

Till death-drive us apart: Associating injury and aggression in the couple

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Abstract

This paper explores the death drive and aggression and its relationship with narcissistic injury in the couple dynamic. Rather than thinking about the all-too-common effects of aggression in relationships, this paper examines its aims and how various forms of injury and disillusionment are built into the developmental processes of all couples. If aggression is the mental immune system, it is argued, reactivity in relationships is built on the link between experienced injury and the attempts by the death drive to paradoxically restore equilibrium. If these links are better understood, particularly the link between inevitable disillusionment and injury, it may assist couples to normalise their difficulties and reduce the destructive effects of the well-intended aggressive drive.