

ON THE DESTRUCTION AND DEATH DRIVES

André Green

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PHOENIX
PUBLISHING HOUSE
firing the mind

First published in French in 2010 by les Éditions d'Ithaque
First published in English in 2023 by
Phoenix Publishing House Ltd
62 Bucknell Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire OX26 2DS

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Authorised translation from the French language edition published by Ithaque

Translated from French and with a Preface by Steven Jaron

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This translation was made possible by the sponsorship of the Boston Group for Psychoanalytic Studies, Inc.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-1-912691-64-7

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India



www.firingthemind.com

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About the author

André Green, French psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, member of the Paris Psychoanalytical Society (SPP), was one of the most pre-eminent figures of the contemporary psychoanalytic movement, both for his theoretical and clinical research and his role within institutions. In 1965, Green became a member of the SPP, of which he was President from 1986 to 1989. From 1975 to 1977 he was a Vice-President of the International Psychoanalytical Association and from 1979 to 1980 a Freud Memorial Professor at University College London. He was elected an Honorary Member of the British Psychoanalytical Society.

He attended Jacques Lacan's seminars between 1961 and 1967, when he definitively broke with him. He then directed a seminar at the Institute of Psychoanalysis in Paris where he invited the great philosophers and authors of his time, including Jean-Pierre Vernant, Michel Serres, Jacques Derrida, Marcel Detienne, and René Girard. A great reader of D. W. Winnicott and a friend of W. R. Bion, he constantly bridged the gap between British, American, and French psychoanalytical research in a spirit of international openness and turned towards the future

of psychoanalysis. His theoretical contributions—the dead mother, private madness, the work of the negative, the tertiary processes and the analytic object—opened the way to psychoanalysis beyond neurosis, the hallmark of twenty-first-century psychoanalysis.

Many of his works, such as *Life Narcissism*, *Death Narcissism*, *On Private Madness*, and *The Work of the Negative*, are classics of psychoanalytic literature.

About the editor

Howard B. Levine, MD, is a member of APSA, PINE, the Contemporary Freudian Society, and Pulsion, on the faculty of the NYU Post-Doc Contemporary Freudian Track, on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* and *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, editor-in-chief of the Routledge Wilfred Bion Studies Book Series, and in private practice in Brookline, Massachusetts. He has authored many articles, book chapters, and reviews on psychoanalytic process and technique and the treatment of primitive personality disorders. His edited and co-edited books include *Unrepresented States and the Construction of Meaning* (Karnac, 2013); *On Freud's Screen Memories* (Karnac, 2014); *The Wilfred Bion Tradition* (Karnac, 2016); *Bion in Brazil* (Karnac, 2017); *André Green Revisited: Representation and the Work of the Negative* (Karnac, 2018); *Autistic Phenomena and Unrepresented States* (Phoenix, 2023) and *The Freudian Matrix of Andre Green* (Routledge, 2023). He is the author of *Transformations de l'Irreprésentable* (Ithaque, 2019) and *Affect, Representation and Language: Between the Silence and the Cry*. (Routledge, 2022).

About the translator

Steven Jaron is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst working at the 15–20 National Vision Hospital and in private practice in Paris. Before studying psychology at the University of Paris-7 and psychoanalysis at the Psychoanalytic Society for Research and Training (SPRF), he obtained a PhD in French and Comparative Literature from Columbia University. His essays have appeared in the *Libres Cahiers pour la psychanalyse*, *Bacon and the Mind: Art, Neuroscience and Psychology* (Thames and Hudson, 2019), and *Psychoanalysis and Covidian Life: Common Distress, Individual Experience* (Phoenix, 2021) and he is the author of two monographs, *Edmond Jabès: The Hazard of Exile* (Legenda, 2003) and *Christopher Bollas: A Contemporary Introduction* (Routledge, 2022).

Introduction

Howard B. Levine

André Green begins his exploration of Freud's formulation of the death drive¹ by noting that

We ought not shy away from contending with Freud's most speculative metapsychology, that which at times roils us due to its impression of being inimical to retreating from the paradise of ideas while nevertheless legislating on problems that concern

¹ Editor's note: In this volume, we will be using the designation death *drive* rather than death *instinct*. Strachey made an unfortunate choice when he translated *Instinkt* and *Trieb* with the same English word, *instinct*, because for Freud the two terms allude to a different set of connotations. Instincts produce "a hereditary behavioral pattern peculiar to an animal species, varying little from one member of this species to another and unfolding in accordance with a temporal scheme which is generally resistant to change and apparently geared to a purpose" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 214) and have a relatively stable aim and object. (Think here of salmon returning to the specific waters in which they hatched in order to spawn.) In contrast, *Trieb* is meant to convey "the relatively undetermined nature of the emotive force in question and the notions of *contingence of object and variability of aim*" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 214–215; emphasis added to the original).

our clinical practice at its deepest, for example, when it elevates itself to examining notions as prevalent and fundamental as life and love, as destructiveness and death.²

In Chapter 2, speaking of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which Freud (1920) begins to seriously consider the death drive as a fundamental component of his dual death theory,³ Green adds:

The impact of Freud’s revolutionary text from 1920 continues to be felt by the analytic community after well more than half a century. What may be said about it? We might summarize the situation as such: “The words have been declined; the thing, on the other hand, in general recognized” ... In the writings of those who see themselves as heirs to Freud’s legacy, we surely observe, from Ferenczi up through our time, that the central problem of psychoanalysis today is precisely found among varied forms of destructiveness.

Green’s aim is to examine in depth, clinically as well as theoretically, culturally as well as within the individual psyche and the analytic process, the status, evolution, and place of the death drive in the writings of Freud and a series of major post-Freudian writers offering

The drive is initially somatic and not represented in the psyche in a form that is ideational or directly knowable. It is a non-specific pressure, a “force without meaning” (Levine, 2022). Only later, as it becomes, produces, and/or unites with an ideational derivative that is psychic does it get attached to a specific object and/or set of aims. But in its somatic form, that is, before it is linked to a derivative that becomes its ideational representative in the psyche, it is ideationally unrepresented. Consequently, Eros and Thanatos are perhaps better thought of as metapsychological hypotheses about “something” in the soma that moves towards discharge in a general and non-specified sense as they “bind” and “unbind”, rather than as inherent sources of specific desires (love, hate, etc.). The specificity of aim and/or object of desire are attributes of the *drive derivative* and not inherent to the drive itself. The latter furnishes the drive force or pressure to these derivatives, which may then be transformed and become qualified as erotic or destructive in aim (Levine, 2023).

² Editor’s note: In this Introduction, all unattributed quotations will refer to Green’s text in this book. Since the Introduction was prepared from a manuscript prior to production of the actual book, corresponding pagination has not been possible.

³ Editor’s note: see Footnote 1, p. xiii.

us his conclusions—and inconclusions—for our further reflection and exploration. In so doing, he conveys a continued vitality in the Freudian enterprise and an urgency to protect and advance it. For Green, Freud offers a powerful and unique perspective from which to view human psychology, social organisation, and the existential challenge of finding and creating meaning within one's life.

In addition to carefully tracing and commenting upon the evolution of Freud's thought, this volume may be seen as a continuation of Green's struggles to make sense of, and put into perspective, his lifetime of psychoanalytic reflections and clinical encounters; a reckoning that anglophone readers may access and trace beginning with his 1975 *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* paper "The analyst, symbolization and absence in the analytic setting", continuing with *On Private Madness* (1997), *The Work of the Negative* (1999), *Key Ideas for a Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (2005a), *Psychoanalysis: A Paradigm for Clinical Thinking* (2005b), and eventuating with *Illusions and Disillusions of Psychoanalytic Work* (2011).

For many North American, anglophone readers, there may initially be something that feels foreign, uncomfortably old fashioned, or overly theoretical in assigning so much import and giving such credence to the drive concept. However, I suspect that many readers will come away with a new and meaningfully altered sense of why the drives—and certain key, metapsychological formulations—were and remain so central to Freud's thinking and, indeed, to the essential core of psychoanalysis as a venture into the ineffable realm of psychic reality.

Regarding the latter, Green sounds a warning and cautions contemporary readers:

there is nothing more alien to common sense than an understanding of psychoanalytic theory ... psychoanalytic thought repels those who try to assimilate it from the outside in so far as its fundamental postulates and theorems are at odds with ordinary thinking.

Put simply, although epistemologically it is very far from a simple matter, psychic reality is a very different matter than consensually verifiable "social reality". Thus, Freud's conclusions are not to be seen "in relation to some reality which [one] might capture in [their] net".

For Green,

The aim of the Freudian enterprise ... [aspires] without any moralising ambition, to foreground a previously unknown aspect of human psychic reality.

And the drive remains an essential concept in the matrix of Freudian theory. It is

a primitive organisation on which the ego has no hold and which tends to reproduce itself without actually being related to the repetitive quest for pleasure but aims, according to Freud, at re-establishing a prior state.

Without the concept of the drive and its force, Green tells us, “Freudian thought is mutilated”. Freud viewed the drive as a “paramount concept” and “asserted the right of paramount concepts not to be proved”. The structure of Freud’s metapsychology is built upon a form of theory-building—dual drive theory; Eros and the death drive; binding and unbinding; pleasure principle *vs.* repetition compulsion—that offers psychoanalysts a coherent conceptual metatheory of psychic organisation, development, and function and informs a pragmatically useful model for clinical listening, understanding, and intervention. That is, there is a *clinical* value to Freud’s metapsychology.

Psychoanalytic theory is a set of interlocking models and theories that derive both from clinical observation and the need for theoretical coherence and consistency. Recognising the latter offers a rejoinder to Nagel’s infamous criticism that psychoanalytic propositions allow for no disproof. It asserts that the verification and “proof” of psychoanalytic assumptions and theories does not necessarily rest with the degree to which they are found to correspond to observable “facts”, but lies instead in the extent to which holding certain assumptions allows analysts to function more effectively in the clinical setting. On this point, in regard to the death drive, Green is quite clear:

When considering clinical practice, whatever theory one holds or has elaborated, in contemporary psychoanalysis it is always a

matter of coming to terms with destructiveness ... Freud himself pointed out three illustrative instances of the death drive: the unconsciousness of guilt, masochism, and the negative therapeutic reaction. While these observations are hardly debatable, modern clinical practice adds quite a few others to them.

While sensual, empirical experience may be a sometimes unreliable guide from which to reach conclusions (Bion, 1970), clinical experience does teach us that

when painful experiences frustrate the pleasure principle and overwhelm the psyche, they result in experiences of unrepresentable destructiveness owing to their all-out, devastating power, that is [both] external and internal. Deadly anxiety and limitless destruction fill the entire psyche ... [I]n such cases we cannot speak of regression to a prior libidinal state but it is a matter of comprehensive regression in which destructiveness is unable to face psychic pain, nor put a stop to it ... we're closer here to what Pierre Marty terms disorganization than repression ... Pleasure is likewise irrelevant here; paradoxically, only *jouissance* reigns. It is uninterpretable; ... interpretations remain ineffective over it ... [It is as if it were] a cyclone that nothing can stop.

And yet, paradoxically, clinical experience also teaches that there is sometimes some possibility of amelioration *après coup*—containment, rebalancing if not redress—in the living out, making sense of, and finding words to describe the catastrophic chaos and disruption and the defensive organisations that it has required. That is, acknowledging, bearing, and putting into perspective.

The binding counterforce of Eros, appearing under the aegis of the transference relationship, can help marshal a primal drive towards representation, a “drive of reason ... not engendered by objects, but that it engenders its own object” (Kahn, 2005, p. 52). This movement was especially recognized by Bion (1962, 1970) in his theory of alpha function and container/contained and was something that I expanded upon in my description of the representational imperative (Levine, 2012, 2022). It stands at the centre of the paradoxical challenge posed by the status

of the drives as unrepresented: how to find words to describe and talk about something that in a sense both does and does not “exist”, and that to the extent to which it may “exist” is not fully comprehensible or conveyable by thought or language. Bion (1962) spoke at length of the difficulty involved in trying to “approach a mental life unmapped by the theories elaborated for the understanding of neurosis” (p. 37).⁴

Elsewhere, Green (2005a) noted that Freud’s (1923) theoretical shift from the topographic to the structural theory marked a change from a theory centred on psychic *contents* (ideational *representations*) to a theory about *process* and the movements needed to tame the unstructured, not yet represented aspects of *the drive*—that is, emotion, impulse, and somatic discharge—within the psyche. According to Green (2005a), the major development in Freud’s revision of theory was the change from

one model, at the centre of which one finds a form of thinking (desire, hope, wish), to another model based on the act (impulse as internal action, automatism, acting) ... the analyst now not only has to deal with unconscious desire but with the drive itself, whose force (constant pressure) is undoubtedly its principal characteristic, capable of subverting both desire and thinking.
(p. 47)

Green (1984) summarised this irresolvable problematic when he reminded us that:

There was on Freud’s part a deliberate choice that psychoanalysis should be a treatment that worked exclusively through speech, through verbal exchange, and that it should manage to deprive itself of any other means ... the crucial question of psychoanalysis remains: how is it that by means of speech we change something in the structure of the subject, whereas what we change does not belong to the field of speech?
(p. 121)

⁴For an extended discussion, see Levine (2022).

While Freud's introduction of the death *drive* raises questions about the essential nature of human aggression and destructiveness, it also asks us to consider:

Is death truly the aim of a drive? Death and the death drive are different things. Death is a fact ... But a drive which pushes towards death can by no means be taken for granted. What do mean by this? If we avoid the controversial term of death drive and above all recall that it is a question of (self- and hetero-) destruction, then things become clearer.

Or do they? For Freud, the hypothesis of a drive contains within itself the force and movement towards

the return to a previous state of life ... [as] the blanket aim of any drive.

What sense do we make of this?

As always with Freud, the introduction of a new concept puts the equilibrium of the whole into question and requires another conceptualization other than that which had prevailed till then.

As far back as the "Project", Freud (1950, p. 297) proposed that the primary function of the nervous system was that of the regulation of tension through discharge; if not total discharge, then at least keeping the tension level optimal and as low as possible. In subsequent writings, he continued to explore whether it was a matter of constancy or complete inertia (the Nirvana principle). What remains constant for Freud throughout his theorising is his attachment to the model of an activity having as its goal the suppression or reduction of the inner tension produced by the stimuli that inevitably follow from our being-in-the-world, alive and sensate.

In 1920, Freud concluded that "the necessity of binding precedes the search for pleasure" and that it is the tenacity of the repetition compulsion that attests to the presence of the death drive. That, and the war experiences, war neuroses, negative therapeutic reactions, and

unconscious guilt led Freud to conclude that man bears within himself an element of hatred as well as a penchant for aggression and destruction, and thus for cruelty. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* attests to the disillusion concerning the belief in pleasure as a guide to life and the construction of the psychic world.

From the vantage point of a later historical perspective—the Shoah, the Gulag, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—Green sees in this a penchant for destruction of both life and the *soul* of the designated adversary:

The destruction of the soul is what any initiative of servitude and domination in war which pits itself against the other—the foreign(er), the bad, and the hated—seeks. There can be no triumph over the other if the other is left to think freely ... What is sought is the surrender of anything which seems to fall under individual will and which is entitled to express difference, the rejection of or opposition to the other.

Returning to Freud, Green reminds us that in assessing our penchant for destruction, hatred, and cruelty, what is crucial is the relative strength, the binding and unbinding of the Eros–death drive pair:

What is important is the construction–destruction pair, along with its intrication–disintrication correlate. There are in fact two ways of conceiving the death drive. A restricted application which finds justification without too much difficulty ... [in] cases attesting to the uncontrollable aspiration to failure, unpleasure, suffering. Next there are the goals of the Eros–destruction drive pair, an application which is broader and which suggests a novel vision of psychic life.

Regarding that novel vision, Green suggests that Freud gives us two sets of hypotheses. In one, the primal drive is marked by the tendency to return to a prior state of non-tension, non-life (Freud, 1920, p. 38). Hence the connection of the death drive with the Nirvana and Constancy Principles. Freud, however, later recognised the complexity

of this perspective and ultimately acknowledged that there exist pleasurable tensions and unpleasant relaxations.

The other basic hypothesis “posits a vision of simultaneity”: that the life and death drives both exist from the beginning and *ab initio* it is always a matter of relative weight, binding and unbinding, intrication and disintrication. This balance is not only constitutional, but is affected by the quality of primary object relationships at key moments of developmental opportunity.⁵ As one reads through Green’s careful exposition of Freud’s discussions, one may wonder from a somewhat different perspective, especially in regard to Freud’s speculations about the first move from inanimate to animate matter, if the press towards unbinding of the death drive isn’t reflected in or analogous to the concept of entropy in physics.⁶

Another facet of Freud’s thinking that Green brings forward relates to the role of the superego and our status as social beings. With the formulation of the superego and in his later writings,

Freud transposes his field of investigation onto society and henceforth sees the elective domain of the death drive within it. For culture cannot be founded on drive renunciation alone ... The field of culture becomes the arena in which are developed the most destructive effects of the death drive.

Green’s Freud winds up as philosopher, anthropologist, and sociologist despite himself. All of Freud’s later, so-called non-clinical writings—*Totem and Taboo* (1912–1913), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), *Civilization and Its Discontents*⁷ (1930), and *Moses and Monotheism*⁸ (1939)—rest upon two

⁵In fact, aspects of the work of Ferenczi, Klein, Winnicott, Bion, Bowlby, Kohut, Loewald, Green, and others may be seen as a corrective that implicates the actuality of the primary object in the binding/unbinding process and the selection or balancing out the force of the self and other destructiveness of the death drive.

⁶Entropy is a measure of the degree of disorganisation in a liquid or gas. Left to its own devices, without the presence of an organising counterforce, entropy tends to increase over time.

⁷In this text, referred to as *Discomfort in Culture*.

⁸In this text, referred to as *The Man Moses and Monotheistic Religion*.

fundamental pillars: our biological condition as living beings and the quality of the relations of one human being to another.

Biology and anthropology do not come under the relation to life alone. They must further include—in relation to the mortal and living human being—that which is immortalised by culture. This is what the Freudian reflection on the death drive teaches us.

Along with Freud (1930), Green asks: what then is civilization? His answer is sobering:

not all ideologies are bearers of peace. They likewise sow death and threaten the most civilised peoples. We are endowed with law in order to limit the damage. But this may vanish from one day to the next in favour of the most obscurantist prejudices. Think of National Socialism and Communism.

While Freud may sometimes assert that “sublimation has surely gained ground” and that there is “the existence of a ‘civilizing process’ unfolding throughout humankind”, history teaches that these processes continue to pale compared to the excitement and pleasure of relatively unmodified drive discharge, *jouissance*.

The feeling of happiness derived from the satisfaction of a wild drive motion untamed by the ego is incomparably more intense than that derived from sating a drive that has been tamed.

(Freud, 1930, p. 79)

men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose drive endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness.

(Freud, 1930, p. 111)

Emphasising the problematic role that culture may play in regard to aggression and destructiveness, Green reminds us that:

Culture, far from succeeding in ‘humanising’ humans, most often fails. Civilisation does not get the better of barbarism ... We need only think of the Shoah.

The abolition of private property gave birth to the Gulag and the new order to the extermination camps. The country in which the Statue of Liberty is found put prisoners in chains and torture was practiced in Algeria by the country of the French Revolution ... One must not forget that if civilisation condemns violence, war is nonetheless monopolised by the State.

For Green, this leads to a sobering conclusion: Freudian pessimism

is the disillusioning enterprise which, for him, constitutes the aim of psychoanalysis.

To what extent will our readers agree or disagree? More than simply his own conclusions, Green has offered us this extraordinary book as a way station and launching pad towards future evolutions in psychoanalytic thought.

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Translator's preface

Steven Jaron

On the Destruction and Death Drives is a late work, the fruit of decades of thinking and debating one of Freud's most radical and thus controversial concepts. André Green saw it as growing out of *The Work of the Negative* (1993 for the French edition, 1999 for the English edition) and somewhat overlapping with *On Private Madness* (1986 for the English edition, 1990 for the French edition; the essays comprising the two editions are close but not identical) and further leading up to the still later *Illusions and Disillusions of Psychoanalytic Work* (2010 for the French edition, 2011a for the English Edition) (Green, 2011b, pp. 380–381). As he states in the foreword to the second edition of 2010, which this translation follows in form and content, he believed that this book was one of his “most important works” (see p. xxxiii, this volume).

André Green's study is a vigorous defence and illustration of Freud's advances on drive theory in which he asserts the necessity of taking into account not only drive dualism but fundamentally of recognising the psychic reality of the death drive in the individual psyche and across cultural processes. The evolution of Freud's drive theory is made possible by the structural model and, as Green wrote unequivocally in an overview of his own later works, “Qui dit pulsion de mort

dit renoncement à la première topique” (Green, 2011a, p. 380). Put in slightly different terms, we as Freudian analysts “cannot speak of the death drive without giving up the first topography”. Even now, as he details the growth of Freud’s argument during the pivotal decade of the 1920s when “the concept of the unconscious” is *replaced* by “that of the id” (see Section 3.4), Green deplores the fact that some analysts cannot bring themselves to recognise the primacy of “drive motions” over “unconscious representations” and further to fathom the theoretical validity of the death drive, if not its clinical relevance. These points and others, in particular the relationship of psychosexuality to the death drive, are discussed in the pages below. Notwithstanding, while in no way a psychoanalytic manifesto, *On the Destruction and Death Drives* may be read not as a call to arms, but to *thinking through* the repercussions of destructiveness at the heart of the psyche.

He qualifies his conclusion as “tentative” since so little is illustrated by case material demonstrating the destructiveness of the work of the negative in his patients’ psyches. This is, he explains, because “I preferred to let myself work over the memory of my experience with them or, in some cases, with those who are still continuing their experience with me, in pursuit of the *Durcharbeitung*” (see p. 113, this volume). The work of memory fosters working-through and the virtual lack of case material—its absence—gives rise to the question of how the destruction and death drives express themselves in the reader’s own clinical practice. In other words, as we proceed through the book, we might ponder how, and to what degree, the destruction and death drives operate not only in our patients but further in the countertransferential dynamic. This, in any case, has been my own experience. Notwithstanding, *Illusions and Disillusions of Psychoanalytic Work* provides a series of clinical illustrations of the work of the negative drawn from Green’s own practice as well as that of colleagues.

André Green may at times be polemical, but this does not prevent him from writing as a ferryman of ideas transporting concepts from one intellectual horizon to another, in this work across mainly British and French shores. Is the capacity to make the frontiers thinkable somehow related to his origins as a Francophone, Cairene Jew who came to France as a young man? Foreignness appeared integral to his make-up, as he made his home elsewhere. Nonetheless, conceptualising the borderline

was precisely what he succeeded in doing as no one had till then. As he wrote in “The borderline concept”, “Our experience has shown us that the limit between madness and sanity is not a line, but a vast territory in which no precise division permits separating madness from sanity” (Green, 1990, pp. 104–105). The use of the word “borderline” when it comes to differentiating mental pathology and mental health, then, is something of a misnomer, or at least gives rise to misunderstanding; it is not a line or division but a “vast territory”, an expansive and perhaps overlapping realm reaching into each.

Edmond Jabès, who shared the same background in Egypt and destiny in France of being in-between, though as a poet not a psychoanalyst, wrote while still living in Cairo in the early 1940s, “Constamment en pays étranger, le poète se sert de la poésie comme interprète”, which may be translated as: “Constantly in a foreign country, the poet makes use of poetry as his interpreter” (Jabès, 1959, p. 208). A perennial stranger, the poet is concerned with interpreting borders and what occurs inside and outside them, and of making their qualities visible. The interpretative drive—or is it rather the translational drive?—is part and parcel of a poet’s self experience, a continuously transformative aesthetic ontology. If I were to substitute “psychoanalyst” for “poet” and “psychoanalysis” for “poetry” in Jabès’s aphorism, I believe that we would come one step closer to sensing not only what characterises André Green’s psychic condition but also the pertinence of his clinical thinking.

When we discuss a book with another person, such a dialogue can be thought of as object presenting, the paradigm being how the mother presents an object to her baby. In talking about an aesthetic object, there occurs a verbal and nonverbal exchange that reveals the way by which one subject relates to another. I recall how in 2006, in the courtyard behind the rue Saint-Jacques at the former premises of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society while waiting for his seminar to begin, André Green came up to me and asked what I was working on. It happens that I had just given a lecture on the painter Zoran Music in which I discussed Green’s disobjectalising function—in which first one disqualifies the other so that the other may be eliminated—in relation to how Music, while in Dachau, managed to sketch his fellow prisoners. With his own means he objectalised (or re-objectalised) them through recording their experience in the face of death, imminent or realised.

This was a desperate and potentially life-threatening expression of the life drive when confronted with an absolute form of destructiveness (Jaron, 2008).

André Green told me that he wished to see the lecture notes and the conversation ended with a mutual smile as we walked together in silence up to the seminar room. Shortly afterwards, with some trepidation, I sent them to him. He wrote back and I was relieved when he gave them his approval. The work of Zoran Music, moreover, made him think of another painter who had survived the camps, Miklos Bokor, with whom, he indicated, he was well acquainted (Green, 1995 and 2011c). He then added that he had just finished a book on the death drive. He said, however, that he did not know if I would subscribe to the assertions set out in this new work, as I had, earlier, regarding *On Private Madness*. *On Private Madness* dealt largely with the borderline concept and the treatment of borderline states while the subject of *On the Destruction and Death Drives* was principally what its title suggested. While reading it and thinking about my own clinical work—to speak nothing of the dark passages of history, if only those in which Music and Bokor found themselves ensnared—the metapsychology of the death drive and the urge to destroy was, however, immediately made clear to me.

A few thoughts on terminology. The expression, *drive theory*, is a not-so literal translation of Freud's *Trieblehre*. While *Lehre* in English might connote "theory", it chiefly means "lesson" or "teaching". Furthermore, it is less doctrinal (though some may see it in this way) than forming part of a body of knowledge, one moreover susceptible to revision. Consistent with Freud, André Green employs *pulsion* throughout *Pourquoi les pulsions de destruction ou de mort?* (as in his other works) and my translation, *drive*, follows this usage. Yet this differs from how *Trieb* appears in the *Standard Edition* as *instinct*, a choice denounced by Lacan, for instance, in his 1964 seminar (Lacan, 1964, p. 49). And yet, explaining his decision to go for *instinct*, James Strachey argued that at mid-century the English language had no satisfactory equivalent for the German word. Opting for *drive* would require, he contended, "a very brave man seriously to argue that rendering Freud's '*Trieb*' by '*drive*' clears up the situation" (Strachey, 1966, p. xxv). I presume, however, that one hundred years after the publication of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), not only a specialised knowledge of Freud's essential terminology

but likewise a broader one has been acquired, and so Strachey's decision has been reversed. If Strachey favoured *instinct*, perhaps this was in fact because it was what was acceptable—at least he thought it so—at the time (the appearance of the first English translation was nearly simultaneous with the publication of the German edition). The drive, specifically the death drive, was itself the source of discomfort consistent, as Green repeatedly shows, with the discomfort felt by those analysts for whom the very idea was inadmissible. For him, the refusal of the metapsychological concept of the death drive amounts to nothing less than a rejection of the *full* contribution of Freudian psychoanalysis to the understanding of human nature. Further, though perhaps less important yet still advisable, I have chosen “investment” for “cathexis”, Strachey's rendering of *Besetzung*.

Revisions have been made not only to the *Standard Edition*'s translations of Freudian terminology but also to the titles of some of Freud's books and essays. *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) is given here as *The Man Moses and Monotheistic Religion*, and especially important to *On the Destruction and Death Drives*, *Discomfort in Culture* replaces *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). Laurence Kahn argues that translating the title of Freud's final work as *The Man Moses and Monotheistic Religion* is preferable in order to emphasise, following Freud, that Moses was a *man* (Kahn, 2022). My decision to render *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* as *Discomfort in Culture* is motivated by the observation that the usual translation doesn't convey the meaning of the first term, so fundamental to Freud's thesis (stated in a word here but developed by Green in Section 3.1) that cultural processes impinge on the drives and thereby arouse frustration, with everything that such renunciation or compromise implies. According to Strachey, Freud himself suggested *Man's Discomfort in Civilization* to the book's initial translator, Joan Riviere, “but,” he added, “it was she herself who found the ideal solution of the difficulty in the title that was finally adopted” (Strachey, 1961, p. 60). Other possibilities, however, include *disquiet* or *unease* or, as Strachey floated, *malaise* (in fact, retained for the French translations, *Le Malaise dans la culture* or *la civilisation*, depending on the translator). Be that as it may, the suggestion to give *das Unbehagen* as *discomfort* is, it seems to me, quite sufficiently accurate: one might think that *disquiet* is preferable because *discomfort* is both physical and psychical while

the former word describes a categorically mental disturbance, that is, worry or unease. But in this specific work Freud discusses the impact of civilising processes on the drive, which he defined in “Instincts and their vicissitudes” (or, rather, “Drives and the drives’ fate”) as a “frontier concept between the mental and somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its continuity with the body” (Freud, 1915, p. 122). To my mind, the *discomfort* associated with the fortunes of the drive helpfully combines what is both psychic and somatic and further implies their continuity (Freud speaks of *Zusammenhang*). Lastly, the English of the title, “Das Unheimliche” (1919) (Strachey’s “The ‘uncanny’”, with the key term placed, as it were, in scare quotes), in which Freud displays his audacious yet fastidious genius as a rigorous philological psychoanalyst, is given as “The unhomely”.

Like Freud’s language use, I have tried to render Green’s thinking, expressed with his characteristic combativeness, as clearly yet as faithfully as possible. At times, however, he uses words that are uncommon in French (e.g., *néantisation* and *psychisation*) and so, where needed, an occasional explanatory note has been added. Words or expressions such as *après-coup* or *jouissance* have not been commented on as they are more familiar to English-speaking analysts, though Rosine Jozef Perelberg (Perelberg, 2006) on the former and Darian Leader (Leader, 2021) on the latter can be consulted with profit as to their meaning. The French terms *intrication* and *désintrication* are translated as *intrication* and *disintrication*; while rare in English, they are nevertheless attested to and so cannot be translated as *fusion* (*fusion*) and *defusion* (*défusion*) or *binding* (*liaison*) and *unbinding* (*déliation*), all of which moreover are frequently employed by different authors including Green himself in discussions on drive theory. Where Green regularly shortens titles of Freud’s works (e.g., *Au-delà...* for *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*), full titles are restored. Quotations of passages from his own works have been translated especially for this volume. André Green chose Montaigne for the epigraph to this work, and I feel that Florio’s translation, contemporary with Shakespeare though here somewhat modernised, is suitable for the English edition.

Warm thanks are due to the members of the Boston Group for Psychoanalytic Studies (BGPS) and, in particular, Howard B. Levine and

David G. Power, whose comments on a draft of this work I have greatly benefited from, and further to Ana de Staal of Ithaque Editions and Kate Pearce of Phoenix Publishing House.

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