psychic tensions. But the problem with this strategy is that it simply doesn’t work. In fact it exacerbates the very disquietude which it aims to remedy. As Adrian Johnston neatly observes:

Reliving the nightmares of traumas again and again doesn’t end up gradually dissipating … the horrible, terrifying maelstrom of negative effects they arouse. Instead, the … labours of repetition … have the effect of repeatedly re-traumatising the psyche … Obviously, this strategy for coping with trauma is a failing one. And yet, the psyche gets stuck stubbornly pursuing it nonetheless.16

The subject’s compulsion to repeat is thus always a failed attempt at recovery; and it is a failed attempt because the trauma being repeated is itself a repetition of another trauma. This other trauma is not the infantile trauma of birth or helplessness, but rather the fundamental negativity (the void or gap) at the core of subjectivity itself.

We can thus arrive at a first conclusion. To speak of the death drive is not to evoke some mysterious force aimed at death and destruction; it is not, as it so often figures in the popular imagination, a thrust towards war, aggression, and ecocide. Rather, the death drive is connected to the compulsion to repeat, to a condition of stuckness. But it is repetition—stuckness—of a specific kind: it signals those breaks and interruptions in the “normal” psychic economy where the pleasure principle fails to assert its dominance; it denotes those points of excess that mark the subject’s (all-too-human) failure to arrive at a state of inertial equilibrium. In this respect, the death drive can be seen as split: on the one hand, its goal is the absolute zero of libidinal-affective quiescence; on the other hand, its aim is endless repetition, which, far from eliminating excitation, actively produces it. The drive thus repeats the failure to reach its own goal; and yet in so doing it also repeats the enjoyment which this negative-repetitive process necessarily generates.

Concisely put, then, what is death-like about the death drive is, paradoxically, its undeadness: its blind persistence, its inability to ever let up. The drive repeats endlessly, as a kind of acephalous force; and it does so in order to enjoy. As Lacan comments in Seminar XVII, “What necessitates repetition is jouissance”—jouissance is what drives repetition.17 But here we need to be specific. First, what gets repeated, and what enjoyment sticks to, are signifiers.18 Repetition is thus fundamentally the repetition—the insistence—of speech.

#### It’s a terrible standard.

#### If they win theories must be entirely falsifiable, vote NEG on presumption. Social science is untestable. [AFF] could just as easily cause their impacts given that realists have theories on equal footing that would indicate such.

Dr. Bernardo Mueller 20, PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Associate Professor of Economics at the Universidade de Brasília, “Why public policies fail: Policymaking under complexity”, Economia, Volume 21, Issue 2, May–August 2020, Pages 311-323

1. Introduction

The traditional approach to public policymaking involves listing possible states of the world given the set of possible choices, assigning a probability to each state, and calculating an expected outcome by considering costs and benefits. This approach works well in situations where the choices are well-known and where uncertainty can be quantified as risk. But both business and public policy often take place in complex domains where it is not possible to conceive of all the possible states of the world, much less to quantify probabilities and costs or benefits. Whether the interest is to create a new program or to improve public services, the systems nature of public policy means that prediction, evaluation and control (hallmarks of good policy-making) are difficult or impossible. The attempt to apply the traditional approach to such a domain often leads to unintended consequences or failure. And typically, things cannot not be made better by simply getting smarter experts, more data or larger budgets. Using the same approach that failed before, but doing it better, can only take you so far.

In this paper I describe five different “pathologies” of complex systems that often contribute to derail public policies. These are characteristics of the situation in which public policies are made and implemented, or of the relations they entail, that make it difficult to control, assess, evaluate, and predict what will happen when the planned actions are taken. The upshot is that it is no wonder that public policy fails so often when it is beset with so many obstacles. More importantly, policy fails when complex problems are addressed using standard linear and reductionist approaches that presuppose more knowledge and control than is ever possible in such situations.

#### But we meet.

Ariane Bazan 24. Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Université libre de Bruxelles. “The Unconscious is Structured as a Language: Evidence from the Lab in Support of Clinical Practice.” Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy. November 6, 2024. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10879-024-09651-9

Starting from Freud’s model of primary and secondary processes and from Lacan’s concept of the signifier, we propose a series of measures for these mental processes, which can be mobilized independently of psychoanalytic training. The GeoCat 1.3 is a non-linguistic tool based on forced similarity choices between geometric figures, with good psychometric characteristics for the assessment of primary and secondary processes. Based on this model we devised a linguistic version of this type of forced similarity choices, the WordLists. In these lists, the phonological and the semantic alternatives behave as primary, respectively secondary process parameters. However, the unrelated alternatives in the control lists turn out to be measures of their own right. In particular, the unrelated choices, in competition with phonological choices, behave as a measure of defensiveness. A study of subliminally administered WordLists has shown that defensive participants unconsciously shy away from phonological ambiguity; faced with ambiguity their subliminal N320 phonological mismatch negativity was exacerbated, possible indicating perplexity. Primary and secondary process parameters also turned out to explain up to one third of the variance in the production of laboratory induces parapraxes. Finally, we have also shown that people solve rebuses unwittingly. This empirical research demonstrates that it is possible to test psychoanalytic ideas in a falsifiable way, and the results give empirical grounding to these principles, when called upon in the clinical setting. Especially the signifier is an important clinical tool which may reveal etiological strands unsuspected to the patient, as shown in the clinical excerpt.

#### Bad and Bunge suck.

Target & Hopkins ’10 [Mary Target, PhD Professor of Psychoanalysis at University College London, Professional Director of the Anna Freud Centre, and Clinical Associate Professor in the Yale University School of Medicine, Jim Hopkins, Visiting Professor at UCL and Reader Emeritus in Philosophy at King's College London and Kohut Visiting Professor of Social Thought at the University of Chicago.], “On Psychoanalysis,” 10-27-10, NewScientist, https://www.newscientist.com/letter/dn19567-on-psychoanalysis/, MG s/o EMuse)

We were disappointed by Mario Bunge’s piece on the scientific status of psychoanalysis (2 October, p 22). As a senior philosopher of science, he could have offered interesting arguments, but instead he founded his criticism of the discipline on factual errors. Psychoanalysis has developed greatly since Freud’s time, producing substantial research and productive connections to other branches of science. Many basic psychoanalytic propositions have been widely accepted, such as the formative impact of early childhood relationships on adult personality. Some of Freud’s specific propositions have been eclipsed by later formulations---as you would expect for bodies of knowledge evolving for more than a century, and certainly for any science. The basic idea of a dynamic unconscious that actively shapes conscious experience and relations with others has made productive connections with disciplines such as neuroscience. Psychoanalysts have been testing the outcomes of psychoanalytic therapies for decades, using randomised controlled trials and systematic follow-up studies, as called for by Bunge in his article. Most trials have found good evidence of the effectiveness of psychoanalytic therapies, when tested in the same way as other approaches. Contrary to Bunge’s assertion, studies included in Jonathan Shedler’s review of meta-analyses of therapeutic outcomes of psychoanalytic therapy did, of course, have control groups (American Psychologist, vol 65, p 98). The 54 signatories to this letter include distinguished researchers in psychoanalysis in the science faculties of leading world universities, who have acquired major public grants and have published papers in high-impact, peer-reviewed scientific journals. This level of scientific contribution compares very well with that in other clinical professions. Readers expect contributors to their debates to be informed as to the facts, and scientific progress requires a respect for evidence. In this spirit we respectfully offer some facts to reassure those concerned by Bunge’s entertaining jibes. Full list of signatories: Mary Target, Peter Fonagy, Anthony Bateman, Peter Hobson, University College London, UK Falk Leichsenring, University of Giessen, Germany Sidney Blatt, Linda Mayes, Yale University, New Haven Connecticut, US Robert Michels, Barbara Milrod, Steven Roose, David Olds, Frank Yeomans, Columbia University, New York City, US Joseph Schachter Mark Solms, University of Cape Town, South Africa Jonathan Shedler, University of Colorado, Denver, US Marianne Leuzinger-Bohleber, Sigmund Freud Institute and University of Kassel, Germany Mardi Horowitz, George Silberschatz, University of California, San Francisco, US Diana Diamond, Eric A. Fertuck, Elliot Jurist, City University of New York, US Helmut Thomä, Horst Kächele, University of Ulm, Germany Raymond Levy, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, US Stephan Hau, Andrzej Werbart, Stockholm University, Sweden Anna Buchheim, University of Innsbruck, Austria Jeremy Safran, The New School for Social Research, New York City, US Stijn Vanheule, Ghent University, Belgium Geoff Goodman, Long Island University, Brookville, New York, US Lewis Aron, New York University, US Joel Weinberger, Adelphi University, Garden City, New York, US Nancy McWilliams, Rutgers University, New Jersey, US Allan Abbass, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada Joseph Masling, State University of New York at Buffalo, US Kenneth N. Levy, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, US Golan Shahar, Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva. Israel John Auerbach, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, US Henning Schauenburg, University of Heidelberg, Germany Dorothea Huber, Technical University of Munich, Germany Stephen Soldz, Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis, US Bethany Brand, Towson University, Maryland, US Karin Ensink, Laval University, Quebec City, Canada Clara López Moreno Alessandra Lemma, University of Essex, Colchester, UK Saskia de Maat, Mentrum Institute for Mental Health, Amsterdam, The Netherlands Patrick Luyten, Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), Belgium Margaret R. Zellner, The Rockefeller University and The Neuropsychoanalysis Foundation, New York City, US Mary Beth Cresci, Division of Psychoanalysis, American Psychological Association, Washington DC, US William H. Gottdiener, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York City, US David Taylor, Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK Sherwood Waldron, Psychoanalytic Research Consortium, New York City, US Paolo Migone, Editor, Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane, Parma, Italy Henriette Löffler-Stastka, Medical University of Vienna, Austria \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ From Jim Hopkins, department of philosophy, King’s College London, and research department of clinical, educational and health psychology, University College London Anyone inclined to credit Bunge’s claim that psychoanalysts are “foreign to the scientific community” should consider examples. The psychoanalyst John Bowlby founded the burgeoning field of attachment research partly to test hypotheses inspired by psychoanalysis about the role of parents. The psychoanalyst Mark Solms has contributed to the neuroscience of dreaming with research indicating that REM sleep and dreaming are dissociable, and that dreams are caused not by the REM mechanisms themselves but by basic motivational systems which are common to all mammals and which arguably form the core of emotion and emotional experience in human beings. Programmes linking psychoanalysis and neuroscience were initiated by analysts 20 years ago, and the journal Neuropsychoanalysis was established in 1999 with an editorial board including leading neuroscientists, cognitive scientists and psychoanalysts. For the past 10 years there have been yearly conferences at which neuroscientists and psychoanalysts have presented research and discussed areas of overlapping interest (video proceedings and other information available at neuropsa.org.uk/npsa). Psychoanalytic journals publish contributions involving psychoanalysts and neuroscientists. Leaders in neurophysiological research on depression have recently put forward an explicitly Freudian model in the Annals of General Psychiatry (vol 7, p 9). This year in Brain, neuroscientists Karl Friston and Robin Carhart-Harris undertake to “demonstrate consistencies between key Freudian ideas and recent perspectives on global brain function that have emerged in imaging and theoretical neuroscience” to show “construct validity” for Freudian concepts and enable “dialogue between psychoanalysts and neurobiologists” (vol 133, p 1265). Such collaboration may, of course, contradict rather than confirm psychoanalytic hypotheses, but it is enough to falsify Bunge’s claim that psychoanalysis should be seen as pseudoscience. Or rather, it would be enough, if Bunge’s claim itself were subject to evidence, rather than abuse masquerading as philosophy.

#### The state is necessarily social---nothing about our explanation is limited to individual psychology.

Nicolai Gellwitzki 25, “The positions of ontological (in)security in international relations: object relations, unconscious phantasies, and anxiety management,” *International Theory* 17(1), 2025, p. 118-150, https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/8844980C60A9DF2D50A0237A811D9C39/S1752971924000125a.pdf/positions\_of\_ontological\_insecurity\_in\_international\_relations\_object\_relations\_unconscious\_phantasies\_and\_anxiety\_management.pdf.

Object relations theory is thus compatible with and offers justifications for OSS’s different subjects of study as highlighted by existing Kleinian work. The first strand of scholarship looks at individuals and how they relate to groups. The work of Cash85 and Houde86 illustrates how Kleinian theory can be employed to analyse how individuals’ experiences of anxiety influence and are influenced by their relationships with different in-groups and out-groups. The second strand of scholarship suggests that groups, including most notably the state as well as International Organisations and political, religious, or ethnic groups, help individuals manage anxiety. Building on this idea, Gellwitzki and Houde have utilised Kleinian theory to demonstrate that the European Union can serve as a provider of ontological security for its member states and their government officials by offering effective defence mechanisms against anxiety.87 The third strand of scholarhship explores states’ conduct in international relations – governments are after all nothing but leaders of a particularly large group and, moreover, such groups often develop a life of their own and should be viewed as an entity in their own right.88 Along this logic, Cash89 as well as Gellwitzki and Houde90 draw on Kleinian theory to develop different theoretical conceptualisations of how this manifests in state behaviour and foreign policy practice. Far from anthropomorphising the state by applying individual-level concepts to it, this constitutes an application of psychological concepts to collective entities, as has been done by psychoanalytic practitioners. In general, object relations theory’s focus on the relationship between individuals, be they group leaders or regular group members, and different groups is in line with OSS scholarship that has suggested that it is the interaction and relationships between individuals and collectives that (re)produce (in)security and anxiety.91 Ontological security-seeking practices are always processes across multiple levels of analysis, and Kleinian theory is uniquely situated to analyse the politico-psychological mechanisms underlying these processes.

#### This argument absolutely turns everything in the 1AC, and we’re still right about it.

Renato Fakhoury 25, Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, “People, States, and the Arctic: Identity and Narratives in Arctic Security Dynamics,” 2025, https://www.proquest.com/docview/3216782700?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses.

In sum, most OSS works concerned with the state level of analysis take a metatheoretical shortcut by treating “states as persons” (Wendt 1999, 2004) and then attributing to the resultant “state person” human feelings, affects and emotions such as those of ontological (in)security. Correspondingly, the scaling up from the individual to the state level, which enables the assumption of a state Self, aligns with—and perhaps also inclines those works to embrace—a Laingian-Giddensian understanding of self-identity and “integral selfhood” where contextual predictability in the form of “basic trust” in the constancy of the social world, consistent autobiographical narratives, and temporal routines ensure a continuity of being-in-the-world, that is ontological security (Laing 1960: 39-41; Giddens 1990: 92-96; 1991: 6, 243). “In international relations,” Bartelson (2015: 81-82) points out, echoing Wendt, “states are assumed to be persons by virtue of their capacity to act intentionally…and possessing something akin to a collective consciousness.” Proponents of this aggregate-level extrapolation model may propose a number of arguments in its defense. First, despite the flaws of state personhood analogy, they may contend, its merits in advancing our understanding of collective psychopolitical dynamics far outweigh its demerits, and as such dismissing it out of hand would risk undermining the interdisciplinary openness and potential of IR as a dynamic field of inquiry. Pertinently, from a state-as-person perspective, exactly because states, nations and societies are imagined heterogeneous collectivities, relying on the “as if” equivalency for their analysis could yield better systemic insights than a sheer focus on their leaderships or ruling elite—who are persons—would. Second, proponents might highlight the policy and practice of international relations in the real world where persons are normally dealt with as state-affiliated “nationals” rather than state-free “individuals” and ultimately based on the “nation-state” from which they hail and how, in ideal-typical terms, friendly or hostile those nation-states are. If a given state is to be penalized through economic sanctions or other legal or diplomatic measures, or so the argument may proceed, it is the treatment of “states as persons” that theoretically justifies application and extension of those measures to its nationals, regardless of its normative implications. “So although the person of the state may be fictitious, looping effects have allowed it to become an indisputable part of political reality,” Bartelson asserts, eventually defending state personhood as “a social fact in its own right” (Ibid: 83).

#### EMPIRICISM---‘experimenting’ consciousness is paradoxical. Knowledge through experiment is more tautological than the truths of analysis.

Erik Stänicke 20, Professor of Psychology at the University of Oslo, et al., “The Epistemological Stance of Psychoanalysis: Revisiting the Kantian Legacy,” *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 89(2), 3/18/2020, p. 281-304.

Nonetheless, there exist some clear-cut examples of positivism and social-constructionism. Let us provide some examples. A strict scientific position can be found when Peter Fonagy (Citation2015) writes that psychoanalysis cannot still be regarded as science. In arguing for a narrow understanding of methods that may provide scientific knowledge, he clearly is committed to a positivistic position. On the other hand, there are many examples of a social-constructivist position besides Hoffman, such as Orange (Citation2003) and Safran (Citation2002).

Kant argues that an empirical realist view (which we may call a positivistic standpoint) and a rationalist approach to knowledge (which may be called a social-constructivist position) are both inadequate in claiming that we can develop knowledge that concerns the essence of the world. Both positions assume that knowledge—which either is provided through the senses or through thinking/logic—can be established without taking the limitations of the human mind into consideration. A social-constructivist will probably protest, arguing that constructivism is concerned exactly with the mind’s limitations and its effects on the perception of reality. However, there is an important nuance to this. In social-constructivism, one aspires to know the world directly by studying the constructs. In Kant’s epistemology, knowledge is about the world, but always mediated by the human mind – and therefore knowledge about the world is always something limited. The philosopher Henry Allison (Citation2012), a leading contemporary authority on Kant, calls it an epistemological position of modesty.

Kant’s Philosophical Project and Freud’s Psychoanalysis

Kant recognized that we are not transparent to ourselves: I can never be sure about the motives of my actions. Since I am not transparent to myself, what motivates the actions of others will likewise evade me. This lack of direct access applies both to self-knowledge and to knowledge about other people.

Kant’s explanation for this lack of transparency is epistemic, not psychological. It is a matter of principle, valid for all individuals, regardless of their historical, cultural, and biographical circumstances. By contrast, Freud, in his metapsychology, partly inspired by Nietzsche’s writings, attempts to develop a psychological explanation of the phenomenon. In Freud’s conception, our urge for self-knowledge stands in conflict to our wish to avoid the pain this insight may yield. It is felt as something dangerous and threatening, causing anxiety and making us uncomfortable. We have accordingly developed a rich repertoire of defence mechanisms to guard against self-knowledge. To hold that the attainment of such transparency should be without ambivalence is for Freud a naïve thought.

#### FANTASY--- The attempt to say psycho false is a fantasy of the unconscious which proves psycho true. Even if they win the argument, the very introduction of it is proof psycho true.

Steven Swarbrick 25 associate professor of English at Baruch College, City University of New York. The Earth is Evil (University of Nebraska Press, 2025). NL 6

The short-circuiting of desire’s destructive detour is the biggest stumbling block that psychoanalysis poses to ecocriticism. Though the politics of divestment certainly accords with main-stream ecocritical objectives, the unconscious drive to divest from accumulation also entails divesting from the fantasy of ecological wholeness. The fantasy of the whole reigns supreme in ecocritical discourse. It is the underwriting logic of every reparative reading. Even the most thoroughly deconstructed subject finds herself entangled—the seemingly endless sprawl of deconstructed particulars sutured in the end. But this aspira-tional entanglement is inherently contradictory. The ecological subject mirrors point for point the aspirational ideology of capitalism, which promises to make desiring subjects whole. The most eco-utopian futures are, consequently, repetitions of the capitalist order. Worse, they perpetuate that order by repressing the split subject of desire.

By contrast, the split subject in psychoanalysis is inexorable. It is not an accidental split foisted on us by external forces. Rather, the split between drive, which has no object and is contentless, and fantasy, which fills in the drive with so many contents, is the very unfoundation of thought, including ecological thought. Although Freud forgets this point when turning to psycho-analytic oil, forgetting is, according to his own theory, one of the ways the unconscious drive satisfies itself by re-creating an absence where there would otherwise be a memory. Freud’s failure to apply his theory is a clear example of psychoanalytic theory in action.

#### Any deferral in antagonism psychically sustains the unsustainable, which turns extinction.

Isaac Thornley 22. Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Human Geography at the University of Toronto. “Sights of Contestation Part I: Unconscious.” 3/23/22. https://niche-canada.org/2022/03/23/sights-of-contestation-part-i-unconscious/.

The underside of a “win-win” neoliberal environmental governance strategy is the death drive of extractive populism.29 What makes disavowal “palliative” (at least in the short term) is that it entails a deferral of confrontation with antagonism, i.e., the social and ecological consequences of expanding the scale of fossil fuel extraction and consumption. As Andreas Malm argues, while denial might temporarily manage the anxiety, eventually it must find an outlet, which can take the form of scapegoating.30 A scapegoat is a particular kind of fantasy that displaces an antagonism intrinsic to a social-ecological relation onto an “other.” A “fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance” and this element of “failure” is often expressed in the form of an external, “foreign” entity.31 Appeals to various scapegoats, foreign threats, and conspiracies have been integral to Alberta premier Jason Kenney’s rise to power and to his strategy of mobilizing consent for oil sands development. Against the discursive backdrop of external threats, Kenney’s government has launched a “rapid response war room” to “rebut every lie told by the green left”32 as well as a “Public inquiry into anti-Alberta energy campaigns.”33

#### No food-based radicalization or societal collapse.

Maureen J. Purcell 24. Ph.D., M.A., Postdoctoral Researcher, UCI Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation. Former Lecturer, Environmental Law, California State University, Long Beach. "Book Review: Food or War." Environment & Security, Volume 2, Issue 2.

A criticism of *Food or war* is that the titular argument that food has a role in the *genesis* of conflict becomes muddled with the positive feedback loop argument couched within the food–war nexus Cribb describes. The former seems to neglect the role of conflict in causing food and hunger crises, emphasizing only a one-way relationship from food crisis to war. This is not to say that Cribb does not present both pathways of this nexus—he does and in compelling fashion—but rather that the evidence supports a slightly different and more cyclical hypothesis than the central thesis.

Similarly, in emphasizing the inarguably important role of food in relationship to conflict, other variables critical for understanding the conflict cycle are ignored. Full bellies do not premise utopia as Cribb seems to extrapolate from his material. A well-fed populace is not one without ideological, moral, or political differences—all of which have been implicated in the conflict cycle. At times Cribb likens food stress to “tinder” (e.g., pp. 140–141, 149), which would suggest, perhaps more appropriately, that the state of the food system is a necessary but not sufficient element of initiating conflict. While the argument posited is never that food is the only cause, the other contributors are rarely if at all mentioned, leaving the non-expert reader without a sense of what else contributes to this complex issue.

Finally, while the main argument is persuasive (if at times muddled) some statements would benefit from supporting evidence while others would specifically be better supported by scientific evidence rather than popular science journalism or news media. This is particularly true of each instance in which the female gender is ascribed particular personality traits in universal fashion in apparent disregard for feminist critiques of stereotyping. Trying to anticipate this very critique, Cribb states, “This isn’t gender stereotyping. It’s an observation about how different kinds of humans think” (2018, p. 201), which does not offer the credibility to his argument that he thinks it does. From a science communication perspective, the mixing of scientifically supported and unsupported claims at times makes it difficult to determine what is a tested and true understanding and what is Cribb’s personal perspective.

#### No nuke escalation---stability/instability paradox caps escalation.

David Brewster 19. PhD; National Security College at the Australian National University; Distinguished Research Fellow with the Australia India Institute. “India-Pakistan: Shadow Dancing in the Himalayas.” Lowy Institute. 2/27/2019. https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2019/02/27/india-pakistan\_shadow\_dancing\_in\_the\_himalayas\_112976.html

Nuclear war theorists tell us that competing nuclear-armed states inhabit what is called a “stability/instability paradox”. The fear of mutually assured destruction can create a form of stability at a strategic level (as we saw during the Cold War). But nuclear weapons can simultaneously create instability by making lower levels of violence relatively safe, because escalation up the nuclear ladder is perceived as too dangerous. In other words, by creating a nuclear ceiling that both sides do not wish to breach, there is also space for conflict underneath that ceiling. How large that space is will depend on the players involved. The India-Pakistan relationship is a great example of this. Pakistan has been a master in pursuing asymmetric strategies against India underneath the nuclear ceiling. This has included adopting a first-use doctrine and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in an effort to blur nuclear red lines (creating space underneath the ceiling). It has supported major terrorist attacks inside India, including the 2001 attacks on the Indian Parliament and the 2008 attacks in Mumbai. It has of course long supported terrorist attacks in Kashmir. In past years, the nuclear threat from Pakistan has prevented New Delhi from responding forcefully to these actions – India’s failure to undertake a military response to the 2008 Mumbai attacks being one example. India is essentially a status quo power, whose first objective is often just to maintain the status quo. But as Pakistan is learning, the stability/instability paradox works in both directions. In 2016, after Pakistan-supported terrorists attacked an Indian Army base at Uri, Modi ordered a raid by Indian special forces against an insurgent’s camp in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The so-called “surgical strike” was heralded as a major victory against terrorism. But while whole books have even been written about it – and even a movie – the details remain somewhat hazy. For its part, Islamabad claimed that the so-called “surgical strikes” never happened, and later invited foreigners to tour the area to “prove” that nothing happened. Each side, wanting to believe its own version, went away with honour served. We are seeing a similar dance now. These latest strikes allow the Modi government to trumpet a major victory against Pakistan, apparently “pre-empting” further imminent attacks against India. This time Delhi turned up the heat a little, striking near Balakot in (undisputed) Pakistan territory rather than in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. And, perhaps incidentally, Balakot is only around 60km from the city of Abbottabad, Osama bin Laden’s old hangout. For its part, Pakistan has again claimed that the strikes never happened and that the Indian planes were in fact forced by the Pakistan Air Force to jettison their bombs in uninhabited mountains and flee. Again, Pakistan has offered to show foreigners around a place somewhere near Balakot to show that nothing happened there. Nevertheless, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan met with Pakistan’s National Security Committee (which controls Pakistan’s nuclear weapons) and then announced that Pakistan would respond to the (non) attack “at the time and place of its choosing”. Whether Delhi and/or Islamabad feel the need to take further public action remains to be seen. But both will seek to manage events. The stability/instability paradox tells us that there may be room to move underneath the nuclear ceiling – sometimes considerable room – but also that the nuclear ceiling is still definitely there.

#### It’ll be cushioned.

Jürgen Scheffran 25. Professor of integrative geography at the University of Hamburg and head of the Research Group “Climate Change and Security” (CLISEC). PhD in Physics from Marburg University. “Planetary Boundaries, Polycrisis and Politics in the Anthropocene: Climate Pathways, Tipping Cascades and Transition to Sustainable Peace in Integrative Geography.” *Towards Rethinking Politics, Policy and Polity in the Anthropocene*. February 25, 2025. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-71807-6\_8

While long-term historical studies suggest a coincidence between climate variability and armed conflict, empirical findings are less conclusive for recent periods. Empirical findings indicate that climate-conflict linkages vary significantly between the world’s regions. Countries with low human development are particularly vulnerable to the double exposure of natural disasters and armed conflict (Ide 2023). Economic, political, and social factors on local, regional and global levels are interlinked with broader effects of climate change. The likelihood of violent conflict is moderated by human development, effective institutions and governance.