

"Psychological Infanticide: On Parents Who Murder the Minds of Their Babies"

Professor Brett Kahr

18 March 2023 - 10:30 till 12:30

Although Sigmund Freud wrote extensively about death wishes in the family, he devoted far more attention to the *child's* desire to kill not only a sibling but, also, a *parent* of the same sex. He barely ever considered the *parent's* desire to murder the *child*. Sándor Ferenczi expanded Freud's notion of family death wishes by observing, albeit rather briefly, that parents do often convey death wishes to their offspring. And Donald Winnicott elaborated upon the concept of parental death wishes, especially in his classic essay, "Hate in the Counter-Transference".

Building upon these foundational contributions, Professor Brett Kahr will examine his own work with psychotic and forensic patients and, also, with normal-neurotic individuals, exploring the many ways in which maternal and paternal death wishes and death threats towards babies and children will become internalised over time and could, ultimately, contribute to the development of multitudinous forms of severe psychopathology. Kahr will explore the concept of the "infanticidal attachment", examining how early parental death threats might damage the very foundations of the ego structure, resulting in psychosis, suicidality, criminality, severe eating problems, life-threatening addictions, and a host of other extreme psychological states. Utilising extensive case material, he will consider how intensive, long-term psychoanalytically orientated treatment can contribute to the neutralisation of such toxic "infanticidal introjects".

Professor Brett Kahr has worked in the mental health profession for over forty years. He is Senior Fellow at the Tavistock Institute of Medical Psychology in London and, also, Visiting Professor of Psychoanalysis and Mental Health at Regent's University London.

Over the decades, Kahr has worked in the National Health Service and in private practice in Central London with both individuals and couples. He is currently Consultant Psychotherapist to The Balint Consultancy and, additionally, Consultant in Psychology at The Bowlby Centre. He also serves as Chair of the Scholars Committee of the British Psychoanalytic Council, as well as Senior Clinical Research Fellow in Psychotherapy and Mental Health at the Centre for Child Mental Health.

A trained historian, Professor Kahr is the Honorary Director of Research at Freud Museum London and, also, an Honorary Fellow of the museum.

Professor Kahr is the author of sixteen books and series editor of more than seventy-five additional titles on a wide range of subjects.

His solo-authored books include several clinical investigations of extreme psychopathology and forensic mental health, including, *Bombs in the Consulting Room: Surviving Psychological Shrapnel*, as well as *Dangerous Lunatics: Trauma, Criminality, and Forensic Psychotherapy*. He has also written on *Sex and the Psyche*, a Waterstones Non-Fiction Bestseller and a chosen title in the Sunday Times Book Club, based on his study of the traumatic, unconscious roots of over 20,000 adult sexual fantasies.

His next books, due for publication in mid-2023, include *Unearthing Freud's Death Bed and Laing's Missing Tooth: Hidden Histories of British Psychoanalysis*, based on his oral history interviews with many of the pioneers of British psychoanalysis, as well as *How to Be Intimate with 15,000,000 Strangers: Musings on Media Psychoanalysis*, in which he describes the work that he undertook as Resident Psychotherapist at the British Broadcasting Corporation.

FiP Members - Free (booking through the FiP website) Non-FiP Members £55 Early Bird Booking £40 (booked before 18/02/2023) Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/psychological-infanticide-on-parents-who-murder-the-minds-of-their-babies-tickets-523647583017>