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Sex and Gender, Volume I: *On the Development of Masculinity
and Femininity*

Splitting: *A Case of Female Masculinity*

Sex and Gender, Volume II: *The Transsexual Experiment*

Perversion: *The Erotic Form of Hatred*

SEXUAL EXCITEMENT

Dynamics of Erotic Life

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enema manipulations and thus permanently change the nature of her work in the analysis, her relationship to me, and her relationship to those she knew in the outer world.

Now, having looked at these aspects of Belle's anality, let us put them aside, and instead, just as Belle did with me, go over other issues that had to be understood before the crucial clarification.

Perhaps equal to our coming to see what had before been mysterious was Belle's relief that I understood what she had been through. Once the anal traumas and excitements were conscious and shared with me, they became no longer active in every cell of her body and psyche, as it were. They lost their power. They were still present—remembered—but they were no longer there as a presence. (The process is similar to that of mourning, in which we finally give up our hope that the lost object is somehow still there to help us, that the loss did not really occur.) The therapeutic effect came as much from her knowing the two of us shared the insight as from the power of the insight itself. (Too many colleagues, who have come to despair of analysis, maintain that the only effect in analytic technique is this sharing; they underline that the insight is not therapeutic, is the result and not a cause of feeling better, is intellectualization. Those of us, on the other hand, who enjoy analytic practice do so, I think, because we have seen what happens when unconscious, and therefore unmanageable, ideas and feelings become part of a patient's volition.)

Another insight was her seeing the underground stories as representing, in part, the interior of her body, mixing together excretory and reproductive fantasies. This fantasy served as a balance—a counterpoint—to the excitedly, masochistically, genitally complicated erotism that was more focused on the outer rim of her body, especially skin, clitoris, and nipples. These two very different complexes of sensations, fantasies, expectations, and perspectives were isolated from each other, each going its own way, until the exploration of the underground fantasy put them together so that she—the subjective “she” that she lives with—could have both available to her, thus enriching not only her erotic life but her other relationships with people.

A fourth understanding, and therefore a turning point, in regard to anality occurred when we analyzed the ways in which she fused her anality and her exhibitionism.

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Sadomasochism

SADOMASOCHISM IS, I think, a central feature of most sexual excitement. My hunch is that the desire to hurt others in retaliation for having been hurt is essential for most people's sexual excitement all the time but not for all people's excitement all the time. How was it with Belle?

Sadomasochism colored each of her experiences in the real world and in the private world of her daydreams. She transformed every moment so that such themes were dominant; in doing so, she was forever lifting the mundane up to melodrama. I had plenty of chance to study this in our relationship, since her sadomasochism in its most direct form was aimed at me. And it was of course in the transference that these issues were brought under control.*

Her resistance was overtly shaped more by sadomasochism than by anything else. A moment she experienced as filled with distress—usually humiliation—became an attack aimed at me. Even her loving and tender times contained the sadism. For instance, if she was gratified that I understood, she arranged the words in the sentence so that the message was, “Considering that you are a male and therefore have always been and shall always be hard, obtuse, unempathic, and unable to bear my physical presence (because it is female), you really are empathic, kind, and remarkably patient; I love you because you try so hard to contain your disgust.” And those were the good times.

She had plenty of techniques available for trying to irritate me, but they all fell within a certain range: never loud in sound or gesture, she still gave a histrionic touch to each moment. Example: she was rarely

*I am, obviously, not saying “resolved” or “finished.” The measure of success with her—and probably with all patients—is how much the heat goes out of an issue, but the lifelong themes probably seldom disappear completely! She will use this style when pressed, but—as I know through my experience with her—it will be a ghost of its old form.

openly angry but instead attempted to show that she had been unfairly hurt by the brute. For years, there was hardly an hour when tears did not ooze out, to run down her face unwiped, doing their glistening job even when the subject matter changed to the nonpathetic. Example: she often dropped references to people or events about whom or which I knew nothing, doing so as if I were informed and could follow what she was saying. This had a double-edged advantage: either I was left confused (and I *was* chronically confused), or when, infrequently, I asked for clarification, she could feel accused, not just that I wanted information. Example: to demonstrate how cruel I was, she would quote something I had said a day, a week, or several years before. On recognizing what I had actually said, I could see how the change of sometimes only a word or two had shifted the context to suit her purpose. She could then, using her misquotation, show that I was imitating what an analyst should be. She had caught me in the proof that I was a tricky bastard. Example: when, at each hour's end, I remarked that the time was up, she rose sadly, understanding that I had interrupted because I was unable to bear any longer to be in the same room with her.

These exemplified an often-used technique, doing something blatantly at odds with what she knew was reality (as she would later admit). In this way she could be a pest, as she had been with her mother, and so reassure herself that she was being noticed: pests bother you (sadism) till you swat them (masochism); and they know they are pests (masochism).

She kept a script going (it made analysis more fascinating for her) that I, being by nature brutal—that is, male—was constantly about to throw her out of treatment. Therefore, whatever she said or did had also to contain a communication to placate me. By saying something she liked, I was secretly telling her that treatment would end now (and doing it despicably—I was a liar, a cheat, a coward, who did not speak directly). On the other hand, if she decided I was displeased, that also signaled the end of treatment. My going on vacation was a secret plan for the end, and in not responding to the accusation I again displayed that incorrigible need to lie. When we set up an appointment in order to begin again after a vacation, that only meant that I wanted to see her a final time to brush her off. A change of schedule was one more sneaky move toward termination.

Before reporting a dream, she often announced that, although a sterling analyst, I did not want to hear her dream but that, by God, she would report it anyway, no matter what dreadful consequences I inflicted on her. This device was also to indicate that I was only pretending to be an analyst. Beneath that lay her awareness that she knew she

was playing the fool by using these maneuvers so grossly; and beneath that, after enough analytic work had been done that she trusted me, was revealed the idea that here was a relationship where she was allowed to play these awful amusements out and be done with them.

Exhibitionism was a great vehicle for her masochism. I was to consider her displays silly, bubble-headed, even disgusting, but she exquisitely measured her moves so as to dismay but not exhaust me. The men in her daydream are bored but nonetheless stay. No matter what she does, the Director is steadfast. His one absolutely essential quality is that he does not leave; he may be frozen, but he is always *there*.

She would test me with ludicrously inept resistance: "You don't want me to talk about this but I'm going to anyway"; "if I tell you something good is happening in my life you will not listen because you only want to hear about the bad things"; "I want to lie down now, but you think I should sit up"; "you never said I *had* to lie down all the time, but that's what you really believe"; "you don't want me to lie on your couch because I may sweat"; "they say you're an M.D. and an analyst but you really can't stand my talking about bowel movements"; "you pretend that you're not a liar, but you really are"; "all right: the treatment will continue but only because you don't have the guts to be honest and throw me out"; "you can't stand me when I'm depressed (happy, angry)"; "... wearing these pants (this dress, blouse, sweater); "... late to the hour"; "... early to the hour"; "... talking to your secretary"; "... ignoring your secretary"; "when you say yes, you don't really mean it—you mean no" (and vice versa); "you don't want to hear what I'm thinking"; "why won't you answer this question since it's not like the other questions I ask—this time I have to have an answer"; "wouldn't it be more honest if you just told me openly that you hated me"; "I love you because you're so patient and try not to let me see how much I disgust you"; "I won't tell you what I'm thinking because it's none of your business"; "I'm so grateful to you for being willing to change the time of our hour next Friday" (considering that you're by nature such a rigid, obsessive-compulsive son-of-a-bitch); "this time I won't tell you what I'm thinking because it's too important"; "you like it when I'm late because then you don't have to spend so much time with me"; "you hate it when I'm late because you can't stand someone who doesn't keep to a schedule"; "you stick to your mechanical, analytic technique with me but if it were another patient—if it were a man or a prettier woman—you don't treat them that way"; "when you are not showing anger (disgust, etc.) you are doubly a bastard because, first, you're hiding your feelings, and second, no real analyst would get angry under these circumstances and display his lack of understanding, and

also because in refusing to show your anger you are cowardly and a liar"; "you don't want me to understand but just to stop the behavior you don't like"; "you can't stand seeing my real feelings, and so I have to disguise them in front of you"; "I hate you right now because you understand me, and so I feel grateful, which humiliates me because you are a man watching me defenseless with these feelings"; "because I get sexually excited so easily and especially because it happens here, I am humiliated all the time with you" (which leads to more excitement which leads to more humiliation); "I am even more humiliated because only poorly bred women cannot control their sexual excitement." These quotations and paraphrases should convey the sense of what went on almost every hour for years. What a relief for us both when, the tricks left behind, their underlying functions were in the open.

She worked from a "can't lose" position, disguised as a "can't win." The other person is always the brute, she always the victim; but at the level where the action really is, she is secretly the victor. She has demonstrated the alleged attacker's cruel inhumanity. The double bind—"no matter what you do to or for me, it is wrong"—is the masochist's device for keeping supplies of masochism and sadism flowing. If an interpretation made her feel understood, Belle thought, "He doesn't mean it; it's just a trick to hide that he hates me." When she did this to people who did not recognize what she was doing, they would get irritated, which proved she was right all along: no one loved her. (The analyst's technique is especially painful for masochistic patients, for our quietness in the face of this pestering never gives them a sure sign they are right.) In addition, she ended up sexually excited, while we poor attackers, if we did not catch what she was doing, ended up—at the least—with a headache. She saw in treatment, then, the same battleground that had been her fate everywhere.

It was inevitable Belle would stage the Director fantasy with me, and her doing so made the analysis possible: we know that analysis of the transference is not an excursion into theory or a look at the past as in a book but has its own passionate life. I had to be the Director; and I frustrated her just as he did, though I also added the quantity of time and a real presence to the measure of interpretation, which helps patients change the meaning they read into the relationship.*

Winnicott has described "the holding environment," the physical and psychologic setting the analyst provides, comparable to the infant's

*Perhaps, generalizing about resistance, one can say it not only functions to ward off the analyst and thus to protect the patient from attack, but also is a secret way of reversing the situation so that the apparent victim—the patient—becomes the victor and, by thwarting the analyst, makes him suffer.

security within its mother's calm and attentive embrace. Only if the analyst establishes that and the patient finds it can an analysis occur. (We should also recognize that patients hold us, though in a less visible manner.) Then, for the transference to dominate treatment, this "holding" must be ignored. If either analyst or patient tries too hard to manifest this kindness, games of love are played and real gratifications pulse through the analysis, jeopardizing the delicate ambience that allows the past to be present.

At times, when insight broke in after a correct interpretation, Belle admitted—knew—we did not have a truly sadomasochistic relationship. It was the task of analysis to make that manifest. Had it been my job to teach her what she had never known, analysis would not have worked; or at least, nonanalytic techniques hidden in the analysis would have been the predominant ones, as in supportive and behavior therapies. For I was not the teacher of a child but rather the co-worker with an adult. With analysis, she was able to learn what she had always known.

For years, it was my function to serve as the victim of her masochism without feeling myself a victim. Had I really felt victimized, I would have turned sadistic (grumpy, at least), and the analysis might have ended, no matter how correct the interpretations. (By the way, I do not see how an analyst can for long feel himself a victim if he is serious; he will be too busy thinking about why the patient is doing this, which precludes his believing he is the real object of the sadism. Yet we must sense our patients abrading us, or we deny them the chance to experience and analyze their sadism.)

I rather doubt that, had I been a brave and true sadist, she would have stayed in treatment, just as she would never have had an affair with a real sadist. She had never had a relationship with a cruel person, probably because she is not cruel, despite all the masochistic shenanigans. It was her purpose to irritate people and exhaust their patience but not to destroy them. In behavior and in daydreams, she had to introduce *failing* defiance; only that sustained her excitement.

Belle had her first boyfriend when she was six. They wrestled; he beat her up. "It was with him that I had my first body-contact excitement, when we played cowboy, with me as the wrestled-down loser and him on top. I was in love with him. Even now in sex, I want to be pinned down." From then till near the end of the analysis, she had no relationships with boy or man, in reality or fantasy, in which she did not feel abused. Only late in treatment did she realize that, although he was always in trouble for attacking her, this first boy never did the same to anyone else. Then she recalled that in her teens, her girlfriends had

pointed out to her that she was picked on by the boys as the others were not. Not surprisingly, adolescence brought out the most dramatic expressions of her masochistic life-style. It was then that the sexual day-dream took its final form: the Director and the audience of unfeeling men. There was scarcely a harder task in our work than for her to see this pattern as not simply the result of males' natural cruelty but of her endless tricks, either to evoke men's cruelty when they were not going about it spontaneously or to interpret behavior as being sadistic when it was not.

The same themes present in the classic form appeared in other day-dreams; one needs change: even a wild stallion can be a bore at times. Here, for instance, is another. One man is showing another man how, for religious reasons, women must not move during intercourse. Belle is the woman on whom these two men are working, and each time she moves, they beat her. In the background she sees herself, watching. (Remember her lover with severe potency problems; she could not move or he would come too soon. The fantasy allowed her to convert this painful reality to excitement.)

Masochism was present, overtly or occultly, in every waking moment, coloring all experience; she was a victim in search of a disaster.

Although I am shy about reconstructions of childhood, finding them more effective in treatment than for research (they are unsafe for research if one is convinced they are correct), here is one we can consider: Belle, the focus of the games of her girl-woman mother, was not treated as a separate person, a daughter, but rather as a doll that enabled mother's childhood to persist. Having no choice but to be in the role of a doll, Belle learned to secrete "lovely," a primary femininity in which pretty clothes, pretty face, pretty body, pretty bottom, pretty carriage, and pretty thoughts created a burdensome sense of being constantly on stage, observed, concerned that the imagined audience might not admire her. Her kind of exhibitionism (the nonperverse, nongenital kind) is not usually described as masochistic, but it probably is.

She never had a taste for physical masochism. Perhaps that was because physical pain, such as beating or pinching, was not used in her early childhood to control or punish her and so never became a trauma needing to be mastered as she grew.* Her masochism was related, instead, to humiliation.² This theory, however, does not account for the enemas, which not only attacked her integrity but also were acutely

*Perhaps the perversion of masochism is a hungry search for skin and mucous-membrane stimulation in people who got too little in infancy and who have decided, as have "moral masochists," that any attention, even if painful, is better than none.

painful. Yet I saw no sign of that pain being converted to symptoms of excitement except perhaps in her mild focus on anal stimulation. I do not know why she converted the *psychic* trauma of being attacked and humiliated into a masochistic life-style, including her style of erotism, but did not convert the *physically* traumatic sensations into a need for anal penetration. Perhaps if the enemas had been daily, or the Caretaker's concentration clearly filled with anger or hatred—brutal, as it was not in reality—and without the woman also at times being comforting to Belle, the invasions would have been hot enough to demand an erotic defense. (Why, in our society, where grossly sadomasochistic fantasies are a favorite of women, do so few practice the perversion of sadomasochism? What ethnographic data are there on sadomasochism in women in other cultures; does one find the actual perversion or mostly—as in our culture—fantasies? Are there—as I suspect—places where women do not rely on masochistic scripts to excite themselves, places, perhaps, where the power distribution between men and women tips more toward the latter?)

Let us look further at the first few years of Belle's adolescence, by which time masochism was already essential for her dealing with the world. She was well along into masturbation (never to orgasm), with her erotic needs increased by puberty and with her figure beginning to develop, when she began worrying about Peeping Toms. Her concern was augmented by her mother, who dramatically embellished the theme. Belle was preoccupied with fears that voyeurs were hiding in the bushes to watch her. (She says that in fact this did happen once.) In order not to be seen, she would go to a hidden, quiet, safe place that gave her a feeling like that in the underground fantasy.

As the boys and girls of her group developed their social and sexual interests, Belle moved with them, though she spoiled her adolescence by masochism. She let herself be displaced by the girls she felt were prettier, more vivacious, more graceful, and had better social credentials. So she did not try to capture the attention of the most desired boys, but chose instead the boy who became a prime model for the audience of men in the fantasy. She saw him (as, to a lesser degree, she did all the boys of her group, and in time all men except the effeminate or otherwise overtly weak) as cold, arrogant, contactless, unloving, superior. These qualities defined masculinity for her. This young man, of course, was a match for her, meeting her compulsive flinching with constant teasing. Whatever he may have been in reality, she saw him as a sadistic, neurotic man who knew her innermost secrets and met them point for point with his uncanny capacity to humiliate her. So she was chronically excited by him, hating him, blaming him, crying, whin-

ing, coming back for more. Of all the nonfather males mentioned in her analysis, he was the one ~~most~~ constantly present.

He expended little erotic effort on her though they were constantly together. She interpreted this as evidence that she was flawed; first, because he, unpopular and odd, was willing to keep going with her, and second, because, though he went with her, he never acted either lovingly or as if sexually excited. More exactly, he touched her in openly erotic ways and got her excited (often by wrestling with her), but he never advanced the action or tried for satisfaction for himself (the Director's attributes). She could not have sustained a relationship had it been otherwise. And of course, because she persisted in this manifestly neurotic relationship, she felt—no doubt correctly—that everyone observing her thought her defective for keeping at it. At every moment, in every way, she knew how to keep that picture before her girlfriends' eyes.

He represents one of the two types of men she chose until these issues were resolved in treatment. The other was as follows: handsome and strong-appearing, appealing to other women, giving promise in form and manner of manliness and professional success, but in fact hiding a sense of defeat—inferior social origins, unused potential, professional failure, manifest unfaithfulness to her, and disturbances in potency. With such a man, she mastered the scripts in which she imagined herself an enslaved female who was required not to move during intercourse.

Only once in her life had she been fully in love: with her boyfriend at age six. He was strong and tough, of her age, given to chasing and beating her up but also playing more quietly with her. He was her first sexual partner, who enjoyed taking out his penis and urinating to her respectful attention.

The clearest contribution to her masochism*—the anal intrusions—make up another set of sensations and images, played out as if independent of the scripts that lie parallel, contiguous, or that cross over the narrative at the moment regnant. Let us go back to that to catch another glimpse of how treatment helped change Belle's way of working in the analysis, her trust of me, and her trust of everyone else. We return to the hour after she let out fully the suffering the enemas had inflicted.

The first consequence appeared as this next hour began: she had not turned off her contact with me, as she would have in the past after an

*Though not as profound as her mother's inability to stay connected—from the birth of the infant on—with Belle. Bak makes the suggestion that sadomasochistic fantasies, especially those of being immobilized, represent the wish not to be separated from mother.¹

hour that made her feel we were close. Instead she spoke directly and without exaggeration. She said she had felt enthusiastic and tense after yesterday's hour, the feeling persisting to the present. What we had discussed made sense; things had fallen in place. She now understood why in intercourse she stopped the build-up, holding off her orgasm until the man was flaccid and then doing it herself almost instantly. She now knew this was an experience she created rather than one that "just happened," a matter of control as in the lost battles against rectal coercion.

Then followed an outpouring of associations—memories of bowel traumas, bowel habits, bathrooms she had known, her mother's bowels, rear ends—the significance not being in the material but in her finally opening up to let this pour through. The worst was over.

We understood better the years-long struggle, why she fought the free expression of feelings—erotism, anger, weeping, whatever; why she laid on her histrionic displays of feeling that simulated spontaneity while at the same time she retained control over her body, her emotions, and her thoughts; how she solved the insoluble, to defeat the assault on her anus and rectum, by creating scripts (behavior) that would forever let her retain control after the traumatic discovery* that there were circumstances (the enemas) she could not control; the lesson learned that fantasies and their conscious organizations—daydreams—will, for the moment at least, undo any traumas, with the additional bonus of sexual pleasure; and that, with the underground fantasy, she also gained control, for the opposite of noise is quiet, the opposite of excitement is tranquillity, the opposite of loss of control is control so subtle it can only be called peacefulness. She learned more about the nature of her sexual excitement; some of the origins of her masochistic scripts and behaviors; about the battle for control hidden in the scripts; why certain characters were chosen and why they performed as they did; how her exhibitionism was constructed and used; how she controlled others while appearing always as a victim; why masturbation was so easy and intercourse so difficult; why she contaminated her femininity with masochism; why her accomplishments in the real world were negligible but those in creating fantasies formidable; why she saw me as she did and how this led to our sadomasochistic relationship; why it was necessary to risk wrecking the treatment even at the cost of losing what she felt was her last hope; why reality was worth so little whatever its potential; why her capacity to love was so worm-eaten. Now Belle knew the two main functions of her masochism: hidden sadism ("my suffering will

*Rediscovery; it must have been known in infancy.

pain you"), and trauma control ("I feel awful all the time so that I won't ever have to really feel awful").

At the end of treatment, she summarized all this: "For me, sadism was caring." Caring was to not be abandoned. She seemed to have little choice.

Masochism has long been a crucial problem for analytic theory.⁴ Freud struggled for years to understand its origins and functions until it finally became for him the central problem of human behavior. How was theory to account for self-destructive impulses that were manifest everywhere in individuals and society in gross and terrible form? The business, he said, must be instinctual.

If masochism hides in its depths a biologic drive, and especially ideas as magnificently impalpable as repetition compulsion and death instinct, we need better evidence than has yet been offered.⁵ Ricoeur reviews the problem:

The decisive experience that led Freud to the death instinct was a certain difficulty that keeps recurring in analytic treatment in connection with the struggle against resistances: viz. the tendency of the patient to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of remembering it as a past memory. . . . What the patient repeats are precisely the situations of distress and failure he underwent as a child, particularly during the oedipal period. This tendency, further evidenced in the strange fate of those persons who seem to call down upon themselves the same misfortunes time and again, appears to justify the hypothesis of a compulsion to repeat that is "more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it overrides."⁶

The problem with the concepts of repetition compulsion and death instinct is the failure of the facts to fit. If we look closely at these clinical repetitions, we find that the repetition is not exact but only a simulation of repetition (as in pornography with its pseudo-risks). Minute differences distinguish the original experience from its redoing; subtle shifts have been purposefully introduced in order to make the experience *be* different while at the same time *appearing* the same. Hidden in those apparently minute changes is, I think, the mechanism of undoing past traumas and frustrations and repeating them, this time successfully, atraumatically—pseudotraumatically only.*

If careful observation reveals that the repetition is not exact, and if, further, one picks up the scripts that support the minute change, one

*There are, however, states in which there is exact repetition; these are the traumatic neuroses. And one can add another category, not yet clearly understood: conditioned responses. Are traumatic neuroses a form of conditioned responses?

can see there was no *compulsion* to repeat pain and self-destruction, only the wily wish, the compulsion *not* to repeat suffering, which, in masochists, is disguised by the use of humiliation or selected physical pains.

Most analysts doubt there is a death instinct and are content with the simpler, semiclinical explanation of masochism as a mechanism in which the ego, caught in a crossfire between the forbidden impulses of the id and the forbidding attacks of the superego, offers itself as a sacrifice, accepting (creating) feelings of guilt and undergoing purgative punishment.⁷ Even this less radical theory may be wrong. Regarding origins of sexual excitement (and perhaps most neurotic constructions), I find the involved unconscious dynamics of sadomasochism more clever, more intelligent, and more sly than is suggested by the sacrificial ego model: we inflict punishment on ourselves in order to avoid having to change. It is easier to feel guilty and to pay a prescribed price, even suicide, than to change. In most of its forms, guilt is a bargain we strike with ourselves. Its presence indicates we have decided that doing what we should is too much trouble. Suicide (not all suicides, for not all are self-murders) is a trick.* So also, for most people, is sexual excitement. If we look closely, we rarely find in most situations in which guilt is a strong factor, such as in masochism or its close relative, depression, that the guilt expressed matches the crime committed. I believe instead that people erect guilt that looks superficially as if it is connected to the crime; but close observation will reveal that the punishment—guilt and its consequences—only *seems* to suit the crime. We actually trick our audience (conscience, superego, God, or our other invented idiots) into thinking the punishment is appropriate.† Guilt is not the price paid for being bad but the price paid for the privilege of continuing to be bad. The megalomania of guilt: I fool everyone.⁸ Even the suicide, in his last moment, is exaggerating, playing to his audience, falsifying his truths, writing his script, running his number.

For those who believe in an "agency" called superego—guardian and judge of morality, punisher, watchdog of atonement—here is another for which superego may be no more than a disguise. This one, hidden beneath the other, gives permission to fail, to be not responsible, to lie, to falsify, to defend against what one knows is true. It is the boss (the "grandiose self"?) who harnesses "the inchoate libidinal mass" (the

*Not only a trick; it is, of course, more complicated than that.

†And yet we may discover that we believe guilt is appropriate, but for a different, hidden offense: for our success in fooling ourselves and others into thinking our expressions of guilt and our confessions are atonement for the manifest crime.

"id"). To uncover this clever devil may be, just as theologians tell us, as important as any other task in treatment.

And masochism is one of this schemer's devices. I do not think people become masochistic because they truly believe they deserve to be punished. Rather, I think they trick themselves and us into believing that that is what they do, while secretly, they are busy with their foxy little sadisms. We had an example of that in the exhibitionist. Does he get caught because of an unconscious need for punishment? I think not. Rather, he gets caught because getting caught is a *part* of the excitement, not an atonement *after* the excitement. And he invents his perversion as a defense against "castration anxiety," that is, humiliation, fear due to attack on his sense of maleness.

Smirnoff makes this clear in what he calls "the masochistic contract," where he reminds us that "it is the victim who lays down the rules . . . a consenting and demanding victim." Masochistic contracts are drawn up by people who know what they are doing and who read all the fine print. It is, as Smirnoff says, "the 'casting' of the play." The pain a masochist suffers is simply dust in our eyes; it is there to fool him and us into believing that he is genuinely deserving of punishment. If his conscience and we, as external witnesses, will buy this, then, with minimal effort, he has preserved his old ways of behaving. In masochism, "pain is not enough, or even has little to do with pleasure."¹⁰

Smirnoff knows Belle's Director and the true purpose of her fantasy:

Masochism is a defiance. It is expressed through the masochist's apparently passive behaviour, by his compliance with the inflicted pain and humiliation, by his claims of being enslaved and used. In fact, the masochist knows that his position is simply the result of his own power: the power of endowing the executioner [read "Director"] with the obligation of playing the role of a master, when indeed he is only a slave, a creation of the masochist's desire. . . .

Sacher-Masoch does not use the vocabulary of a victim, but that of the director of this play. Thus the masochist does not appear as the victimized accomplice of a sadistic executioner, but as his educator—just as the sadist is the pedagogue of his reluctant victim. It is of the utmost importance to redefine masochism—in any of its clinical forms—not through the "pleasure in pain" element, but as an actualization of a contract which must regulate the relationship in the masochistic performance.

The symbiotic relation, as found in masochism, makes use of suffering, pain, and humiliation, not in order to obtain pleasure, but as a symbolic representative of both the unattainable fusion with the impossible separation from the primary sexual object.¹¹

There is no way we can demonstrate that masochism is a manifestation of a drive ("instinct") to suffer pain.* We learn more if we look for the meaning a piece of masochism has for its owner. Berliner's phrases "Suffering is the weapon of the weak and unloved"[†] and "Masochism is a way of hating without great risk"¹² are the main sermons in this chapter. Masochism is a technique of control, first discovered in childhood following trauma, the onslaught of the unexpected. The child believes it can prevent further trauma by re-enacting the original trauma. Then, as master of the script, he is no longer a victim; he can decide for himself when to suffer pain rather than having it strike without warning. Or, when we have more of the hidden text, we can see masochism as an attack ("suffering is my revenge"). Displayed to suitable parents, clever masochism can elicit a suitably guilty response—and easily become a habit. Or, less conflictive, what about the masochism acquired when one identifies with a parent's masochism? That sort is culture-wide when, for instance, it is part of the definition of "normal" femininity (Freud, Deutsch, Bonaparte), and hard to remove, as may be most identifications not created from conflict.

In reality and in fantasies, the masochist builds his impregnable structure. By taking the power to cause trauma out of the hands of others and into his own, he tries to guarantee that nothing serious will happen. Belle said that by not portraying good things in the daydream—no good men and no loving sexuality—by having the manifest story line concentrate on power struggles and humiliation, "I could represent that I was to be alone for life, and by making the fantasy so bad, I was just practicing making things worse than they ever really would be. Then when they were bad in real life, they would never be as bad as what happened in the fantasy. So I would never be disappointed. I was in good shape for that: I knew since I was tiny that I could get by on very little. You can survive anything if you practice mentally over and over." For instance, when forced to eat food she did not like, she would work that food into a daydream and sufficiently transform the actual situation that she could eat and perhaps even enjoy it. The price—the one she so often willingly paid—was that she kept manufacturing situations that were staged until she had it so constructed that all reality was staged.

*Let us put aside herein the physical pleasure that can be found in pain. We must know much more before being sure that the ubiquitous erotism of pain—so many people like to be pinched, squeezed, bitten, swatted; or they dreamily inflict precise little pains on favorite parts of their bodies—is a biologic drive underpinning the nonphysical masochism with which we are now concerned.

†Retain the phrasing but change the inflection depending on your communistic or fascistic tendencies. (Both viewpoints merge when the protagonists turn to weapons.)

It did not always work: with the enemas, brute physical sensations scattered the protecting daydreams.

There is another grand explanation, no longer popular, that equates activity with sadism and passivity with masochism. In fact, both sadism and masochism are active processes. First, both are active in that they require planning and thinking. Second, one behaves in as complicated and physical a way to let oneself be struck as to strike: it takes as much doing to lay oneself on the tracks as to drive the oncoming train. And the manly exercises of boxing or satyriasis have no significance unless one thinks of the risks involved. One goes or is gored. In both bullfighting and ballet, style is a nice cover for masochism.

If we focus on childhood and the interplay between parent and child, as in weaning or toilet training, we recall how babies learn to bear frustration, to value waiting, and to convert pain to the pleasures of mastery. Fortunately, analysts now speak more in terms of the interplay and less in terms of instinctual vicissitudes.

Reik has discussed much of this in *Masochism in Modern Man*. His ideas were formulated almost forty years ago (and at a time when analysis was not as kind to disagreement as it is now); they are, on the whole, as applicable to masochism as any published since. Although he did not generalize his ideas to perversions at large or to sexual excitement, he stated that masochism is better studied as the play of fantasies than as the manifestation of a primary biologic force; that the masochist—sexual or social (as Reik called it)—secretly invents himself as victor (sadist), disguising tormenting, incessant little sadisms behind the unending suffering; that the masochist seeks revenge in his masochistic behavior; that the masochist does not primarily enjoy pain but accepts it as a preliminary to now earned pleasure; that the masochist is forever playing to an audience that condemns his alleged persecutors; that masochism may hide mockery; that the masochist sets up only the appearance of being passive and victimized; and that good analytic work reveals the exact details of the fantasies, going further to explain the behavior than instinct explanations.

He felt (as I do now, years later) that fantasy was the crucial element in the development of erotic and social (“moral”) masochism.

It still stands that the preliminary phantasy has a special importance for masochism. The phantasy is also the primary factor in a historic sense. Masochistic practices are but an acting out of preceding phantasies, daydreams that are transferred into reality. Every thorough analysis shows that the masochistic perversion is a reproduction of previously imagined situations long familiar to the individual. In the beginning there is no action, as far as masochism is concerned, but the phantasy.

The actual scene corresponds thus to the staging of a drama and is related to the phantasies as is the performance to the dramatist's conception. They are exposed to the same accidents, incidents, and necessary adaptations to the means at hand, and are just as dependent on the mood and the co-operation of the actors. Only rarely does the performance surpass the ideas of the author. More often, even as with the masochistic scene, it falls short of the conception. There are cases when the person in the actual scene is unsatisfied or only faintly excited while the recollection leads to an orgasm. The rules, given in such a scene, are comparable to directions to the stage manager.

... It is perhaps wrong to emphasize the theatrical aspect in masochism. The analysis of the traits in the ritual of perverted scenes proves that there is a full meaning in every one of them. I am using the expression “ritual” purposely, since the peculiarly rigid rule and order which govern the masochistic scene are to be compared with the conscientiousness in the performance of religious and magical rituals. A change or a disturbance of this masochistic ritual diminishes its lust-value. It can even destroy it. A kind of tradition will develop, which has to be kept as in ceremonies of the church. First this has to be done, then that; words have to be pronounced in a certain manner, and so on. All these traits may seem to be haphazard and unpremeditated, but the psychologist who studies the history of the ritual, recognizes that there are meaning and connection. In no other perversion does ritual play a role similar in importance.¹³

I can only repeat, as still true decades later, Reik's remark:

I only wish to stress here that the importance of the phantasy as the very essence of masochism has not yet been appreciated in analytical theories, that its indispensability has not yet been recognized. . . .¹⁴

Reik knows people like Belle:

The masochist runs his own show . . . [Masochism is] a staged repetition. . . . The masochistic action has the purpose of enacting a phantasy of revenge by repeating a situation that justifies the feeling of revenge and defiance. . . . The suffering . . . becomes the sign and expression of one's own values. Whoever has to bear so much misfortune and hardship has a right to be proud of it. He is marked by destiny, but he is also chosen by destiny. Simultaneously he is one of fate's elect, one whose peculiarity and peculiar lot raise him above the mass. One who has to suffer so much, who is exposed to so many wrongs, is permitted to look down upon others, is not bound by the laws and rules that bind others. . . . [The masochist] represents the supremacy of will power apparently giving in to the will of all others. In renouncing his own will he shows insubordination. He marks time until the forces of aggression and destruction have worn

themselves out against the might of his inertia. He can take a beating now, if he hopes that later on his aggressor will be destroyed. The unconscious revenge fantasy is a permanent companion of his surrender. Submerged, he rises again and again. . . . The masochist does not accept punishment and humiliation, he anticipates them. He not only demonstrates their impotence to withhold the forbidden pleasure, but he affirms and demonstrates that it was they which helped him to it.¹⁵

Reik, I think correctly, disagrees with Freud and other analysts who believe that the main mechanism in producing masochism (lying, as it were, on top of the biologic Anlagen Freud postulates in his discussions of primary masochism and death instinct) is the need for punishment. He does not, however, tell us what provokes the excitement, what impels one forward; rather, he tells us how masochism is used to protect the excitement, to allow it to pass through dangerous straits, finally to burst forth safely into orgasm.

Let me end these thoughts on sadomasochism with the old question. Does hostility exist as an independent force ("drive," "instinct") or is it due to our being victimized—a result of suffering, pain, and frustration? The issue is blurred, I think, when the word "aggression" becomes synonymous with "hostility."¹⁶ Hostility, along with rage, hatred, malice, revenge, and harm, connotes nothing less than the desire to hurt an object. It is, then, motivated, planned, desired, and willed and exists as fantasy, in the form of scripts. (The fancy speculation on aggression using animal behavior is meaningless unless it can be shown that animals are not just aggressive but also act from hatred when they attack or kill.)

The word "aggression" sometimes has the connotation of hostility. But the dictionary shows it can also be used for activity that does not have within it malevolent intent: "healthy self-assertiveness or a drive to accomplishment or to mastery esp. of skills . . . marked by driving forceful energy."¹⁷ This aspect of the word is present in such words as readiness, boldness, determination, enterprising, energetic, self-confident, vigorous, active, variable, adaptable, forcefulness, confidence, resolute, and intrusive. None of these implies desire to harm an object. But if "aggression" contains too many implications of hostility, then another word—perhaps "assertiveness"—might do for those realms of activity and forcefulness not motivated by anger and hatred.

It does not seem, then, that we must accept as logical the announcement that a destructive instinct, a biologically determined force, is present in all living creatures, inevitably impelling them to destroy. Till

better data appear, I join those who think that rage, hatred, and desire for destruction are learned and defensive behaviors. These impulses may draw their strength from biologic forces that energize activity, but the desire to harm is, I think, an added feature. The fact that it is universal in our species does not make it instinctual.

...: 'Copulation is no more than an unsatisfying substitute for masturbation.' " Or S. Freud, " 'Wild' Psycho-analysis" (1910), *S.E.* 11: 223: "We have long known, too, that mental absence of satisfaction with all its consequences can exist where there is no lack of normal sexual intercourse; and as therapists we always bear in mind that the unsatisfied sexual trends (whose substitutive satisfactions in the form of nervous symptoms we combat) can often find only very inadequate outlet in coitus or other sexual acts."

7. Cf. hallucinated imaginary companions in Stoller, *Splitting*.

Chapter 7. Sadoomasochism

1. S. Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937), *S.E.* 23: 216-53.
2. Cf. M. de M'Uzan, "A Case of Masochistic Perversion and an Outline of a Theory," *Int. J. Psychoanal.* 54 (1973): 455-67.
3. R. C. Bak, "The Phallic Woman: The Ubiquitous Fantasy in Perversion," *Psychoanal. Study Child* 23 (1968): 29-30.
4. C. Brenner has reviewed the issues from the classical analytic position in "The Masochistic Character," *J. Am. Psychoanal. Assoc.* 7 (1959): 197-226. Berliner, in three papers, reviews and revises classical analytic theories. Like Reik and others (e.g., Smirnof, myself) he stresses the interpersonal-become-intrapsychic more than the instinctual-become-intrapsychic. See B. Berliner, "Libido and Reality in Masochism," *Psychoanal. Q.* 9 (1940): 322-33; Berliner, "On Some Psychodynamics of Masochism," *Psychoanal. Q.* 16 (1947): 459-71; Berliner, "The Role of Object Relations in Moral Masochism," *Psychoanal. Q.* 27 (1958): 38-56.
5. Kardiner and others present an extensive criticism that emphasizes interpersonal rather than instinctual forces in masochism. See A. Kardiner, A. Karush, and L. Ovesey, "A Methodological Study of Freudian Theory: III. Narcissism, Bisexuality and the Dual Instinct Theory," *J. Nerv. Ment. Dis.* 129 (1959): 215-20.
6. P. Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. D. Savage (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 286-7.
7. "A sense of guilt is invariably the fact that transforms sadism into masochism." S. Freud, "A Child Is Being Beaten" (1919), *S.E.* 17: 189. Cf. R. M. Loewenstein, "A Contribution to the Psychoanalytic Theory of Masochism," *J. Am. Psychoanal. Assoc.* 5 (1957): 213-14: "Psychoanalytic experience invariably confirms Freud's view that masochistic perversions in men, as well as the moral masochism, result from a turning of sadism against the self under the influence of guilt feelings."
8. "Moral masochism and hypocrisy have in common that a kind of morality is being used in them for the gratification of deneutralized drives. The difference between the two is clear, however. In moral masochism proper, the masochistic gratification is unconscious and the moral motivation may be conscious or not. In hypocrisy the moralistic motivation is consciously stressed in order to hide more or less preconscious gratifications of ego interests or of sadism. Thus to some extent sadism of the superego is close to hypocrisy. The difference between them is that in sadism of the superego and in masochism of the ego, the self is the victim; in hypocrisy, the gratification is derived at the expense of others." Loewenstein, "A Contribution to the Psychoanalytic Theory of Masochism," pp. 212-13. The philosophic problem revolves around whether one can be unconsciously sly.
9. Cf. L. A. Spiegel, "Moral Masochism," *Psychoanal. Q.* 47 (1978): 209-36.
10. V. N. Smirnof, "The Masochistic Contract," *Int. J. Psychoanal.* 50 (1970): 666-7.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 668, 670.
12. Berliner, "Libido and Reality in Masochism," p. 331. See also Loewenstein, "A Contribution to the Psychoanalytic Theory of Masochism."

13. T. Reik, *Masochism in Modern Man*, trans. M. H. Beigel and G. M. Kurth (New York: Farrar, Straus & Rinehart, 1941), p. 49. I disagree with Reik's last sentence and also with his repeated statements that the dynamics he has found belong only, or almost only, to masochism.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 252, 254, 419, 429.

16. See E. Markovitz, "Aggression in Human Adaptation," *Psychoanal. Q.* 42 (1973): 226-33, for a welcome discussion of these distinctions.

17. Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*, 1961.

Chapter 8. Exhibitionism

1. The following will sound naïve, but it is not: I do not see how a therapist—whether an analyst practicing analysis or a physician doing a physical examination—can be enticed by a patient if he really wants to understand the area, anatomic or psychologic, he is investigating. One would expect just that lack of excitement if, as my theory says, the desire to examine does not contain a desire to harm; only if he is fetishizing the patient into parts, indulging in the victim-victor, simulated-risk, mystery, pecking routine, will he get caught by sexual excitement. But if he is truly interested in what he is doing—physical or psychologic examination—there is no space inside him at that time for sexual excitement. It is inappropriate, not forbidden or renounced in a fit of obstinate frustration, but simply not a part of his present psychodynamic state. "The patient, whose sexual repression is of course not yet removed but merely pushed into the background, will then feel safe enough to allow all her preconditions for loving, all the phantasies springing from her sexual desires, all the detailed characteristics of her state of being in love, to come to light; and from these she will herself open the way to the infantile roots of her love." S. Freud, "Observations on Transference Love" (1914), *S.E.* 12: 166.

It is not so simple, however. An essential tool for analytic work is the way we respond to our patients. We must vibrate as sensitively as a musical instrument, or we will not know, except intellectually, what the patient is experiencing and what the patient does to provoke responses in others. To do our work, we must receive the messages our patients send, but we cannot do this if there are cultural, language, neurotic, or personality chasms between us and the patient. (If a tribeswoman scarred for beauty shows me her scars, I will not sense her meaning, nor will she, on meeting my blankness, fathom my failure to respond.) When Belle tries to buy me off with a bit of thigh, I have to know—empathically, not just theoretically—what other men in our culture also know about flashing thighs. But my response is minimal, a signal; it has behind it no pressure toward action. The transducer would register no change.

2. Cf. D. G. Brown, "Drowsiness in the Countertransference," *Int. Rev. Psychoanal.* 4 (1977): 481-92. How are empathy and resonance related to countertransference?

3. "An exactly analogous state of affairs occurs in the same field when a person who is masturbating tries in his conscious phantasies to have the feelings both of the man and of the woman in the situation which he is picturing. Further counterparts are to be found in certain hysterical attacks in which the patient simultaneously plays both parts in the underlying sexual phantasy. In one case which I observed, for instance, the patient pressed her dress up against her body with one hand (as the woman), while she tried to tear it off with the other (as the man). This simultaneity of contradictory actions serves to a large extent to obscure the situation, which is otherwise so plastically portrayed in the attack, and it is thus well suited to conceal the unconscious phantasy that is at work." S. Freud, "Hysterical Phantasies and Their Relation to Bisexuality" (1908), *S.E.* 9: 166.

4. "Characterized by excitability, emotional instability, over-reactivity, and self-