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**The social generality of sadomasochism: A study in the political
as personal**

Chancer, Lynn Sharon, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1987

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THE SOCIAL GENERALITY OF SADOMASOCHISM:
A STUDY IN THE POLITICAL AS PERSONAL

by

LYNN CHANCER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Sociology in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
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Abstract

THE SOCIAL GENERALITY OF SADOMASOCHISM:
A STUDY IN THE POLITICAL AS PERSONAL

by

Lynn Chancer

Adviser: Professor Stanley Aronowitz

Sadomasochism is commonly associated with only sexual and violent manifestations, associations which deflect attention from the possibility that it might be a more general dynamic characterizing a broad range of interpersonal relationships in society from love and intimacy to patterns encountered within institutions such as the family and work.

However, accepting this connotation as one manifestation of a sadomasochistic dynamic, a basic case of S&M sex treated paradigmatically reveals several characteristics which apply to these other, more general manifestations as well. At the heart of this phenomenon is a pattern of dominance and submission which is based on symbiotic dependence on the part of both sadist and masochist, and which closer examination reveals to be a fundamentally dynamic rather than static form of interaction between self and other. The paradox of the sadist is that he or she seeks disapproval within the mode of approval, whereas the masochist seeks approval within the mode of

disapproval. This irony can be understood not only in terms of an existential analysis but also by employing psychoanalytic concepts drawn both from Freud and particularly from Freudian-derived object relations theory. (However, Freud's own interpretations of sadomasochism were often mutually contradictory and inadequate for explaining the phenomenon in reference to its possibly causal referents.) In the latter tradition, ideas taken from Margaret Mahler suggest that both the sadistic and masochistic positions represent failures to achieve a necessary balance between independence and dependence, or, for the child, between the attainment of both a satisfactory symbiosis and separation-individuation period in relation to parent/caretaker figures.

Several important social applications of the characteristics deduced from the 'S&M' paradigm can be made. Given patriarchal structures as described by Millett, de Beauvoir and others, the traditional nuclear family creates a tendency for gendered sadomasochism to emerge, with women tending to be cast in a relatively more masochistic position, men in a relatively more sadistic one. Yet, patterns in the family as well as other institutions lead to shifting transmutations from sadist to masochist and vice versa, with one mode usually dominant and the other subordinate. The emergence of both sadism and masochism in the same person is exacerbated by other social structures, such as the nature of capitalist bureaucracy as described by both Weber and Marx. A workplace structured

bureaucratically may lead to the masochist personae being adopted in relation to a superior, the sadistic relative to an inferior. The developed analysis is also applied to a comparison between the psychological/subjective state of the capitalist and that of the worker in terms of the sadomasochistic dynamic. However, analysis of this dynamic in the work sphere is not limited to capitalist manifestations since similar characteristics are also found in present day 'communist' societies, leading one to conclude that change is possible only if personal (or psychological) as well as political (or sociological) factors are given equal significance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was inspired by both personal experiences and by my observations of the experiences of others, as well as by many intellectual discussions with friends and other students and faculty members. It would be hard to cite them all.

In particular, I am grateful to the members of my committee at the Graduate Center for providing an atmosphere in which unconventional theoretical projects are possible and encouraged, something which has made the Graduate Center program distinctive for myself and other similarly theoretically-minded students. In that regard, I feel tremendously fortunate to have chosen in Stanley Aronowitz an advisor who never once questioned the validity of my ideas but only how they could better fulfill their intellectual potential. Thanks go to him for contributing a unique blend of consistent support, brilliance, and astutely on-target comments. I have also had wonderful conversations with Roslyn Bologh and Mike Brown, both of whom were similarly encouraging and extremely helpful in their comments. Last but not least is the significant contribution made by Jennifer Hunt, who as an outside reader trained in psychoanalysis as well as sociology did a marvelously thorough job, informing me where my own psychological understanding may have been flawed or inadequate.

So many friends deserve mention for the caring, encouragement and insights they too have provided that I fear I will be unable to mention them all. To Elissa, Annamaria, Karen, Eric, Leslie, Kenny (whose intellectual discussions with me go back many years), Isabel -- thanks.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Upon hearing that I am writing a dissertation on sadomasochism, many people look at me askance, their eyebrows slightly raised. I imagine them speculating about whether I use whips and chains in my own bedroom or am simply interested in studying those who do from a detached and "academic" perspective. Even among friends and associates who are fascinated by the topic, I sense that they, too, have wondered, "How and why did she become interested in that?" It therefore seems appropriate in this as well as other ways to commence the following work with reference to my own experience, motivations and interests. By beginning with the various reasons I have chosen to study sadomasochism, I hope to stir the reader's interest as well, to provide a foundation of personal experience to which the reader might, at some level, relate. I will then feel it justifiable to begin drawing theoretical conclusions from that experience and other empirical examples, teasing forth implications I suspect have enormous collective and social applicability. Via sadomasochism, I will question how the frequently referred to "personal and political" realms are interwoven, how it is possible for social structure to be connected with everyday experience and everyday experience with social structure. Most important, I wish to examine bifurcations traditionally placed between the "psychological" and "sociological" as allegedly separable disciplines and dimensions of life. Sadomasochism here takes

on the aspect of a case study in whether the sociological and psychological are not, rather, so intimately related as to render skewed the vision of anyone who would ignore their deep reciprocal influence.

I can isolate three primary sources of my interest. The first relates to a past encounter with what I will provisionally call, prior to detailed explanation of my intended meaning, sadomasochism in myself.¹ This encounter had little to do with the sexual form, the proverbial "whips and chains" with which "S&M" is conventionally associated. Indeed, the second chapter of this dissertation will be devoted to trying to define sadomasochistic characteristics in such a way that they encompass a far broader range of relationships between self and other than is generally understood by narrower connotations of "sexual" S&M. Nonetheless, my second reason relates to a debate within feminist circles which has focused on precisely these common sexual allusions. This "sadomasochism debate" began with the planning of the April 1982 Barnard Conference on Sexuality and still continues to provoke many feminists' attention. It placed my personal interest within a specific intellectual context and raised crucial theoretical questions which must be addressed, however sadomasochism is defined. I will return again and again to the central issues broached by the debate in ensuing chapters. My third and final reason relates to the topic's special capacity to evoke and combine a number of my academic concerns, ranging

from social and feminist theory and philosophy to considerations of deviance, the institutions of the family, work and education, and even -- as we shall see - death.

* * * * *

About ten years ago, while in college, I found myself simultaneously involved in two tempestuous love affairs. My encounter with sadomasochism thereby arose in the sphere of day-to-day intimate relationships, "love," areas to which few if any meta-theorists and sociologists devote serious attention.

At the time, I was "madly in love" with one young man who returned my affection inconsistently, with a certain aloofness and detachment. I was constantly insecure and uncertain about his feelings toward me, though he insisted he loved me. Yet, I sensed our relationship to be eminently conditional. I seldom felt confident about whether he would greet me with warmth or with coldness; I felt any day, at any moment, my lover might reject me, judge me, find me to be wanting in some quality I could not guess beforehand. And, rather than diminishing his attractiveness, I believe in retrospect that the anxiety-ridden state with which he became associated was the dominant explanation of his particular appeal. I knew other men who were intelligent, interesting, who seemed to like me. But it was only he with whom I was "in love" -- that allegedly most mystical of

states. His judgments were far more valuable to me than that of others because he alone called into question my feelings of self-worth, putting them into doubt by his coolness and the uncertainty of his continuing affection. The others seemed to like me indiscriminately, to be content with me just as they had encountered me. But he alone required that I change, that I work for his approval; only he hinted that I was not "good enough" in my, so to speak, naturalized state. This was why he was, as I now see it, "special": with him, existence -- my existence -- was not its own justification. Instead, calling forth a never-ending specter of possible rejections, disapproval, pronouncements of worthlessness, he set up for me a true Weberian calling. I, too, had a quest, not dissimilar from the one upon which that theorist's lonely Protestants had embarked. But whereas they pursued approval from God, I wanted it from my lover; their security would be in heaven, I pursued mine on earth; they wanted salvation from Him, I wanted from him only a sense of inner legitimacy I had come to, or always must have, lacked.

To repeat, my salvation had its conditions, like theirs: there were unstated though definite regulations, "rules of the game" I had to follow if my lover was not to reject me. And so I developed a virtual art form of trying to win approval and avoid disapproval -- Dale Carnegie-esque -- by anticipating his reactions, molding myself around his projected desires. As de Beauvoir so wonderfully described

in The Second Sex, I came to view myself indirectly rather than directly, through the eyes of the other instead of my own; the obsession of that famous Proustian masochist, Charles Swann, seeking vindication in Odette's favorable judgment, was painfully familiar.

The second young man, however, was infatuated with me. The roles somersaulted: Swann to the other's Odette, I was simultaneously Odette to his Swann. I felt more secure, freer, safer in his company than I had with the first man. That the second man loved me was not perpetually in doubt but neither, therefore, did I deem it valuable. The second man seemed to love me too much; I wondered what was wrong with him. His flaw was fatal, irredeemable. Out of a corner of my mind's eye (clearly not the main determinant of my behavior), I watched in horror as I became to the second man what the first was to me.

But where did I fit into all this, I asked myself in confusion? Certainly I was in the masochistic role in the first relationship, but was I sadistic in the second? It didn't seem to me that I was, for the idea of being in any way sadistic relative to another revolted me. As a feminist, a socialist, I was "above it" ethically, morally; I alone was in the structural position of seeing both sides of a phenomenon my intellect would have me transcend. But I did not realize that as long as I was capable of masochistic behavior, I also had a capacity -- whether or not enacted or realized -- for the sadistic: the two were inseparable,

locked as if in a dance. For I had a veritable interest in maintaining my relationship with the second man. It comforted me, better enabled me to take risks with the other just as men traditionally base their pursuit of elusive mistresses on the loyalty of wives. I had this interest regardless of whether the second man could obtain fulfillment of a quest, or only a quest, within the structure of our dynamic. Certainly, I represented as much a calling for him as the other did for me. Whether or not I chose to play a sadistic role, the fact remained that so long as I pursued the first man, I functioned to the second as sadistic symbol since I necessitated that the second young man would have to pursue me; like the paradoxical effects of suicide, masochism could not separate its apparent directedness toward self from its effect upon others. "Loving" the elusive other, his "loving" me, I could never "love" him yet he felt that if only he tried this, that or the other strategy, perhaps.....the approval and vindication he, and I, sought was always maddeningly beyond reach, receding behind an infinite regress of Quixotic advances. And in its multifaceted complexity, our sadomasochistic jigsaw puzzle strained at its edges outside itself into other triangular sadomasochistic jigsaws -- what of a person we knew who wanted the approval of the second man, he elusive and potentially more valuable because of me, what of the person who might attract the first by the challenge of her/his ambivalent disinterest? The puzzle can

be given yet another twist. In my relationship with the first man, was my masochism -- undoubtedly genuine and awful on one level -- really pure and uninfected by its opposite, on another? Was the desperate ferocity of my pursuit (and, of course, that of the second young man's pursuit of me) indicative of "love" or also a pervasive rage at our dependency, our perceived delegitimation (the proverbial "love-hate" relationship)? Did we feel rage we would gladly direct toward them, toward the other, if a whole panoply of circumstances -- social and psychic conditioning -- had not habitually aimed it at ourselves? Certainly, as time went on, I had to hate the other/he had to hate me for the exaggerated authority we represented. There was, therefore, always the seductive appeal of an opportunity for revenge -- an opportunity which, of course, might never unfold as anything other than a theoretical possibility. But, if it did arise and was seized upon, would it have been truly aimed at him, at me, and if not, at whom or (as I will slowly argue) at what?

Moreover, reverting to the perspective of the beloved in relation to the lover, in the former role might we not mortally fear the consequences of stepping down off our pedestals onto human, erring, judged rather than judging ground? In other words, I am inquiring as to whether the Proustian Odette sensed that she, too, was loved conditionally -- would Swann have loved and valued her if she were no longer elusive, if she gave him the love and

approval he sought? (Would I have still "loved" the first man?) Or would she have then ceased to be Odette, having architected her own obsolescence, only to have another Odette fashioned in her place? In a society where value seems to rise with irrational unattainability, do we not feel compelled not only to fashion others but also ourselves in an elusive guise, alien to both?

* * * * *

This recounting of and reflection upon personal experience may appear to some as a digression from the subject at hand -- a theoretical investigation into sadomasochism, its characteristic features, its myriad manifestations. However, I will insist that this personal experience is the subject at hand insofar as the reader may relate to it, and because it illuminates fundamental issues underlying both this work and the post-Barnard sexuality debate I will later describe.

The Relationship Between a Psychological and Sociological Approach to Sadomasochism

One issue relates to whether the dynamic in which I and the two men were involved is best analyzed from a traditionally "psychological" or from a "sociological" perspective. A psychoanalyst, a psychiatrist, a member of a psychology department -- each in his or her own way

extremely influenced by a Freudian framework -- would approach my experience with a specific orientation and set of questions. They might, for instance, inquire if the first man for me and I for the second man (and also their corollaries -- I for the first man and the second man for me) symbolized parental figures upon whom the adult was still dependent. Did a mother or father, powerful in our childhoods, deny love and approval the adult now wishes to regain through a substitute figure? A Freudian psychologist would also, I imagine, note the triangular situation I described and wonder at its resemblance to the Oedipal configuration of the conventional nuclear family -- child, mother, father. Were we, as adults, attracted to an unresponsive other (the first man for me, I for the second man) because of Oedipal conflicts stemming from sexual rejection by a parent similarly unattainable, though for very different reasons? Some psychologists, inspired by Freud, would scan individual biographies for factors such as these to explain the described sadomasochistic phenomena. Individual history is then referred back to universalized needs and complexes: children in general need love and approval that, when denied, haunts them as a pressing lack; children are sexual beings who must eventually accept the impossibility (universalized in our culture, at least) of acting upon these feelings with their first object(s), the primary caretaker(s). Nonetheless, only the individual can alter her, or his, alignment relative to this universal

paradigm. Thus, the psychological approach also accords the individual a privileged place because she or he is seen as prime mover of both personal and, I would argue, sociopolitical change. Whatever other differences may exist between them, most psychotherapies (be they of a strictly Freudian psychoanalytic, Jungian, Reichian, gestalt variety) presume it possible for individuals in the present to redress needs and lacks inherited from the past of their childhood. The individual is not, therefore, determined, nor ever entirely reducible to the effects of social influences which undoubtedly contributed greatly to her or his formation.

I believe this "psychological approach" to have remarkable validity and explanatory power. Having turned to it years ago to understand my interest in the first man and disinterest in the second, I found it capable of no less than revolutionizing my relationship to myself, immediate others and the more distant external world. Thus, that the "individual" as theoretical category cannot be "scientifically" or mechanistically reduced to a mere effect of social causes is to me personally verifiable. Without psychoanalytic experience, an assumption which permeates the questions posed in this text would seem less defensible -- the assumption that sadomasochism, for all its complexity, is neither inevitable nor the only possible mode of interaction which can exist between self and other. Nor do I doubt that psychological insights are critical to an

understanding of sadomasochism; indeed, chapters 3 and 4 are devoted in their entirety to a review of psychoanalytic literature in light of this dissertation's concerns.

However, all this having been said, I have noticed over time that what I once took as the isolated experience of myself and two lovers now strikes me as more commonplace than rare, mocking my earlier conviction that individual personality and the quirks of individual history is all that was at stake (though, of course, it is also simultaneously exactly what is at stake). However, something similar to the dynamic described above seems to be so prevalent socially that it seems to preclude explanation via mass psychological coincidence. I have heard of similar interaction occurring in homosexual (both lesbian and gay) relationships as well as in those which are heterosexual. I will therefore strongly maintain in this work my anti-essentialist conception of gender, acknowledging at once a) that women are undoubtedly conditioned by gendered interests under patriarchy to adopt a relatively masochistic, men a relatively sadistic, stance, b) that woman are no more inherently masochistic than men inherently sadistic, and consequently c) that men are capable of being (and are often) masochistic just as women are capable of being (and are in cases) sadistic. And I have heard of similar interaction occurring in casual encounters as well as in more long term intimacies and traditional marriages. Time and place may vary, and the extremity of sadomasochistic

interaction range from mild manifestations to the dangerously violent. Yet, most people I have known have in some way experienced related situations and feelings, often chalked up rather uncritically to the irrational and mystical character of "love." The very commonality of the dynamic I recounted points suspiciously to the likelihood of something of "social" origination being entailed, something which can no more be entirely reduced to the "psychological" than the "psychological" can be reduced to it.

Can it be mass psychological coincidence that many people experience something similar to what I described in hinting that if the first man began to adore me and the second to withdraw, my emotions would probably have reversed (as would those of the second young man toward me)? In hinting that my "love," the first man, seemed to reappear, to telephone or come by, just at those times when I felt (and he must have felt) I was finally free of him? Or, is there something of a concretely social nature in American society -- the particular historical milieu with which I will be dealing -- that encourages us to feel negatively toward ourselves and positively toward others to whom we accord relatively greater power and knowledge, others who become unduly authoritative in and for their reinforcement of this negativity (the masochist's situation)? Is what I felt in relation to the first man -- i.e., a sense that his approval was eminently conditional, dependable only so long as I didn't challenge the rules of our game -- also

experienced by many people in a capitalistic and bureaucratically organized society? Is our social order one in which we feel that our existence is not its own justification, just as I experienced the need to earn approval "in love"? Or, on the other hand, is there anything in American society which encourages the taking of an authoritative, sadistic stance when opportunity arises (itself based on social, psychological and other circumstances), deeming others less worthy relative to the self we build up by contrast? Returning to a hypothetical Freudian-influenced psychologist, might not she or he hesitate to assert that all people who have experienced a subtly sadomasochistic infatuation paradigm (such as the one I described) have unresolved Oedipal conflicts? What of the increasing numbers of children who were, or are being, raised in families which do not conform to the traditional nuclear triad -- might they not imbibe a sense of powerlessness which is social in its genesis? And, even if an Oedipal conflict or variant upon it is present, why would it remain unresolved for large numbers of people -- are there social processes which account for failure to resolve Oedipal complexes en masse? The psychologist should find just as curious the proposition that huge numbers of people suffer from love and approval denied them in childhood. Is this merely "coincidence," or might social processes here too be shaping individuals in such a way that they come to feel worthless, unable to approve either of themselves or

their offspring in their "personal" lives? And if social processes are shaping people in such a way, why are they? Are there correlates one might call "sociological" to psychological processes aptly observed on the individual level?

I am now beginning to dip, not only into a Freudian psychological mode of analysis, but gradually to move onto sociological terrain, onto the turf of theorists like Durkheim, Marx, Weber and de Beauvoir. Durkheim, defining the realm of the "social fact," influenced the very foundation of social "science" by suggesting a social realm prior to and independent of an individual's creation. Psychology's discrete individual finds this social world at birth and learns that it will resist efforts she or he might make toward alteration. Marx, of course, fits within the sociological framework as the most significant theorist to detail the specific social universe of modern capitalistic societies like our own; I mention Weber from interest in how bureaucracy, as a form of social organization he analyzed with such ambivalence, might affect the development of a sadomasochistic personality. And more recently, de Beauvoir's The Second Sex struck patriarchy a blow similar to the one Marx sought to deal capitalism in Capital -- the blow of richly detailed expose, stripping bare the workings of patriarchy as a system of domination and power. Each of these theorists suggest the existence of real social institutions -- the social fact of patriarchy, the social

facts of a bureaucratic capitalist environment, to take these notable instances -- which greet and form psychological individuals just as they later have the capacity to act back upon what they have inherited. The two are dialectically related, each a Hegelian moment in the unfolding of the other. Thus, if sadomasochism is truly to be understood in all its complexity, one must inquire into sociological as well as individual dimensions of the phenomenon. In addition to the Freudian questions, one must question in detail exactly what in the character of modern American, patriarchal, bureaucratically capitalist society -- taken as quintessential social facts -- makes possible the existence of sadomasochistic patterns in large numbers of people. If the social forms the individual just as the individual forms it, might not people imbibe sadomasochistic patterns within social institutions as well as personal relationships? And, if social factors which influence the development of sadomasochism as a potentially mass character structure can be specified, are these influences touched upon in societies which undergo or have undergone revolution? Is it possible for aspects of sadomasochism which could be attributed to the social to "wither away?" I will grapple with these difficult questions in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examining, respectively, the institutions of the family, education and work in terms of the sadomasochistic

pattern Chapter 2 further explicates.

* * * * *

Why Sadomasochism? The Problem of Recognition

The reader may aptly note that I have not yet explained why I dubbed the intimate relationships in which I was involved "sadomasochistic." While the next chapter addresses this question in theoretical detail, several assumptions pertaining to what I call "the problem of recognition" may best be stated in advance. These assumptions bear directly on my use of the term "sadomasochistic."

The "problem of recognition," as formulated in Hegel's The Phenomenology of Spirit, introduced an existential theme which has since been varied by, among others, Jean Paul Sartre, George Bataille and Jessica Benjamin.² I think the "problem" can be simplified and restated as follows. If we assume the very basic proposition that in general most cultures value life over death,³ then a basis exists for adjudging that which sustains and perpetuates life as "better" and preferable to that which beckons toward death. In order for life to thrive, the argument would continue, human beings must be recognized by others or they cannot possible recognize themselves. There can be no "I" unless there is someone who is "not I" by comparison; self-definition is possible only in relation to the definition of someone else

(stated in simplistic mathematical terminology, a is conceivable as a only because it is not b). Without acknowledgement and recognition by an other, the unimaginable would occur: the "I" as separate entity would have no meaning and would experience emptiness so profound that psychic and biological death would be rendered indistinguishable.⁴ Thus, in order to be, properly speaking, "alive," an individual must be related to others (and therefore to the social) in such a way that recognition of the self and not-self (or other) is an authentic possibility.

But how can self and other be related so that the recognition of both is ensured? It seems to me that there are only three primary strategies which a self may employ in relation to an other so as to attempt resolution of the problem of recognition:

1) The first strategy, or option, is that which I believe symbolically approximated my situation in relation to the first man, and the second's in relation to me. An individual may exist in a state of such dire need for love and recognition by an other (I collapse the two because love would appear to be a form of recognition -- how can one be loved by someone other than the self unless they are a different being?) that this other is accorded priority in relation to the self. One subordinates will and desire to that of the other, whose will and desires are now taken as one's own. In this way, an attempt is made to submerge the

self by substituting and seeking union with an other -- the price the self believes it is necessary to pay for recognition. In Hegelian terms, this is the psychic reality which corresponds to the slave (however slavery may have been initiated, whether coercively or apparently on a voluntary basis).

2) The second strategy approximates a stance subtly embedded in the first man's attitude toward me, and mine toward the second man's. It is a stance which subordinates the other's desires and will to one's own. In this way, one achieves a recognition which is secure because it acknowledges the self's greater authority and importance relative to the other. One thereby appears to be relatively independent, as though it is possible to deny the self's contingency and need of the other. This, in Hegel's framework, is the situation of the master, willing to fight to the death to achieve a victory of subjugation over the slave.

3) In the third strategy, or option, recognition is based neither on the subordination of one's will to that of an other nor of the other's will to one's own. Rather, recognition stems from mutual admission by self and other that each is different from and independent of each other--yet at the same time utterly dependent on one another. This appears at first glance to be a conundrum, a candidate for a Buddhist koan, a challenge to Newtonian logic which would categorically assert a is not b without also recognizing the

unified field this implies. Acknowledgement here is based upon the acceptance of both moments (dependence and independence, independence and dependence) and the impossibility of repressing or denying either.

Of these three possibilities, I believe only the third to be capable of resolving the problem of recognition. In contrast, the first two are doomed to failure. If recognition entails no less than how life can be sustainable and self-perpetuating, then the first two options in contrast flirt dangerously with a proclivity toward death.

Returning to the "problem," recognition to be genuine must be granted by an other who in some way cannot be controlled by the self, who has a certain degree of actual autonomy. If the other were merely an extension of the self, there would be no basis for self-definition in contrast to an other -- the very basis for a distinction between self and other would die and the self as such with it. Therefore, for recognition to occur, the other as well as the self must be preserved as separable entities. (In Chapter 3, I try to translate the concept I am expressing here in existentially-based language into psychoanalytic terminology, drawn both from Freud's own thought and from post-Freudian object relations theory, which may refer to the same underlying reality.) A given person is then rendered inescapably vulnerable, having to recognize the independence of an other upon whom one at the same time depends. The saving grace, however, the potential beauty of

this third option, is that the other is in an analogous position: to be recognized, s/he, too, must grant the independence of the other upon whom s/he simultaneously depends for recognition. Other to self, self to other, radical vulnerability becomes bearable by virtue of its mirrored reflection -- for Hegel, the only state in which the subject and object become, for a moment, objective, identical.

But the first two strategies fail to solve the problem of recognition precisely because their effect is to slowly erode any sense of dialectical tension between self and other. If I must subordinate myself to the will of an other in order to be recognized (the first option), how can I believe resultant acknowledgement to be genuine? In order to obtain it, I have had to act as though I were not a separate being. My efforts will continually fail, for how can I achieve recognition in relation to an other from whom I cannot allow myself to be independent (and who therefore also is not independent)? The more I try, the more I will feel frustrated. I engage in behavior which tries over and over to destroy the self so as to be subordinate, but find myself never achieving the recognition I sought short of my biological death. Only in death could I wipe out the actuality that I am separate and cannot ever truly merge with an other. I therefore call this behavior masochistic, because it is self-destructive rather than self-regenerative to the person who cannot be recognized within the boundaries

of its logical imperatives. The self wears itself down, becoming wearier and wearier, but to no avail: one cannot merge and remains unrecognized, unaware that merger would, in any event, approximate death rather than a life-sustaining state. This is the foundation from which I make the claim that a non-sadomasochistic mode of interaction between self and other is preferable to a sadomasochistic one. My "judgment" rests entirely on acceptance of the premise that life is preferable to death. Once this premise is granted and not itself taken to be problematic, certain modes of interaction appear to allow for life's perpetual renewal more than others. As detailed in the next chapter, an unfulfillable quest for recognition does not have to be experienced physically in order to be masochistic. Masochism experienced psychologically rather than physically can be similarly insidious, and explains why I provisionally called my own experience masochistic.

Nor can the second strategy resolve the problem of recognition because its terms are to deny the separateness of the other (in the masochistic strategy, it is the separateness of the self which is denied). But, rather than subordinating oneself to the other's will, the other here wishes to subordinate the other's will to their own. I now wish to control and dominate the other, the Hegelian slave. In so doing, however, haven't I negated my own possibility of recognition -- for how can I be recognized by an other who only recognizes me from a condition of enslavement? The

person adopting the second option can no more be satisfactorily recognized than the person adopting the first; the former is merely the observe of the latter. In this second scenario, the self does not pursue the diminution of self but the diminution (or negation) of the other. For this reason, I call this strategy for attempting to resolve the problem of recognition "sadistic." The sadist does not and may never realize that in dominating the other to forcibly guarantee recognition, the other is slowly obliterated as someone who can provide authentic feedback for the self. In destroying the other, the basis of the sadist's own self is also destroyed. In my example, although the first man sensed that his conditional and controlling behavior somehow ensured my loyalty, he was nonetheless dissatisfied and searching for recognition from another; this may also explain one facet of my interest in the first man and disinterest in the second.

Thus, my use of the term sadomasochistic in regard to my own experience refers to the impossibility of genuine recognition between self and other within the logic of a dynamic which would obliterate all tension between them. To wish to obliterate this tension points toward a Freudian thanatos, for eros requires that both self and other be maintained in a state of mutual dependence and independence. I therefore referred to the first two options as sadomasochistic, tending either toward destruction of the self in an effort at merger (the masochist) or toward

destruction of the other, an effort at unimaginable independence (the sadist).

The Barnard Conference - The Problem of Evaluation

The problem of recognition brings me back, albeit via a circuitous route, to why the Barnard conference also provoked my interest in studying sadomasochism. The conference had little to do with why I classified my experiences as sadomasochistic, for it dealt with sadomasochism as it characterizes sexual relationships rather than intimate relationships understood in more global terms. Nonetheless, it too broached the question of evaluation: should sadomasochistic sexual practices be viewed negatively and, if so, why or why not? Is S&M really problematic? This is the same question the problem of recognition might be used to answer, insofar as it suggests a criterion by which sadomasochism in general can be assessed -- namely, in relation to whether life is assumed preferable to death. But the Barnard conference also drew attention to the slightly different problem of how pleasure and desire are actually experienced, a dilemma clearly present within the context of the 1982 debate.

Controversy over sexuality erupted in April of that year when the planners of the Barnard conference permitted members of the lesbian organization SAMOIS to both speak and distribute literature at this annual feminist event. The uproar was exacerbated by the action of shocked Barnard

College administrators who quickly censored a pre-conference brochure because of SAMOIS' contribution -- a picture of a razor blade placed between the legs of a woman in spread-eagled position. SAMOIS itself was a West Coast-based group named after the dominatrix in The Story of O, which rebelliously proclaimed the legitimacy of sadomasochism as a form of sexual expression that men freely practiced -- why shouldn't it be a freely chosen option which lesbians as well were entitled to explore?

The planners of the Barnard conference proceeded to defend SAMOIS' right to participate, largely out of concern that "cultural feminist" attitudes, such as those held by certain members of the group Women Against Pornography (WAP), had assumed unquestioned predominance within the feminist movement as a whole. Cultural feminists, they contended, had come to associate women's sexuality with a pure and idealized vision, an "erotica" (as opposed to the contaminated world of pornography) from which uncomfortable desires for power or powerlessness managed to remain absent. In relation to the "problem of recognition," they therefore visualized women's sexuality as falling within the third option, having skirted the sadomasochistic orientation of the other two. But, in making these idealized leaps, feminism was in danger of falling into another pit, the trap of an essentialist philosophy which would attribute the purity of women's sexuality and the brutishness of men's to biological nature. It was only a short step from this

sexual essentialism to the same attitudes -- the attribution of innate goodness (and passivity) to women and inherent evil (but also assertiveness) to men -- which initially led all feminists, including "cultural feminists," to revolt against their biologically-rationalized oppression.

But what if, as conference planners like Alice Echols and Ellen Willis objected, this view of women's sexuality is sanitized and does not reflect the experience of all women? What if the vision serves only to set up a feminist super ego with regard to sexual practices, repressing and intimidating those women whose experiences may not be so pure, who may derive pleasure from pornography and/or the world of the sadomasochistic? It was probably in this iconoclastic spirit, that of freeing women's actual feelings, that SAMOIS' right to participate in the conference was maintained by its planners -- not because of any necessary advocacy of the group's position per se.

Yet, the planners' position also merits expansion to the degree that it did not distinguish clearly between two separable issues, experience and evaluation. To argue that sadomasochism is a problematic mode of interaction between self and other need not imply a derisive judgment upon individuals who in one way or another have engaged in it (whether solely on a sexual level or in the broader sense my experience suggests). It implies only a judgment about the nature and internal logic of the dynamic itself. Moreover, it would be surprising if human beings did not derive

pleasure from sadomasochistic patterns in which they may habitually have engaged, or have had little choice but to engage. As I will argue, they may imbibe the texture of these patterns through a whole series of social as well as psychological experiences. The masochist who for some reason is unable to recognize (or act upon recognition of) the impossibility of obtaining acknowledgement within a given dynamic, may nevertheless come to find gratification in the process itself. This is self-protective, a defense mechanism which happens to also be self-destructive: the self nonetheless grabs onto it for dear life, learning to find erotic sustenance wherever it humanly can. The lover may feel no choice but to take pleasure in being so absorbed in the sadomasochistic process that it becomes an end in itself, a substitute though secondary means of self-identification. One cannot dissociate oneself from this process with which one has become associated and in which one has invested so deeply. The process is all that matters and comes to be, understandably, desired. It is not interrogated as to its meaning or rationality, nor can the masochist afford it to be: means and ends, form and content, have been sundered indefinitely from one another. Thus, the sadomasochistic dynamic may be problematic at the same time we derive continuing pleasure from it.

In light of this observation, my negative "judgment" about sadomasochism refers only to that which can be seen, from the standpoint of intellectual detachment, to be

destructive of the self (the masochist) or destructive of an other (the sadist) in relation to the problem of recognition. But this assessment must also include that which is embraced within most people's ordinary definition of S&M: self-destruction or destruction of an other may or may not be experienced (by sadist and/or masochist) as painful; both may be experienced as pleasurable. In this sense, I agree with writers who, beginning with Marx and finding 20th century exponents in George Lukacs (referring to class consciousness) and Nancy Hartsock (referring to feminist consciousness) believe in an objective standpoint from which our psychological and social interests differ from their appearance when immersed in a⁵ a culture not of our own making. Nonetheless, the work of any standpoint theorist remains incomplete to the extent that it halts with recognition of something termed "false consciousness." Our present consciousness is quite real, our experience cannot be derided: with regard to sexuality, which Freud described as among the impulses "which, even normally, are the least controlled by the higher activities of the mind,"⁶ this dilemma is perhaps most profound. The interesting question then becomes whether a given theorist can maintain belief in a psycho/social/sexual reality different from our own without thereby sacrificing the equally real evidence of our present consciousness. How is it possible to move from an imperfect but living present to a utopian but immaterial future? If an answer were to

exist, it would have to be one which posits some type of "dialectical" movement between these points in time, showing how our given consciousness could be gently nudged into new directions (or perhaps how it creates its own internal "contradictions").

While I make no pretense of being able to solve this important theoretical problem, my orientation toward sadomasochism is to accept both its current pleasurable status for many people and sadomasochism's ultimately problematic nature as a permanent dynamic between self and other. My interest in studying sadomasochism's social as well as psychological roots is aimed at expanding our conception of what would have to be altered in order for non-sadomasochistic patterns of interaction to slowly, and dialectically, themselves become pleasurable.

But the other issue the Barnard conference highlighted was just this -- would sadomasochims no longer be pleasurable in an altered society? The gist of the sexuality debate may have been its calling into question the previously taken-for-granted idea that with social change would come altered psyches and a "politically correct" sexuality. The passionate anger SAMOIS aroused in 1982 is perhaps most comprehensible in view of the group's implicit challenge to this cherished belief of the social reformer. What if, however, sadomasochism refers to aspects of human existence -- to anger at the length of the infant's dependence upon a caretaker, to a need to comfort ourselves

about our mortality, even to biologically-based drives -- which are transhistorical, not alterable simply by changing social structures? In fact, this is the most haunting question to which, beneath its surface, the Barnard Conference alluded. It is a question with which this dissertation cannot help but be concerned.

The Problem of Sadomasochism's Origins: Transhistorical v. Socially Specific Theories?

The most far-reaching effect of the Conference, then, was to reintroduce a version of the "nature v. nurture" debate of which sadomasochism was a particular instance: did sadomasochism stem from the universal or the historically specific? By posing this issue, the Conference found itself straddling several, sometimes conflicting, theoretical perspectives. There are, in particular, three intellectual traditions amidst which the debate and the general question of sadomasochism's origins can be located. Two of these have attempted to explain sadomasochism in terms of universal or "transhistoric" aspects of human existence, while the third focuses on social factors as fundamental to its genesis. The three traditions might be summarized as follows:

I Transhistorical Theories

A. Biological and Psychological Theories (especially those influenced by Freud)

I would place in this category any theory which

attributes to sadism or masochism a biological origin. Biological theories of innate sadism, or aggressivity, have attained degrees of notoriety which vary with their respective historical contexts. For example, the history of criminology is replete with recorded efforts to link physiology with aggressivity, beginning with the phrenology of Cesare Lombroso (who believed "cranial size" determined violent tendencies), to 1960's efforts to link an extra Y chromosome with criminality in an already-imprisoned population, to the recent resurgence of a subfield called ⁷ sociobiology. Although studies concerning masochism are rare, the cynic might argue that they have not been necessary. Classic sexist texts, attempting to link passivity in women with phallic lack, culminate in attribution of a biological basis to "female" masochism. Indeed, Freud himself promulgated this position, both in popularizing the conception of penis envy and by referring to women's "primary masochism" (although this was an area about which he admitted confusion).

Nevertheless, I would characterize Freud's own view of sadomasochism as psychological, not merely biological. In his Three Essays on Sexuality, the anal phase is also described as the moment of sadism's origination; one has the impression, however, that remaining "anal" after the phase should have been passed would be explained by Freud in terms of either constitutional (biological), psychological factors, or both (depending upon a given individual).

Moreover, within Freud's psychoanalytic explanations are the possibility of multicausal interpretations. As will be seen, some Freudians emphasize sadomasochism's origins in the pre-oedipal phase while others emphasize its oedipal roots. Last but not least, the period during which Freud was writing has to be considered when evaluating his approaches to sadomasochism, since they reflect the transformations and vicissitudes to which his own thought was subject.

Oedipal roots which may lead to sadomasochism were explored by Freud in his famous essay "A Child is Being Beaten." Sadism and masochism in this context represent different stages in fantasization occurring in relation to Oedipal desires for the parent. Turning to more contemporary theorists, in particular object relations theorists (about whom I will write more in Chapter 3), one finds sadomasochism associated with the infant's rage at having to separate from its parents.

Whether taken to be biologically based or more strictly speaking psychological (i.e., a failure to properly individuate or resolve an Oedipal crisis), this set of theories explains sadomasochism by conflicts which would not merely "wither away" if social structures were altered. While I wish to examine the ways in which social processes can affect these psychological dilemmas -- perhaps channeling them into altogether different directions -- the fact remains that their originators referred to inescapable aspects of a human condition. This theoretical tradition,

then, inclines toward the just as inescapable conclusion that sadistic and masochistic traits might characterize certain people in any society -- even if the total number of individuals affected fluctuated to a greater or lesser degree in varying social milieu.

B. Existential Theories

I refer here to the same intellectual tradition in which I placed already-cited writers like Hegel, Sartre, Bataille and Benjamin when discussing the problem of recognition. Disparate in many ways, I nevertheless perceive in these theorists a common theme -- the attribution of ontological importance to death as a permanent reality which has a profound influence upon the experiencing of life. (This characterized the later writing of Freud as well.) Viewed through the lens of this perspective, sadomasochism becomes an attempt to resolve anxiety rooted in consciousness of death. Hegel's master overcomes the slave because only the former is willing to risk death for power. Sartre, in a long section on Being and Nothingness, describes both sadist and masochist as wishing to avoid what he calls "facticity," or the knowledge of human life's contingency and ultimately its mortality, vis a vis their respective postures. For Sartre, consciousness of mortality is painful, forcing human beings to take responsibility for their actions, to fear the facing of the unknown. In sadism, however, one attempts "blindly" to fix the other's, the masochist's, existence and therefore

avoid cognizance of one's own unavoidably contingent existence: "Thus sadism is a refusal to be incarnated and a flight from all facticity and at the same time an effort to get hold of the Other's facticity."⁸ Similarly, Sartre explains masochism in terms of a desperate attempt to lose one's own facticity through efforts aimed at the masochist's submerging of her or his own will to that of an other.⁹

A tradition which explains sadomasochism as two different strategies to avoid confrontation with mortality properly belongs in the category of a transhistoric or universalizable theory. Modern technology, dazzling though it may be, gives no hint of solving death's biological mystery in the conceivable future. Therefore, to the extent death and the appeal of sadomasochism are related, another reason exists for wondering -- a la the issues raised by the Barnard conference -- whether masochist and sadist are only phantoms of an historically specific social setting.

II Theories Which Point Toward Social Roots of Sadomasochism

A. Marxist Theories.

The intellectual tradition bequeathed by Marx asserts that consciousness, defined in the broadest possible manner, is greatly influenced by "material" social factors. Although Marx himself did not apply his writings about the nature of capitalism to sadomasochism, a social explanation of it can be extracted from this thought. Two

theoretical strands of 20th century post-Marxist analysis are particularly applicable to sadomasochism: in the first, sadomasochism must be extrapolated from a theory in which it is only implicit; in the second, explicit attention is devoted to its discussion.

1. Lukacs and the theory of reification, based upon the predominance of the commodity form. In History and Class Consciousness, written in 1922, Lukacs contended that it was no accident that in Chapter 1, Volume I of Capital, Marx began with an analysis of the commodity form as that which uniquely characterizes capitalist societies. Insisting that he was merely expanding the implications of Marx's own ideas, Lukacs further asserted that "fragmentation of the object of production" in the external world also "necessarily entails the fragmentation of its subject."¹⁰ By virtue of his reading of Marx, Lukacs pointed toward, but did not himself embark upon, the elaboration of a capitalist psychology. Such a psychology would have to embrace the way in which human consciousness becomes "reified" under capitalism: in a society where the commodity form has become dominant, workers (and the bourgeoisie as well, Lukacs added) come to view themselves and others as things, grist for the marketplace of exchange, unable to grasp the logic of the system as a whole. Describing the detachment of someone like a journalist, or social "scientist, whose consciousness is fragmented in such a way that the external and internal -- or political and

personal -- dimensions of life have been sundered apart as though no other possibility existed, Lukacs wrote:

Here it is precisely subjectivity itself, knowledge, temperament and powers of expression that are reduced to an abstract mechanism, functioning automatically and divorced both from the personality of their 'owner' and from the material and concrete nature of the subject matter at hand. The journalist's 'lack of convictions,' the prostitution of his experiences and beliefs is comprehensible only as the apogee of capitalist reification....The transformation of the commodity relation into a thing of 'ghostly objectivity' cannot therefore content itself with the reduction of all objects for the gratification of human needs to commodities. It stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man; his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world..his physical and psychic 'qualities' are...subjected increasingly to this reifying process. 11 (Emphasis added.)

The imagination stirs at this description, for it is not difficult to see how it might be interpreted so as to offer a social, historically specific theory of sadomasochism -- whether or not Marx or Lukacs themselves applied the idea of reification to psychology and sexuality. If individuals (again, Lukacs is careful to include both proletarian and bourgeois under the rubric of commodification) have come to think of themselves and others as exchangeable objects, they will have a psychological proclivity toward according the buyer/other far more importance than they can possibly give themselves. I will be concerned about selling myself, convincing the abstract buyer on the marketplace -- who exists as generalized social other, amorphous, the unseen and unheard introjection of a social "they" -- that I too ought to be a valued commodity.

I will worry about which toothpaste and deodorant I am wearing, where I went to school, who my friends are, whether I am "packaging" myself well enough on the job market or in the marketplace of sexual (the meat "market") and psychic attractiveness. My sense of self-worth will always be in doubt -- will it not? -- since I must always evaluate myself in terms of how the generalized other of the marketplace will judge me. Consequently, my existence can never be its own justification: seen as though a commodity to myself and others, I must constantly work at earning approval or I may be doomed to loneliness, unrecognized because I simply don't sell. (I return to this perspective in Chapter 7, devoted to a study of the institution of work within a capitalist society, and its potential applicability to an analysis of sadomasochism.)

In this way, a commodity-permeated social universe attacks individuals from all sides with uncertainty as to whether they are "good enough," with a constant threat of social rejection which extends to every part of their being. Given the omnipotence of capitalist commodification, human beings are formed amidst stimuli which cannot help but produce a negative self-conception and sense of inferiority with reference to an infinitely receding (and therefore unattainable) social standard. Therefore, it would not be surprising if, at the level of my personal experiences, I wished to earn the approval of someone whose attitude toward me was ambivalent and conditional. My beloved then merely

becomes the generalized other personified, a buyer I can see and touch, whose approval will hopefully fill the void of what I fear I lack in social esteem. This analysis leads to the provocative conclusion that the structure of capitalism itself, as a particular form of social organization, tends to produce masochism in those who live within it -- in short, to masochism appearing as the logical psychological correlate to capitalism's systemic imperatives.

But what about the sadist? At first glance, masochism in this Marxist/Lukacsian framework appears to correspond to the situation of the proletariat, sadism to the capitalist's mentality. However, I suspect closer examination reveals an even more complex reality. If sadomasochism is a dynamic in which the sadistic and masochistic intertwine, then each is capable of self-transformation into its opposite (again, Chapter 2 will expand this point theoretically). Thus, for instance, a president of a major American corporation may adopt a sadistic stance toward workers and middle managers beneath him (in 1986, still usually a "he") but masochistic in relation to the powerful chairman of the board of director individuals under whose authority he is subordinate. A middle manager may similarly partake of both relations, just as I did in my experiences with the two men. Moreover, male workers, compelled into a masochistic stance at the workplace, are often quite sadistic to women in the privatized sphere of their families. As Lukacs argued, commodified culture does not magically exempt one economic

class (the bourgeoisie) from its effects, while demoralizing another (the proletariat). Rather, both imbibe (in both directions) the texture of commodified and sadomasochistic relationships, even though their structural position in relation to capitalism (whether the sadistic or masochistic stance) is radically different. But, to the extent a sadomasochistic psychological orientation is preponderant, an overly rigid Marxist interpretation of how "class" ought to be defined will have only limited explanatory power. Lukacs attempted to draw out the full implications of Marx's own thought, implications which can be taken to mean that sadomasochism en masse is not surprising but to be expected, given the structure of the capitalist Weltanschauung.

2. The Frankfurt School - The importance of the Marxist/Lukacsian interpretation of commodification is its propounding of a theory which can explain sadomasochism solely in terms of the social structure of capitalism. Neither Marx nor Lukacs, however, considered transhistorical bases of sadomasochism's possible origins, such as those suggested within the psychological and existential traditions. Their contribution was to imply, rather than to develop, a psychology of capitalism. But events of the late 1930s and 1940s -- the traumas imposed both by the revealed atrocities of Stalinism and the rise of fascism as a social mutation unimagined by the 19th century mind -- compelled Marxist intellectuals to take Freudian

insights more seriously. The relationship between sadomasochism and death had become horribly, and historically, real. Consequently, writers within the Marxist-influenced Frankfurt School, particularly Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm, developed explicitly social theories of sadomasochism which at the same time tried to incorporate Freudian conceptions.

As both a Marxist and a Freudian analyst, Reich must be classified in the forefront of modern theorists who have attempted to link the social with, as in Reich's case, the sexual. The influence of Freud reinforced Reich's belief that free sexual expression, as that intellectual tradition argues, is a biologically-tinged requirement of human gratification; through Marx, Reich maintained a sense of how specific social structures affected sexuality's development. In The Mass Psychology of Fascism, written as Hitler was coming to power in 1931, Reich combined these two traditions to argue that sadistic tendencies will flourish wherever sexuality is repressed and monogamy strictly mandated. Although he focussed on the symbolic order of the Nazi regime, his correlation is applicable to any culture that fosters sexual repression via the legalized institution of monogamous marriage. A Reichian social analysis is therefore one which acknowledges the centrality of a Freudian-based sexual drive, claiming that sadomasochism will result wherever sexual freedom is inhibited. Extraordinarily radical today as in the 30s, Reich's theory

implies that not only fascist but capitalist and communist societies as well may generate sadomasochism if they perpetuate state-enforced monogamy.

I greatly respect Reich's attempt to consider the social and psychosexual simultaneously, and believe that the present work attempts to place itself within the same tradition. However, it seems to me that Reich's theory was limited (though not invalidated) by its implicit assumption that sadomasochism would face almost automatically with the achievement of sexual liberation. This assumption is empirically belied by American subcultures in which both multiple sexual partners and sadomasochistic sexual practices appear simultaneously. Reich's theoretical omission may have been to ignore other social institutions, in addition to the family, which similarly germinate sadomasochistic tendencies. Reich ultimately defined the sexual in terms which conceive of it primarily in a genital sense, oriented toward the undoubted importance of orgasm as a physical release of libidinal energy. However, had he employed a broader definition of the sexual, such as Freud's own more "polymorphous" conception, Reich might have been led to posit the need for transforming an entire panoply of social relationships that generate sadomasochism in a similarly "polymorphous" way.

In Eros and Civilization (1955), for example, Marcuse appropriated several Freudian concepts for social theory, in particular, the reality versus the pleasure

principles and eros and thanatos (as Freud described the two pairs of concepts in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920)). Marcuse acknowledged that Freud was correct to accord some degree of universality to the reality principle: how would society be possible if people acted only upon their desires for libidinal gratification? However, the repressiveness of capitalism far exceeds that which is minimally necessary to ensure social functioning -- under capitalism, surplus repression reigns. When surplus repression dominates a social order, Marcuse contended, eros (the force of life) is stifled, struggling desperately to stay alive, while thanatos (the force of death) replenishes the void. In such a society, which resembles our own, human beings are conditioned to adopt the first and second strategies toward solving the problem of recognition -- the third occurs far less frequently, and is difficult to initiate, difficult to sustain. Marcuse's theorizing splendidly integrates the socially-based Marxist tradition with conceptions borrowed from the traditions of which Freud was a leading representative (and which acknowledge the possibility of transhistoric biological and psychological realities). However, unlike Reich, Marcuse's conception of eros is extremely (and I think properly) polymorphous, fully inclusive of the multifaceted social incarnations in which both it and thanatos can appear. One of the several goals of this study will be to elaborate Marcuse's observations about the relationship between eros and thanatos: Precisely what would be necessary

in order for eros to be revitalized so that it is in no way threatened by thanatos? By detailing the ways in which several American social institutions -- the family, schooling, and work -- plant the seeds of sadomasochistic psychology, I hope to highlight ways in which eros can be nourished so that a third option is more commonly chosen to successfully resolve the problem of recognition.

B. Weber and a Theory of Bureaucracy.

In contrast to Reich and Marcuse, Weber did not deal explicitly with mass psychological structures in his work. However, like Marx and Lukacs, elements of his theorizing can be extrapolated so as to offer another, specifically social angle on sadomasochism. Weber's well-known writings on bureaucracy (his essays on the subject in addition to sections of the two-volumed Economy and Society) characterize it as a form of organization without which modern mass societies could not operate. But the very features which are at the source of bureaucracy's efficiency -- pyramidal, hierarchically organized chains of command, its clearly specifiable jurisdictions -- are also precisely what produces its impersonality, its tendency to reduce human beings to numbers, cogs in a wheel. The recent movie Brazil brilliantly portrayed the netherworld of Weber's imagination, as if it had somehow unearthed his theory's gloomy "iron cage" in which all spontaneity and charisma have been lost: in Brazil, no one dares question bureaucracy's generalized other, all is

surreal and a woman is handed a receipt for the receipt of her husband's death.

How might bureaucracy and sadomasochism interrelate? Because bureaucracy is a dominant mode of modern social organization, pervading everything from government to the corporate world to the trade union and the reformer's own organization, human beings under its purview learn to accept a feeling of subordination in everyday life. Enormous parallels can be drawn between those effects of the commodity form and bureaucracy which are similarly conducive to the development of sadomasochistic personality traits . Bureaucracy also encourages individuals to be extremely concerned about the opinions of superiors; its rules and regulations are also eminently conditional, however "rationally" they may be promulgated. Within any bureaucracy, one is socially conditioned to subordinate oneself, to be as if married to organizational imperatives. Yet, though also a socially based perspective, a Weberian analysis differs from a Marxist (both a Lukacsian/ Marxist or the more Freudian syntheses propounded by Reich and Marcuse) in that only the latter remains optimistic that the phenomenon's potential obsolescence: the marketplace, as locus of commodity exchange, is far more permeable to change than bureaucracy as a singularly modern form of social organization. Weber saw no alternative to bureaucracy: unless one could be found, there is little reason he would

have thought possible corresponding changes in authoritarian, sadomasochistic personality structures.

C. DeBeauvoir and Feminist Theorizing about Patriarchy and the Family

I consider de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) to be the most important expression of feminist theorizing written to date. In it and innumerable other works which have since followed, patriarchy has been defined as an institutionalized system of male domination of women; though a social fact, patriarchy has been far less historically specific than capitalism, having characterized all cultures and eras of which modern anthropology is aware. Patriarchy also rests upon the division of the world into gendered, coercively separated domains: it associates the masculine with the public, the political, the external world of office or business; the feminine with that which is private, personal and familial. Within the family, where gendered roles are first imbibed, men learn to repress their emotions. As Nancy Chodorow describes in her book The Reproduction of Mothering, they are pushed into the public world where power is associated with independence and the denial of intimate connection with others. They come to believe in the superiority of the masculine world, to experience a sense of domination over the inferiorized world of the "second sex." Women, on the contrary, are confronted with powerlessness in relation to the male-dominated world. DeBeauvoir goes on to detail the processes by which, at

every stage in her development (from young girl to married woman -- or the difficulties of living alternatives to marriage -- to old age), women are treated in such a way that a masochistic stance (such as my own in relation to the first man) can be anticipated. On the other hand, in their desire to "master" the world of nature with which women have become associated under patriarchy, men assume a relatively more sadistic stance.

In addition to deBeauvoir, writers such as Hartsock (Money, Sex and Power) and Chodorow offer an implicit theory of sadomasochism which could be taken as a gendered re-interpretation of the problem of recognition. Within patriarchy and the family, men are conditioned to adopt the sadistic role with far greater frequency than are women, whereas women are conditioned to adopt a masochistic role far more often than the sadistic. In other words, women are socially geared toward adopting the first strategy in order to try to resolve the problem of recognition (the masochist's strategy), men toward adopting the second. Consequently, men tend to deny their dependence, valorizing an unsurpassable independence; women are taught to suppress independence (though I think both Hartsock and Chodorow emphasize the inadequacy of the man's position far more clearly than they are willing to admit an analogous one-sidedness within the woman's position), and to feel that connectedness is an unequivocal good. In this way, socially mandated gendered identities prevent mutual acknowledgement

by self and other of simultaneous independence and dependence. They therefore perpetuate sadomasochism which, by virtue of specifically patriarchal imperatives, tends to cast men in the role of sadists and women in the role of masochists. In so doing, men are forced to repress one dimension of themselves, women another. However, I suspect that a theory of patriarchy can no more entirely explain why women are sometimes sadistic and men sometimes masochistic than a theory about capitalism can explain the gendered proclivities of both. Therefore, it appears that sadomasochism's complexity requires a theory which tries to synthesize the crucial insights of several intellectual traditions and paradigms.

The Project of this Dissertation

In the chapters which follow, I will frequently return to both the problems and the intellectual traditions I have touched upon in this Introduction. My own orientation is toward theories which focus upon sadomasochism's possibly social roots. However, I feel just as strongly that universal aspects of human existence -- e.g., a need for recognition from an other and therefore both autonomy and connectedness, the influence of anxiety about death on life, needs for sexual gratification and the expression of psychologically based feelings -- should not be denied or lightly dismissed. I will therefore devote attention in each of the following chapters to a) how the specific

structure of American social institutions may be conducive to the development of sadomasochistic character, and b) how these social institutions might differently channel transhistoric needs we are at present powerless to manipulate.

I will structure the rest of this dissertation as follows:

Part I will be devoted to further defining sadomasochism. In Chapter 2, I will take a hypothetical instance of S&M sex -- the manifestation with which sadomasochism is most commonly associated -- and try to derive from it characteristics typical of the sadist and the masochist, respectively. I will then try to apply these characteristics to other instances of social interactions between self and other, returning briefly to my example of love and then offering others drawn from work and school experience. The intention of Chapter 2 is to demonstrate more specifically than I have in this Introduction that sadomasochism is a far more normal phenomenon of American society than is usually acknowledged. In Chapter 3, I will review the vast psychoanalytic literature which has been devoted to studies of sadomasochism -- sociological analyses have been proffered far more infrequently. My hope, in so doing, is to show how ideas drawn from Freudian psychoanalytic theory, as well as the notion of symbiotic attachment and other insights of object relations theory, are analogous with conclusions

reached in Chapter 2 through a more existentially based mode of analysis. I will then feel that Part I has set the scene for understanding both the scope and characteristics of sadomasochism; if sadomasochism has been explored in sufficient detail, social institutions can later be examined in terms of their possible influence upon the development of these characteristics.

In Part II, I will turn to an analysis of three social institutions -- the family, education, and the workplace, -- as they appear in the American context with which I am most familiar. I will treat these institutions as Durkheimian social facts and question how their structure might logically correlate with the characteristics of sadomasochism which can be deduced from existential, psychoanalytic and sociological theories. Within Chapter 4 (the focus of which will be the institution of the family), Chapter 5 (education as social institution) and Chapter 6 (the institution of labor), I will refer to the theoretical perspectives and issues developed here; again, I will also try within each chapter to incorporate considerations of that which may be transhistoric as well as that which is decidedly social.

Chapter 1: Notes

1. I have wondered why the sadistic was given priority in naming a phenomenon which might have also been called masosadism -- in my own case, discovering masochism was primary and prior.

2. See, in particular, Jean Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956); Jessica Benjamin, "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination" in Powers of Desire ((New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), and George Bataille, Erotism: Death and Sensuality (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986).

3. A brilliant analysis of this proposition in terms of Western culture versus Eastern religion and philosophy is found in an unpublished essay by Masao Abe. Abe argues that the West in fact does prioritize life over death, whereas Eastern religions may accord the two ontological equality. Abe's point is that the way life and death are viewed in a particular culture reflects a process of social evaluation and decision-making.

4. Without b, a as such is inconceivable and ceases to exist. However, whether a perishes entirely is a philosophical question akin to riddles about whether there is sound when a tree falls in an empty forest.

5. The concept of standpoint reinterpreted from a specifically feminist perspective (the "feminist standpoint") is presented in Nancy Hartsock, Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), in particular the chapter entitled "The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism." See, also, the discussion of "false consciousness" in Georg Lukacs, "Class Consciousness," in History and Class Consciousness (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1983).

6. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 15.

7. See, for example, S.A. Mednick and K.O. Christiansen, eds., Biosocial Bases of Criminal Behavior (New York: Wiley, 1977) and James Q. Wilson and Richard Herrnstein, Crime and Human Nature (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985).

8. Jean-Paul Sartre, op cit., p. 399.

9. Ibid. See also, section entitled "First Attitudes toward Others: Love, Language, Masochism," pp. 364-379.

10. Lukacs, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in History and Class Consciousness, op cit., p. 89,

11. Ibid., p. 100.

Chapter 2. The Paradigm of the Sadomasochistic Dynamic and its Existential Characteristics

For most people, the term "sadomasochism" conjures up images of sexuality merged with violence. These associations usually take two specific forms. First, sadomasochism is frequently thought to be sexual activity in which pleasure emanates either from one person's forcible domination of the other (the sadistic position) or from the experience of being forcibly dominated (the masochist's position). This is the "S&M" of "kinky" and deviant sex, an underworld of pornographic or lived fantasies, replete with whips and chains and leather (or their mental representations). Here, one is stimulated by the breaking of taboos, the refusal to adhere to "civilized" forms of sexual conduct. Instead, intense excitement may result from tying someone up and making them do what you tell them they 'really wanted to do anyway'; or from being tied up and told you're going to 'get' it whether you like it or not.

That sadomasochism often connotes sexual activity revolving around issues of dominance and submission is by no means surprising. In the sense of having become bolder and more public, sadomasochistic sexual activity seems to be generating renewed interest, a sort of urban renaissance in the 1980s, as though it were somehow an ironic excretion of gentrifying, yuppifying culture. Nonetheless, it still exists beyond the pale of what most Americans consider "normal" sexual conduct. While there is no way of knowing how frequently it is practiced in the privacy of people's

homes, clubs devoted exclusively to sadomasochistic sexual activity exist in New York as well as other major urban centers. 'S&M' frequently figures in pornographic videos and pornographic literature; and sadistic or masochistic practices are commonly requested of prostitutes. Not, of course, mainstream, sadomasochism is nonetheless more and more a source of fascination even outside the world of pornography and prostitution. It is the subject of several recent, commercial Hollywood movies such as 9-1/2 Weeks, with 'respectable' stars Kim Basinger and Mickey Rourke and Blue Velvet, David Lynch's now-cult study of a sadomasochistic eruption in the very heart of suburbia USA. Black leather and silver studs, originating in punk culture which itself made symbolic reference to S&M, has been coopted by the fashion industry just as blue jeans were a decade or so earlier. In everyday language, contemporary use of the ambivalent, not-entirely-negative "kinky" to refer to S&M implies a crack in traditional attitudes which would once have used only words like "sick" to describe it. And, even in feminist intellectual circles, as we have seen, the sexuality debate called into question earlier attitudes toward S&M which would uncritically condemn it as a form of sexual expression. Given this degree of interest and renewed attention to S&M as 'kinky' phenomenon, it is not surprising that most people I know assume a study on sadomasochism to be one which would focus on sexual practices.

But sadomasochism has a second common association as well. Rather than evoking explicit sexual activity or fantasy, reference is frequently made to "sadomasochistic" relationships which are relatively more ongoing in duration, and more systematic than a sexual act which can be isolated in time and space. An example would be to speak of a battered woman (or, less often, a battered man) as being involved in a sadomasochistic relationship. These relationships are usually thought of as centering on violence to a relatively greater degree than sexuality. While both forms of sadomasochism link sexuality and violence (so that sadomasochistic relationships can easily be tinged with sexuality or involve explicit sexual violence), the first sees itself more in terms of sex than of violence; the second sees itself more as a form of violence than of sex. However, each may use the form of one (i.e., sex or violence) to express the content of the other. But the importance in distinguishing the two is to recognize that people involved in sadomasochistic relationships will not necessarily engage in sadomasochistic sex, nor will people who have S&M sex necessarily be involved in an S&M relationship. A sadomasochistic dynamic, then, may be enacted in one part of a person's life and not others, though, as I will argue, it may very well be symptomatic of certain characteristic patterns wherever it is enacted. Thus, sadomasochism's frequent association with sexuality and violence, as manifested in sadomasochistic sex and

sadomasochistic relationships, could be viewed at one level in relation to recent rises in public consciousness and interest in these particular manifestations of the dynamic. This is, however, tautological, failing to explain the original source of the association. Why has sadomasochism been associated primarily with sexuality and violence, associations which are obvious and visible since they have to do exclusively with the body? To properly understand the actual roots of the association necessitates turning, first, to the historical context in which the term sadomasochism first appeared, and then tracing its development, in particular, the use made of the term within a prominent strand of Freudian psychoanalytic thought. The latter tradition has often focussed on sadomasochism's roots in oedipal conflicts, an association which tends to link the phenomenon with the child's early experiencing of sexual feelings. The various interpretations of sadomasochism given by Freud himself, and the way the most obviously sexual of those interpretations remains associated with S&M, is discussed further in the following chapter.

But what about the linguistic origins of the term itself? In his 1898 work on sexual deviance entitled Psychopathia Sexualis, Krafft-Ebing coined the term "sadomasochism" to call particular attention to his clinical observation that the ability to take pleasure in both the sadistic and masochistic sexual positions frequently existed

within the same person. The linkage of sadism with masochism itself derived from descriptions of sexual relationships within the work of two European novelists, the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, whose depictions were the source of deriving the terms "sadism" and "masochism," respectively. In Sade's novels, sadism is explicitly associated with pleasure emanating from sexual relationships in which a given party (here, the sadist) assumes a controlling, dominant and usually cruel position. On the other hand, Sacher-Masoch describes the sexual pleasure of being overwhelmed by an other stronger and more authoritative than oneself -- the masochist's position. Although both Sade and Sacher-Masoch provided subtle and sophisticated analyses of motivations, fantasies and orientations that could conceivably transcend their sexual manifestation, their depictions of actual behaviors focussed only upon this realm, linking sexual sadomasochism with sadomasochism itself.

For reasons both historical and contemporary, then, sadomasochism in the minds of many persons has no meaning other than the two forms mentioned above: sadomasochism is sex and violence. However, while references to sadomasochistic sex and violence have become more common in public discourse, the conclusion should not be drawn that S&M has become acceptable. If for some members of a 'sophisticated' public, kinky sex is no longer sick, it is still probably weird; if provocative, it may still be

deviant: it may be considered strange and taboo even in the 'privacy' of thought. (On the other hand, sadomasochistic relationships are at a conscious level just about universally condemned.) Therefore, we are content to assume that S&M is engaged in by a minority -- a sizable, "kinkier" minority, but nonetheless a minority. As an exclusively sexual-violent form, it can comfortably rest where it at present is believed to be -- in the recesses, the fringes and borders of our consciousness' and lives.

Whether it is the locus of fantasy or activity, whether experienced or thought about in relation to ourselves or others, sadomasochism by definition is represented as and taken to be the extreme. On a bell curve of legitimized behaviors, ideas, even fantasy, most people would place it on the sidelines, certainly not the forefront. Borrowing a sociological conception developed by Durkheim, the idea of the "normal" being that which is seen as more generally distributed in relation to the pathological," sadomasochism would clearly be placed by most people in the latter category. It may be pathologically kinky but it is still pathological: sadomasochism is not normal. Arguments have been made about the commonality of these sexuality and violence-related connotations of sadomasochism within American culture. For example, feminist film criticism has aptly demonstrated a semiotic link between violence and images which have been used to represent women. But the crux of the ensuing argument revolves around a potentially

even more disturbing proposition. What if violence and sex, the traditional connotations of S&M, are only the the most obvious and surface forms of a far broader phenomenon with which sadomasochism ought to be associated? What if sadomasochistic sex and sadomasochistic violence might better be termed manifestations than forms, themselves referring to a state of mind and pattern of interaction between self and other which is much subtler and more difficult to discern? And what, then, if our labelling of sadomasochism as sex and violence has served to associate the concept predominantly with deviant behavior, making of it something which affects only the outer reaches of social continua -- "them" rather than "us," the other rather than me? Or, if me, this "me" only at the less fundamental borders of my personality and being, in my allegedly more inessential and privatized thoughts and actions?

To broach the possibility that sadomasochism ought refer to something beyond itself (that is, beyond contemporary definitions of itself) is to demand that attention be paid to what I see as a fundamental question: why is it that people desire to dominate or be dominated? What is it which underlies the desire to be masochistic, sadistic, or to alternate between the two? For sexuality and violence merely manifest the desire to control or be controlled -- indeed, one might say they are these desires' most extreme expressions. Yet, in and of

themselves, they go nowhere in explaining the source of such desires. Rather, a limited conception of sadomasochism draws attention away from the psychic and social roots of such desires.

Secondly, and just as important, is that a limited conception also deflects attention from other forms in which sadomasochism could conceivably manifest itself, such as everyday relationships of love or work, when the desires and motives it represents are channeled into other spheres. If sex and violence are forms of a broader phenomenon, other manifestations might exist as well. The question then arises of whether other spheres of social and personal life do have features which, like sexual violence and violent sexuality, are outward signs of a far more general, inward desire to dominate and/or be dominated? If a more generalizable phenomenon, sadomasochism's ramifications would go beyond simply noting that American society is replete with relationships of violence and sexuality that feature sadistic and masochistic personae. For, if sadomasochism can take forms that on their surface appear to be quite benign rather than violent or sexual, the phenomenon may be far more inclusive than previously assumed. Sadomasochistic sex and violence would then be just the most obvious manifestations of a more socially generalizable dynamic. It might then conceivably affect a far greater number of people in aspects of their lives which are far more difficult to marginalize. Viewed from an

expanded perspective, it might truly be "normal."

But I have still not touched upon the crucial question of what it is that characterizes sadomasochism in any form. How does a desire to dominate or be dominated manifest itself? What do such desires signify, and what are the typical features of these feelings? I would like to return to S&M sex as particularly graphic, physical example of sadomasochism more broadly defined, accepting as the beginning of an argument that S&M as sexual practice is probably the phenomenon's most common association. If S&M sex is one manifestation of a more general phenomenon, examining it in greater detail should provide insight into aspects of sadomasochism one would expect to find outside the realms of explicit sexuality and violence. In what follows, I wish to coax from obvious images their more subtle implications, taking as my starting point a simple example of S&M sex. In this example, I assume that a sadomasochistic dynamic is being enacted rather than merely fantasized, since in later chapters I also treat situations in which the dynamic actually appears. (Obviously, however, sadomasochistic fantasies may not ever be acted out, raising the interesting question of the conditions under which they remain fantasized or may be lived out.) In this way, I hope to establish several definitional criteria to use in assessing whether other social relationships between self and other -- such as those which occur within the institutions I will discuss in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 -- also

might be said to have sadomasochistically oriented features.

In what follows, I will use "he or she" to refer to the sadist's (usually a he) situation, and "she or he" to refer to the masochist's (usually a she). I do that so as to simultaneously indicate that women and men are socially geared toward assuming respectively gendered roles and that these roles are not in any way biologically determined or characterized by any trait which could not be adopted by either sex.

The Situation of the Sadist in S&M Sex

Take the example of a sadist in a sexual relationship. The sadist is "sadistic" insofar as he or she enjoys being in a position of dominance. Let us say the particular sadist under consideration ties and binds the sexual partner so that freedom of movement is severely limited or curtailed (sadomasochism in all cases, both more and less extreme, will involve the lessening of the masochist's freedom in some way). This bound other may then be forced to engage in a variety of sexual acts. The person in the sadistic role may have negotiated with the person in the masochistic on a predefined understanding of their situation. They may regard it as play and concur that the bound other should stop sex that "went too far," becoming frightening or uncomfortable; or S&M sex may fall on the other end of the continuum, involving actual violence which the masochist is not in a position to halt. Or a particular situation may fall somewhere in between, a strict margin between the two

being obviously artificial. However, regardless of where a particular act falls on a continuum of possible S&M situations, the most elementary defining feature of the sadist is pleasure in holding a position of unequal power. The sadist's sense of control is the exact analogue of the masochist's lack of it; excitement exists to the precise degree the masochist has been rendered out of control. For the sadist to feel pleasure, the masochist must under no circumstances be unconditionally free; the masochist must not be able to express her or his will without restriction, lest the controlled situation be broken. The form in which inequality is expressed -- whether via a chain or several handkerchiefs used to tie the masochist's hands and legs to a bedpost -- matters less than the fact that control is a sine qua non of sadomasochistic sexual practice. It is just as obviously present in S&M relationships. While the sadist in an S&M relationship may not literally bind the other, a battering situation (for example) in which violence occurs assumes helplessness, vulnerability and unequal power on the part of the masochist.

A second, similarly obvious characteristic of the sadist in S&M sex is that he or she wishes in some way to humiliate the masochist. Humiliation can itself take a wide variety of forms. It may be explicitly violent humiliation, a la the common whips and chains imagery often associated with sadomasochism. A sadist may be relatively more verbally than physically violent, sneering at the masochist,

calling her or him degrading names (for women, "slut," "whore," "cunt," "bitch,"; or, as in Blue Velvet, the comically dumb-himself Frank yells "stupid" at Isabella Rosellini who is in the masochistic position, telling her to "shut up"). The crucial element here is debasement. In order to experience sexual pleasure, the sadist feels a need not only to be unequal with, but also to in some way diminish the worth of, the other. This is no place for "separate but equal" spheres; rather, the sadist desires the masochist to be separate, unequal, and decidedly inferior. In pop psychological terms, the sadist operates within an "I'm okay, you're not okay" mentality. The same impulse to humiliate is readily apparent in S&M relationships, wherein battering manifests not only control but contempt. Any cruelty on the part of the sadist, any will to power and control, is inseparable from an urge to "put down" the other. The sadist struts confidently through the world (it does not matter whether that world is a room in which the masochist/other is tied up and being "forced" to perform sexual acts or a home in which, say, a wife is being beaten) because of an omnipotent self-assurance which derives from the lack of confidence on the part of the other. A series of bifurcations come into play: it is I who am good because it is you who are bad; it is I who am superior, you inferior; I am worthy, mighty, powerful, essential whereas you are worthless, powerless, and the "inessential."¹ All this is implicit in the relations of which S&M sex is merely

the physical manifestation. In this manifestation, it is I who wield the whips and you who are in chains.

Thus, the sadist is characterized by taking pleasure in a sense of power and control which derive directly from the relative powerlessness of the masochist. But is the sadist of the sadomasochistic sexual situation really so self-assured? Certainly, he or she seems to be. Returning to a hypothetical example in which the sadist has tied up the masochist, the former quite literally holds the reins of power. Yet, what in the first place is the meaning of the fact that the sadist wants and needs to bind the masochist in order to experience pleasure, that the sadist needs to 'put down' the other in order to feel superior? There can be no doubt, in this simplified sexual example, that the sadist greatly required a masochist to bind. That the sadist's sense of power is only possible relative to the masochist having been stripped of it implies extreme need and dependency of the former on the latter. The sadist needs an inferior masochist in order to appear relatively superior. Without a bound and degraded masochist, the sadist as such would die, as the Hegelian problem of recognition indicated -- there would be no basis for his or her existence, an existence which only takes on definition in opposition to the other. But the need to bind this other has an even deeper significance than the provision of self-definition, a definition which at its heart entails the assumption of superiority. Curtailing the masochist's

movements so as to sexually legislate inequality also serves to assure the sadist that the masochist will not go away, will not reject the sadist. This possibility was not safeguarded when the masochist was not bound. It is all too apparent that the dependence of the sadist on the masochist is so enormous, so intrinsic, that nothing may be left to chance. The very act of binding (or, in the case of the S&M relationship, keeping the other in a state of dependency and powerlessness which derives from psychological and economic rather than strictly physical causes) attests to extreme dependency. Why else would one feel compelled toward physical restriction -- why else would the act of restricting be this pleasurable? Even the sadist's characteristic desire to humiliate is more understandable in terms of this dire need of the masochist. One would hardly expect someone who requires an other this urgently to feel happy about their dependence. On the contrary, contempt and physical violence may express, at least on one level, the sadist's rage at her or her own impotence, his or her inability to stand alone. Extreme dependency on the masochist, therefore, is a common thread linking the sadist's desire for control to the sadist's desire for humiliation.

The above analysis, deduced from my very basic example, suggests a paradox at sadism's very heart. The sadist appears to be the opposite of what his or her situation actually suggests. To the world, the masochist and to

himself or herself, the sadistic persona exudes confidence and self-assurance. The sadist seems to be independent, to mock and leer contemptuously at the masochist's dependence. He or she fantasizes orgasmically unlimited power; in S&M sex, it is the sadist who 'calls the shots,' so to speak, and the masochist 'better' do what she or he is told. However, a closer look reveals surface appearance to be a lie, and extreme need to be the sadist's best guarded secret from self and others. This is a crucial difference between the sadist and masochist in S&M sex. The masochist, as will be seen shortly, is completely cognizant of her or his dependence on the sadist. That the sadist mocks his or her own analogous need implies an even greater dependence than that experienced by the masochist, a need which the sadist feels must not at all costs be acknowledged.

An interesting analogue to the Hegelian dialectic presents itself here, particularly as it was elaborated by Lukacs in the same essay in History and Class Consciousness cited earlier. ² The Hegelian master/slave dialectic also accords the the slave an advantage over the master because the former is closer to nature. Another way of stating this is that the slave is able to recognize her or his dependence on the natural and social worlds, whereas the master denies and represses this dependency. I will try to reformulate this concept in psychoanalytic terms in Chapter 3, arguing that the masochist (slave) is closer to escaping from a sadomasochistic pattern than is the sadist

(master) precisely because the latter is unable to acknowledge psychological dependence on the other. This, however, should in no way be taken to mean that the masochist (slave) automatically will escape the dynamic. Thus, the sadomasochistic situation is characterized by a myth of sadistic independence when in reality the sadist may very well be more dependent than the masochist. However, the myth has ideological reality and is subscribed to not only by the sadist but, as will shortly be described, by the masochist as well.

Thus far, I have defined the sadist's position in terms of pleasure which cannot exist unless the sexual partner has been rendered both unequal and inferior: a relationship of power has been set up in which the sadist is relatively powerful, the masochist relatively powerless. In addition, I am arguing that this need to dominate and control implies an ironic dependence which further marks the specificity of the sadist's relationship to the masochist. From these combined characteristics -- the desire to 'put down' an other upon whom one denies being dependent -- one might conclude that a bound and compliant other would be the fulfillment of the sadist's sexual dreams. However, such a conclusion is far too static, failing to describe the sadist's role in what cannot be other than a dynamic, constantly changing process. For once the masochist has been tied up and brought under control, hasn't the sadist's source of pleasure been removed? From whence will pleasure be

regained, from what can it garner sustenance and self-perpetuation? If the process is not somehow rejuvenated, the sadist will again feel dead and alone, stripped of his or her sexual raison d'etre. Of course, the sadist can move on to a new person, another masochist, and in this way keep a process in motion. But if a different partner is not available, or continued pleasure is sought in the same sexual encounter, or the sadist's focus is an ongoing relationship with one person (the S&M relationship of above) -- then some other solution to the sadist's problem is required. A solution would be if new barriers existed which in turn needed to be overcome. The sadist, seemingly so desirous of control, can thus be expected to secretly crave resistance -- a challenge to his or her authority -- on the part of the masochist. This would then enable the sadist to re-assert power, to restore order to the system the masochist has temporarily challenged. The sadist not only tolerates but is titillated by this role reversal in which the masochist challenges their hierarchical positioning. In resisting, the masochist implicitly withdraws her or her approval from the sadist and his or her domination; at the moment of this challenge, it may no longer be accepted that it is you who are essential and therefore 'good,' I who am inessential and therefore 'bad.' But the sadist is tolerated and titillated by the masochist's challenge only so long as it is temporary and occurs within the 'rules of the game.' The sadist does not want the masochist to

overthrow the system of control altogether by, so to speak, bursting through her or his chains. Loose chains, however, are not only acceptable but desirable, allowing pleasure -- which by definition for the sadist involves re-assertion of control -- to be repeated. And so the masochist who fights back and resists can be theoretically anticipated to be a turn-on. Her, or his, resistance is also in the sadist's ironical self-interest: it enables pleasure to be retaken and the process to continue via the re-assertion of control which the sadist feels confident will be the denouement to the challenge. It is fascinating to speculate here, however, about whether even greater, perhaps ultimate, sexual pleasure for the sadist would arise from the very thing he ostensibly dreads most -- a permanent and completed revolution by the masochist, or, as in the world of pornography, the masochist turning into a dominatrix and herself/himself brandishing the whip. If so, pleasure would ensue from relief at the sadist's secret having finally been discovered. At last, his or her real dependence could then be acknowledged to a higher and stronger being (a kind of sexual Peter's Principle). Jean Genet wonderfully described this inversion in his play The Balcony, in which lawyers and judges sadistic in their day-to-day lives unwind in a sexual underworld where they themselves are deliciously dominated. Given this theoretical insight, it is not difficult to understand how sadism is linked to, and potentially transformable into, its opposite. It is just as easy to

comprehend why the sadist may resist this transformation to his or her death, relegating this underlying desire for the dynamic's overthrow to something like a Freudian unconscious (see next chapter), defined existentially in this chapter as that which cannot be acknowledged at an explicit, conscious level. To acknowledge a secret desire to be dominated himself, or herself, means that the sadist would no longer be a sadist. Since sadism is the customary posture with which he or she associates, the idea of change would be frightening and overwhelming, linked even to his or her (symbolic) death. Thus, resistance to change will be enormous even if the sadist secretly desires a change in the power relations in which he or she partakes. Resistance, as we shall see, is desired only so far.

But returning to the line of reasoning I have been trying to follow, what if the masochist does not, for whatever reason, resist, and is resigned to or titillated by compliance? How can the sadist then fight the death of the process, and consequently his or her death within it, so as to assure that pleasure may be retaken? For the sadist, the logical option is to create resistance by challenging the masochist to greater and greater depths of compliance. The sadist must set up tasks for the masochist to undertake in progressive sequence, tasks which make it seem like there is much more that the latter could do if she or he were truly controlled by the masochist. To set up these tasks, the sadist must constantly innovate. In terms of S&M sex, he or

she will want to know what act the masochist is willing to perform now -- is the masochist willing to show submission by fulfilling still a new sexual command, will the masochist, for instance, demonstrate the sadist's control by having sex with others at the latter's whim? (The latter example from a sexual manifestation of S&M takes place within Pauline Reage's novel, The Story of O: when the sadistic Rene exhausts his own taste for masochistic acts to be performed by the heroine, he requires her to have sex with his brother Stephen, a step I interpret as being associated with attempts to keep the dynamic alive.)³ The sadist stimulates the masochist's resistance by requiring the perpetual exhibition of devotion; in this way, the sadist may continue to reassert his or her control. Simultaneously, these "tasks" serve to reinforce for the sadist that the masochist will not disappear, allowing the flaunting of seeming independence in the face of actual dependence.

The crucial point is that the sadist in S&M sex sets up a process in which resistance takes place or is artificially induced under controlled circumstances, allowing domination to be constantly re-asserted. The sadist is driven by fear that the process, and his or her role within it, may wither away and die. Yet, the logic of the process in which he or she is involved points toward its own destruction in one of two theoretically possible ways: the common element which unites them is that both methods bring about the eventual

death of the sadomasochistic dynamic per se. The first possibility, if one takes the logic of the process to its extreme conclusion, is horrifying for the masochist. As each new task is progressively exhausted, the next one has to become more difficult and extreme; one has to reach further and further into the depths of body and mind in order to create it. Viewed from this theoretical perspective, it would not be surprising to find S&M sex blurring into violence (though this is not inevitable) as the sadist becomes more and more outraged at inability to sustain pleasure. Nor is it hard to envision the masochist's physical ability for real or imagined "resistance" wearing down. Snuff films, in which women may be beaten so badly that death becomes a real possibility, express this most extreme outcome implied by the process. At the more common level of the process' symbolic meaning, 'death' of the masochist also kills the sadist as such (at least within the framework of this particular dynamic). The process is thus irrational -- irrational, again, a la the problem of recognition -- in terms of its own alleged goal of providing complete security and power for the sadist. Once the masochist has been negated, security and power are meaningless for lack of an object in regard to whom they can be experienced. The sadist's thirst may be quenched by momentary glimpses of sexual satiety, but relief is only momentary -- the sadomasochistic sexual process will tend over time to negate the object the sadist must enliven in

order to ensure future satisfaction. The process is not self-sustaining but self-destructive in its own terms. In this sense, sadomasochistic sex is radically different from sex in which neither partner is bound. Here, desire, which in all sexuality cannot avoid fluctuation between arousal and its extinction, is at least at all times potentially renewable vis a vis the freedom of the other. But the sadist has sealed the other's will and, in so doing, rendered the process irrational except insofar as one becomes attached to it for the sake of the process alone.

But the disturbing dialectic described above assumes an extreme, acted-out sadomasochistic situation in which physical binding is inexorable (i.e., the masochist truly cannot escape), and in which a given sadist loses control of the expression of his or her rage at the forever-elusive goal of both controlling and feeling recognized by the other. Another possibility is present the moment one relaxes this extreme case, and allows for a sadomasochistic sexual situation in which she or he (the masochist) is able to physically leave or pull away. The sadist may allow this for a complex of reasons related to his or her background and internalized set of social constraints. Or, as suggested earlier, the dynamic may not be seen as 'hard core' but as the enactment of a sexual game in which both partners have agreed that the masochist can call a halt to their activity when she or he wishes.

This corresponds, for example, to the interestingly

sanitized view of sadomasochistic sex presented in the fairly recent film 9-1/2 Weeks (the novel on which the movie is based is far more explicit), a presentation I would argue corresponds to the peculiarly modern renewal of interest in 'kinky' sex among a gentrified viewing population. In the film, Mickey Rourke as the sadist plays a risk arbitrageur, bored in his huge office with a secretary and plenty of cash, who has 'fallen in love' with the masochistically-cast Kim Basinger. As with the classic sadist whose portrait I have been sketching, Rourke's character can never be sexually content. Over time, he requires Basinger's subjection in progressively more unambiguous forms: early in their relationship, he leaves her stranded and terrified on a ferris wheel; later, he threatens to spank her; only with further passage of time does he buy a whip and demand that she crawl. His character also conforms to the above paradigm in that he is excited when she refuses -- they have passionate sex as she starts to leave after refusing to lift her skirt and be spanked. But the more tyrannic the risk arbitrageur becomes in his sexual demands, the more the young art dealer played by Basinger becomes convinced that the dynamic is self-destructive to her. Her resistance becomes real, strengthened by the power she begins to discover as the sadist's dependence on her is progressively and paradoxically revealed. In asserting herself so as to leave the relationship, a decision the sadist's increasing desperation may give her little choice but to render, she

gains sufficient confidence so as to leave altogether. Similarly, the sadist may bring about the death of the sadomasochistic dynamic by leaving the masochist little choice but to revolt from pain -- psychic, biological or both -- so as to save her or his psychic or biological life. Here is the second possible outcome of the dynamic in which the sadist is entrenched: it may point either to a tendency for a) both masochist and sadist to be destroyed, or b) toward a tendency for the masochist, driven to desperation, to overthrow the dynamic altogether and leave the sadist behind. Which of these two possibilities actually ensues is not in any way determined but, rather, is influenced and mediated by a wide range of circumstances of the sort described in following chapters, or perhaps even simply by will. However, this second possibility only presents itself after one has relaxed an assumption of strict binding from which the masochist simply, physically, cannot escape.

At this point, I would like to summarize the arguments I have been making, and the characteristics I have attributed to the sadist in S&M sex, on the basis of my theoretical example:

1. The establishment of a hierarchical order between self and other which rests on the attribution of superiority to the sadist, and inferiority to the masochist. The sadist sets up an unequal relationship with the masochist in which the former is powerful and "good," the latter powerless and

"bad." Although the sexual symbolism of a bound other clearly reveals that the sadist is deeply dependent upon the masochist, both accept the ideology that it is the sadist who is primary, the masochist who is "inessential" and secondary. Therefore, the masochist "deserves" to be enchained and the sadist feels righteous in the assertion of relative self-importance.

2. Within this hierarchical order, the paradox comes into being that the sadist desires what I have called "resistance" within the bounds of the S&M relationship. Consequently, I contend that the sadist is characterized by a desire for non-compliance within an overall context, or mode, of compliance -- put slightly differently, the sadist wishes his or her authority to be challenged so that disapproval takes place in the mode of approval. One would suppose that the sadist would be sexually satisfied by the achievement of control over a compliant masochist. However, pleasure in the assertion of power can be retaken only if resistance exists or is created by virtue of the sadist's progressive desperation -- otherwise, the sadomasochistic process and the sadist qua sadist would die. Consequently, the sadist's ideal is not total compliance but a masochist who resists within the boundaries of his or her chains.

3. The coming into being of a process which is irrational in its own terms but which requires the sadist to work at constant innovation. If the masochist does not

resist, the sadist will try to simulate obstacles to his or her will by creating successive sexual tasks the masochist must perform to demonstrate loyalty. This process may wear down the masochist, literally as well as figuratively. as the sadist slowly eradicates the source of what once yielded pleasure via control -- this source is the masochist's freedom. Alternatively, the masochist, if enabled to do so circumstantially, will resist in such a way that the dialectic unfolds in precisely the opposite direction. Rather than wearing down the masochist, the masochist becomes dialectically stronger and more convinced of the necessity of escape until, at last, the sadist is rejected just as he or she once rejected the masochist. Though which of these two scenarios unfolds is of crucial and indeed urgent significance, the outcome for the sadist qua sadist is in one sense equivalent. The sadist's desperate dream of total power and security, which he or she expresses sexually in the need to bind the other, remains just as perpetually and inevitably out of reach as it is for all human beings in sexual endeavors. The bound other who no longer resists represents a Pyrrhic victory for the sadist, one which paradoxically is not victory at all but defeat; similarly, the other who resists to the point of renouncing the dynamic has also slipped from the sadist's grasp. Both denouements are unsatisfactory to the sadist within the confines of his or her structural persona, leaving that sadist bewildered and angry, frighteningly, paradoxically, alone.

The Situation of the Masochist in S&M Sex

Characterizing the masochist in S&M sex is unavoidably an exercise in mirror images, or the turning around of the proverbial coin so as to view the same phenomenon from a different perspective. In what follows, I will again refer to the hypothetical example of S&M sex which assumes the masochist's pleasure to arise within the context of being bound.

Like the sadist, the masochist is well aware that their dynamic is based on inequality; both share knowledge of the sadist's power relative to the masochist's powerlessness: these are characteristics of the same situation each experiences. But, unlike the sadist who is sexually aroused by the prospect of asserting control, the masochist desires the feeling of being controlled. (I am assuming here another "ideal type," the "ideal type" masochist who experiences pleasure in S&M sex and is not involved with it solely because of physical or economic coercion. Unfortunately, however, even in some cases of coercion, desire and necessity can co-mingle as as to become indistinguishable -- see Chapter 4 on "The Family." Therefore, a masochistic sadomaasochistic psychology may result and be characterized by similar features, regardless of whether or not it began "voluntarily" or at some point within a psychic or social relationship not of the individual's own choosing.) To the masochist, like the sadist, their respective spheres are not merely separate but hierarchically structured; just as the

sadist wishes to "put down" the other, the masochist hopes that the sadist will take charge. Being bound expresses the masochist's desire to have her or his will constrained, allowing the sadist's will to predominate by contrast. The masochist accepts the bifurcations inherent in the sadomasochistic dynamic, feeling inessential and secondary compared to the more omnipotent sadist. It is the sadist who is important, who matters -- the masochist sees little or no value in herself or himself. Instead, one would expect the masochist's attitude toward self to be as contemptuous as the sadist's, hardly respecting what the masochist feels to be so worthless. Abnegating self, the masochist bows to the sadist who, thereby, is disproportionately authoritative. Consequently, I do not find it difficult to understand in theory why the masochist is aroused by feeling controlled rather than by recognizing a direct assertion of control. The masochist must be unequal and constrained, in some way bound, since she or he does not associate pleasure with the sexual assertions of this worthless self; she or he may feel guilty, as if pleasure is only allowable if the self is in some way punished (an important socially-based way to understand rape fantasies in women). Rather, the masochist wishes to feel overtaken, overwhelmed, by the worthwhile sadist upon whom she or he depends. For, unlike the sadist, the masochist has no illusions about whether her or his sexual relationship with the sadist expresses a state of deep

dependence of self upon other. The implications of sadomasochistic imagery are not lost on the masochist, who knows consenting to be bound acknowledged the extremity of this need. The masochist's neediness only compounds contemptuous inner feelings -- what is wrong with me that I cannot do without this other, that I am so desperately dependent that I consent to be overwhelmed by the contemptuous sadist? The masochist and sadist are utterly alike in resenting the dependence each feels upon the other. They differ only in the form taken by their common protest. Whereas the sadist blames the other (it does not matter if this "blame" is expressed in S&M sex through violence, verbal abuse, or non-violent sexual control), the masochist in S&M sex blames the self; whereas the sadist denies dependence by ostensibly appearing to be "free," the situation of the bound masochist directly admits it; the sadist, directing contempt toward the masochistic other, is simultaneously the instrument of the masochist's expression of contempt toward self. One can anticipate similar feelings characterizing the masochist in an S&M relationship who, though physically unbound, feels both self-contemptuous and extremely dependent on the sadistic other.

Of course, the pure masochist I have been describing would not wish to be convinced that the sadist, too, is dependent. Such a realization would strip the sadist of the accoutrements of absolute authority from which the masochist's sexual pleasure derives. If the sadist is

revealed to be dependent, he or she is also vulnerable, human, a peer of the masochist's -- this would spell the death of the masochist qua masochist. (Odette would no longer have been Odette, the first man I "loved" would have been transformed into the second I didn't "love.") Therefore, the masochist is interested in maintaining the sadist's preferred image as a more independent, powerful, and superior being. Like the sadist in S&M sex, the masochist will also be interested in renewing sexual satisfaction within the confines of this hierarchically structured sadomasochistic situation. But how will this be possible once the masochist has been bound and felt pleasure at being controlled by the allegedly superior sadist? As with the sadist, the masochist can have many consecutive partners, moving from one sadist to another after each sexual encounter has been exhausted. Or in an S&M relationship, the masochist can eventually find a new partner, the only difference being the movement being elongated over time, possibly ad infinitum. For to assume that the system leads to its own inevitable overthrow -- either for sadist or masochist -- is as ludicrous as economistic Marxists waiting for capitalism to automatically, scientifically, die from its own internal contradictions. Masochists and sadists, and the sadomasochistic dynamic in which they participate, are far more resilient than this -- they can prolong their search seemingly indefinitely. Thus, in reference to the problem of

recognition sketched earlier, the process tends toward its death rather than toward a self-equilibrating balance. The tendency may or may not arise, or may be procrastinated and postponed. What can be stated with certainty, however, is that the goal of recognition can never be truly attained as consciously envisioned: joy can come only from absorption in the process itself and not from fulfillment of its alleged goal. Nonetheless, just as with the sadist examined earlier, the masochistic dynamic is fraught with contradictions and with paradoxes. Again, these will tend to unfold within the sexual encounter -- whether that encounter takes place within one relationship or within movements which repeat the pattern over time in different relationships -- whenever the masochist seeks to renew her or his pleasure. Here, too, a dynamic rather than static process must be assumed, or the masochist's identity would dissolve once control had been asserted.

How is it possible for the masochist to renew the process? Here, still another motivation for resistance suggests itself, this one relatively autonomous of the sadist's own (also autonomously generated) efforts. A possible strategy would seem to be for the masochist to do just what I suggested the sadist would most enjoy -- resist from within the confines of his or her chains. If the masochist resists, the sadist's rejuvenated pleasure should also be her or his own; the masochist will feel controlled again when the sadist reasserts control. Even if

autonomously generated from the sadist's or masochist's separate, respective motivations, their movements are coordinated within the same jigsaw puzzle of sadomasochistic desire. But the paradox of resistance, which we can now view from within the masochist's rather than the sadist's Weltanschauung, is that it accomplishes the very thing the masochist was supposedly trying to avoid. Rather than being a movement of self-abnegation which gives power to the sadist, it may be a movement of assertion which bestows to the masochistic persona -- the masochist's self -- a feeling of confidence, as described above. This is the mirror image of the masochist coming to realize that the sadist is really dependent, and consequently just as problematic: the masochist's discovery of internal power puts the lie to the masochist's identity qua masochist. This may be an unacknowledged motivation for provoking the sadist, in that bringing about the sadist's acts of control also enrages the masochist, driving she or he further toward the outer edges and the possible renunciation of the dynamic. The more the masochist resists, the less the masochist is, and feels herself or himself to be, a masochist. The masochist may even begin to notice that the more self-assertion she or he exhibits, the more this peculiar creature -- the sadist who is supposed to enjoy controlling -- seems to be stimulated. The masochist now may possess an inkling of the sadist's secret, and intuit a possible source of power over him, over her. The most radical implication of this would

be the realization of the sadist's secret fantasy -- to be dominated himself, or herself, to have sex with someone else holding the reins. Were this radical fantasy to be played out, not only would the sadist be transformed into the supposedly antimonious masochist, but the masochist would also have the potential to become her or his opposite -- a sadist. To the extent the masochist could live out the ramifications implicit in resistance, not only the sadist's but the masochist's own secret paradox would be revealed: the former desiring what he or she supposedly most dreads, dependence; the latter hankering after what she or he supposedly wishes dearly to deny, i.e., independence and power. (Of course, however, the masochist's paradox was that the illusion of total dependence can never entirely be maintained in the face of actual physical separateness.) This is the underside of the S&M dynamic -- its unconscious dream. For, of course, the reality of S&M sex may not allow the masochist to resist, nor would resistance "automatically" result in pleasure when, or if, the masochist encountered a phantasmical, "happy ending" role reversal. The bound masochist who resists may instead confront a sadist who is very removed from wishing to be dominated, and who takes so much pleasure in reasserting control that the masochist is damaged or, in the most extreme of cases, destroyed.

Moreover, returning to the dynamic's internal workings, the above strategy is problematic as a means of perpetuating

pleasure since it potentially destroys the masochist qua masochist. Perceiving oneself as masochistic may be so intrinsic to the identity a person has built, or found themselves forced to build over time, that it is not easily relinquished. Therefore, to the sadist's annoyance, the masochist may not resist -- resistance may not feel pleasurable as long as the individual preserves, or in any way wants or feels a need to preserve, the masochistic mode. Or, even if the masochist feels driven to resist, she or he may be afraid of renouncing the dynamic altogether, swinging back and forth between forays into independence followed by a frightened retreat and then perhaps another foray outward. A second strategy would then predictably come into play, one which I expect will take place more frequently than the first since it alone maintains the "rules of the game" -- the status quo of the sadist and masochist's original identity. This second strategy will be instituted either by the masochist or by the sadist, the latter now wishing to "induce" resistance. To what second strategy can the masochist possibly retreat? (Of course, it may not be a retreat but for some masochists the first and only strategy tried.) In one way or another, the masochist, probably demoralized, consents to play the game. She or he may resist but, if one assumes a dynamic which is capable of continuation, even resistance and forays in and out of the process take place within the context of the process itself. The masochist hopes to rejuvenate this process by continued

abnegations which allow the sadist to feel more and more in control while she or he is rendered progressively more out of control. Of course, the masochist's offer may be redundant since the sadist, faced with a dead process and an unresisting masochist, may already have initiated the set of demands described earlier. Will the masochist demonstrate fealty by a new sexual act, one which by the standards of the "normal," "non-deviant" world might seem "disgusting"? Will the masochist, as in Pauline Reage's The Story of O, consent to sleep with the sadist's brother Stephen, or any other (whose particular identity is irrelevant to this argument)? How far is the masochist really willing to go? Is there some nook or cranny of the masochist's being which is not yet fully controlled, which is surreptitiously resistant, and which can be offered up for the sadist's (and masochist's) continued enjoyment? The horrible truth of the process I am describing is that, as already hinted in the Introduction above, the possibilities for hidden repositories of the masochist's "self" are infinite short of the masochist's biological death. Only in death (which also would be the death of the process and the ironic death of the sadist qua sadist) could total control be achieved: even in the most restricted of strait-jackets, the masochist in life retains the possibility of self-assertion in the independence of her or his thoughts, which the sadist can never physically or in any other way grasp. Thus, whether suggested by the masochist or in response to demands

immediately initiated by the sadist, pleasure can be retaken within the same S&M sexual encounter via a creative, progressively more extreme "set of tasks." These are, of course, the same tasks to which I already alluded when describing the situation of the sadist in S&M sex.

But still another paradox exists for the masochist in the carrying out of this second strategy. The masochist finds herself, or himself, playing the game of tasks the sadist generates. Implicit in the meaning of this collusion is the masochist's desire to please the sadist and thereby gain his or her approval. Yet, the masochist's alleged desire had been for the S&M sexual dynamic to reinforce negative and contemptuous inner feelings, for the sadist's message (returning to pop psychology) to be that "I'm OK, you're not OK." Yet now, we find the masochist engaged in an ongoing process which seems to alternate, dialectically, the sadist's assertion of contempt for the masochist with moments during which approval can be earned. In fact, as I concluded in the last paragraph, it is ironically the very process of performing acts to earn the sadist's approval which keeps the sadomasochistic dynamic alive. I would argue, then, that approval in the mode of disapproval is for the masochist the analogue to the sadist's desire for disapproval (or resistance, non-compliance) in the mode of approval. Like the sadist, the masochist will not want approval to transcend the boundaries of the sadomasochistic situation. If it is not alternated with disapproval, the

result will once more be the death of the masochist qua masochist (just as the sadist could no longer act within a sadistic mode if the masochist were to be so resisting, so disapproving of the sadist's control that the system began to self-explode). Interestingly enough, for the masochistic process to continue, approval must be a moment in the S&M dynamic. A sadist who was completely contemptuous of the masochists would not be in the relationship at all or would have murdered the masochist (the two amounting to the same result, i.e., the non-existence or death of an ongoing dynamic). In order for a real dynamic to exist, however, the sadist inevitably has demands for something the masochist can and must do for he or she to experience pleasure. Why else would the sadist be in the dynamic were it not in some way pleasurable and rewarding? But the moment it is acknowledged that the sadist experiences pleasure, one simultaneously admits that he or she can be pleased as well as displeased by another, that there are some things more than others which the masochist can do in order to earn approval. The sadist has standards, makes evaluations -- as long as this is the case, there will be some things of which he or she approves as well as disapproves. If you really love me, the sadist exhorts, you will do or not do such and such -- and so the game ensues. Therefore, an unavoidably paradoxical aspect of the masochist's situation in S&M sex is that she or he seeks to have her or his existence approved of and legitimized by the

sadist within the confines of the sadomasochistic system. In other words, the masochist will seek approval in the mode of disapproval, just as the sadist sought disapproval in the mode of approval. Like the sadist, therefore, the masochist, too, has a secret. Whereas the sadist must hide the enormity of his or her real dependency, the masochist obscures desire for approval which is simultaneously a desire for recognition. But what is the desire for recognition if not an urge to be seen as worthwhile in one's own being, a being implicitly different from and strictly speaking independent of the sadist? Returning to the problem of recognition, one can only be recognized by someone from whom one is separate and therefore someone in relation to whom one can be recognized. Thus, the masochist's secret, analogous to the sadist's: the sadist is really dependent and only appears to be independent whereas the masochist really aspires to independence and only appears to be dependent. In relation to the problem of recognition, which required a simultaneous acknowledgement of both moments (dependence and independence, independence and dependence), both sadist and masochist adopt radical positions which attempt to altogether obliterate one or the other of these existential stances. Their mutual irony is that, even while adopting an extreme posture, the situation of both demonstrates that they nonetheless partake in some way of both modes. But, to repeat, the masochist has the possibility of a structural advantage about which she or he

may or may not be aware, may or may not act upon. This advantage is a psychological restatement and analogue to Lukacs' elaboration of the Hegelian slave's advantage in laboring. The masochist must constantly work at the tasks innovated by the sadist in order to earn his or her approval. In so doing, she or he may realize a sense of power contrary to conscious intentions, regardless of whether resistance has been initiated by the sadist or the masochist. This power of self-assertion stems directly from the logic of the sadomasochistic encounter, and implies that the phenomenon can internally transcend itself (unless, of course, the exceptions outlined above come into play) more easily for the masochist than for the sadist. This is the second option I described in the otherwise simplistic adaptation of 9-1/2 Weeks, which ends with the masochist sufficiently emboldened by the pain of progressive oppression that she rejects the dynamic in toto.

Yet, that the masochist in S&M sex will in no way automatically experience the demise of the sadomasochistic system any more than socialism by itself could spring from capitalism's contradictions, is a point which merits reiteration. Rather, she or he will generally seek approval only in the mode of disapproval, within the "rules of the game" established in the S&M sexual situation. Accordingly, no sooner may the masochist resist, attesting to independence vis a vis the sadist, than the sadist will reassert power. But, in relation to the masochist's apparent

goals, aren't these assertions of power desirable -- don't they contribute to the renewing of her or his own pleasure? The answer, ultimately, is no, for the process cannot fulfill this long-term goal for the masochist any more than it could for the sadist: it is irrational even in terms of its internally stated goals. Analogous for the masochist to the sadist's dream of unbounded control would be an imagined state in which she or he were totally controlled. But, again, this is not possible for the masochist in S&M sex short of biological death. No matter how earnestly the masochist tries to subordinate her or his will to that of the sadistic other, the separateness of her or his self survives. And, though the masochist may dream of a sadist unlimited in power, the latter's need of the former continues to attest to the sadist's actual contingency and dependence. Thus, the masochist's alleged dream of total passivity also remains impossibly and permanently beyond reach. Yet perhaps this is not really the masochist's dream. Just as the sadist seems to secretly desire the discovery of his or her real dependence, so the masochist may secretly desire her or his real independence to be revealed. Within the dynamic, however, this paradox is virtually assured of remaining hidden. The masochist remains as paradoxically unrecognized at the end of the sexual process as she or he was at its initiation. I would like to restate what appear to be characteristics of the masochist in S&M sex in a form which allows them to be

readily compared with the characteristics of the sadist in S&M sex:

Characteristics of the Sadist in S&M Sex

1. The establishment of a hierarchical order which accords superiority to the self and inferiority to the other.

(a) Within this order, the sadist appears to be completely independent of the sadist but can be seen, upon closer examination, to also be extremely dependent upon the masochist.
2. The sadist, apparently wishing total compliance, can be seen to secretly crave disapproval in the mode of approval, within the 'rules of the game.'
3. The coming into being of a process which is irrational in its own terms but which compels the sadist to work at constant innovation of tasks which the masochist is required to perform.

Characteristics of the Masochist in S&M Sex

1. The establishment of a hierarchical order which accords inferiority to the self and superiority to the other.

(a) Within this order, the masochist appears to be completely dependent on the sadist but can be seen, upon closer examination, to be relatively independent of the sadist.
2. The masochist, wishing to be totally compliant and disapproved of, ironically wishes approval (this to take place within the mode of disapproval) and to be recognized as separate even while on the surface subordinating desire to that of the sadist.
3. The coming into being of the same process in which the masochist must constantly work to earn an approval which can never arrive.

Having discussed in detail the respective characteristics of the sadist and masochist in S&M sex (as well as the ways in which each is capable of self-transformation into the role of the other, so as to form a

pattern which is properly called "sadoomasochistic"), I will return to the question of whether these characteristics appear in other social situations which involve self and other. Is this dynamic in any way similar to what I described as an intimate love relationship? Can it be said to appear in any way within a work environment, or during the course of one's socialization within the educational process? Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will try to answer these questions in detail. Suffice it to say here, however, that I will try below to capture the flavor of the phenomenon's possibly wider social applicability by returning still once more to personal experience.

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Does this analysis of S&M sex bear any resemblance to the infatuation paradigm I sketched in the Introduction? It seems to me that several insights gleamed from this analysis now make that experience even more comprehensible, for the experience of the second man in his "love" for me and my experience with the first shared the following characteristics. As infatuated persons, we clearly felt a desperate need for a sense of self-worth and self-validation which had to emanate from an external source. Love involved something far more urgent than friendship, companionship and sexual gratification -- it entailed the vindication of one's very legitimacy as a human being, a vindication the infatuated was not able to provide internally for herself or

himself. This fact of extreme dependence upon approval from an external source meant that a basic inequality existed in the relationship between self and other, between the lover and the beloved -- just as in S&M sex, the sadist and masochist exist within a hierarchical ordering which accords superiority to one and inferiority to the other.

Thus, the lover was extremely dependent (as was the masochist in S&M sex) upon an external source for approval and justification of one's existence in the world, an approval which could not be internally generated. If the adult feels they cannot do without the other, she or he will experience themselves as having no inner substance of their own, to be as a nothingness, completely impoverished to and within themselves. This implies a state of mind in which a given person (here, the infatuated) is accustomed to looking outward rather than inward for a sense of ontological legitimation; the capacity to look to oneself for legitimation is not developed. One would expect that a person who experiences feelings of inner impoverishment and lack cannot help but sense themselves not only as missing but as negative -- again, whether those feelings stemmed from the dominance of the commodity form under capitalism or from psychoanalytic failure to individuation (see Chapter 3), or both. It cannot be a matter of neutrality to oneself to feel empty. Rather, it would be surprising if the person with this poorly developed capacity for self-legitimation did not in some way view themselves with a certain degree of

disdain. After all, life cannot be lived by any other than oneself -- simple survival requires nurturing, literally loving, one's self, but how can one love a self with whom one is unacquainted, a self unknown, imperceptible, to oneself? How would one not come to harbor negative feelings toward this apparently absent self, and not look jealously, longingly, at an other who seems to strut through the world with certainty, with apparently impenetrable conviction about their selves? Might not this person feel not only infatuated toward but sexually attracted toward this self-confident other, hoping that passionate sexual merger could somehow transmit the other's certainty, bring it closer into one's own being? The comparisons with the situation of the masochist in S&M sex are obvious.

What about the second characteristic found in S&M sex -- does that apply to the masochistic lover as well? I think the second characteristic in this case is that approval sought cannot be indiscriminate or arbitrary, but must emanate from a very definite sort of other, an other who alternates disapproval with approval. If the other were to be supportive, positive and extremely loving toward oneself, this would be experienced as completely inadequate for giving the lover a sense of external legitimation. Since the lover's need for external vindication implies both weak as well as negative inner feelings, an unambivalently loving other would only reinforce self-contempt. The other would be the external projection, the outer manifestation, of the

sense of disdain I had toward myself -- thus, my feeling that something must be wrong with the second man and my lack of reciprocity toward him. An approving other is then ruled out as a satisfying "love" object. But a love object who was completely disapproving would not be an option, either, for this person might choose to have nothing to do with the lover, rendering an actual relationship impossible. This option can be achieved only vicariously or through fantasy, and may be an element in the seductive appeal of the Gothic romance, Judith Krantz novels, and television shows like Dallas or Dynasty -- one can fantasize a powerful, rich and/or handsome (characteristics symbolic of unattainability and the possession of something which is lacking to and in oneself) lover who in reality would have nothing to do with me. Or take, for example, a worker, a secretary, who at some level realizes the boss will not socialize with him or her because of impassable class and status boundaries, but is nevertheless content to bask vicariously in the other's shadow. These instances aside, a completely disapproving other cannot explain the actually occurring process of interaction between loved and lover I have been describing. Only a third option remains, involving an other who intersperses disapproval with enough positive reinforcement to set a real dynamic into play.

The love object who alternates approval with disapproval will at once satisfy the lover's desire not to have her or his negative image reflected and provide a

way (seemingly) to assuage the lover's need for meaningful external legitimation. But this, the only option really open to the lover if feelings of self-disdain are assumed, also consigns her or him to a situation in which the approval so passionately desired can never really be attained. Just as S&M sex fails to resolve the problem of recognition, so does a love which is tainted with a sadomasochistic orientation.

These, then, are the conclusions I have drawn and generalized from personal experience. The characteristics of the infatuated "lover," as I found them affecting me and suspect they commonly affect others, seemed to involve:

- 1) Symbiotic dependence upon an external source of approval and self-legitimation, feelings the self is not able to bestow internally. Rather than a balance existing between self and other, the self is impoverished relative to the other, whose opinions and judgments take on extreme and sometimes sole significance.

- 2) Negative feelings toward oneself which are a corollary of this extreme dependence, and which lead to approval being sought not indiscriminately from an arbitrary other but from a particular type of other who alternates approval with disapproval.

- 3) The consequent setting into motion of a process in which one must constantly earn, constantly work for, a satisfaction which is always beyond reach, a process ultimately irrational in that it denies its own goal and

offers only itself in return.

It is not difficult to see the parallels between this dynamic and the dynamic I have teased from a hypothetical example of S&M sex and outlined above. My point is not to suggest that S&M sex and intimate relationships similar to the ones I have described are identical, but rather that they may be different manifestations of a similar psychological pattern which operates from similar, underlying motivations. The question of whether this pattern itself arises, at least in part, through the influences of particular social structures, will be a fundamental question explored in many of the chapters which follow.

Looking back over these characteristics, I cannot help wondering if similar features appear in other social situations which likewise involve a relationship between self and other. Can they really be limited to the "lover," or do they characterize other relationships not explicitly related to love and intimacy? I have suggested that what at one level are "individual," "microcosmic" and "psychological" patterns of interaction between two people in love occur so commonly that they must also be seen as socially prevalent dynamics. I began with this example because it seems to me that intimate relationships are often exempted from consideration in terms of their social dynamics within the field of sociology (although Durkheim or Meade both concerned themselves with relationships between

the individual and society, or the psychological and the sociological). But if it is the case that sadomasochistic tendencies invade love, might they not also appear in other significant relationships between self and other, such as those that occur at jobs or at schools? Why would patterns of interaction which occur in the "personal," private realm not also characterize relationships in the supposedly more impersonal and public arenas of everyday existence?

I would like to turn to another source of personal experience, in reference not to a 'relationship' but a work situation. For four years, I worked full-time as a legal secretary in a major New York City law firm, and am convinced that many 'relationships' between secretaries and lawyers had a similar psychological texture to that of the dynamic already described. The major difference between the two situations, of course, is that while lovers think of themselves as equal and freely chosen, explicit structural inequalities exist in examples drawn from the world of work. People are compelled to work; their situation does not appear to be freely chosen. However, my argument rests on the already stated assumption that whether a dynamic has been entered into freely or through the force of circumstance, it may produce (or compel the production of) similar characteristics. The secretary may have little choice but to share with the infatuated lover a sense of herself as relative non-entity compared to the lawyer for whom she works -- her objective situation at her workplace

will correspond to this impression. To date, most secretaries at the firm are still women and most lawyers men. Within the structurally-based situation which characterized the relationship between most lawyers and secretaries, it was he who was the important one, the knowing one, the one to be respected. In relation to him, the usually female secretary was the "inessential," the less valued and valuable. In the context of this particular firm, secretaries' sense of unimportance was compounded by this quasi-caste system which quietly but rigidly imposed a separation between lawyers and non-lawyers: a lawyer might sleep with a secretary but living with her or marrying her, introducing her socially to his associates -- that would be frowned upon. Little wonder if a secretary would feel herself to be meager and less substantial than the attorney--other, and if she might look to him rather than herself for approval. Once more, structural considerations here overlap with psychic experience -- a secretary's job in fact depended on her boss' approval, making some sort of symbiotic relationship unavoidable. Here, of course, unlike the situation with S&M swex, no physical binding exists. Yet, for whatever reason, how could a secretary not frequently experience a desire to gain approval, security and acceptability from the other at her job -- just as the lover, who felt internally impoverished, sought legitimation from an external source? For the secretary, the stakes are even higher -- the lover fears psychic emptiness upon

failure to win the others' approval; to this, the secretary's situation adds the dimension of possibly losing one's livelihood. Feelings related to psychical and psychic survival, so often perceived separately, are here explicitly merged. And, as with the characteristics of the lover, the boss' approval will obviously be conditional.

Conditionality is inherent in the assumptions of the job situation. In this instance, it is not necessarily a reflection of any choice or self-projection on the part of the secretary: certain rules and regulations which must be followed, duties and functions fulfilled, constitute the "job" as we now understand it in both capitalist and communist societies. But, many secretaries knew at some level that conditionality extended beyond job definition to whether and to what degree they could question these regulations, and thus to questions of unequal power.

Interestingly enough, Lukacs' theoretical observations are applicable here as well, for the texture of the psychology I am describing was not at all limited to well-demarcated relationships between secretaries and attorneys. It characterized interaction between attorneys as well, and therefore is an intra as well as inter-class phenomenon. The attorneys at this firm, similar to most large and corporatively organized law firms, were divided into partners and a huge group of younger associates. The goal of the associates was partnership, which could only be attained after seven years and then for only one in every

six or seven candidates. Thus, the associates, too, found themselves in a structural position of extreme dependency, despite the fact that they were supposedly of a higher status than the secretaries "below" them (despite their structural capacity to adopt the sadistic stance in one sphere, they were forced to be masochistic in another). Thus, the associates had far more in common with the secretaries than they usually recognized. The secretary anxious to please her boss did not appear to me as terribly different from the associate anxious to please the "partner" -- structural positions are altered, but the anxiety remains the same. Will the partner like the brief I have written? Will he think I am hardworking and sharp enough? Was I, to use the language I noticed was frequently borrowed from sports, a good enough "team player"? At the most fundamental level, the associate, like the secretary, seeks approval, legitimation, the sense that he fits in -- for all this, money is simply a symbol. In the process of the search to "make partner," then, the associate closely approximates the three characteristics I outlined first in reference to S&M sex and then in relation to the situation of the infatuated lover. He or she must depend on an other (the partner) for sought approval and legitimation of work (the particular manifestation of self with which we are dealing at the moment). The partner is not just someone with whom the associate consults in such a way that there is a give-and-

take between self and other. Rather, the associate is surrounded by the uncomfortable reality that the partner's opinions and judgments determine much more than her or his own. It is the partner who has power: the associate's dilemma is that of utter dependency; approval (again, partnership as symbolic of legitimation in the sphere of work) cannot emanate from the self, but must come from the other. The other thus becomes endowed with extraordinary significance -- surplus significance, making an analogy with the Marcusean concept; his gestures and tone of voice can be taken as shades of approval or disapproval. The associate looks to him as external authority and accepts relative unimportance in comparison. Of course, approval will again be interspersed with disapproval. The associate is in a situation analogous to that of the lover, whose poor sense of inner legitimation can only be satisfied by an inconsistently approving other. Once more, it is only approval alternating with disapproval (or at least the perpetual threat of it lurking in the background) which corresponds to the young associate's psychic reality -- a reality in which six out of seven will in the end be "rejected." How could the associate's life not be fraught with insecurity? He or she cannot relax vigilance any more than the lover. Even if things are going well and the (symbolic) partner is appeased one moment, the associate may make a mistake, perhaps lose a case and "blow it" the next. One must always be wary and on guard; one must always have,

in the back or forefront of one's mind, the necessity of perpetually proving onself. Neither the secretary nor the associate have progressed terribly far from the Weberian Protestant. Like the latter, they, too, are enslaved to a fantasy which at best can provide only moments of satiety: they are on the road to a salvation which somehow continues to be maddeningly beyond reach. But I am getting ahead of the project at hand. Before turning in Part II to the relationships one would expect to result from social arrangements as they are frequently experienced at work or within the family, I wish to try to elaborate the nature of the sadomasochistic dynamic from yet another angle -- the perspective of Freudian psychoanalysis and Freudian-influenced object relations theory. How do these descriptions conform to the characteristics deduced above from a type of analysis which relies primarily on existentially-based reasoning? Does a Freudian psychological perspective confirm, or does it vitiate, the validity of these inferred characteristics? Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of Freud's own multiple theories of sadomasochism. In Chapter 4, I continue to explore sadomasochism psychologically through object relations theory, emphasizing both its discontinuities and continuities with the insights provided by Freud.

Chapter 2: Notes

1. See the discussion of the "inessential" as applied to women in the introduction to Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (New York: Vintage, 1974).

2. See the discussion of reification and commodification in Lukacs' "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," History and Class Consciousness (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983).

3. Pauline Reage, The Story of O (New York: Ballantine, 1965).

Chapter 3 - The Freudian Tradition

Numerous theoretical differences, some glaring, others more subtle, exist within psychoanalytically-oriented circles depending upon whether one is a Jungian or Adlerian, a follower of Klein or Anna Freud, or an adherent to Reichian or Gestalt forms of therapy. Yet, whatever disputes of doctrine or clinical practice divide them, these and other tendencies maintain virtually complete unanimity as to the central role played by Freud himself in the genesis of psychoanalytic thought. Freud has been to the strands of post-Freudianism what Marx has been to the Marxists, however richly complex the lineage of later developments within both traditions. Consequently, it seems logical to begin a review of psychoanalytic thought about sadomasochism with their most prominent exponent, with the ideas bequeathed by Freud himself, turning in the following chapter to the course taken by these ideas as they evolved historically through object relations theory.

* * * * *

Within Freud's voluminous writings, three separate explanations of sadomasochism can be identified (as we shall see, a fourth, gendered, explanation is properly considered a subset of the third). The fact that Freud had various and sometimes conflicting theories of sadomasochism could be taken, and indeed to a significant extent does reflect his

belief in the multi-causal character, or "overdetermination," of psychological phenomena; the fact of numerous interpretations within Freud's work are also symptomatic of sadomasochism's own stubborn complexity. While both of these interpretations are partially explanatory, they should not obfuscate the further possibility that sadomasochism was a psychic problem which stymied Freud (as he himself from from time to time admitted)¹ because of certain limitations within his own theoretical approach. Even where Freud did not explicitly confess confusion, internal reading of several texts reveals oscillation between concepts which relate directly to how he will come to interpret sadomasochism. I will argue that the most fundamental source of Freud's theoretical quandary is sadomasochism's own character as a phenomenon which cannot be fully explained unless psychological and social factors are simultaneously invoked. Sadomasochism may have therefore exceeded the bounds of the Freudian paradigm, to borrow Thomas Kuhn's concept, a paradigm which emphasized biological and psychological insights apart from equally depthful investigation of their social context.

Freud's first explanation of sadomasochism is propounded in his Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905). Here, sadism and masochism are described as component parts of the sexual instinct which can take either an active (sadistic) or passive (masochistic) form. Nevertheless, Freud is careful to underline the critical

point that sadism is the primary instinctual thrust.

Masochism, he writes,

...seems to be further removed from the normal sexual aim than its counterpart; it may be doubted at first whether it can ever occur as a primary phenomenon or whether, on the contrary, it may not invariably arise from a transformation of sadism. It can often be shown that masochism is nothing more than an extension of sadism turned around upon the subject's own self, which thus, to begin with takes the place of the sexual object. 2

This early belief on Freud's part that masochism is nothing but inverted sadism was picked up at a much later date in a major work on masochism, Theodore Reik's 1941 Masochism and Modern Man, in which Reik details hostile and controlling impulses underlying most masochistic postures. For Freud, the theme of sadism's relative primacy over the secondary phenomenon of masochism was introduced in the Three Essays for several reasons. As a component of the sexual instinct, Freud believed sadism could be explained by the element of aggressiveness or "instinct for mastery" which is particularly associated with the "second pregenital phase"³ of the child's sadistic-anal organization. Freud tells us that "cruelty in general comes easily to the childish nature";⁴ children can for the first time exercise control over external objects, in relation to which they were hitherto helpless, vis a vis the granting or withholding of feces from the eager 'toilet trainer.' At this point, the explanation of sadism is not gender specific but rather thought of in "active" versus "passive" terms. If the child for some reason becomes fixated to this

anal stage (in this regard, Freud warns against the potential dangers of spanking for fomenting masochism in certain children), sadism or masochism may come to dominate later sexual organization. But, whereas sadism is here explained as an instinct for control aroused in the anal stage, Freud offers a different, now-gendered hypothesis when writing of sadism as sexual perversion (or algolagnia) in an earlier segment of the Three Essays:

As regards active algolagnia, sadism, the roots are easy to detect in the normal. The sexuality of most male human beings contains an element of aggressiveness--a desire to subjugate; the biological significance of it seems to lie in the need for overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by means other than the process of wooing. Thus, sadism would correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual instinct which has become independent and exaggerated and, by displacement, has usurped the leading position. 5

Sadism becomes not an active but masculine component part of the sexual instinct (by extension, of course, masochism becomes feminine, a gendered theme which will be incorporated into Freud's later notion of "feminine masochism"), by virtue of its being conceived as a biological vestige of a presumed human mating pattern. Thus, even within the same early work, Freud oscillates in his explanation of sadism's origins. Uniting these two suggestions, however, is his belief that sadism by definition refers to aggressive drives which are directed outward toward an external object, whether toilet trainer, woman, or as too often coincide, both. This aggression, moreover, is in both cases related to a stage in the

development of sexuality. Given that these explanations rest on sadism's other-directedness, how would they be convincing unless sadism were primary relative to the masochistic, self-directed moment of what Freud believed to be the anal component of the sexual instinct? And sadism must be primary if, as Freud assumes, sadomasochism is indeed part of the sexual instinct, of "eros." The sexual instinct seeks pleasurable reductions of tension. For Freud, sadism fits this requirement far more easily than masochism, which on its surface is a peculiarly disturbing amalgam of pleasure and pain.

Nevertheless, although insisting on sadism's causal primacy as an instinct consistent with the pleasure principle, Freud stresses in both the Three Essays and his Instincts and their Vicissitudes that sadism and masochism are interchangeable. Masochism is sadism turned inward upon the self, but a masochist can also under certain conditions become once again sadistic or, of course, vice versa. Freud agreed with Krafft-Ebing's having linked Sade to Sacher-Masoch, and with the sentiment behind referring to a phenomenon not as sadistic or masochistic but as sadomasochistic:

A person who feels pleasure in producing pain in someone else in a sexual relationship is also capable of enjoying as pleasure any pain which he may himself derive from sexual relations. A sadist is always at the same time a masochist, although the active or the passive aspect of the perversion may be the more strongly developed in him and represent his predominant sexual activity. 7 (Emphasis added.)

The Three Essays, then, announces Freud's first explanation of sadomasochism's roots: he sees it as a biologically-based manifestation of human aggressivity, a relic of a particularly conceived species heritage, which now takes on the aspect of a component part of the sexual instinct. As such, it is associated with the anal stage, although it may be compounded later with a sexuality that also includes genital activity (which Freud, along with Ellis and Krafft-Ebing, referred to as "sexual perversion"). In this interpretation, sadomasochism originates as a pre-genital, pre-oedipal problem which points toward a biologically-based aggressive instinct in human beings.

On the other hand, Freud's second explanation hypothesizes that the seeds of adult sadomasochism are planted in the child's first oedipal encounter. (It should be noted here that several writers, see, for example, Hunt and Ruddin 1984, aptly point to sadomasochism's overdetermination for Freud, its potential roots in both his pre-oedipal and oedipal hypotheses.) The major text corresponding to this position is Freud's well-known essay, "A Child is Being Beaten," in which he analyzes a common beating fantasy he had come to observe in both male and female patients. Freud states that childhood beating fantasies recalled by his adult patients tended to have three layers of meaning, consecutively described by Freud: a) a child, not the fantasizer, is being beaten by an unidentified party, b) the fantasizing child, herself or

himself, is now being beaten by a parent, usually the father (this stage is generally, though not always, unconscious and inserted through interpretation by Freud), and c) a group of children are being beaten by an amorphous authority figure such as a teacher. Freud's explanation is that the child initially wants exclusive love and attention from its parents, desires which in the Oedipal phase become sexualized. The child perceives that the possibility of these desires' gratification is impeded by other children, such as siblings, who come to compete for the parents' affection. The first phase, then, takes a sadistic form with the child wishing the parent to be beating the rival child. Its content is that the parent hates the other and loves only it. This fantasy is sexually satisfying to the child since, in punishing the interfering rival, it imagines the fulfillment of its own oedipal wishes. Yet, the child simultaneously feels tremendous guilt about this imagined fulfillment of its Oedipal desires, leading to the second image deemed by Freud the most significant, in which the child itself is being beaten by the father. This beating fantasy contains aggressive feelings the child now aims at itself because it anticipates punishment for forbidden sexual desire. Thus, in this interpretation, which will be critically important within the Freudian tradition, adult sadomasochism is related to the repression of newly-awakened sexual desire in childhood. The Oedipal complex postulates that this desire will be most pronounced,

as well as most forbidden, in relation to the all-important figures of parents -- for Freud, the child's sexual desires are assumed heterosexual, though he correlates a 'negative' or 'inverted' Oedipal complex with homosexuality or lesbianism. (As critic like Juliet Mitchell have aptly noted, Freud's model of developing sexuality thus describes a culture which operates on patriarchal and heterosexist presumptions, rather than referring to any biologically determined pattern of sexual evolution.) The child represses these desires and feels she or he will be punished for even entertaining them in fantasy.

The specifically social circumstances under which these desires will be repressed, including why they may be repressed at all, will be discussed in Chapter 5 on the family. This is not, however, Freud's concern at present. Rather, the child within the family of Freud's description will find that

This being beaten is the meeting place between the sense of guilt and sexual love. It is not only the punishment for the forbidden genital relation, but also the substitute for it, and from this latter source it derives the libidinal excitement which is from this time forward attached to it, and which finds it outlet in onanistic acts. Here for the first time we have the essence of masochism. 9 (Freud's emphasis)

The sense of guilt is sufficiently strong to cause the child, in most cases, to repress this phase altogether, substituting for it the third fantasy in which many children are being beaten by a teacher or other authority figure and the child is merely a spectator. According to Freud, this

once again sadistic form hides the child's guilt from itself while also allowing for onanistic gratification. I cannot glean from the essay, however, a precise explanation of why the third phase necessarily reverts to sadism rather than masochism (third phase, of course, contains both moments, though if it were predominantly masochistic, the child would be part of the group being beaten instead of a spectator). Yet, such were Freud's empirical findings, which he partially accounts for in terms of beatings administered by teachers that were witnessed by schoolchildren.

On the question of gender, "A Child is Being Beaten" again reveals some confusion. Freud is generally taken to presume heretosexualty in children. But then why would sexual gratification emanate for the little boy in the second fantasy from beatings by (presumably) the father? If in fact the child is gratified by its unconscious beating fantasy, Freud must fall back on the notion of polymorphous infantile sexuality, also promulgated in the Three Essays. Sexuality would have to be defined broadly as a variegated, rich, multi-dimensional flow of energy which merges with sensuality, in which case the child wants physical contact with love objects whose gender is irrelevant. Freud, in that case, would implicitly admit to a sort of primordial bisexuality, a multi-sexuality, which is only later, presumably in the oedipal stage, channeled by social factors into a heterosexual outlet. And indeed, as

Juliet Mitchell has argued, Freud at his most radical does
admit just such a primordial bisexuality. This inter-
pretation also provides substantiation for the claim I hold
to throughout this work that sadomasochism refers to
patterns of behavior (or, in Freud's case, in conflicts
related to the manifesting of instincts and drives) which
are in no way essentially fixed by gender, though they
obviously take on gendered forms. On the other hand, it is
just as apparent that infantile polymorphous sexuality has
already been channeled into heterosexual objects by the
Oedipal phase. This claim is explicit in "A Child is
Being Beaten," probably the result of social realities,
biases, and pressures of his own time. If Freud assumes
heterosexuality, he finds himself in the absurd
position of having theoretically explained only
sadomasochism in little girls. This will be problematic
for him as well as for us, since Freud has already stated
1) that the sadist is always at the same time a masochist,
and vice versa, 2) that sadism is the province of little
boys, and 3) that masochism is the province of little girls.
Despite this considerable confusion, I nevertheless wish to
give Freud the benefit of the doubt and to interpret the
explanation of sadomasochism he offers in "The Child is
Being Beaten" as referring to sexual feelings felt by
children toward parental objects who are paradigmatic of
an unresponsive other. This interpretation includes the
recognition that in a patriarchal society where hetero-

sexuality is hegemonic, society will attempt to channel these feelings toward the other-sexed parent, defining sexuality in a genital sense which makes one gender especially unavailable.

Therefore, guilt about the child's "Oedipal" feelings -- the child's burgeoning sense of sexual desires, feelings unique to the oedipal stages -- is for Freud the underlying cause of the association now established in the child's mind between sexual gratification and aggression/pain, between sexual gratification and sadomasochism. Essentially, Freud's argument is that sadomasochism may result from sexual repression, a repression brought about by fear of punishment should the child acknowledge, let alone try to act upon, its sexual desires. Thus, weaving future possibilities suggested by this analysis, the child, later the adult, may wish to beat an other so as to attain forbidden excitement (the sexual sadist) or feel itself beaten (the sexual masochist). In either position, fantasized or enacted, the expression of sexual feelings is linked to that which for the child was once perceived within its social-psychological environment to be 'naughty' or taboo. Freud summarizes as follows:

The perversion is no longer an isolated fact in the child's sexual life, but falls into place among the typical, not to say normal, processes of development which are familiar to us. It is brought into relation with the child's incestuous object-love, with its Oedipus complex. It first comes into prominence in the sphere of this complex, and after the complex has broken down, it remains over, often quite by itself, the inheritor of its charge of libido, and weighed down by the sense of guilt that was attached to

it. 11

A subtle implication of Freud's interpretation, later made explicit in Wilhelm Reich's writings on sadomasochism (for instance, his explanation of masochism in Character Analysis), is that sadomasochism can take on a defensive quality as a way of maintaining sexual desire in a form which incorporates the assuaging of guilt and expectation of punishment (whether of oneself or an other). As we shall see, object relations theorists, who stress pre-oedipal conflicts, this interpretation of sadomasochism as defense is confined by Freud only to sexual and oedipal conflicts. The importance of "A Child is Being Beaten," however, is not only its presenting of Freud's second explanation of sadomasochism in terms of sexual repression. It also provides fascinating insight into the way in which sadism and masochism are 'two sides of the same coin,' into sadomasochism's internal vicissitudes and transformations. In this respect, the explanation it provides is internally consistent with Freud's first hypothesis. In addition, while Freud's explanations differ in their relative attribution of oedipal versus anal, pre-oedipal factors in sadomasochism's causation, they both presume sadism's primacy. This may explain why Freud was not particularly puzzled by the return to (relative) sadism in the third phase of the children's fantasies: the fantasy's final form reinforced his sense, at the time, of sadism's primacy. As in the Three Essays, Freud in "A Child is Being Beaten"

believes the original sadomasochistic impulse to be the aggressive, sadistic moment. Only later, in response to its feelings of guilt, is there a sadomasochistic turnaround as the child fantasizes its own beating and assumes a masochistic position.

In what I call the third explanation, Freud no longer adheres to these common assumptions. He himself does an intellectual about-face, theorizing for the first time that masochism rather than sadism may be the primary causal impulse within a sadomasochistic complex. Although the essay usually cited in reference to Freud's shift is the lesser known but extremely important "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924), the change is presaged even earlier with the controversial introduction of the death instinct in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920). Since the death instinct bears directly upon this third explanation, a digression into the details of the earlier text may be helpful for understanding Freud's evolving interpretations of sadomasochism.

Freud begins with a discussion of the economics of the pleasure principle, also called the "Nirvana principle" (the two are used interchangeably). The pleasure principle holds that human beings experience as pleasurable that which brings about a decrease in quantity of organismic nervous excitation and stimuli, and as unpleasurable that which

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increases nervous energy. By virtue of this definition, the release of libidinal (sexual) energy in orgasm is

prototypical of the pleasure principle's greatest aim and paradigmatic fulfillment. The pleasure principle's dictatorship within the human psyche, however, is limited, due to mediation by the reality principle. It is the latter which constructs social restrictions to libidinal gratification; these restrictions are accepted because individuals come to understand that maximal pleasure is realizable only within the culturally-mediated boundaries of reality. Thus, Freud had always visualized the reality principle -- as he now tells us -- as that which socialized but did not fundamentally challenge the pleasure principle and its dominance. But was there something "beyond" this pleasure principle which called its supposedly universal hegemony into question? In 1920, Freud dubs this something "thanatos," an instinct toward death and destruction which does not conform with the formerly axiomatic seeking after pleasure in human beings. Thanatos cohabits with eros, the instinct toward life and creativity. Freud admits that the relationship between eros and the pleasure principle poses a thorny theoretical question, but nevertheless treats the two as allies; he interprets the motive of the pleasure principle, epitomized in sexual desire, to be related to the force of life rather than death, to creativity -- and, for Freud, procreativity -- rather than destruction.

But why 1920 -- why is it at this juncture and not before that Freud 'discovers,' i.e. constructs, a

thanatos? Certainly, as various chroniclers have noted, he seems to have been troubled by the senseless brutality of World War I, the "terrible war which has just ended," as he refers to it in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Yet, of course, his case is based on more than his dark mood or that of the time, however these may have provided a catalyst to his self-described "speculations." Though he refers to "scientific evidence," Freud unabashedly admits a speculative, quasi-literary nature to Beyond the Pleasure Principle, inviting the reader to follow his intellectual revisions and expansions. The 'evidence' cited by Freud rests largely on his observation that patients who have experienced trauma, whether as adults amidst the exigencies of war ("war neuroses") or during childhood, tend to return time after time to originally painful event(s). This "compulsion to repeat," which may manifest itself in dreams or in the course of analysis, "evidently disregards the pleasure principle in every way."¹³ Why, he wonders, would people wish to return to a painful earlier state? The dilemma creates several apparently self-destructive obstacles which are particularly evident in the psycho-analytic situation, for instance, resistance to ending therapy and separating from an analyst. Freud wonders why -- why the repetition of trauma in dreams, a problem which provokes him "to admit for the first time an exception to the proposition that dreams are the fulfillment of wishes"¹⁴? He concludes that

At this point we cannot escape a suspicion that we may have come upon the track of a universal attribute of instincts and perhaps of organic life in general which has not hitherto been recognized or at least not explicitly stressed. It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life. 15

Of course, the conservative instinct deduced from the compulsion to repeat and its elaboration is the death instinct, thanatos, which slowly moves the human organism (and, as Freud observes, other species as well) toward an inevitable demise. Like other species, we come full circle, taking a long detour in the process, thanks to the countervailing pressure exerted by eros, the instinct toward life. This theoretical foundation having been laid, the implications of the death instinct for sadomasochism -- and Freud's third explanation of it -- can now be developed in "The Economic Problem of Masochism."

But has the groundwork, in fact, been firmly established? In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud had defined as under the aegis of the pleasure principle that which contributed to a reduction of nervous excitation and stimuli within the (human) organism. By this definition, why wouldn't thanatos itself fall under the pleasure principle's sway? After all, Freud's definition of this other entity, the death instinct, is that it tends to pull us back to an earlier state. But isn't death the ultimate

reduction and complete extinction of nervous tension? If so, then Beyond the Pleasure Principle comes perilously close to achieving the precise opposite of its intention. Rather than successfully promulgating a dual instinct theory in which eros and thanatos are conceptually isolated into separate jurisdictions, the two appear to have collapsed back into their prior unity. Thanatos is subsumed under eros or, alternatively, eros under thanatos. There is no distinction between them: life and death are as if one. At another level, this provokes speculation about the relationship between the erotic and death, which in sexuality human beings may experience as a longing to return to an earlier state, to a totality experienced prior in time and space to the emergence of barriers between self and other. Is the erotic a flirtation with death of the self? Does desire partake of the pleasurable, the painful or something which refuses the distinction as a false dichotomy?

It cannot be coincidental, then, that Freud begins "The Economic Problem of Masochism" with reference to this problem, this theoretically seductive confusion between life and death, pleasure and pain. But, rather than jettison the death instinct altogether, he instead simply alters his definition of the pleasure principle so that the former and the latter no longer coincide. I was wrong, Freud seems to admit, but not fundamentally. He now introduces an analytic distinction between the pleasure principle and the

Nirvana principle. Only the latter principle is compatible with the death instinct:

Barbara Low [1920, 73] has suggested the name of 'Nirvana principle' for this supposed tendency [toward lowering organismic excitation, l.c.], and we have accepted the term. But we have unhesitatingly identified the pleasure-unpleasure principle with this Nirvana principle. Every unpleasure ought thus to coincide with a heightening, and every pleasure with a lowering, of mental tension due to stimulus: the Nirvana principle (and the pleasure principle which is supposedly identical with it) would be entirely in the service of the death instinct. But such a view cannot be correct... it cannot be doubted that there are pleasurable tensions and unpleasurable relaxations of tension...

However this may be, we must perceive that the Nirvana principle, belonging as it does to the death instinct, has undergone a modification in living organisms through which it has become the pleasure principle; and we shall henceforward avoid regarding the two principles as one. It is not difficult...to guess what power is at the source of the modification. It can only be the life instinct, the libido, which has thus, alongside of the death instinct, seized upon a share in the regulation of the processes of life. In this way, we obtain a small but interesting set of conclusions. The Nirvana principle expresses the trend of the death instinct; the pleasure principle represents the demands of the libido; and the modification of the latter principle, the reality principle, represents the influence of the external world. 16

With this modification, Freud saves the death instinct from its own theoretical demise. Simultaneously, he allows a new interpretation of sadomasochism to come into existence, one in which the phenomenon is averted from the sexual associations of eros and the pleasure principle (associations with which the first two explanations were linked), and placed instead under the rubric of thanatos. Freud's desire to salvage the death instinct may have had two related motivations. For one thing, even if Beyond the

Pleasure Principle had mistakenly allied the pleasure principle with the death instinct, the examples of a "compulsion to repeat" described in that text still needed to be explained -- they still, for Freud, did not conform to the revised pleasure principle. Secondly, the "terrible war which has just ended" (and which may have catalyzed the positing of the death instinct in the first place) could have filled Freud with doubt as to the ability of his earlier hypotheses to explain events which clearly had massive social proportions. Could the Oedipus complex, to which Freud assigned a privileged position in the genesis of neuroses, really be the cause of a large-scale breakout of sadistic hostility? Why in 1914 rather than at another historical moment? Was sadomasochism, if interpreted as a component of the sexual instinct, any more enlightening? The problem in having interpreted sadomasochism as part of sexuality, of eros, was that the insanity of war pointed more toward social destructiveness than it did toward human self-preservation. Thus, in a sense, Freud needs the death instinct to avert an anomaly in his prior theorizing. This anomaly, in threatening the supposed dominance of the pleasure principle, simultaneously hinted at the limited ability of his earlier sexual explanations, which focussed only on the individual to explain collective, social phenomena as well. In 1924, Freud needs something else to explain the enigma of masochism, the enigma of human self and social destructiveness, since in his own evaluation his

theories to date were inadequate (remember, at this point, Freud had not yet written Civilization and its Discontents). Otherwise, "The existence of a masochistic trend in the instinctual life of human beings may justly be described as mysterious from the economic point of view. For if mental processes are governed by the pleasure principle in such a way that their first aim is the avoidance of unpleasure and the obtaining of pleasure, masochism is incomprehensible."¹⁷

Hence, the third explanation: the source of the sadomasochistic impulse is thanatos, the death instinct. The death instinct, however, can no more be entirely hegemonic within the psyche than the life-sustaining erotic, or human beings would not survive. Consequently, sadism and masochism represent what Freud calls an "admixture" of eros and thanatos -- the death instinct is tamed by interaction with the sexual drive, with libido, so as to produce sadomasochistic sexuality (again, judgmentally dubbed in Freud's time sadomasochistic "perversion"). The masochistic side of this sexuality is "erotogenic," one of three types of masochism identified by Freud in "The Economic Problem." Note, moreover, that with the introduction of the death instinct, the masochistic moment becomes primary, occurring prior in time to its sadistic cousin. Masochism, as part of the death instinct, is initially self-directed before a portion of it becomes sadistic and turns toward an external object. The pessimism of Civilization and its Discontents

is thereby anticipated, if not expressed until later; sadism at this point appears necessary to avoid self-destruction but, of course, self-destruction is not truly avoided by destruction of the other, of the social, which the human being also needs in order to survive. Even after partially turned outward, however, a "residuum" of the death instinct remains within the individual as "the erotogenic masochism proper."¹⁸ Interestingly enough, Freud contends that the sadistic portion may later be introjected back into the individual to form a secondary masochistic layer superimposed upon the erotogenic masochistic base. Unlike primary masochism, which Freud asserts as a kind of universalistic/biological constant (similar to the way he posited an aggressive component of the sexual instinct in the Three Essays), secondary masochism may or may not arise for it presumably is variable, depending upon a constellation of familiar and social circumstances.

The second type of masochism Freud classifies in "The Economic Problem" is "feminine masochism." Freud believed feminine masochism to be the most easily observable manifestation of erotogenic masochism -- it is the gendered variation of the latter theme. For Freud, feminine masochism explains women's capacity to endure painful biological processes such as menstruation and childbirth. I will return in greater detail to feminine masochism when dealing with the family, both in terms of Freud's continuing confusion about this aspect of sadomasochism's

generally enigmatic character, and in terms of the application and development of "feminine masochism" by post-Freudian analysts, notably Helene Deutsch. But equally significant here is the third version of masochism identified by Freud, that which he calls "moral masochism." The introduction of moral masochism is the first sign in the Freudian opus that a sadomasochistic character needed to be explored in other than its explicitly sexual incarnations. Until this point, Freud's first two explanations had provided a perfect theoretical analogue to the commonsensical association of sadomasochism and kinky sex alluded to previously in Chapters 1 and 2 (insofar as feminine masochism is a type of the erotogenic form). Whether S&M was linked with regression to or fixation at the anal stage of sexual development, a component part of the sexual instinct, the remains of an unresolved Oedipal conflict, or a combination of these factors -- any or all of which could result in eventual "perversion" -- Freud's interpretations reinforce, and may have greatly contributed to, the association of sadomasochism with deviant sexual behavior in particular individuals. Freud, as we have seen, makes no mention of the possibility that society itself may generate tendencies conducive to sadomasochism or the development of a sadomasochistic character structure. Indeed, Freud does not allude to character, to non-sexual manifestations of sadomasochism, at all -- at least, that is, until the present juncture. Rather, having transferred sadomasochism

into the court of thanatos rather than eros, Freud simply makes it correspond to the other common popular association with sadomasochism -- violence and destructiveness. Mundane connotations between sadomasochism and sexual violence (or violent sexuality), both seen as socially deviant, are thus traceable to very specific elements within Freud's multiple theories of sadomasochism. Yet, a radical kernel of Freud's thought, pervading his more general writings on sexuality, neurosis and psychosis, is that the supposed extremes of psychic experience differ from the 'normal' only in degree. If so, could Freud himself be intellectually content with a limited definition of S&M? Certainly, in the post-Freudian practices of many analysts and therapists, sadism and masochism are often related to conflicts and feelings which transcend merely sexual manifestations. Does dissatisfaction with a narrow definition in fact lead Freud to introduce the concept of moral masochism, which he defines as "chiefly remarkable for having loosened its connection with sexuality"? Does Freud introduce moral masochism because he senses the inadequacy of these prior definitions for understanding the peculiar generality of sadomasochistic historical and social events? If this was in fact the case, then the moral masochistic type, like the others a theoretical descendent of the death instinct and masochism's new primacy, becomes the (unconscious?) raison d'etre within "The Economic Problem of Masochism." For only moral masochism points

beyond sexual manifestations to a wider characterological meaning and linguistic usage of S&M. According to Freud,

All other masochistic sufferings carry with them the condition that they shall emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command. This restriction has been dropped in moral masochism. The suffering itself is what matters; whether it is decreed by someone who is loved or by someone who is indifferent is of no importance. It may even be caused by impersonal powers or circumstances. 20

But moral masochism conceptually promises more than it delivers, for Freud carefully notes that while the ties to sexuality have been "loosened," moral masochism has not abandoned sexuality completely. Its theoretically loyalty has wavered only in conceding that masochism may have non-sexual manifestations while remaining substantively committed to a sexual source. This "loosening" allows Freud to modify but maintain the thrust of his original paradigm since, at base, moral masochism is still only another variation on the erotogenic theme. In the last several pages of the essay, Freud speaks of the "unconscious guilt" which pervades moral masochism. The source of this unconscious guilt, he speculates, must be no less than the Oedipus complex -- and so the older, second explanation is re-incorporated back into his theorizing about sadomasochism. The possibility of additional sources of guilt and anger are not explored. Moral masochism, again, may take forms removed from the overtly sexual -- explaining, say, a non-sexual but sadomasochistically-tinged relationship between worker and boss, or teacher and

student, or political follower and political leader -- but the originating cause of these forms will still be sexual, i.e., oedipal. "Conscience and morality have arisen through the overcoming, the desexualization, of the Oedipus complex," Freud writes, "but through moral masochism, morality becomes sexualized once more, the Oedipus complex is revived and the way is opened for a regression from morality to the Oedipus complex."²¹

By the time we have reached "The Economic Problem of Masochism," then, three problems relevant to this work have emerged from Freud's explanations of sadomasochism. These problems, I would contend, have led post-Freudians in the object relations and neo-Freudian schools (both of which will be the subject of the next chapter) to reconsider sadomasochism in response to perceived inadequacies in the Freudian explanations, particularly so as to focus on pre-oedipal in addition to oedipal sources of causation. The first of these problems is now apparent: while the introduction of moral masochism loosened the tie between sexuality and characterological manifestations, it did not do so in a way which encouraged the consideration of historical and social factors as causes of sadomasochism sui generis. The tendency of these explanations, up until and including the promulgation of moral masochism, is to reinforce common associations between sadomasochism, sexuality and violence, thereby focusing attention away from a general sadomasochistic character

which might conceivably correlate with the structure of social institutions themselves.

The second problem entails one last look at "The Economic Problem of Masochism," as presaged in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Freud, as we have seen, distinguished the pleasure principle from the Nirvana principle so as to correct his older formulation and preserve the death instinct as a meaningful separate entity. His desire to maintain thanatos resulted, at least in part, from the conviction that the "compulsion to repeat" was anomalous to the pleasure principle and necessitated the inference of a death instinct. But this basic assumption may have itself been flawed since all the examples cited by Freud can be attributed to the pleasure principle. For instance, why wouldn't recurrences of childhood trauma, encountered in dreams or analysis, indicate the psyche's attempt to absorb a former shock by rendering it more familiar? That returning many times to a source of fear and anxiety serves to desensitize its traumatic character is well known to contemporary psychologists, whose treatment of phobias almost always involves gradual confrontation of the disturbing situation, person or object. Freud, of course, knew this, too: he clearly acknowledges, in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, that one motivation behind children's games (their joy in making objects "go away" when they know they can control their return) as well as recurring dreams may be to master unsettling fears and uncertainty. These

games/dreams, therefore, fall within the purview of the pleasure principle. But Freud goes on to insist that there is something "beyond" this aim which cannot be explained by the seeking after eventual pleasure. Why, he asks, do patients in psychoanalysis re-enact self-destructive patterns which have no rational or productive ramifications for their therapy? Why do they "seek to bring about the interruption of the treatment while it is still incomplete; they contrive once more to feel themselves scorned, to oblige the physician to speak severely to them and treat them coldly; they discover appropriate objects for their jealousy...None of these things can have produced pleasure in the past, and it might be supposed that they would cause less unpleasure today if they emerged as memories or dreams instead of taking the form of fresh experiences....In spite of that, they are repeated under pressure of a compulsion." ²² Freud may be mistaken, however, in dismissing these patterns as simply "unpleasurable" in the past. What if self-destructive patterns developed in childhood and now re-enacted in the psychoanalytic transference situation were themselves initially attempts to ward off anxiety? In other words, what if they, like the recurrent trauma of dreams or war neuroses, originated as defensive maneuvers which the patient has not yet been convinced are no longer necessary to her or his survival? Freud, although hinting at this possibility, refuses to consider it fully in Beyond the Pleasure Principle; he seems determined to

persist in the incarnation of thanatos, even while making his own counterarguments.

If Freud's argument in Beyond the Pleasure Principle is flawed, what does this imply about his third explanation of sadomasochism? The proposition that sadomasochism manifests a death instinct will also become problematic, in an analogous manner, since that which appears to emanate from self-destructive tendencies is revealed to have another possible meaning. If occurrences which appeared to defy the pleasure principle were instead merely detours toward it, masochistic phenomena might similarly stem from a defensive origin. Perhaps, for example, one perceives in childhood that a form of behavior which is objectively (to an outsider) self-destructive is nevertheless a necessary cost she or he must pay to avoid the ultimate destruction of psychic and/or biological death (the two may be experienced as indistinguishable). The child, for instance, must adopt self-sacrificing and self-destructive forms of behavior which are appropriately perceived as necessary to gain a parent's love, and without which that love will not be forthcoming. In that case, a sort of living death is chosen over actual extinction because no other 'choice' is available. This nonetheless amounts to what must be seen as a victory for eros and the pleasure principle: one chooses a self-destructive life over the finality of death, and it is only in the former instance that the eventuality of change is even a possibility. In

the process, however, a psychic investment is made because one comes to associate the self-destructive pattern (now habitual over a development from childhood into adult life) with a substitute sense of security, of normalcy, of existence itself. This is the way life has been experienced to be, however problematic or painful. Because of the defensive history of such a self-destructive pattern developed in childhood, the adult will staunchly defend and resist efforts at change. Consequently, as Freud of all people well knew, it would not be terribly surprising if psychoanalysts continued to manifest self-destructive patterns long after they ceased to correspond to a new external situation forged in a transference relationship with the analyst. The adult is afraid to drop a life-sustaining pattern not because of a desire a return to an earlier state -- death -- but because she or he has not yet been persuaded that doing so won't itself result in death, as it would have for the child.

But for Freud to have analyzed sadomasochism as a defensive structure would have been to call attention to what the masochist or sadist was defending against. (I will argue that both moments, sadistic and masochistic, may develop defensively, as different responses to a common psychological problem.) It is, in other words, to call attention to the situation -- whether that situation is labelled the 'environment,' the 'family,' 'society,' or an 'external milieu' -- in which sadomasochism evolved, and

therefore to inquire into the sorts of conditions under which individuals feel compelled to develop self-destructive or other-destructive behaviors. On the other hand, the burden of Freud's approach is to see sadomasochism in terms of intrinsic drives which, whether self-directed or directed against others, exist independently of their social setting. These drives then appear as if abstracted from the social structures which mediate them, and the latter are held at arm's length from the origins of sadomasochism.

As we shall see in the next chapter, post-Freudians like Anna Freud, writing about ego defenses, as well as most object relations theorists do in fact revise Freud so as to consider sadomasochism in a more openly defensive manner. By taking relations to external objects as more central to sadomasochism's genesis than internal drives (see, for example, Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), they implicitly and sometimes explicitly reinsert the family qua social setting into the psychological calculus. This shift in emphasis from drives to milieu (including the relations to objects within it) seems to me more fundamental than the distinction often made between Freud and the object relations theorists with regard to sadomasochism, i.e., that the latter stressed object-related pre-oedipal factors compared to Freud's oedipal concentration. In fact, as we have seen, the range of explanations of sadomasochism offered by Freud included both pre-oedipal and oedipal components. Rather, the significance of object relations

theory is to imply Freud's failure to take the social into account as it clearly manifests itself within historically specific forms taken by the family. I would argue that these post-Freudian theorists generally ignore the turn taken in Freud's later writings and replace sadomasochism under the jurisdiction of the pleasure principle. This reversion does not necessarily mean that sadism becomes primary again; postulating that sadomasochism is defensive does not necessitate one moment being causal in relation to the other. Masochism and sadism may be different modes of responding to a problematic situation, which itself can now be thought of as primary.

The third problem bequeathed by the Freudian tradition brings us back to the characteristics of the sadist and masochist deduced in Chapter 2 from a hypothetical example of S&M sex. As I suggested, these characteristics resemble those found in relationships experienced in other spheres of everyday life such as love, the workplace, or within educational structures. Common to each of these manifestations was a clear relationship between sadomasochism as a dynamic process and issues of power, of hierchically structured dominance and submission. Both sadist and masochist sought approval and disapproval within the 'rules' of their game, maintaining the system but yet teasing it at its edges. The relevant question then becomes whether the Freudian explanations satisfactorily address this process. Why, for example, does the sadist seem to

want disapproval within the mode of approval, the masochist approval within the mode of disapproval? Freud wholeheartedly agreed with Ellis and Krafft-Ebing that sadism and masochism could transform one into the other and that they were at bottom different facets of the same phenomenon -- yet his theories do not seem to explain why or under what external conditions inner transformations occur. Why does there appear to be some evidence of self-movement toward the outer boundaries of the phenomenon, toward its possible overthrow? Certainly, positing sadomasochism as a component of sexual instinct (a sort of fixed, biologically derived entity) does not explain why the sadist would strain toward masochism, or the masochist toward sadism, or either toward the transcendence of the system. Nor does the death instinct offer much of a solution. Both explanations are relatively static, not particularly helpful in explaining a dynamic process which takes shape in both, to use the narrow definition, sexual and non-sexual locale.

This leaves Freud's oedipal explanation which I will again interpret as referring to desire for the unattainable -- the sexual love of an unavailable parent -- for the moment ignoring until following chapters the implications of his confusion about the relationship between sadomasochism and gender. This childhood desire will be a structural possibility in any society which, like our own, makes incest taboo; even if incest were not taboo, it is difficult to imagine a society in which there were no restrictions

whatsoever on sexual desire as it is experienced and generalized from childhood. If, as Freud believed, oedipal desires create guilt and are for various reasons repressed, they might reassert themselves sadomasochistically in numerous situations (work, education, etc.) in the form of seeking the approval/disapproval of a desired other. Movement between roles, or moments, of the dynamic could then be interpreted as evidence of a desire to overcome it, no such a priori desire is specifically hypothesized by Freud. Rather, for Freud, resolution cannot occur until the repressed oedipal material residing within an individual's unconscious has been brought to light and 'worked through,' presumably within a psychoanalytic situation.

Let us return to hypothetical, "speculative" reasoning. I now assume that this has in fact occurred, that an individual has resolved underlying oedipal conflicts which relate back to her or his childhood through psychoanalysis. The question relevant to this work now becomes: would sadomasochistic patterns in which that individual had been involved in several different facets of her or his life then also disappear? It certainly might, to some degree -- let us say that the individual in question is now no longer attracted to unavailable women or men in his or her emotional and sexual life (as in one of several popular psychology books which have recently appeared on this subject, Women Who Love Too Much). However,

this individual finds that in other situations he or she faces (within the hierarchical organization of his or her corporation job, in his or her life as a graduate student within a top-down organized academic institution), the structure of day-to-day interaction encourages the seeking of approval from others who are by definition selective and conditional in their evaluations. The individual, in other words, still encounters structures of power organized in a rather schizophrenic, hierarchical manner: the patterns are stable, yet dynamic and shifting; one is encouraged to submit to 'the organization' and yet jockey for a higher place within it.

My point is a Durkheimian one. Even if a given person's oedipal complex is satisfactorily resolved (this complex being the best of the three explanations offered by Freud when applied to the sadomasochistic characteristics observed in Chapter 2), "social facts" external to that individual -- hierarchically organized forms of social power, for example -- may still be generating another, independent condition for the development of a sado-masochistic character structure (or, as Freud called it, "moral masochism"). (I believe these conditions could potentially be different than and independent of the family: however, a strict Freudian might interpret these external conditions as capable of reactivating the original and causally-favored oedipal complex.) Durkheim's concept of a "social fact" refers to that which exists prior to

individuals and which will resist their efforts at change; "social facts," though once created by individuals, come to constitute what Jean-Paul Sartre termed the "practico-inert," to take on their own independent existence; they are more than the 'sum of their parts,' even though individuals can eventually effect them once again. Consequently, a dialectical process comes into being through a second set of mutually interacting "moments" (the first being the sadistic or masochistic "moments" to which I refer in speaking of the sadomasochistic complex). These moments fluctuate between, on the one hand, the individual who can affect social processes and, on the other, social processes which can affect the individual. The crucial point for my purposes is that both moments must be taken into account in any thorough elaboration of sadomasochism, since each has relative independence vis a vis the other. My third and independence vis a vis the other. My third and final problem with the tradition bequeathed by Freud, therefore, is that although revolutionary in its understanding of biological and psychological conflicts within individuals, the propensity of Freud's theorizing is to underprivilege the world of social facts as a second substantial and independent moment. In so doing, the multi-faceted nature of sadomasochism as a complex process which occurs in many arenas is not fully elaborated.

I have tried to trace both Freud's own internal vicissitudes and the problems left in his wake for future psychological theorizing of sadomasochism, especially within the school of object relations discussed in the following chapter. Nonetheless, it should be clear that I do not wish to imply that the Freudian explanations should be dismissed as if irrelevant or insignificant -- quite the contrary. It should be obvious that they have had an enormous impact on the way in which sadomasochism has generally been conceived. That Freud contributed to a narrow sexual definition of sadomasochism should not be taken to obscure the reality that the phenomenon also has very real sexual components. To state the point slightly differently, Freud is one of the premier theorists of the transhistorical perspective with which this work is concerned. He clearly poses the question alluded to in Chapter 1, i.e., whether sadomasochism has biological and psychological roots which would resist social manipulation and would reappear in future social formations. Two of his explanations of sadomasochism -- S&M as component part of the sexual instinct and S&M as manifestation of a death instinct -- postulate universal and biological human attributes, or drives, about which only speculation is possible. I do not think that Freud substantiated the death instinct even in his own terms, and therefore believe it is best ignored and reinterpreted (as again, the majority of post-Freudians have done).

There is, however, no analogous reason for dismissing out of hand Freud's postulate that some sort of biologically-based sexual drive exists in human beings. It may indeed. But more to the point is that the only thing we can affect is the ways in which a possible sexual drive is mediated by the weight of social structures which are superimposed upon it: for many in the sociological tradition, this is all that matters. But just as the danger of Freud's approach is that by consideration of the bio-psychological, Durkheimian social facts could be reduced out of existence, it is simultaneously important not to react by exorcising the sexual as an independent and biologically-based moment within individuals. This is true even if the only appropriate focus of attention is the way in which sexuality is socially mediated.

Freud does, as we have seen, leave some room for social variation within his instinct-based explanations. For instance, whether secondary masochism will accrue on the erotogenic foundation was implicitly dependent on external circumstance. But it is with regard to Freud's oedipal explanation that social factors are the most crucial. I have tried to interpret this explanation apart from the contaminated patriarchal setting in which it was proffered so as to suggest that a theory of sadomasochism must in some way take it into account. Certainly, the sadomasochistic traits exhibited by some individuals may be traceable in part to sexual desire for an unattainable parent. But what

needs to be investigated, when we eventually turn to the family, is the question of under what social circumstances "oedipal" desire becomes a source of guilt and repression. If we do not dismiss Freud's insight as invalid, granting that it is at the very least an intellectually valid possibility, then one must question whether sadomasochism is the product of the way a particular society deals with sexual desire experienced by children. Are there certain social structures and institutions which contribute more than others to the repression of, and guilt about, sexuality? If so, what are they? (I would add that Alice Miller's brilliant argument in Thou Shalt Not Be Aware must also be seriously considered, her exposition pointing to the possibility that the "Oedipal" notion is itself a social mediation of sexual desire felt by adults for children. This, of course, is a perspective entirely ignored by Freud, but one which nevertheless raises an analogous question -- what type of social structures and institutions create a society in which adult sexual desire for children cannot be acknowledged?) In this way, neither Freud's concern about the sexual nor the social factors in sadomasochism's genesis need be ignored. They should, properly speaking, be considered simultaneously.

But, at its best, the Oedipal complex can only be a partial explanation of sadomasochism in its entirety, most happily considered as an element of a larger and more broadly based theory. I am trying to emphasize that

criticizing narrowly "sexual" interpretations of sadomasochism does not mean ruling out the sexual. It is, instead, to suggest that perhaps the sexual is itself a manifestation of something else -- not of thanatos, the instinct toward which Freud groped in his theoretical wanderings, but perhaps a larger yearning toward some kind of ontological security which sexuality expresses but never entirely exhausts or subsumes. With this query, I turn to object relations and its focus upon pre-oedipal rather than oedipal explanations for sadomasochism. In so doing, I hope to shed more light on other, more characterological and psychological components of sadomasochism -- of which sexuality is but one manifestation -- which particular social forms will later be seen as mediating if not also encouraging.

Finally, it seems to me that object relations theorists draw much of their inspiration from important concepts developed by Freud himself, though not necessarily those concepts which pervade his specific interpretations of sadomasochism. Rather, ideas drawn from his thought as a whole (again, not simply from his explanations of sadomasochism) may be most helpful in illuminating the phenomenon in question. For example, the paradigmatic example of S&M sex analyzed existentially in the last chapter could be re-interpreted in terms of a Freudian unconscious: the sadist is not aware (or is unconscious of) his or her actual dependence; the masochist is not aware (or

is unconscious of) her or his actual independence. In both cases, one side of existence has been, in Freud's conceptualization, "repressed." Then, too, combining existential and Freudian modes of interpretation adds the dimension of seeing this repression as not entirely or merely conceptual, referring as well to a biologically-based libido, to physical energy. Both the sadist and masochist are enraged at their symbiotic enmeshments: the former lashes out directly at the other, indirectly at the self; the latter turns directly on the self, indirectly at the other. As we shall see, object relations theorists take these brilliant insights made by Freud and develop them even further, reaching into basic ontological conflicts that predate the oedipal drama the 'father' of psychoanalysis tended to one-sidedly highlight.

Chapter 3: Notes

1. I think that Freud was particularly aware of this confusion in regard to feminine masochism, and feminine sexuality in general. In "The Economic Problem of Masochism," Collected Papers, Volume II (New York: Basic Books, 1959), however, he begins by admitting the mystifying nature of masochism generally. A large part of this chapter is devoted to tracing the changes in his theoretical attitudes through the course of his developing thought.

2. Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 24.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

4. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

5. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

6. Again, it should be noted that at the time of the writing of the Three Essays, Freud had not yet fully developed the dual instinct theory in which the two drives, libido and aggression, are explicitly formulated. I believe, however, that his line of reasoning was already implicit in the theoretical position adopted in the Essays.

7. Freud, op cit., p. 25.

8. However, even if sadomasochistic conflict dates to the pre-oedipal anal period, it may manifest itself only when oedipal and genital problems arise (regression). Alternatively, the 'problem' may have never disappeared (Freud would call this fixation).

9. Freud, "A Child is Being Beaten," Sexuality and the Psychology of Love (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 117-118.

10. See the chapter in Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage, 1974) entitled "Masculinity, Femininity and Bisexuality," p. 47, where she quotes Freud as saying in the Three Essays that "Every individual on the contrary displays a mixture of the character-traits belonging to his own and to the opposite sex; and he shows a combination of activity and passivity whether or not these last character traits tally with his biological ones."

11. Freud, op cit., p. 120.
12. Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 2-4.
13. Ibid., p. 30.
14. Ibid., p. 26.
15. Ibid., p. 30.
16. Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," in the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), V. XIX, p. 160.
17. Ibid., p. 159.
18. Ibid., p. 164.
19. Ibid., p. 185.
20. Ibid., p. 165.
21. Ibid., p. 169.
22. Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, op cit., p. 15.

Chapter 4. Object Relations and Post-Freudian
Theory: Sadomasochism Reinterpreted

The importance of object relations theory in the evolution of post-Freudian psychoanalytic thought has been to shift attention from bodily drives and instincts, particularly the sexual and aggressive drives described by Freud, to the structured dynamic of relations between objects.¹ An analogous shift occurs in the conceptualization of sadomasochism. Rather than emphasizing intrinsic inner forces which are later modified by external factors, object relations theorists contend that the nature of childhood relationships may themselves foster sadomasochistic propensities. By granting centrality to relations between objects (and thus, as we shall see, to those fostered in the pre-oedipal period), post-Freudian theorists in the object relations mode develop a more dynamic, phenomenological analysis of sadomasochism than was possible within the explanations proffered by Freud. The following remarks, therefore, are directed toward the question of whether, why and how object relations theory might add greatly to Freud's explanations in better understanding the structured patterns of sadomasochistic interaction detailed in Chapter 2.

Object relations theories generally accord priority to the pre-oedipal period of childhood in causing sadomasochistic propensities, as opposed to the oedipal focus advanced by Freud. Yet, just as Freud's explanations

were not exclusively oedipal, it would be simplistic to assert that object relations theory is one-dimensionally pre-oedipal. Rather, the altered emphasis reflects concern about how relations between self and other arise and set patterns for later development. Obviously, the first encounter between self and other -- the baby and its caretaker -- takes place in infancy, long before an oedipal drama could possibly unfold. Correspondingly, object relations theorists of sadomasochism root the phenomenon in earlier experiences between children and their external objects. I interpret their intention not as denying the sexual altogether but, instead, locating it within an even deeper longing for ontological security: sadomasochism, fantasied or enacted, outside or in the bedroom, re-enacts a search for a satisfaction never attained in childhood. (Yet, as in Nancy Chodorow's book The Reproduction of Mothering, the autonomous character of sexuality may in object relations theory seem to take a secondary place relative to the pre-oedipal period which is now being stressed.) The sought-after goal may have been a happy symbiosis between infant and parent, the reward of one's narcissistic glories, or just a balanced recognition between the strivings of the self and the need for a beloved and loving other. Sado-masochism results, according to object relations theorists, when the world of infancy and childhood has in some way frustrated the child's aspirations toward a certain type of relationship between self and other. Whether the adult seeks

redress in sexuality, an intimate relationship, or the admiration of colleagues is irrelevant to the primary goal of righting an older ontological trauma.

There are clearly both continuities and discontinuities between Freud's approach to sadomasochism and that of object relations theorists. For example, the writings of Melanie Klein, an analyst upon whom Freud himself looked favorably, demonstrate both adherence to a belief in the dual instincts of libido and aggressivity and a burgeoning sense of the defensive use to which both are put. Klein is known for her research on children, and especially² for her insistence on their analyzability. In Love, Hate and Reparation, Klein and her colleague Joan Riviere argue that all infants feel biologically-based aggression linked to their total dependence and longing to maintain blissful satisfaction of basic desires. This need is so great that should it go unmet or even be temporarily frustrated, the infant's rage is so intense that it wishes to destroy, to virtually obliterate, the parental object. Unable to distinguish between fantasized wishes and reality, guilt then comes into play out of the child's fear that it actually could wipe out the parent, upon whom it depends so desperately and also loves. Thus, these later emotions triumph and function to maintain the child's sense of security, a security which requires the balancing of aggression³ and love. Although not explicitly discussing sadomasochism

in Love, Hate and Reparation, the authors introduce a pre-oedipally based potential for its later development as well as hinting at the possibility of aggressions' inversion into a defensive form. They nevertheless wish to preserve Freud's belief in the centrality of both sexuality and aggressivity in human development.

A similar perspective pervades the psychoanalytic writings of Bernhard Berliner, who does specifically treat the phenomenon of sadomasochism from an object relations perspective. Berliner, classically trained as a psychoanalyst, is not desirous of breaking entirely with the father anymore than were Klein and Riviere. Though likewise adhering to Freud's formulation of instinctual, aggressive tendencies that can take a sadistic form, he differentiates this type of sadism from masochism and the sadomasochistic dynamic in which the masochist participates. Masochism, for Berliner, is a response to an aggressive environment and bears no necessary relationship to innate sexual or destructive drives. Instead, he views it as a fundamental disturbance of early object relations, "a defensive reaction, motivated by libidinal needs, to the sadism of ⁴another person." (My emphasis) Masochism cannot be separated from the situation in which it occurs; it is a response to actual trauma the child has experienced. Berliner argues that experiential reality, rather than an eternal biologically-based force, underlies the development of masochistic character. Within Freudian theory of the

1940s and 50s, Berliner's thought anticipates analysts like Alice Miller and Jeffrey Masson (the latter being, in other respects, radically different from each other in outlook), who in the 1980s reinterpret the Oedipus complex in terms of real seduction traumas to which children have been subjected.

But the sadomasochistic trauma of Berliner's description "is a more specific and real trauma preceding the oedipus complex and already unconscious at that time: direct expression of hatred which the child experienced from a love object in early life." (My emphasis) It unfolds, according to Berliner, as follows. A child feels hated, unloved, unwanted by the caretaker(s), the available "object(s)" in its environment. At a very early age, however, the child senses that some degree of attention and recognition will be forthcoming under specific conditions, i.e., if and only if the child adapts her or his personality to the parent(s) desires and perceptions. She or he may sense, for instance, that the caretaker(s) is more affectionate when the child appears to be suffering. Or increased care may be perceived as forthcoming if the child acquiesces to the whims of the other(s), the other(s) own need for attention. The child willingly subordinates his own integrity to that of the other, Berliner contends, because the need for love is perceived as most fundamental. As alluded to in the preceding chapter, masochism in this analysis becomes a very particular type of

defense, one which aims at self-preservation even as it takes place self-destructively. Despite the objectively self-effacing character of the masochistic defense, the child at some level realizes that any love is preferable for survival than none at all. That this instinctive reaction on the part of children is in fact life-saving is borne out by well-known and famous studies by Spitz and Bowlby, which concluded that infants deprived of love may in some cases perish.

Masochism, therefore, takes form in response to the child's need for love while simultaneously wreaking severe damage on the developing child's psyche. The child who survives masochistically will not be able to develop a strong and independent sense of her or his own existence; the sense of self remains weak from lack of opportunity to exercise its inchoate powers. Yet, Berliner devotes less attention than other object relations theorists to this "ego" impairment, concentrating on a second psychic injury. The energy of the child's angry response to the hostile treatment she or he has received will be directed internally rather than externally. Unable to express rage directly, the child "introjects" the hostile outer object and comes to see herself, or himself, as 'bad' and unworthy. In this way, the objectively unloving caretaker(s) can be experienced subjectively as caring and 'good,' an illusion the child needs desperately to maintain. The other is all right; it is I who am naughty, who must have deserved the

other's hate. For Berliner, masochism is a "pathological
7
way of loving."

Nonetheless, the internalized rage the child feels at the poor treatment she or he has found is not directed at the self in a simple or one-dimensional fashion. To Berliner, Reik and others in the Freudian tradition, anger apparently directed at the self may also seek to express hostility toward others. This may happen in several ways. For one thing, the child may use masochistic behavior to invite attention from, or inspire guilt in, the sadistic/other. Masochism here aims self-destructively at manipulation and the expression of anger toward the external object. Secondly, Berliner believes that introjection of the other's hostility is frequently coupled with the phenomenon of identifying with the aggressor -- in this case, the sadist. This identification, it seems to me, serves several purposes simultaneously. For one thing, it facilitates the child's ability to see the parent as 'good': imitating the other's behavior is a means of justifying and legitimizing it as though it were indeed exemplary. At the same time, the child feels it will gain love and approval vis a vis the respect implied in mimicry -- so long, of course, as the child imitates sadistic behavior in regard to a third party (or, as in masochism, her or himself), remaining masochistic in relation to the sadistic caretaker/other. Identification with and imitation of the caretaker thus has the third benefit of permitting the child (and later the adult) the

satisfaction of redirecting some of her or his own hostility outward onto others, not only toward the self. In this way, the masochist of one interaction may be the sadist of another. An obvious, contemporary example of this dynamic is child abuse. As empirical studies show, it is more common than not for a formerly abused child to abuse his or her own child when, as an adult, a position of power has been assumed. Identifying with the aggressor hastens the passing of sadomasochism from one generation to another. In this way, Berliner concludes moral masochism can become universal, the psychic inheritance of a given culture.⁸

Berliner's analysis has several distinct advantages when compared to Freud's theories of sadomasochism. Unlike Freud, Berliner has managed to provide some insight into a rationale for, and mechanism behind, masochism's potential transformation into sadism. Secondly, Berliner's object relations perspective is better able to account for a social setting in which sadistic and masochistic tendencies appear to him prevalent, without falling back on the concept of a universalized death instinct. Instead, the generality of the phenomenon is referred back to characteristics of sadomasochism itself which can bring about its own internal demise and reproduction between individuals and over generations. Though able to offer a more dynamic basis of explanation than Freud, however, Berliner's analysis has a similar disadvantage. Berliner does not address the more sociological question of why children experience their

parents' real hatred so frequently that moral masochism began to appear to him as virtually universal. Are there social and cultural factors implicit in the production of sadistic parenting en masse, or is only masochism (and not sadism) a reaction to actual conditions? It would be insufficient to respond that the sadist is the masochist 'grown up,' since this would fail to explain the original sadism, nor could it be easily demonstrated that all sadists at one time in childhood occupied a masochistic (rather than sadistic) position. In not extending his defensive argument about masochism to sadism, Berliner implies that the latter reflects an innate human aggressivity, as Freud would contend. But, if Berliner's theory does suggest this latter proposition, then it fails to progress much further than did Freud's explanations. Masochism and the sadomasochistic cycle would continue ad infinitum because sadistic parenting would be unavoidable. Though not positing a death instinct per se, one is left with what amounts to a similar conclusion: sadomasochism might just as well be explicable in terms of a universal death instinct, since there is little hope of circumventing or escaping it over the course of generations. Sadism may be inevitable, even if masochism is not. Positing sadism's inevitability was not, in all likelihood, Berliner's intention. I perceive him as attempting to steer sadomasochism in all its complexity toward a more social terrain, but not taking his theory far enough in that direction. Berliner provides a theory of

masochism as defense but not of sadism. By not investigating the possibly social origins of parental/caretaker sadistic behavior, he remains locked in the traditional bifurcation between psychoanalytic and sociological modes of analysis, a bifurcation both theoretical and one which is often built into the exigencies of being a professional, practicing analyst.

The thread of this bifurcation continues to be visible in more recent object relations theories of sadomasochism, even as writers try to provide greater clinical specificity than did Berliner about the exact characteristics of situations which produce sadomasochistically-inclined personality. Shirley Panken and Suzanne Schad-Somers share Berliner's conviction that masochism is a defense against disturbances in early object relationships, but go further toward elaborating the exact nature of trauma experienced by the infant. Like Berliner, neither Panken nor Schad-Somers offer fully developed accounts of social factors conducive to certain trauma being experienced en masse (though both, and Schad-Somers especially, make reference to social theories and the importance of taking social factors into account). Nonetheless, their accounts are well worth reviewing, since both have written important works on the subject based on their clinical observations about the childhoods of sadomasochistic patients. Interestingly, they reached similar conclusions. The childhoods of their sadomasochistic patients were frequently characterized

by oral deprivation and inconsistent "libidinal availability." ¹⁰ The caretaker (in their studies, as is overwhelmingly the case in patriarchal culture, being generally the mother) seems to respond only sporadically to the child's needs. Panken's description is that the parent may be oversolicitous or infantilizing, depriving, unempathic, ¹¹ unaffirming, frustrating or rejecting. While the specific parental characteristics encountered by the child varies from case to case, common to Panken's clinical experience is that the child does not feel secure about her or his internal needs being recognized and met. If the parent openly ignores the child, the child suffers from lack of affection and connection to others in the external world; if the parent is overly concerned with the child, the child does not feel that it can develop an independent sense of what Heidegger calls "dasein," being-in-the-world. The child loses in either case, never truly feeling loved. Yet, as Berliner argued, she or he desperately needs love, and cannot acknowledge this actual absence of it. She or he then turns to masochism as a strategy for the fulfillment of this need.

But why does the child adopt a masochistic rather than a sadistic strategy? What factors explain her or his move to one rather than the other sadomasochistic position? Schad-Somers' proffers one possibility. Writing of the two endpoints of a sadomasochistic continuum, she, as did Berliner, conceptualizes masochism as the quest for survival

by eliciting love from an unloving object. On the other extreme is sadism, in which one desires to inflict maximum punishment on the object for having failed to provide love. According to Schad-Somers' account, where one falls on this continuum relates to the specific characteristics of the child's familial or extra-familial environment. Whether the child will become sadistic or masochistic depends on whether she or he is rewarded for introjection of the caretaker's hostility and the turning of a 'bad' object into a 'good' one. If the child senses that she or he will be rewarded for suffering, for her or his willingness to subordinate needs and desires to that of an other, masochism becomes a comprehensible psychic choice. After all, masochism retains some connection with the needed and desired other, the parent or caretaker. If, however, the child senses that there is, as Schad-Somers puts it, "no hope of redemption,"¹² ensuing rage may lead to the second strategy of adopting a sadistic mode of psychological survival. The child understands from experience that masochistic behavior will not bring about recognition and a response from the other -- perhaps sadistic behavior will. Even if it does not, by expressing rather than inverting her or his hostility, sadistic behavior reflects the child's deep despair. This despair is in a sense even more profound than that felt by the masochist, leading Schad-Somers to comment that "Unfortunately, the inability on the part of many writers on the subject to see the move toward the sadistic position as

a product of demoralization -- the loss of hope -- has robbed them of the compassion that is necessary in order to understand and properly treat the sadomasochistic syndrome."¹³

Thus, Schad-Somers extends Berliner's early argument to contend that sadism as well as masochism are defenses against an unsatisfying and painful childhood environment. This is not to imply, of course, that the sadist should simply be pitied and sadistic activities condoned; as we saw in Chapter 2, the sadist is objectively the one wielding the 'whip,' whether literally or symbolically. Rather, the importance of Schad-Somer's analysis is that it emphasizes that sadism as well as masochism should not easily be dismissed as inevitable, as if based predominantly on innate aggressivity or a Freudian-style death wish. If object relations theory is to be useful in explicating the origins of sadomasochism, it must investigate the possibility that sadism, too, can be a response to a particular type of situation. Yet, susceptibility to masochism or sadism will emanate from different sorts of communication from the caretaker/parent: in the case of the former position, the child feels she or he will be rewarded for mirroring the object's desires; in the latter, the child senses a more profound apathy and lack of recognition toward her or his being. Sadism, again, may then represent an even more desperate move than masochism. It may be the expression of vengeance, or a last resort aimed at eliciting attention and

recognition where masochism would fail. (I will return to this crucial point later in the chapter, for it may provide a clue as to why, a la Chapter 2, the sadist appears to be even more dependent within the sadomasochistic dynamic than the masochist.)

Alma Bond, also writing from the perspective of object relations theory, provides an interesting case study of a sadistic quest for attention in the psychological pattern of an 18-month old child. Working in a children's center in the late 60s under the direction of Margaret Mahler, she details her relationship with Hilary, who as an infant seems to have been weaned very suddenly. Hilary, writes Bond, experienced a "sudden traumatic loss of the
¹⁴
symbiotic relationship"; Bond surmises that the mother may have become frightened and overwhelmed by feelings of extreme intimacy with her child. What Hilary appears to have experienced was a threat of total abandonment by an ambivalent caretaker. She did not feel conditional rejection, i.e., an awareness that attention would be forthcoming if she acted in ways her caretaker consciously or unconsciously demanded: masochism would have been the outcome of this situation, in which the symbiotic bond might have been maintained within specified limits. Hilary, consequently, turns to a sadistic mode of interaction. As an analyst working directly with children at the center, Bond learns of Hilary's "sadomasochistic pattern" through direct experience. Researcher and researched had taken a

liking to each other, and Hilary had begun to be friendly toward Bond. She continued to favor Bond until an incident occurred in which Bond opened a door for another child. Hilary's reaction to the memory of rejection this must have stirred was to immediately become cool toward Bond, ignoring her and abruptly withdrawing the indications of affection she had previously bestowed. According to Bond, this pattern of response on the child's part had already developed in relation to Hilary's mother, who habitually became upset if her daughter abruptly withdrew into herself. Some degree of attention, therefore, could be elicited from her mother if Hilary seized the initiative and herself did the rejecting. As Bond explains it, Hilary's adoption of a 'sadistic' stance served many functions simultaneously: it a) placed Hilary in the more powerful role of causing rather than receiving pain; b) defended against the trauma of her own rejection by denying it, acting as if she rather than her mother was in the position of rejecting; and c) "resuscitated" the symbiotic bond between mother and daughter.¹⁵ When this pattern repeated itself in relation to Bond, she writes that she was determined to break it. When Hilary rejects her, Bond does not pursue the child (as was the mother's wont), nor is she unfriendly toward her. She continues to be consistently cordial. This altered reaction 'paid off,' for eventually Hilary began to approach Bond once again. Bond concludes that through this strategy, she was able to end the burgeoning sadomasochistic cycle.

Of course, the common denominator in the environments of both sadistically and masochistically-oriented children is that neither feel that basic needs are being met. One child may turn to masochism, the other sadism, in an attempt to redress a perceived imbalance and defend against trauma. But what exactly is the nature of this imbalance? What needs would have to be met in order for sadomasochism not to develop? Esther Menaker, who for the most part shares his views, nonetheless claims that Berliner did not probe deeply enough for an answer to this question. For Menaker, sadomasochism arises from impairment of the ego's ability to properly separate itself from the parent, or caretaker, as a distinct entity. This, it may be remembered, is a point Berliner introduces but does not assign the same critical importance as Menaker. Whether or not the child can develop an independent sense of its own identity while at the same time feeling part of a human community is, to Menaker, the most fundamental question of object relations theory. The masochistic child, constantly in a state of being eager to please, has no opportunity to develop her or his own sense of "ego functioning," nor to identify with the attitudes of an affirming caretaker or parent;¹⁶ for Menaker, these two elements are integral to the development of a sense of self. On the other hand, the sadistic child, though left to her or his own resources (and therefore seemingly more independent), is nevertheless desperate to manipulate the symbiotic bond back into

existence. Masochist and sadist exist in a state of symbiotic dependence upon the parent/caretaker, though the exact configuration assumed by the bond differs from one to the other position. More precisely, I would argue that the nature of the masochistic (child's) symbiosis is to be in an acknowledged state of dependence on a caretaker who 'calls the shots' and is in a position of power; the sadistic (child's) symbiosis seeks to usurp this position of power for one's own, in so doing denying the depths of actual dependence and powerlessness.

Maintenance of a symbiotic relationship, then, seems to be at the core of sadomasochism, understood at this level in terms of shifting combinations and permutations of defensive strategies. But the question of what it is which would not encourage sadomasochism remains unanswered until some 'normative' model of non-sadomasochistic psychological can be suggested. It seems to me that one such model exists in the writings of Margaret Mahler. (D.W. Winnicott also develops and refines this position through his concept of 'good enough mothering' -- which I think is better conceptualized as good enough parenting -- but it is Mahler who is central to my purposes here.) Mahler is famous for her empirical research into the development of psychosis in children. This research led to her development of a set of respective stages a child must feel satisfied in completing in order for what Mahler considers healthy development to occur; severe divergence from these stages

could result in extreme mental anguish. The basis for her promulgation of these stages was long-term observation of children's and parents' behavior. While Mahler herself did not develop an analysis of sadomasochism, I will try to extrapolate what I see as highly applicable elements of her theory.

Mahler describes this set of stages as follows. In her view, a fundamental aspect of psychological development is what she calls "separation-individuation." Separation refers to the child's emergence from a symbiotic bond, and individuation to the assumption of unique characteristics¹⁷ on the part of the the individual. Both are intrinsic to what Mahler calls the "hatching" process. She stresses that hatching has both a biological and psychological dimension. A child can physically perceive herself or himself as separate from the parent or caretaker, while psychologically being symbiotically connected. For authentic separation-individuation to take place, the child must experience both a physical and psychical sense of gradual development from a self-other unity into a more dialectical sense of self as separate and yet simultaneously part of a human community. For Mahler, successful completion of this process is fundamental for human well-being. If some sort of separation/individuation does not occur, psychosis will result because the child will have no ability to distinguish itself from the world, and consequently will be unable to attend to its own independent

survival. But separation-individuation will not occur unless two prior stages are themselves transcended. The newborn child initially exists in a state Mahler dubs "primary autism." She or he constitute a "monadic system," little connection is sought with the outside world, and the child spends most of its time sleeping or crying to be fed. Next is the crucial symbiotic stage, in which the child is generally either breast-fed or given a bottle by its mother. (Mahler assumes that symbiosis will take place with the mother, since she is concerned about tracing the processes of a connection at once psychological and biological, which continues following birth through breast feeding. She does not, however, account for the possibility that symbiosis can occur with other caretakers.) In symbiosis, "the infant behaves and functions as though he and his mother were an omnipotent system - a dual unity within one common boundary." ¹⁸ The infant begins now to differentiate painful from pleasurable sensations, and to associate the latter with the mother. The importance of symbiosis is that it gives the child a sense of security and connection to others which, again, compounds a biological, psychological and, in Mahler's opinion, even ¹⁹ a social dimension. Whether the child senses that its immediate environment is one in which the parent is happy or anxious -- information she or he is able to pick up from face-to-face contact and other non-verbal cues - will greatly affect whether or not the world is perceived as safe

and comfortable.

According to Mahler, the process of separation-individuation can occur properly if and only if the primary autistic and the symbiotic stages have been successfully achieved and passed. Thus, separation is impossible unless a solid basis of intimate connection with another has already been established. If symbiosis has not taken place, or has taken place only partially, the infant will be unable to develop. This can be explained in several ways. Psychologically, the child must feel secure enough to be able to risk the initial fright of the unknown, of testing an environment about which it is uncertain. If the child feels that she or he can look back at its caretaker or parent (the image comes to mind of an infant learning to walk who takes one step forward, then looks behind to make sure that the familiar person has not disappeared), development can ensue without overwhelming fear of loss. Philosophically, in terms of existential concepts employed in Chapters 1 and 2, self-definition is possible only relative to a base which remains secure as point of reference. How can I intuit a 'self' unless that self is different from an other? Without an other from whom I can sense myself as contrasting entity, neither subject nor object is conceivable. In the case of the separating child, that object must be in some way fixed, safe for me, or else I cannot control it and use it as a source of my own definition. This has several consequences. It means that

the burgeoning child-parent relationship normally partakes, in this one respect, of a 'somasochistic' quality: the child needs to fix the parent, to feel a certain power and control of the caretaker's whereabouts, in order for Mahler's separation-individuation phases to proceed. Should this unequal but necessary relationship not occur in childhood, and be rapidly transcended, a far more insidious and permanent somasochistic pattern may develop, as I will begin to argue below.

Assuming, however, that the autistic and symbiotic phases have been successfully navigated within the child's environment, Mahler believes that separation-individuation will be marked by four distinct sub-phases: 1) differentiation and the development of a body image (the child at this point begins to 'look back'); 2) the practicing period in which, having ascertained the continued presence of the parent or caretaker, the child proceeds to test its locomotive skills, feeling more daring in its evolving confidence, and temporarily forgetting about the other's whereabouts; 3) rapprochement, during which the child runs back to its parent, as if suddenly noticing that she or he had forgotten to check, and seeks reassurance that growth does not mean the loss of connection; and 4) consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy.²⁰ Like the prerequisites for separation-individuation (primary autism and symbiosis), the child's ability to reach the fourth subphase depends upon

satisfactory experiencing of each prior phase. If symbiosis does not occur properly, the child will obviously feel uncomfortable about separating; her or his attentions will be aimed at gaining the initial security necessary for satisfactory separation to result. Assuming symbiosis has taken place, separation-individuation will be impossible unless the child feels as though she or he is encouraged to assert individual growth. The rapprochement stage is critical in this regard. The child who is symbiotically attached and desirous of separation (as are, according to most clinical researchers, all children) finds herself or himself in a precarious and delicate situation. On the one hand, the child wishes to separate; on the other, she or he needs to feel that separation is not achieved only at the cost of losing the sense security it desperately requires in relation to another human being. In rapprochement, therefore, the child asks for reassurance that this price will not have to be paid: she or he asks for recognition, for approval of its attempts to be at once a separate being and a being connected to a social unit which it also needs for survival. Should the child perceive that no such approval is forthcoming, she or he will most likely prefer to remain symbiotically connected. The child knows it can survive within the symbiotic bond -- it already has. Her or his fate alone, should separation mean disapproval, is far more uncertain, terrifying, probably bringing up fears of psychic/biological death.

The connections between Mahler's analysis, itself reflective of an object relations orientation, and sadomasochism can now be developed. I perceive significant intellectual links to the explication presented in presented in Chapters 1 and 2. The psychoanalytic concepts of symbiosis and separation-individuation may relate to aspects of that which in Chapter 1 I called the "problem of recognition." Reflecting on the controversy about sexuality and sadomasochism which surfaced within the feminist movement after the 1982 Barnard conference, I argued in the first chapter that a dynamic relationship between "self" and "other" could avoid a tendency toward its own internal demise only if two conditions were fulfilled. A human being must feel both a sense of separateness from others and a sense of connection to a larger human community. This is necessary in order for persons to recognize themselves and one another, as George Herbert Mead explicated brilliantly in Mind, Self and Society. If you are not separate from me, how can I possibly define myself (separately from you)? Simultaneously, if you have no connection with me whatsoever, self-definition is just as unimaginable, for it would be impossible to conceive of myself except relative to another. Without this sense of simultaneous independence and dependence, the distinction between self and other or, as in the philosophical terminology of Hegelians, between subject and object, would collapse and human beings

would experience, if not biological, then psychological non-existence. (This could also be described in terms of a psychotic break in which the world seems an extension of oneself or oneself an extension of the world.) The relationship I attempted to develop between these requirements for interaction and sadomasochism is that both the sadistic and masochistic positions symbolize philosophical extremes which incline toward their own destruction. As already described, any analogy with death is, of course, figurative, since both sadistic and masochist can continue their patterns ad infinitum. Their postures represent what is only a tendency toward a situation which cannot be maintained in its own terms: the final goals of the sadist and masochist are 'impossible dreams' precisely because of their failure to resolve this problem of recognition. In masochism, one's own will is subordinate to that of another and an attempt is made to merge one's own being, to act as if it were possible to deny one's own separate existence; in sadism, one attempts to superordinate one's will over that of another, to pretend that one's existence is not contingent upon a relationship to an other and that all dependence can be denied. Therefore, the masochist and sadist, each in their specific and respective manners, try to deny one of the two moments -- independence and dependence -- which I believe have to co-exist dialectically in any ongoing human interaction. In terms of concepts developed by Freud himself,

both the sadist and masochist could also be said to repress one aspect of their existence, i.e., to force into unconsciousness the fact that another dimension of their lives (they feel) cannot be acknowledged: anger at this repression, however, does not disappear and will haunt the specific form adopted within the sadomasochistic dynamic. In forcing and having been forced into this repression, the situation of both remains one of endless, restless searching for a satisfaction unattainable within the rules of their game, a satisfaction possible only if one of these dual-faceted needs did not require renunciation.

But it is precisely the origins of this repression that Mahler's model may help to explain via the introduction of fundamental psychoanalytic concepts and observations. It seems to me that a similar relationship to the one just explicated between sadomasochism and the problem of recognition also exists between sadomasochism and Mahler's processes of symbiosis and separation/individuation. The relationship is as follows. It may be that the ideal outcome of a child having satisfactorily passed through symbiosis and the four subphases of separation-individuation would be a sense of simultaneous independence and dependence having been internalized as a taken-for-granted, day-to-day mode of psychological and social existing. The importance for the infant of the symbiotic stage is its provision of a sense of security and belonging in the world: at this stage,

it is merged with the caretaker (who will be a mother if breast feeding is assumed to take place within the first year of the infant's life -- it is also important for radical feminists not to deny what still remains a biological reality, much as that reality is smothered by cultural baggage). The infant is utterly dependent on this caretaker for the fulfillment of basic physiological and psychological needs, including the paradigmatic sense the caretaker provides of attentiveness and responsiveness toward these needs. As Mahler describes, the subphases of separation and individuation between child and caretaker occur only as a growing by-product of ontological security developed in this symbiotic phase. Through the vicissitudes of backing away and rapprochements, the child learns dialectically that she or he has a separate existence in relation to that of caretaker(s) who must remain relatively fixed as growth progresses. She or he weaves back and forth between forays into the joys of independence, and concern that important emotional relations to others have not been lost in exchange for this independence. But what if these processes have not occurred? Then, as Berliner, Menaker, Schad-Somers, Panken and others seem to concur, either a tendency toward sadism or masochism may result. If reformulated in terms of Mahler's concepts, this tendency could provide one potential explanation of why the (philosophically formulated) problem of recognition may not have been resolved for a

given person. Sadism or masochism would express a psychological longing for the drama of symbiosis and separation/individuation, never satisfactorily experienced in childhood, to be re-enacted. Within the sadomasochistic dynamic, sadist or masochist might even be expressing a desire for that re-enactment to have a more satisfactory resolution; this would provide insight into why each seems to move toward what I termed the edges of the dynamic, as if desirous of exactly the opposite of what one would expect. (Yet, as suggested in Chapter 2, the dynamic is not overcome -- and, by analogy, psychological resolution would not occur -- so long as the 'rules of the game' are maintained. In other words, the dynamic may be teased but it will not be transcended so long as its operations remain mysterious, hidden or 'unconscious' to the persons within it.) The sadist's relationship to the Mahlerian phases of symbiosis and separation/individuation may resemble the process Bond depicts in relation to her infant friend Hilary. Perhaps a tendency toward sadism takes shape when the child does not feel that he or she has been able to connect in a satisfactorily symbiotic way to a caretaker. The child may feel that a nurturant symbiotic bond is not available at all or, alternatively, that he or she is forced to 'hatch' from it prematurely, before a sense of safety and security permits the child to naturally roam out into the world. (As mentioned below and at the beginning of the following chapter on the family -- in which I begin to discuss the

development of sadomasochism along gendered lines -- Nancy Chodorow has suggested this line of analysis to explain not sadism and masochism but the "reproduction of mothering" in the psychological experience of little girls as opposed to little boys.) The child who evolves toward a sadistic pattern feels frightened and certainly angry at the fact that his or her need for love and recognition have been frustrated or altogether denied. Consequently, it would not be surprising for the child to respond sadistically since, as Schad-Somers notes, masochism is not a possibility. Masochism makes sense only in terms of a child having difficulty extricating itself from a sympiotic bond in which she or he is already immersed; it presumes that the caretaker -- the sadist -- provides conditions (a la Chapter 2) which the masochist can meet in order to be recognized and loved. For the child who finds himself or herself in a situation conducive to the development of sadism, however, no such conditional recognition is forthcoming to cement the sympiotic bond. Sadism then becomes a strategy to resuscitate the symbiosis which is otherwise, as Lacan would say, lacking -- though here, as we will soon see in relation to the evolution of gender roles in the family, it is the little boy who experiences a lack. The sadistic child's strategy for emotional survival is to investigate whether his or her own assumption of power may intimidate the caretaker to fulfill desperate needs. (The sadist of Chapter 2, of course, desperately needs the masochist.) The

child initially perceives a lack and withdrawal of symbiotic attention from the caretaker as sadistic -- now he or she will attempt to constitute the other as masochist, and defensively seize the sadistic moment for his or her own. Like Hilary, the sadistic child is much too vulnerable to acknowledge how desperately the caretaker's love and attention is needed: this is utterly sensible, since the child may have already had the traumatic experience of openly expressed desire having been met with rejection. (This rejection, I will begin to argue, may express not only a particular rejection by a particular individual caretaker, but also incorporates cultural and social norms concerning emotional expression of which the caretaker is merely a representative.) Instead, the sadistically developing child tries to act cool and nonchalant, disinterested, oblivious to the profundity of his or her need: instead of having attention and recognition denied to it (the vulnerable position, the position of the victim), the child denies recognition to the other, placing the caretaker in the vulnerable, victimized position from which some response may at least be forthcoming.

In terms of Mahler's and Chodorow's developmental stages, the sadistic child has not satisfactorily experienced the symbiotic phase and may very well feel that he or she was pushed out of it prematurely; the child may feel forced to move toward separation and individuation before emotionally secure and satisfied by its relationship

to caretaker other(s). Thus, the sadistic child seems to be independent when in fact he or she is still extremely dependent. Like the sadist of Chapter 2, his or her bravado masks a psychological reality which is dramatically different from what it appears on the surface to imply. This explains the extreme dependence which was previously deduced. In terms of the problem of recognition, the sadist acknowledges separateness but cannot acknowledge dependency; his or her position represents one extreme of the two which fail to provide both moments I believe are necessary for ongoing satisfying interaction between self and other. But, whereas the sadist seeks to reincarnate the symbiotic fulfillment he or she was denied, the masochist, on the other hand, is caught -- not, of course, coincidentally -- in a symbiotic vise. Relative to Mahler's categories, the position of the masochistic child is that she or he cannot separate and individuate since the caretaker(s) does not wish the child to emerge as an independent being. This is quite comprehensible if the caretaker/parent has been exposed to the development of sadistic tendencies (more on the gendered implications of this in the ensuing chapter); in this case, as we saw above, there will be a desire to keep the masochistic child in the symbiotic bond if and only if the child meets certain requirements demanded by the sadist. Here is the "hope of redemption" which Schadsomers postulated as distinguishing the masochist's childhood situation from that of the sadist. The masochistic

child, unlike the sadistic, is not prematurely pushed from the symbiotic bond. Quite the contrary. Instead, she or he experiences a sense that recognition will not be forthcoming if the child ventures forth from the (allegedly) blissful symbiotic embrace. Think here of this child in relation to Mahler's third subphase, that of "rapprochement." When the child has honed its locomotive skills, freely exploring the world, it becomes frightened that the cost of asserting its own identity will be to lose the connection with others it also vitally requires. She or he looks for a rapprochement, for reassurance that this high price will not be paid and that the other will continue to love even if the child grows up. For the masochistic child, however, this reassurance will not come, never came: not symbiosis but rapprochement is denied, since to allow the child such independence threatens the (sadistically oriented) caretaker's interest in maintaining the original union. Consequently, the masochistic child will experience a biological 'hatching' process -- obviously, she or he will physically develop as a separate being -- but not the crucial psychological analogue to which Mahler refers. In contrast with the child who develops sadistic forms of interaction, the child developing masochistically understands fully that she or he is dependent. It is her or his actual independence which, though testified to by the clear physical evidence of her or his senses, is frightening, cannot be acknowledged and is unable to develop. One child learns that his or her normal

desire for love and recognition (and instinctive, survival-based aversion towards rejection) will not be forthcoming if deep feelings of dependency are admitted: the other learns that love may not ensure if she or he attempts to assert independence. In both cases, the development of a simultaneous dependence and independence are impossible, given the skewed nature of the sadistic and masochistic positions: in Mahler's psychoanalytic conceptualization, in both cases, a child will not have been able to developmentally satisfy its need for symbiosis (dependence) and separation-individuation (independence), which would have resulted in the internalization of both moments. And, as was apparent in Chapter 2, the further tragedy of the situation is that within the structured pattern of sadomasochistic interaction, no resolution is possible. Translating again into Mahler's terminology, suppose the hidden meaning behind the sadist's ironic pushing toward disapproval in the mode of approval, and the masochist toward approval in the mode of disapproval, is that each seeks in their respective way to topple the sadomasochistic dynamic. In psychoanalytic terminology, this might mean that the sadist wishes to acknowledge his or her need for symbiosis and the masochist wishes to acknowledge her or his need for separation (or approval, "rapprochement"), and in so doing to pass beyond the developmental phase where trauma occurred. Yet, as Alice Miller shows incisively in The Drama of the Gifted Child, these goals cannot be achieved

within the sadomasochistic dynamic. For the sadistic child to feel that dependence could be acknowledged, he or she would have to face someone for whom this admission would not be frightening, who would not reject the sadist for his or her confession. Even more important, recognition would only be meaningful for the sadistic child if it issued from someone who could not sadistically be manipulated and controlled. If the child had to resort to sadism to have attention bestowed upon itself, how genuine, believable and satisfying could this attention be? Obviously, as Chapter 2 discussed, the the masochist is definitely not this free, non-manipulated, non-controlled person: for the masochist's own reasons, she or he functions in a dynamic in which the sadist (or sadistic child) is reinforced for his or her power, coolness, superordination. Correspondingly, for the masochistic child to separate, the caretaker would have to be willing and able to provide the reassurance denied in rapprochement. But how can this be the case for a sadistically-oriented caretaker who has his or her own interests in maintaining the child's subordination? It should be obvious by now that in order to break out of the sadomasochistic dynamic, both sadist and masochistic need an other who is not a party to the dynamic, who acts out of a previously mentioned, third positional possibility. The intervention of an other who does not operate within the sadomasochistic dynamic, however, is extremely unlikely for it denies the logic of the dynamic itself (unless something

or someone interferes and disrupts the cycle). Therefore, tendencies toward the patterns's internal overthrow are likely to remain no more than just that -- tendencies. Again, it is apparent that the situations of the sadist and the masochist, whether described existentially or psychologically, are mutually interactive, fitting together as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. In general, each dynamic in which the sadist is enmeshed will imply a corresponding dynamic applicable to the masochist. Yet, these "correspondences" are not altogether literal for, evaluated in terms of the psychoanalytic model, the predicament of the sadistic and masochistic child are not simply parallel. The difference between them is analyzable in terms of a comparison between a two-step versus a one-step process. In order to reach a psychological and existential state in which both dependence and independence are possible, the sadistic child must 1) resuscitate the symbiotic bond, and 2) separate and individuate from this symbiosis. As Mahler describes, the separation-individuation subphases evolve naturally from a fulfilling symbiotic relationship. If, however, the sadistic child has been frustrated in his or her symbiosis, then he or she will have to first relive the symbiosis in order to leave it afterward. This second separation, if properly re-enacted, would be an altogether different experience from the unsatisfactory first attempt in that it would not have to entail the child being forced to pay the price of renouncing its sense of emotional

connection with others. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for the child who developed into a sadistically-oriented adult, a two-step process would have to take place in order for the adult to have the choice of interacting outside a sadomasochistic dynamic.²¹ For the child who developed into a masochistically-oriented adult, however, only one stage would have to be experienced. The masochistic child already exists in an acknowledged symbiotic bond with the caretaker. The step she or he must take is that of correcting the already-symbiotic bond so that it allows the separation-individuation subphases to be entered. This may explain the paradoxical observation of Chapter 2 that the masochist seems to be less dependent than the sadist, however the phenomenal appearance may indicate the opposite relationship. Implicit in the masochist's situation, at least, is an explicit acknowledgement that she or he is dependent: the ability or acknowledge (or, stated differently, the inability to deny) dependence implies a certain developmental strength which I would argue stems from some recognition having been symbiotically accorded the masochist (child). For the sadist, however, to acknowledge dependence is far too frightening, leading to the paradoxical conclusion that he or she is, in terms of this psychoanalytic conceptualization, weaker than the masochist.

Although their situations are not strictly speaking parallel, the masochist shares with the sadist a vital and

extreme need for the other. In this way, both are "symbiotically" attached, even if only the former is able to let on to her or his dependence. Consequently, this analysis, based upon observations proffered within object relations theory, is able to explain the extreme nature of mutual dependence, the first characteristic deduced in Chapter 2. It is also able, as detailed above, to explain the internal movement within the sadomasochistic dynamic, providing some insight into why a sadist would seek "disapproval within the mode of approval." The sadist will be perpetually dissatisfied with the recognition he or she has won only by manipulation, and will desire at some level to push toward a more genuine recognition. The masochist, on the other hand, seeks "approval within the mode of disapproval" because she or he also cannot be satisfied with the denial of an independence which nevertheless is a physical and undeniable reality. Seeking rapprochement, the masochist tries desperately to win recognition of her or his independent strivings. This, of course, explains the second characteristic already deduced. The third, that of the impossible nature of the quest, has been explicated in terms of the characteristics of the sadomasochistic dynamic itself. Both sadist and masochist seek a kind of love and recognition -- seek to develop in a way that allows for a simultaneously dependent and independent manner of living -- which is quixotic, unattainable from the other, equally caught in the vise of a sadomasochistic pattern of inter-

action. Therefore, it seems to me that object relations theorists' stress on the experiences and issues raised for the child in the first few years of life (during the "pre-oedipal period) is a crucial one for understanding the complexity and dynamism of lived sadomasochism. In this respect, Freud having placed greater emphasis on oedipal conflicts and the way sadomasochism is channeled once sexuality as an autonomous and independent variable has been introduced, was inadequate to explain the phenomenon in its full complexity. While sexuality is critical, sadomasochistic sexuality may be a very particular form into which libido is channeled because of conflicts which pre-dated the oedipal drama. Thus, if a given child is unable to separate from its parent(s) and remains symbiotically attached as it begins to experience burgeoning sexuality of a genital variety, that child may be more likely to channel libido sadomasochistically. For it seems to me that resolution of an oedipal or electra complex (or some non-heterosexist reinterpretation thereof which would envision these complexes to mean simply sexual desire for the first love object(s) the child encounters) would have to mean that the child is able to separate from those newly aroused feelings to another more appropriate object. Assuming now that these desires indeed exist, the child would have to feel that it would not be punished for for some inkling which resembles their acknowledgement

(nor feel guilt at having them, the repression of which forms the substrata of the complexes in the first place); simultaneously, the child would have to feel some sense of being encouraged by the parent or caretaker to renounce them; and further, the child would have to believe the cost of having and renouncing desire would not be to lose all sense of still very much needed love from that constant object/other. All this would be necessary for the complex to be satisfactorily resolved, and indeed approximates the strategy most psychoanalytically oriented therapists will adopt later with the repressed adult. But what if that adult, for reasons I will eventually relate to the conditions for socially induced sadomasochism, has no desire for that child to make those renunciations, and has already encouraged the child in the pre-oedipal period to remain symbiotically attached? Then the repression of sexual desire may be in the parent or caretakers' interest, continuing into the oedipal period a symbiosis begun in the pre-oedipal one, because the acknowledgement of sexual feelings would bring libido into the open and potentially free energy which had been cathected onto the parent. The acknowledgement may have been a form of now oedipally-based, Mahlerian separation-individuation. To the degree that the parent or caretaker does not wish the child to separate (that person(s)' motivation being bracketed out until later chapters), sadomasochistic

sexuality too takes on the explicit character of defense - but here defense against sexual repression in the oedipal period. As Freud hypothesized in "A Child is Being Beaten," sadomasochistic sexuality might maintain some pleasure while its particular S&M form assuages guilt and anger related to the pre-oedipal continuing symbiosis. Consequently, a richer understanding of sadomasochism requires insights provided by object relations theory into pre-oedipal ontological conflicts: Freud's oedipal explanation was a necessary but not sufficient condition of this deeper understanding.

Nevertheless, as is hopefully just as apparent, object relations theory itself stems from psychoanalytic ideas which are based on crucial Freudian concepts. Again, even if Freud's specific explanations of sadomasochism may have been inadequate, as I believe they were, his psychoanalytic conceptualization of the unconscious and the need for cathexis (or securing) of objects are absolutely essential to the theorizations of object relations.

In the chapter which follows, I will explore the way in which gender roles - viewed both in terms of the psychoanalytic and socialization processes through which they are created -- affect a tendency for sadists to be masculine and a tendency for masochists to be feminine. Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gillian, Nancy Hartsock, Jessica Benjamin and other significant theorists have developed

arguments about the relationship between gender and psychological development. I will, therefore, begin by reviewing their contributions to an understanding of the interaction between sadomasochism and gender.

At the same time, I will treat the family as a social institution which needs to be examined in terms of the psychological characteristics its structure and empirically-demonstrable forms seem to create. Chapter 5, then, is the first of three ensuing chapters which will attempt to investigate whether structural characteristics of American institutions are in way conducive to the development of sadomasochistic characteristics, as they have been defined and elaborated in Part I of this work. A crucial question which will be implicit in this investigation is whether these social institutions in any way affect the object relations theory perspective toward sadomasochism I have delineated and deduced from Mahler's and other, similar post-Freudian ideas. If sadomasochism can result from a failure to develop through symbiotic and individuation stages so as to experience a sense of simultaneous dependence and independence in daily life, why would this happen en masse? Again, a psychoanalytic perspective alone does not sufficiently address this question. Is it possible that large numbers of people in American life remain symbiotically dependent upon others in ways which often approximate sadistic, masochistic, sadomasochistic patterns of interaction? Why would this be the case? Is it simply

that many people are parented in a sadistic fashion? It seems to me that such a conclusion is far too simplistic and would not explain why this might be the case. I hope that the chapters which follow will attempt to treat sadomasochism from both a sociological as well as psychoanalytic perspective, looking at whether and how the sadist and masochist could become a familiar character of the modern patriarchal, capitalistic and bureaucratic American scene.

Chapter 4: Notes

1. This is the definition given by Jay Greenberg and Stephen Mitchell in Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

2. Ibid. See, in particular, Greenberg and Mitchell's chapter on Melanie Klein.

3. Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere, Love, Hate and Reparation (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1964).

4. Bernard Berliner, "The Role of Object Relations in Moral Masochism," Psychoanalytic Quarterly 27 (1958), p. 44.

5. Berliner, "Libido and Reality in Masochism," Psychoanalytic Quarterly 9 (1940), p. 325.

6. I will vary my use of the term "caretaker" with the term "parent" in order to highlight the fact that either may be the case in a particular situation, and that biological parenting need not be assumed (nor, for that matter, exclusive participation and responsibility on the part of the mother).

7. Berliner, "The Role of Object Relations in Moral Masochism," p. 40.

8. Ibid., p. 50.

9. See Shirley Panken, The Joy of Suffering: Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy of Masochism (New York: Aronson, 1973) and Suzanne P. Schad-Somers, Sadomasochism: Etiology and Treatment (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1982).

10. Panken, The Joy of Suffering, op cit., p. 92.

11. Ibid., p. 84.

12. Schad-Somers, Sadomasochism: Etiology and Treatment, op cit., p. 47.

13. Ibid.

14. Alma Bond, "Sadomasochistic Patterns in an 18-Month Old Child," International Journal of Psychoanalysis 48 (1967), p. 597.

15. Ibid., p. 599.

16. Esther Menaker, "Masochism: A Defense Reaction of the Ego," Psychoanalytic Quarterly (1953), p. 215.

17. Margaret Mahler, The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 4.

18. Ibid., p. 42.

19. Ibid., p. 45. Mahler uses the term "social symbiosis" to stress a matrix of "sociobiological dependence" in which the child responds to positive as well as negative cues it receives from its environment.

20. Ibid.

21. See, for example, Gerhard Ruffler's "The Analysis of a Sado-Masochist" in Sado-Masochism (New York: International Universities Press, 1952). Ruffler recounts the sequential development of an analysis of a sexual sadomasochist who liked to beat near-naked women. The patient's sadistic desires gave way first to masochistic ones in which dependence on his mother (and anger at that dependence) was explicitly acknowledged before the sado-masochistic dynamic itself could evolve into something with a slowly diminished and diminishing appeal.

PART II THE UNFOLDING OF S&M IN ITS SOCIAL SETTINGS:
A Brief Introduction

The purpose of the preceding chapters was to define and develop particular characteristics by which sadomasochism as a specific pattern of interaction between self and other can be identified. Again, it is my intention to propose a conceptualization of sadomasochism which has a broader significance and more general applicability than the narrower sexual images with which it is commonly associated. In reference to the "sexuality debate" within feminism, this definition of sadomasochism should be distinguished from what has been called -- referring to the sexual arena to which even feminists have confined their discussion -- 'role playing.' Role playing refers to the fact that, from time to time, one sexual partner may wish to assume a relatively more passive, the other a relatively more active, position. As feminists such as Amber Hollibaugh have convincingly stated, "Sometimes I want to play, resist, fight against another woman sexually; sometimes I want to surrender. I can't imagine sex without this."¹ Indeed, it is hard to imagine a social setting in which human beings did not occasionally wish to assume these positions, any more than it is possible to imagine someone not wishing to lavish on a beach with arms open to the sun or desiring someone else to rub their back while they lay passively in anticipation (waiting for the other who, of course, may very well enjoy the role of masseuse/masseur).

The sadomasochistic mode of interaction I have been describing, however, is distinct from role-playing in that the sadist's or masochist's part cannot readily be shed at will: role-playing implies that the role which has been assumed can be unassumed. Instead, my interpretation of sadomasochism refers to a pattern of interaction which is dynamic but nevertheless takes place within boundaries, the limits of which are respected by both sadist and masochist. By definition, the sadist cannot arbitrarily abandon the sadistic position in which he or she habitually takes pleasure without risk of losing that pleasure (however self-defeating it may be in the philosophical and psychological senses I have outlined), nor can the masochist jockey from role to role at her or his whim. That is to say, the sadist feels in some way compelled to adopt a position of power, the masochist unhappy at the prospect of a diffident other. There is a logic to their intercourse, not of their own making, from which extrication is a highly complex matter; and the internal transformations which, according to both the testimony of Freud and object relations theorists, do indeed take place, occur in an apparently structured rather than random manner. The sadist may secretly wish to be disapproved of, but only when he or she knows that power relations will remain undisturbed. Transformation into a masochist will in all likelihood occur only under specified conditions, such that someone has intervened and altered the prior balance of power. A

corporate middle manager may, for example, interact sadistically with his or her secretary, only to be masochistically oriented in relation to the executive above him (or her), who is in a structured position of sadism vis a vis that middle level manager. The middle level manager will not, in all likelihood, 'role play' by suddenly taking a masochistic position toward the secretary and a sadistic one toward the partner. Similarly, the secretary placed in a masochistic situation at work may find a position rife with sadistic possibilities at the end of the day when coming home to her or his children. Sadomasochism, then, as opposed to role playing, refers to regularized, even routinized, complexes of structured interaction.

Moreover, as detailed in the last half of Part I, these structured modes of interaction can simultaneously be understood in reference to psychoanalytic categories, particularly those developed by object relations theorists such as Margaret Mahler, Bernhard Berliner, Esther Menaker, Suzanne Schach-Somers, Shirley Panken, and others. The definition of sadomasochism I have tried to develop refers not only to the characteristics deduced existentially from a hypothetical example of S&M sex in Chapter 2. It also includes my suspicion that these characteristics refer to a similar reality as that described by object relations theorists, employing Freudian concepts such as the unconscious and object cathexis. In particular, whether or not symbiosis and separation-individuation are

satisfactorily experienced may explain in psychological terms the development of sadism in some persons and masochism in others. Mahler's model may also help to explain paradoxical elements of dissatisfaction experienced by both sadist and masochist, the relative dependence of each, and the 'impossible dream' they search hopelessly to achieve.

This analysis attempts to provide clues to the texture of sadomasochistic discourse, its conditions, dimensions, and specifications. In the chapters which follow, I will shift attention from defining the dynamic of sadomasochism itself to a consideration of three major social institutions of American life and culture -- the family, education, and work. The purpose of Part II will be to investigate the following question, fundamental to this work: How would one logically expect these social institutions to influence ² the sort of psychological interactions which evolve in relationships between self and other, the individual and the social? I will not start with the individual abstracted from a social context, as I did in the existentially-oriented Chapter 2 (and as did Jean-Paul Sartre in Being and Nothingness). Certainly, such abstraction is Freud's wont as well, concerned as he was with biological and sexually-based factors as an independent moment of human existence; and, while object relations attempts to introduce a social dimension, it nevertheless does not succeed in developing a full-blown social theory, a

'psychosocial' theory in which psychology and sociology cannot be intellectually or practically polarized. At the same time, it is important to remember that existential, biological, sexual and psychological dimensions of life cannot be simplistically reduced to a function of the social.

In Part II, I begin with the structure of social institutions themselves, hoping to investigate the way individual persons would tend to develop within them. Do the interactions which one would expect to, and which in fact do, occur resemble the characteristics of sadomasochism which have been described? If so, then, returning to Durkheim, sadomasochism could be said to be more of a "normal" than a "pathological" feature of American social institutions and a particular type of society of which they are representative. On the other hand, within chapters which follow, I will also reintroduce these other possibilities, i.e., the possibility that sadomasochism might stem from biological impulses (something akin to innate aggressivity, a la Freud) or from desires to be attached symbiotically to an other so as to assuage fear of death (which I consider a more existentially-based argument, a la Sartre). Moreover, an analysis of American social institutions raises the issue of whether some form of hierarchy is not unavoidable and, therefore, meaningless if taken as a social source of sadomasochism.

I start with the family because, within it, the individual --the growing child who only later is dubbed and fashioned as such -- first encounters society in its most elemental and paradigmatic institutional form. Whether or not this child becomes sadomasochistically oriented may affect her or his susceptibility to other social institutions, to schooling and to structures of employment, which are encountered afterward in chronological succession. In addition, it is the family which is the site of the production of gender, the incubator of the tendency for women rather than men to more often be in the masochistic situation and men more often than women to assume a sadistic persona. Eventually, having traced the child's psychosocial progression through other social institutions of schooling and work, I will wish to return to this child, grown and individualized. How would the adult the child became approach the family to which she or he returns in a position of (relative) power rather than powerlessness, now a (relative) initiator rather than recipient of social and psychological influences? How is sadomasochism en masse produced as well as reproduced?

Part II. A Brief Introduction: Notes

1. Amber Hollibaugh, "Desire for the Future: Radical Hope in Passion and Pleasure," Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality (Boston, London, Melbourne & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 408.

2. I purposely use the word "influence" rather than "determine" to avoid a tendency toward reductionism which can occur in vulgar Marxist analyses.

Chapter 5: Sadomasochism, Gender and the Family

A. The cultural generality of masculine sadists and feminine masochists.

Just as sadomasochism or "S&M" is commonly associated with sexuality and violence in day-to-day parlance, so is the sadistic personality frequently envisioned as masculine and the masochistic as feminine. The purpose of this chapter will be to explore why. Is it indeed the case, as cultural images usually reflect, that the majority of sadists in our society are men, the masochists women? And, if so, how has this extreme, gender-skewed state of affairs come into existence in relation to a dynamic which, as we have seen, is not in essence gender-bound?

That cultural images testify to a skewed reality is so obvious that elaboration may be redundant. Yet, the simple fact that gendered sadomasochism is mundane, a common assumption within daily life, merits attention lest the phenomenon come to be ignored and taken for granted. Of course, such culturally gendered associations are not new, a predominant in chapter feature of merely the 20th century world. They existed within the writings of Sade and Sacher-Masoch, from whose work, as we saw earlier, the term "sadomasochism" was eventually derived. In Sade's writing, sadism is regularly the province of men who take pleasure in the masochistic sexual subordination of women. On the other hand, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, after whom Krafft-Ebing will name "masochism," opens his now famous Venus in Furs

with a male narrator seeking a woman sufficiently powerful and deserving of his respect that he can ecstatically pledge to be her eternal slave. Despite this apparent sex role reversal, the sadistic woman he locates -- his Venus who, bedecked in elaborate ermine, whips him to heights of orgasmic frenzy -- eventually abuses her power to the point where he, in disillusionment, feels compelled to revert to the sadistic persona. It is as if von Sacher-Masoch's hero, like the sadist of Chapter 2, experimented with his or her unconscious dream of masochism and teased the sadomasochistic dynamic so far at its edges that it threatened to topple: order then had to be restored. And what did Wanda, the Venus in furs, do to lose the hero's respect? Interestingly enough, her downfall relates to her having fallen in love with someone who dominates her, thereby reverting to the masochistic position relative to another male sadist. At the beginning of Venus in Furs, it is the man who is the powerless masochist and the woman powerfully sadistic: at its conclusion, two men have seized the reins of sadism, one by his nature and the other 'driven' to it by the feckless, now powerless and masochistic woman. Thus, despite their notoriety relative to one or the other extreme of the sadomasochistic spectrum, Sade and Sacher-Masoch employ what amounts to similarly gendered conceptions of sadism and masochism. Granted, their literature makes sophisticated reference to the interconnectedness and transmutability of sadism and

masochism, to the phenomenon's dynamic characteristics; neither Sade nor Sacher-Masoch cherish illusions of sado-masochism being merely sexual, for their work openly treats sexuality as a phenomenological manifestation of relationships of power. Yet, within this manifestation, the writings of Sade and Sacher-Masoch are paradigmatic of representations linking sadism with men and masochism with women.

Of course, gendered representations pervade contemporary images as well, in both the 'sexual' realm of pornography and non-'pornographic' popular culture. Needless to say, the sadistic position in S&M pornography is almost overwhelmingly occupied by men, the masochistic by women. A given pornographic portrayal may, as in Sacher-Masoch's novel, reverse sex roles in an occasional scene, seemingly for purposes of titillation, to stimulate the sadist's fantasies about assuming the role of the masochistic other while knowing through the medium that he or she still maintains control. In general, such titillation does not challenge the fundamental status quo of the male sadist and female masochist: it is usually the woman who is bound, the man who binds; the horrifying genre of the snuff film always, to my knowledge, depicts women as tortured and men as torturer. Nor is the cultural stereotype in any way limited to pornography. Of course, Recent film representations of what I have called "sexual" S&M (representations which portray the narrower connotation

even when, as with Blue Velvet, calling it into question) cast Dennis Hopper as the sadist in Blue Velvet, Isabella Rossellini as the masochist; in 9-1/2 Weeks, Mickey O'Rourke plays the sadist to Kim Basinger's masochistic character. Other film depictions of sadomasochism more explicitly widen sadomasochism's connotations, referring to ongoing relationships which are sadomasochistic in more than the sexual sense and which frequently entail violence. I think here of recent films such as Dance with a Stranger, Sid and Nancy, The Stepfather and River's Edge, all of which depict women situated in masochistic positions vis a vis sadistic men. Then, too, the genre of the detective novel and the crime film is replete with such imagery. For instance, in the 1986 52 Pick-Up, based on one of Elmore Leonard's detective novels, a woman is forced to place a piece of cardboard on her naked breasts through which she is brutally shot by several men, annoyed that she had asserted some independence. The men, as the case would have it, portray pornographers who had become involved in blackmail and extortion. (Not only Leonard's work but most other writers of his ilk, such as Raymond Chandler, Dashell Hammett and Jim Thompson, similarly feature a masochistic woman and sadistic man as organizing principles.) Ironically, the film illustrates the clear analogy between actual pornography and cultural representations which share a similar structure though not themselves labelled

'pornographic'; it shows, concomitantly, the problem of singling out the former for condemnation without placing it in the more holistic context of the latter. The characteristics of sadomasochism skewed by gender apply to both forms, exemplifying further the many limitations of a narrowly 'sexual' definition.

In still another cultural realm, current books related to gender and sadomasochism adorn commercial bookshops. Women Who Love Too Much has climbed high on the best-seller list, while Men Who Hate Women and the Women who Love Them also appears to be highly marketable. Though not explicitly dealing with sadomasochism, all three make reference to intimate relationships akin to those I experienced and described at the opening of Chapter 1. Consequently, I think they refer to interactions which often share at least some of the characteristics I term sadomasochistic. More important for present purposes, however, is that all three address themselves to the woman as the usually more dependent party within intimate relationships, and conceptualize the man as the seemingly more independent actor. Their popularity attests to widespread acknowledgment of verity behind these gendered characterizations, and to interest in what I deem sadomasochistic tendencies (an interest which may demonstrate that these books are tapping common experiences).

If, therefore, there can be little doubt

that American society is replete with cultural images of masculine sadists and feminine masochists, to what do these images correspond? I have not yet even touched upon the question of why and how it is that, if asked to predict in advance, most of us would have anticipated the disturbed teenage killer of Tim Hunter's River's Edge would be a boy, the young person he murders a girl.

B. Feminine masochism, masculine sadism and the structure of the family.

How has gendered sadomasochism arisen? As we saw in Chapter 3, despite his confusion on the subject, Freud provides a prominent example of an attempt to explain the predominance of sadism in men and masochism in women by positing biology as a causal factor. At one point in the Three Essays on Sexuality, sadism is theorized as a primordial vestige of the male, while in "The Problem of Masochism," Freud stated that "feminine" masochism was the most easily observable of the three masochistic types he had identified. Freud has been greatly attacked for asserting this biologically-based connection between women and masochism. For instance, Horney has called Freud to task both for the way in which he associated women and masochism and for his promulgation of the idea of penis envy, both of which she convincingly argued are products of social conditions rather than biological necessities.¹ On the other hand, Juliet Mitchell sees Freud's ideas, so often

highly problematic for women, as descriptive rather than prescriptive, merely reflecting the way in which women's psyches are formed in male-dominated societies like his 19th century Victorian milieu and our own. Mitchell argues, I believe aptly, that for feminists to altogether abandon basic Freudian insights into the workings of the unconscious and the importance of sexuality would be to throw the proverbial 'baby out with the bathwater.' Unlike Horney, Mitchell does not wish to treat Freud as a biological determinist. Rather, she interprets Freud as reflecting, rather than necessarily approving of, the unfortunate products of cultural inculcation: for instance, she argues that "To Freud society demands of the psychological bisexuality of both sexes that one sex attain a preponderance of femininity, the other of masculinity: man and woman are made² in culture." To Mitchell, feminine masochism and masculine sadism as well as penis envy are precisely such cultural products, correctly observed if not properly diagnosed in their origins by Freud.

Thus, Freud's particular legacy for women has been a subject of controversy among feminists. Yet, a conservative tendency within his thought was certainly present and elaborated by several orthodox post-Freudians, continuing to seek biological justification for "feminine" masochism and "male" sadism. After Freud, the thread of this linkage between women and masochism was reiterated and

supposedly clarified by orthodox analyst Helene Deutsch in
her massive The Psychology of Women (1944).³ In
Deutsch's treatment, masochism is not a defense against an
intolerable social and psychological environment but a
biological mechanism of human adaptation. Only the
biological life of the human female contains painful
experiences of menstruation and childbirth. Therefore,
according to Deutsch, women would be unwilling to bear these
strains unless they also took pleasure in their pain.
Since reproduction is clearly not a luxury the race can
afford to eschew, female masochism becomes necessary to
species survival. It is not to be changed, nor is it
changeable: rather, it is to be accepted as a universal
feature of women's "species being" (to borrow Marx's term).
The 'well-adjusted', woman, according to this train of
thought, is someone who resigns herself to this state of
affairs and accepts it gracefully, with humility, without
developing any sort of 'reaction formation.' Not only
biology but, even more insidiously, psychology is taken to
be destiny. The alleged 'curse' of women is not simply
menstruation but masochism as well; for humanity as an
evolutionary whole, it is a blessing. Of course, in making
this argument, neither Freud nor Deutsch -- taken here as
exemplary of any biological or sociobiological theorist who
propounds the inevitability of sadomasochism's gender-skewed
manifestations⁴ -- consider whether the association they
observed between women and masochism might result from

social disposition toward particular psychological and sexual patterns rather than any innate predisposition. If social and cultural influences gear women toward a masochistic position, biological assertions become ludicrous, analogous to what Marx, in referring to economic class relations, calls "ideology" -- i.e., the efforts of a ruling group to justify its own oppressive social relations by making them appear as though eternally necessary. The proclamation that "biology is destiny" becomes ideological, and Freud's theorization of masochism most appropriately taken as in itself an historical artifact.

Thus, the tendency for sadism and masochism to assume gender-skewed forms must be investigated sociologically, as feminist writing of the last thirty years has done with splendid effectiveness with regard to the creation of gender categories. A substantial and growing feminist literature has taken up the question of the traditional nuclear family, arguing that within this formerly little-studied institution is a microcosmic paradigm of oppressive tendencies in society itself. One of the most crucial achievements of feminist theorizing has been the debunking of biological arguments by revealing that they are not only ideological but tautological, obfuscating a world in which supposedly in-born characteristics are indeed politically, socially and culturally mandated.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into consideration of three theoretical concerns:

1. I will discuss several feminist writings which have dealt with the way in which "feminine" and "masculine" gender is created within the traditional nuclear family. (By "traditional nuclear family," I assume that unit which has been hegemonic within societies where heterosexual marriage has held a privileged place; in this traditional familial structure, childrearing and household management is the special province of women and 'breadwinning' outside the home the province of men.) Doubtless, this 'socialization' perspective will be extremely familiar to many readers. My only claim to possible novelty is in reviewing this now-familiar but still important literature with a particular eye to the question of whether the creation of gender is simultaneously the creation of gendered sadomasochism. How do the characteristics of the traditional nuclear family relate to the characteristics of sadomasochism already discussed? Does the creation of a "masculine" versus "feminine" human being simultaneously tend toward the creation of a sadist and a masochist, or are the two separate and unrelated processes? It should be noted at the outset that this analysis again presumes an anti-essentialist bias, for if the creation of "feminine masochism" is shown to be a social creation, so must be the creation of "male sadism." Any other position is theoretically untenable.

2. What is this social institution I am deeming the 'family'? Is it the traditional nuclear family or have

social changes eroded this concept to the point where it is virtually obsolescent? And, if obsolesced, how does gendered sadomasochism continue to be reproduced, if it really is being reproduced?

3. Lastly, I will turn to the question of relations between children and parents. Whether or not the traditional nuclear family has eroded beyond recognition, children still remain the 'property' of parent(s) in American life. A given child is still defined as belonging to caretaker(s), regardless of whether care-taking takes place within a traditional nuclear family where marriage and heterosexuality still reign, a single family household headed by mother or father, a non-single lesbian, gay or bi-sexual household in which one person has biologically parented a child (and where legal property rights may be a serious issue because of discriminatory practices), or a situation in which legal adoption has established property rights to children. For all the complexity of issues which surrounded the Baby M case, the 'right' of one of the parents to Sarah or Melissa remained outside the parameters of conventional legal discourse. Yet, in a discussion of sadomasochism and the family, the issue of whether such ownership might affect the development of sadomasochistic characteristics must be taken into consideration (This is particularly the case since the concept of private ownership of children is crucial to the way in which most people conceptualize 'families,' however

different their particular mode of familial organization.)
This issue may or may not affect whether sadomasochism takes
a gendered form, and is therefore potentially an autonomous
factor.

* * * * *

1. One line of reasoning which can be used to assess
whether or not the traditional nuclear family creates a
tendency toward gendered sadomasochism is implicit in the
massive theoretical literature compiled by feminists about
the characteristics of gender itself. Again, I will ask the
reader's tolerance for presenting a now-familiar perspective
with the dual goals of, first, re-interpreting its applica-
ble insights to the present work and, second, inquiring into
its continued relevance to the way individuals are still
enculturated in 1987, within and without the family.

In Sexual Politics (1969), one of the first
classics of radical feminist theory in what is often called
the "second wave" women's movement of the late 60s and 70s,
Kate Millett defined power relationships between men and
women as a universal category which ought be accorded at
least as much legitimacy as male theorists (such as Marx)
accorded power relationships based upon economic class. Her
desire to bestow independent and primary status to sexual
politics was seconded by a number of other early radical
feminist writers, including Shulamith Firestone, Mary Daly

and Ti-Grace Atkinson, all of whom would probably agree with Millett's definition of patriarchy. This definition may be worth quoting at some length:

Quite in the same manner [as the study of racism, l.c.], a disinterested examination of our system of sexual relationships must point out that the situation between the sexes now, and throughout history, is a case of that phenomenon Max Weber described as herrschaft, a relationship of dominance and subordination. What goes largely unexamined, often even unacknowledged (yet is institutionalized nonetheless) in our social order, is the birthright priority whereby males rule females. Through this system a most ingenious form of 'interior colonization' has been achieved. It is one which tends moreover to be sturdier than any form of segregation, and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring. However muted its present appearance may be, sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power.

This is so because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance - in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands. As the essence of politics is power, such realization cannot fail to carry impact. 5

Indeed, her statement does carry impact, for with it Millett not only reminds us that the patriarchal structure she describes is still very much with us almost twenty years later, but presents sociologists with an eminent example of a Durkheimian "social fact." It does not require a massive compilation of empirical data to convince us that, although women have made major strides and have some representation in spheres where they were totally absent at the time of Millett's writing, major institutions of

power -- political, corporate, academic, scientific, military, police power -- remain male-dominated in 1987. Correspondingly, while fathers may play more of a role in childrearing than they did in 1969, women still bear the brunt of this responsibility. Thus patriarchy, as Millett and other radical feminists insisted, is a structure of power which is quite real, just as material as Marx's conceptualization of class. But, unlike Marx's definition of the capitalist and proletariat classes relative to economic relations of production, feminists claimed that an even more fundamental division of society occurs between men and women relative to relations of reproduction. This relationship, they contended, is more basic because the latter is inclusive of the former, whereas the reverse relationship does not hold true.⁶ The division based on sexual politics mandated that women, because of their biological connection with childbearing, would be confined to the domestic realm whereas men would carry on all other social business; as Sherri Ortner described the bifurcation,⁷ women were associated with "nature," men with "culture." From this initial polarization sprang others which corresponded to it: the domestic realm of women was a private, personal world as opposed to the public, political one to which men belonged; the former was constructed as, allegedly, the world of subjectivity and emotion, the latter of objectivity and reason.⁸ Most of all, patriarchal relations were sexual politics in that they placed men in

a position of power, women in a position of powerlessness. Women did not stay at home with their children as wives and mothers in the traditional nuclear familial structure because, having once been given the choice, they had curiously all come to the same decision simultaneously. They were the exclusively female keepers of the family because they had faced no other choice, based on their sex. Biology, radical feminism of the second wave asserted, was not destiny but destined, interpreted in a particular way by men who for their own reasons had compelled women to protect home and hearth.

It is beyond my purposes here to confront the question of how and why women's oppression first arose. More relevant is that the sexual politics of patriarchy has characterized most societies known to us historically, that it is still quite alive, and that it constitutes a "social fact." Anyone 'born female' cannot avoid the realization that she lives in a world -- albeit one very slowly in the throes of change -- which has traditionally placed women in a secondary status. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in rebellion as early as 1949, women find themselves defined as the "second sex"; for Lacan, women are defined in language and society only as the opposite of definition, its negation, as lack and absence where the male phallus comes to signify the presence and fullness of culture.

I began with Millett because she forces us to remember that patriarchy was first defined by feminists not

merely in relation to language but as part of a very real, as Marxists say a "material," mode of social, political, economic and cultural organization. Within this form of organization, women encounter the fact of their own inferiority: they also encounter the private realm, itself deemed inferior by patriarchal imperatives, to which they are confined not by their own choosing. This private realm, of course, is the traditional nuclear family, in which women experienced themselves primarily as wives, in relation to husbands, and as mothers in relation to sons and daughters. How will the sense of inferiority mandated by patriarchy affect their experience of themselves in these positions as well as the experience of men -- of husbands and fathers -- invested in their own superiority? How will the experience of the little girl born into the traditional nuclear structure differ from that of the little boy? I return here to de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, the earliest and I believe still the richest and most poignant description of these divergent experiences within the traditional nuclear family produced by second wave feminism. Simultaneously, I will try to extrapolate aspects of her analysis relevant to the production of gendered sadomasochism. While it is obvious that the situation of many women has been substantially altered since the time of de Beauvoir's writing (clearly, many women do not today define themselves primarily as wives and mothers, nor live in traditionally structured nuclear families), my contention is that, at the

very least, vestiges of the gendered world she describes⁹ remain as realities for women and men today. I use her work paradigmatically, as existential illustration of the consequences for men and women's psyches of the socio-political reality, permeated by patriarchal divisions, which Millett described. In addition, when discussing living arrangements which do not conform to the traditional familial model later in the chapter, I assume that many ideological assumptions explored by de Beauvoir persist in the culture as a whole, even when they are not experienced directly. Likewise, Millett's sexual politics are still dominant due to male control of most social institution, though contemporaneous with particular individuals not living in nuclear families of the traditional model nor, where they do, experiencing oppressive relationships of the sort de Beauvoir depicted. De Beauvoir's description of the family situation encountered by the little girl in contrast with that encountered by the little boy contains phenomenological language not unlike that used by Jean-Paul¹⁰ Sartre in Being and Nothingness. De Beauvoir begins her chapter on "Childhood" by stating that infants of both sexes will in the first years of life face a primordial existential trauma, the trauma of being weaned from a sense of oneness with the world (and the mother) to the realization of an irrevocable physical separateness. This, again, she conceptualizes philosophically:

The nursling lives directly the basic drama of every existent: that of his relation to the Other. Man

experiences with anguish his being turned loose, his forlornness. In flight from his freedom, his subjectivity, he would fain lose himself in the bosom of the Whole. Here, indeed, is the origin of his cosmic and pantheistic dreams, of his longing for oblivion, for sleep, for ecstasy, for death. He never succeeds in abolishing his separate ego, but at least he wants to attain the solidity of the in-himself, the en-soi, to be petrified into a thing. It is especially when he is fixed by the gaze of other persons that he appears to himself as being one.

It is in this perspective that the behavior of the child must be interpreted....ll

Thus, de Beauvoir (and, to the extent that they hold to a common intellectual orientation, Sartre as well) suggests a potentially universal source of sadomasochism in human dismay at physical separation. As I suggested in reference to Freud and the death instinct, sadomasochism when eroticized could then express a longing to return -- either through the masochistic submerging of the self in another, or the sadistic control of another so that this person lacks the freedom to escape -- to an original symbiotic state. The longing would characterize both sexes; there is no reason to believe at face value that altered social situations would in any way dislodge this type of yearning. I will return later to the implications of this 'universalistic' existential argument.

But even if all children experience this existential trauma, it will unfold quite differently for the little boy and little girl within this traditional nuclear family. Very soon, de Beauvoir tells us, the little boy learns that if he is to enter the bifurcated universe of men, of the 'objective,' the rational, the public -- a world which

requires the brutal repression of the other side of reality it has forcibly relegated, the domestic world of the mother -- he must bid a particularly abrupt farewell to his childhood longings. He must deny his desires for closeness to to another (in the traditional nuclear family, the mother), for connections, for emotions which fall outside the 'manly' role. "This is just where the little girls first appear as privileged beings," de Beauvoir asserts, brilliantly aware of the oppressive, warping limitations of patriarchal imperatives for men as well as women, for

..the boys especially are little by little denied the kisses and caresses they have been used to. As for the little girl, she continues to be cajoled, she is allowed to cling to her mother's skirts, her father takes her on her knee and strokes her hair... bodily contacts and agreeable glances protect her against the anguish of solitude. The little boy, in contrast, will be denied even coquetry; his efforts at enticement, his play-acting, are irritating. He is told that 'a man doesn't ask to be kissed..a man doesn't look at himself in mirrors....a man doesn't cry.' He is urged to be 'a little man'; he will obtain adult approval by becoming independent of adults. He will please them by not appearing to seek to please them. (My emphasis) 12

Although de Beauvoir personally disliked psycho-analytic formulations (for instance, she does not concern herself with the age at which this abrupt break with the mother takes place nor whether it occurs in the pre-oedipal or oedipal period), the implications for sadomasochism in terms of object relations theory are clear. The cultural imperatives of patriarchal structure itself, in forcibly separating the public and private, the personal and political realms, require the little boy to renounce his

feelings of symbiotic dependence before he may be ready to do so. At a more sociological level, he is required to do so in order to win approval, to feel a needed sense of belonging, to feel that he is not deviant, a 'queer' or a 'fag' (as those terms are so brutally used). Of course, social approval takes shape in the persons of his parents, and it is from his mother (with the father's present or invisible approval) from whom he must, as Mahler would put it, separate. What de Beauvoir does not explicitly detail is that, although the little boy may appear to separate in response to symbolic patriarchal mandates, he still feels tied, dependent and in need of his mother. He is forced to define himself in opposition to her, yet he cannot as neatly sever his emotions, that part of himself which he is forced to alienate and objectify. In Freud's sense, his desire for dependence and merging is forced into unconsciousness. He must act as though he were independent; he must, as in de Beauvoir's formulation, please without letting on that he seeks to please. One foundation of a sadistic tendency has been laid.

But, de Beauvoir continues, the boy quickly encounters some degree of compensation for his emotional sacrifice. He feels anger, rage, at the separation the mother has forced upon him. Yet, "if the boy seems at first to be less favored than his sisters, it is because great things are in store for him. The demands placed upon him at once imply a high evaluation. Maurras relates in his memoirs that...His

father took his hand and drew him from the room, saying to him: 'We are men, let us leave those women'...The child is persuaded that more is demanded of boys because they are superior...this abstract notion takes on for him a concrete form: it is incarnated in his penis." ¹³ This sense of superiority is, of course, possible only in relation to women: I am "essential," the boy learns, because you are not, because you are "inessential"; my privileges extend to the world of power, defined in opposition to the domestic realm to which you are confined. Thus, the boy, already angered at his premature separation, senses that he will not lose the emotional contact he needs with a woman as long as he accedes to controlling her, to setting up a hierarchical relationship with her in which he appears to be independent. Yet, his rage, the seeds of a possible misogynism, remains, for he resents his dependence and his fear of loss were he to loosen his grip.

On the other hand, a very different though analogous scenario awaits the little girl who did not have to renounce the world of her mother. If initially "privileged," she too soon surmises that she will be treated as inferior, that her "Mothers and nurse feel no reverence or tenderness toward her genitals; they do not direct her attention toward that secret organ, invisible except for its covering, and not to be grasped in the hand...She does not experience this absence as a lack; evidently her body is, for her, quite complete; but she finds herself situated in the world

differently from the boy; and a constellation of factors can transform this difference, in her eyes, into an inferiority." ¹⁴ Penis envy, then, is only a biological symbol for the social construction of a "second sex." The little girl perceives a sharp difference between the way in which she and the little boy are experiencing the world. Yes, she has not been forced to separate from her mother as he was, but she may watch with envy, already with greater passivity, as the boy begins to act upon and test his environment in a more direct and active fashion. Even if unconsciously dependent, only falsely separated, he still acquires a sense of his powers by asserting "his subjective freedom...he contends in hardiness and independence with other boys, he scorns girls...he feels his body as a means of dominating nature and as a weapon in fighting...He undertakes, he invents, he dares." ¹⁵ (I will return to this quote later in discussing criticisms of de Beauvoir within feminist theory itself.) In contrast, she feels that she cannot venture out so freely into the world, that she remains attached to her mother's world even after she might have gradually chosen to move away from it. Again, one is reminded of Mahler's concepts, for de Beauvoir's analysis paints the picture of a young girl who feels constrained by society to remain in a relatively more symbiotic state. Of course, she is physically independent, but psychologically, she is called upon to experience herself indirectly, not as a subject directed outward to the world but as a person

whose goal is to be both an object to herself and the growing little boy. "Thus a vicious cycle is formed; for the less she exercises her freedom to understand, to grasp and discover the world about her, the less resources she will find within herself, the less will she dare to affirm herself as subject."¹⁶

Now, it is a foundation for a tendency toward masochism which has been laid. For the girl rapidly surmises that her approval will not come from self-assertion but from efforts to please the boy who, like his father, represents power in the world and wishes to control her. In this paradigm of the traditional nuclear family, the girl realizes that her only avenue to the sort of power held by men is by attracting a man who is willing to allow her to experience it vicariously. It is her desire for independence which is rendered unconscious. Or, as Freud wrote -- again, reflecting certain psychological realities of this form of familial organization -- to substitute a child, relatively helpless in relation to a mother, for the phallus she lacks. De Beauvoir details the growing young girl's relation to dolls, over whom she has some power and which orient her to future motherhood. But the most painful part of her description relates to the girl's effort, as she approaches adolescence, to make herself into an "object" for the other. Then, as now, she might spend hours fussing with hair, make-up, fashion and fashion magazines (hours still not generally matched today by an equivalent preoccupation

on the part of the youthful boy), eager to attract the gaze of an interested other. Here, de Beauvoir's analysis seems to me quite 'relevant,' even to women who have invested in careers and would not think of abandoning them altogether for motherhood, yet who still worry about their sexual attractiveness, their weight, the size of their breasts or other physical attributes of particular concern. Even such a contemporary woman may be influenced, whether consciously or subliminally, by the little changed content of technological culture, its musical and MTV representations proclaiming the joys of romantic love in which she can lose herself in union with a male savior. As de Beauvoir writes, the romantic glorification of "falling in love" may mask a situation in which she is (supposedly) submerged with this masculine 'savior' who nevertheless remains in a position of dominance. The experience is quasi-religious:

Head bowed, face buried in her hands, she knows the miracle of renunciation: on her knees she mounts toward heaven; her surrender to the arms of God assures her an Assumption fleecy with clouds and angels. It is from this marvelous experience that she copies her earthly future...everything invites her to abandon herself in daydreams to men's arms in order to be transported into a heaven of glory. She learns that to be happy she must be loved...Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow-White, she who receives and submits...

Un jour mon prince viendra...Someday he'll come along, the man I love--the words of popular songs fill her with dreams of patience and of hope. 17

How different is this passage written in 1949 from the hopes of many teenagers today? For many teenage women, one

of many motives behind eagerly embraced pregnancies may be to elicit a commitment from boyfriends upon whom they may still feel emotionally and psychologically dependent.¹⁸

And one day he may indeed come along, and the young girl may find herself no longer an adolescent but a wife, soon to be a mother. By this time, however, a tendency toward masochism may have already taken root in her accustomed interactions between self and male other. This tendency is not at all a determined one, and may be mediated by a variety of factors, even where the young girl was raised within a traditional family. Perhaps the young girl was encouraged to assert herself by her mother, or found in her father a supportive source of encouragement -- obviously, not every young girl will emerge from a traditional nuclear family oriented toward masochism. Perhaps, for a complex of indeterminate reasons, her parents simply did not relate to each other hierarchically in spite of socially hegemonic norms which may have urged them to do so; perhaps they were personally radical, believing in a greater degree of equality. Yet, implicit in the theory proffered by Millett, de Beauvoir and more contemporary feminists is the notation of structural inequities which may predispose and encourage women in a masochistic direction (while predisposing and encouraging men in a sadistic one). These inequities stem fundamentally from the social fact of one gender having exerted systematic political control over another. In so doing, a sex-gender system comes into being

which asserts the superiority of men and the relative inferiority of women; correspondingly, the domestic realm, the world of emotion, personal connections and intimacy is devalued relative to that of the public sphere of discrete and (allegedly) rational individualism. One aspect of human qualities are repressed in favor of another. Concomitantly, the first characteristic of sadomasochistic interaction also comes into being: the setting up of a hierarchal relationship of dominance and submission between self and other, a relationship in which one group is raised in importance while the other is denigrated by comparison. And, just as we saw in Chapter 2, the relationship between men and women which results is decidedly symbiotic, blatantly characterized by a dependence obvious in women while assiduously hidden in men. Women, de Beauvoir notes, are discouraged from asserting their subjectivity directly, encouraged to seek vicarious approval and recognition from others, usually men. Men, on the other hand, both need women desperately (and the part of themselves associated with the mother which they were forced to repress) and learn to see them as inferior, thus justifying assertions of power and control. If women are deemed the "second sex," then their oppression can be rationalized; note, however, that women's mandated, now rationalized confinement to the domestic sphere results, not coincidentally, in men feeling secure that the side of themselves they have alienated (and assigned through gender to women) will not go away. (I

think that feminist writing about male objectification and rage against women, as well as the tendency of the male self to be definable specifically in opposition to women, sometimes underestimates the importance of the need these other characteristics imply.¹⁹ Men tend toward sadism and hatred of women precisely because of their rage at needing them so badly. Otherwise, their attitude would be far more indifferent.) Consequently, there is no way that the unconditional approval women may seek in male's eyes, itself an alienated guise of their desire to regain rapprochement and recognition for their own own subjective emergence, can be attained within a family which rests on the assumption of inequality. Yet, the young girl, like all human beings seeking approval of her simultaneous yearnings for dependence and independence, must have felt frightened at the social stigma, the disapproval, the withdrawal of love and affection, awaiting her if she ignored her social and cultural heritage. Thus, the tendency toward masochism which pervaded at once a patriarchally-organized society and her family arises in her as a defense against a very real existential situation. It is not that women are masochistic, that they in any way way desire pain for its own sake, but rather that they are consigned to seek love and approval in masochistically-tinged forms.²⁰ This implication corresponds with insights of objects relation theorists into sadomasochism. So, too, does the fact that the boy is yanked from his emotional connection with his

mother (experiencing what Mahler might call a false separation) while the girl remains associated with her after she might otherwise have chosen to separate (experiencing a possibly unduly long symbiosis).

De Beauvoir's theory, then, is basically one which concerns socialization, the learning of gendered roles. The situation of women and men may impel them toward a relatively masochistic or sadistic position because of social norms they have internalized, and which have been transmitted to them symbolically through the paradigmatic figures of father and mother. Her theory is not, however, psychoanalytic. Non-deterministic, it assumes that just as gender roles (and, by the extension I am making, orientations toward sadism or masochism) have been learned, they can be unlearned through womens' assertion of will. But it fails to take into account the ways in which unconscious and irrational processes, or factors which involve sexuality, may play a part in the reproduction of gendered roles and the difficulty individuals may experience in trying to escape them. De Beauvoir has been criticized by later feminists for this problem as well as for her tendency, apparent in the passage where she lauded the generic 'he' for 'his' daring and mastery of nature, to reify the transcendent projects of the male world; simultaneously, she seems to subtly undermine the domestic realm, reacting against it a little too violently and indiscriminately. Housewife and childrearing are seen

unambivalently as drudgery as opposed to the 'real labor' of the conscious existential projects which men are allowed to undertake. But why aren't both parts of life, reflecting cyclical as well as progressive dimensions of reality, the former problematic only because it has been socially deemed inferior? The problem, it seems to me, is that both the world of men as well as that of women has been warped by the repression of one side of human existence, using gender as a device to achieve this polarization. Sadomasochism is merely the non-gendered expression of this enforced split between the dependent and independent moments of our simultaneous needs. Consequently, radical change would not entail simply re-entering the 'male' universe but altering its character, just as the domestic realm would be transformed if allowed to reflect traits both 'feminine' and 'masculine.'

Let us return to the young girl as she assumes the roles of wife and mother, for both these points are raised by Nancy Chodorow in her influential work entitled The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender. Though Chodorow's critique is not at all directed specifically to de Beauvoir, she expresses dissatisfaction with theories that rely primarily on learning and socialization processes to explain the production and reproduction of gendered roles. In particular, she is concerned about how it is that women come to fulfill the socially expected role of nurturer and

mother. Coercion cannot explain the continued and ongoing nature of the relationship between mother and child, which has its own autonomous and interactive quality quite apart from the "intention" of the socializer. Accordingly, Chodorow writes that

....men's power over women [cannot] explain women's mothering. Whether or not men in particular or society at large--through media, income distribution, welfare policies, and schools--enforce women's mothering, and expect or require a woman to care for her child, they cannot require or force her to provide adequate parenting unless she, to some degree and on some unconscious or conscious level, has the capacity and sense of self as maternal to do so. 21

Socialization theories, consequently, may be necessary but they are not sufficient explanations of women's willingness to mother.

To find a more satisfactory explanation, Chodorow turns to psychoanalytic categories (and particularly to an object relations orientation) in order to fill this theoretical void. What satisfactions do women find in mothering, and how in psychoanalytic terms is it that they contribute to the reproduction of gendered roles? Here, Chodorow takes a more careful approach to the specific stages of mother-infant development, differentiating the pre-oedipal relationship from the oedipal. Her argument proceeds as follows. She begins with the assumption that parenting is a potential capacity of anyone who has themselves been parented. Both men and women, then, would have the ability to parent, though only women are called upon to do so

because of the skewed nature of gendered relationships. In the mothering relationship which develops between a particular woman and her child, memories of the woman's own childhood will in some way be activated; she will project onto the child her own experience of having been mothered, or even her reaction against that particular experience. From the outset, then, Chodorow has placed the mother within a situational and historical context. Of course, for most women, this context will involve having themselves experienced a different relationship to their mothers (as opposed to their fathers) which may be re-activated in reference to daughters (as opposed to sons). The mother, after all, is of the same gender as her daughter and different from her son, leading to her treating them in a non-synchronous fashion. Yet, Chodorow warns, "I do not mean this as a biological claim. I am using gender here to stand for the mother's particular psychic structure and relational sense, for her (probable) heterosexuality, and for her conscious and unconscious acceptance of the ideology, meanings, and expectations that go into being a gendered member of ... a society like ours, in which mothers have exclusive care for infants and are isolated from other adults, in which there is physical and social separation of men/fathers from women/mothers and children, and institutionalized male dominance..."²² According to Chodorow, the way in which this gender differences affect mother's treatment of daughters in the pre-oedipal period is

that the latter is perceived as an extension of the former. The mother will have difficulty in recognizing the existence of her daughter as a separate person. Chodorow cites clinical studies conducted into mother-child relationships by Robert Fliess, Enid Balint, Christine Olden and Klaus Angel which show a preponderance of symbiotic²³ relationships. In some cases, a mother may initially be "asymbiotic," failing to empathize with the child's need for unity, only to later become "hypersymbiotic" when the daughter began to separate and individuate. Although these clinical studies do not address themselves to gendered differences, Chodorow notes that almost all cited cases of mother-child symbiosis refer to relationships with daughters in which a false empathy is evidenced. The mother appears to be empathetic with the daughter, to support her desires and perhaps to wish to live vicariously through her, but this is true only within limits, as long as the latter does not grow away from and abandon her: citing Balint, Chodorow writes that observed empathy "was probably a distorted projection of what the mother thought her infant daughter's needs should be. As her daughter grew, and was able to express wants and needs, the mother systematically ignored these expressions and gave feedback not to her actual behavior but rather to what she had in the first place²⁴ projected onto her child." (My emphasis.) Although Chodorow acknowledges that some of this clinical literature, especially studies undertaken by Fliess, refers to

pathological cases, she argues that as with Freud the extreme cases are only magnifications of a more 'normal' tendency. In a book by Signe Hammer entitled Daughters and Mothers: Mothers and Daughters, based on interviews with over 75 pairs of mothers and daughters, the author also notes a tendency toward emotional overidentification in the form of a "semisymbiotic relationship, in which neither ever quite sees herself or the other as a separate person."²⁵

Thus, a prolonged symbiotic as well as narcissistic relationship (in which the mother lives vicariously through the daughter as self-extension, therefore not being willing to let her go) may normally evolve between a gendered mother and her daughter. This relationship may keep the daughter in a symbiotic or "hypersymbiotic" state well past the pre-oedipal period, perhaps into her fourth or fifth year when separation and individuation ought already have been solidly established (according to Mahler, the four subphases of separation-individuation would have been completed by the third or fourth year).

Quite another picture emerges with regard to the mother's relationship to her son in the pre-oedipal period. Citing evidence drawn from Bibring, Slater, and Whiting, Chodorow argues that as a result of the structure of the traditional nuclear family -- a structure which means that the husband/father is frequently absent, immersed in the business of the public sphere -- the mother may therefore turn to her son as a substitute. She will tend to sexualize

and differentiate him at an early age: "A mother, here, is again experiencing her son as a definite other--an opposite-gendered and -sexed other. Her emotional investments and conflicts, given her socialization around the issues of gender and sex and membership in a sexist society, make this experience of him particularly strong." ²⁶ Seeing him as the 'other,' as exactly the opposite of the daughter perceived as extension of herself, she will push him out of the symbiotic bond in the pre-oedipal stage. To the extent the mother views the son as a 'little man' and substitute for the absent father, she may wish him to be separated, relatively independent and strong in relation to her. The son may then encounter an oedipal phase long before his sister. In this way, Chodorow describes a process in which the mother does not mechanically and passively 'reflect' socialization into gendered roles, but has her own psychological motives (given that socialization) for wishing to maintain them: they are not foisted onto her coercively, but form her psyche in such a way that for these various reasons she will come to reproduce them.

What happens in the first oedipal phase (which Freud expects will occur around ages 4 or 5), when the child begins to perceive her or his parents in sexual as well as ontological terms? This phase is a critical one because with it comes the explicit introduction of a triangular rather than dualistic relationship. For the young girl, the daughter, the oedipal phase will pose a particular problem:

if symbiotically or semi-symbiotically attached to her mother, how will she come to transfer her sexual interest onto the father? Chodorow's answer is that she will do so ambivalently, while still maintaining ties to her mother. The daughter's underlying rationale for developing a sexual attachment to her father will not simply be related to learning of gender roles or to innate heretosexuality. Rather, the gendered constitution of the family causes the daughter to turn to the father to separate where the mother was an inadequate vehicle for her differentiation. Looking to the world of men, a world she has been told is superior, she cherishes hope that here she can meet the psychological needs denied her in relation to another woman, her mother. Chodorow's description is fascinating here when compared with that proffered by Mahler: "Every step of the way, as the analysts describe it, a girl develops her relationship to her father while looking back at her mother -- to see if her mother is envious, to make sure she is in fact separate, to see if she can in this way win her mother, to see if she is really independent. Her turn to her father is both an attack on her mother and an expression of love for her." ²⁷ This is remarkably similar to the subphases of separation-individuation in which the child "looks back" -- now it is the daughter who is using the father to bring about a separation otherwise unlikely. A triad has been introduced into the parent-infant duality, one which corresponds to what Freud called the "Electra

complex." But whereas Freud bases the daughter's turn to the father on innate heterosexual impulses, this analysis suggests rather that it evolves primarily because the daughter seeks to continue a healthy growth process, instinctively wishing to somehow co-mingle her dependence with independence. The structure of the traditional nuclear family mandates that this turn toward independence take place in relation to a man, though there is nothing inherent about this positioning. Of course, a great deal of continuity exists here between the pre-oedipal and oedipal phases, for now this struggle for the daughter's recognition is sexualized in relation to the father. Usually, the father will encourage these symbolic gestures toward him on the part of the daughter, reinforcing the young girl's turn toward heterosexuality. Chodorow's point, though, is that the mother continues to exert a strong influence on the daughter even after she has turned toward the father.

For the boy, on the other hand, the oedipal stage is not as complex and loaded. He has already developed a sexualized relationship to his mother in the pre-oedipal phase. There is no need for him to transfer his sexual loyalties, as may have been necessary for his sister. Yet, it is interesting that Chodorow devotes far less attention to the oedipal experience of the young boy, seemingly convinced that his situation is far less conflictual than that which might face his sister. But perhaps this conclusion is reached too hastily. Certainly, Chodorow is

correct to indicate that the little boy and little girl's positions are not symmetric insofar as, having both been raised by a woman, only one will have to transfer their sexual feelings to the opposite gender (assuming, of course, heterosexual orientations). Nevertheless, the boy who is thrust out of symbiosis abruptly may formulate a particular desire to please the father he is supposed to emulate. Psychoanalytically speaking, however, only the mother can fulfill his desire for symbiosis, given gendered imperatives. Thus, heterosexuality for him as well conforms, not coincidentally, to the fulfillment and sexualization of his frustrated pre-oedipal needs. To the extent that this may be the case (and I am merely speculating here), he too will be part of a triangular situation in which the father remains an ambivalent figure to him as well.

At this point, I would like to return to the implications of this analysis for sadomasochism. Evidently, Chodorow's work is not dissimilar from de Beauvoir's in describing a situation which has similar psychoanalytic implications, particularly in terms of object relations theory conceptualizations. Both daughter and son are mothered. Because of the gendered social structure in which the traditional nuclear family is embedded, the mother will treat each differently. The son is thrust out of a symbiotic bond into a false separation/individuation, still needing and desiring this attachment. In this way, he

develops a tendency toward sadism, as it has so far been defined. The daughter, on the other hand, frequently remains in some sort of symbiotic relationship with her mother, in which differentiation comes late, not at all or superficially. Not possessing a strong sense of her differentiated self, her confidence not garnered through self-assertion, she is more vulnerable to a masochistic posture toward an other. Unfortunately, her search for true differentiation in masochism takes an alienated form, since the sadist can no more afford to lose her than she can afford to be lost.

It is here that perhaps Chodorow's analysis could be reformulated in terms of already developed characteristics of sadomasochistic interaction. A critical question now becomes whether gender is a case study in sadomasochism or if sadomasochism is a case study of gendered relations? I would tend to take the former position, and would develop it as follows. Until this chapter, I have dealt with sadomasochism as if an interaction between two individuals, one who adopts a sadistic position, the other a masochistic, and have bracketed out the implications of this dynamic for outside parties. Yet, it seems to me that sadomasochism intrinsically implies triangulation, an infinite regress to relationships outside itself. Thus, returning to the very beginning of this work, I once found myself in a masochistic position relative to a sadistically positioned other: we fit sadomasochism's gendered tendency. Ironically, though,

I found that my very situation as a masochist cast me into a sadistic role (one which was by no means the object of my attention) vis a vis an other who had chosen to interact with me. Masochist to one person, I found myself located sadistically in relation to another. This, of course, accords with the internally transmutable nature of sadomasochism which almost all writers on the subject would agree is one of the dynamic's most blatant features. I was simultaneously masochistic and sadistic, but perceive that it was in the character of the sadomasochistic dynamic for one aspect to take precedence over another. Consequently, I would argue that my dominant tendency was masochistic, and my subordinate one sadistic. Implicit in this assumption is a recognition of the infinite regress in both directions to which I refer above: a masochist is inconceivable except in reference to a sadist, the sadist inconceivable in reference to a masochist, etc. ad absurdum. The interesting question now becomes whether and how this analysis might apply to the gendered form sadomasochism tends to adopt, given the structure of traditional nuclear families within a patriarchally-organized social system like our own.

If we assume the combined effect of patriarchy as a Durkheimian, enculturating "social fact" and the fact that women themselves have been mothered in a particular way, women come to be constituted as hierarchally subordinate to dominant men. This relationship of

inequality and dependence may predispose women toward a masochistic position relative to the sadistic one in which men find themselves. Let us take, then, as given a traditional nuclear family in which the wife finds herself constituted as masochist in relation to the husband who has been constituted sadistically. How will the mother and father proceed to relate to their children? Both find themselves in a relationship of relative power, the children in a position of relative powerlessness (I return to this facet of the family in Section 3 below). Yet, it is not the father who will generally be engaged in childrearing but, as both de Beauvoir and Chodorow noted, the mother. Masochist in relation to the father, her dominant tendency, she now finds that she has a subordinate potential (whether or not realized) for sadism -- for a sense of power and control otherwise denied her -- in relation to her children. Yet, if she acted sadistically to both her children, one would expect that son and daughter alike would end as constituted by tendencies toward masochism. We know, however, that this is not the case. How does only the daughter grow up masochistically-oriented? Following Chodorow's lead, I would agree that the mother psychologically perceives the son as an extension of his father (certainly not an extension of herself), and therefore the heir to similar privileges. The son is another representative of the 'first' sex, he is powerful and from him the mother may wish to gain approval just as she does

from the absent father. She, therefore, turns her dominant tendency, masochism, toward the son, thrusting him abruptly from symbiosis where he is dependent upon her. If she shares the characteristics of the masochist developed in Chapter 2, she certainly does not want him to be powerless but powerful: how else would he be a meaningful, legitimate and legitimating object of her own desire to be recognized as separate? In turning masochistically toward him, the son is constituted sadistically. This tendency is both reinforced and undermined by the son's relationship with his father who, within the triangulating, infinitely regressing structure of the nuclear family, constitutes the son in turn as a masochist. The son emerges, then, with a dominant tendency toward sadism and a subordinate tendency toward masochism. Though the initial orientation toward sadism or masochism takes place in the pre-oedipal phase (when the son is thrust from symbiosis), it is reinforced in the oedipal phase when this tendency is sexualized. It is fascinating to observe that for both sexes, socially legitimate, heterosexual attraction will be toward that sex with which one is linked in one's dominant mode of sadism or masochism. Interestingly enough, the son's sadistic side has taken shape in paradigmatic relation to a woman, his masochistic side in relation to a man. (This may have interesting repercussions later, when the world of work is introduced in Chapter 7.)

So much for the mother's relationship with her son. If

he was perceived as potentially powerful, a representative of the privileged sexual class, her daughter is correspondingly powerless, a reminder of her own lack of self-confidence. Just as the mother wished the son to separate so that he could be powerful and independent, she feels no corresponding urgency in relation to her daughter. The daughter, the mother perceives, is objectively subordinate, masochistic in relation to her; she senses the girls' desperate need for approval of her own strivings. But why doesn't the mother respond with simple indifference to the daughter? As we saw in Chapter 2, the daughter could not develop masochistically in relationship to her mother unless she sensed that her mother set up some (sadistic) conditions which could earn the daughter the older woman's blessing; otherwise, the daughter might feel no "hope of redemption," in Schad-Somer's formulation, and develop in a sadistic direction like her brother. Yet, as Chodorow and others describe, clinical evidence testifies to the mother being anything but indifferent to her daughter's separation, evincing a very definite desire for the younger woman to remain symbiotically attached. Why? It would seem to me that the mother's subordinate tendency toward sadism may come into play as a result of her dominant masochism's failure to achieve its own stated goals. The more the masochistically-oriented mother tries to win approval of separation from a sadistically-oriented husband/son who cannot by the nature of their dynamic provide it, the

further she is driven into depths of despair. This is where sadomasochism's dynamic character comes into play. The masochist finds her or his efforts doomed to failure, her or his alienated sense of self more and more demoralized. This demoralization may signify, simultaneously, a greater neediness in relation to a third party/other, someone whose love and affection is relatively more certain. Thus, the masochist of one relationship may through progressive demoralization wish to be the sadist of another so as to fix and make secure the loyalty of a flattering, pleasurable other. In this sense as well as the others detailed above, the mother may be loathe to lose her daughter. She then exerts her dominant masochistic tendency toward her son and her subordinate sadistic tendency toward the daughter.

In her turn, the daughter is constituted by this sadistically-oriented mother as a dominant masochist. Her father also constitutes her as such. But, just as Chodorow describes, the daughter realizes that only the father really waves the flag of redemption. It seems that pleasing the mother is impossible, whereas the father may compliment her, sexualizing the daughter's pre-oedipal desires. Thus the daughter may turn masochistically toward the father and sadistically back at the mother, who has held out little or no hope. This does not contradict Chodorow's assertion that the daughter remains tied to her mother even after turning in the oedipal stage toward the sexualized male. Rather, it confirms her thesis, since the daughter remains

symbiotically dependent upon both parents, though in differing forms. Again, the real issue here is not innate heretosexuality which magnetizes the daughter toward the father; rather, sexuality in the oedipal stage becomes linked in gendered form with ontological longings inherited from the period of pre-oedipal desire. The daughter, finally, ends as a dominant masochist in relation to men (her father, later her husband and son), and a subordinate sadist in relation to women (her mother, later her daughter). It is not hard to imagine from this scenario how motherhood and fatherhood will be reproduced in ensuing generations. (Just as the daughter's subordinate sadism will eventually unfold outside the system of the traditional nuclear family, within her own family, the father's subordinate masochism transcends the family's borders, spilling over into his associations at work or in politics, tending to form itself in relation to men. Again, there is nothing deterministic about this analysis: this subordinate masochism could just as well unfold in relation to a woman, perhaps one who presents a challenge. Here is the tendency for the sadist to look for "disapproval in the mode of approval". His unconscious dream and subordinate mode is masochistic; for the progressive failure of sadistic efforts to re-activate the symbiotic bond make him, like the masochist, more and more despairing and demoralized, increasingly in need of the opposite relationship he allegedly seeks.)

The advantage of this analysis is that it is not at all gender-bound: sadomasochism takes form within, but does not discriminate by, sex. Therefore, the mother does not push the son out of the symbiotic bond prematurely because he is physically different from her (an extremely subtle essentialist point implicit within Chodorow's argument) but because social relations have cast him in a supposedly privileged position. Were the daughter to have somehow been similarly privileged, she would have done the same. Similarly, the son defines himself sadistically in opposition to the mother not, fundamentally, because she is of a different sex but because she is a member of a subordinate group and the two coincided. It is perfectly possible to separate from someone of the same sex; all that is required is that the person be a relatively discrete entity, a characteristic possessed by all: the importance assigned to perceptions of similar or differently-sexed objects is itself socially constructed, not an immutable aspect of social relationships. Thus, the problem with gendered relations is that they take form within sadomasochistic patterns of interaction between self, other, and society. Changing the former requires changing the latter. By implication, it is difficult to agree with Chodorow's call, at the end of her otherwise groundbreaking work, for dual parenting in which both mother and father, man and woman, husband and wife are present to restore to the whole of the family its bifurcated, gendered halves. I

would prefer to call for parenting which does not take sadomasochistic forms, in which both women and men can attain simultaneous independence and dependence, dependence and independence, in which they can find love and approval of their necessary human strivings toward both. This requires caretaker(s) who are not themselves embedded in a sadomasochistic dynamic, and therefore can allow for the child to satisfactorily experience both symbiosis and the processes of separating and individuating. By implication, such caretaker(s) or parent(s) do not necessarily have to be coupled or single, married or unmarried, heterosexual, lesbian or gay, though they may be any of the above. Simultaneously, a given lesbian or gay couple may relate to each other sadomasochistically whereas a given heterosexual pair may have for one reason or another escaped this structural tendency. Clearly, the position in which both women and men find themselves in the patriarchal nuclear family is problematic and skewed, sadomasochistically gendered. But is this problem limited only to the family in its traditional form?

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2. and 3. Numerous observers of the contemporary family have noted significant changes in its composition over the last twenty years. Whereas at one time most adults lived in traditional nuclear families, today only about one third conform to this pattern. The number of single-headed, and especially female-headed, households has risen dramatically: between 1970 and 1984, an 80% rise in female-headed households occurred so that 9.9 million rather than 5.5 million families conformed to this description; 26% of all families with children under 18 were single-parent families.²⁸

This increase reflects a variety of factors related to general social conditions as well as class, gender and race-related influences. Some women and men, influenced in part by the ideological challenges raised by social movements concerning women's and gay rights in the 1960s, resent the assumption their parents may have made that a fulfilling life requires marriage at all; many may opt to have children outside the parameters of the traditional nuclear arrangement.

On the other hand, many women may not have rejected the old model of 'normality' at all. Instead, they may find themselves abandoned by men who embraced "women's liberation" and used it to their own advantage. Barbara Ehrenreich raises this possibility in The Hearts of Men, suggesting that one unintended consequence of second wave feminism may have been to liberate men from the oppressive

role of the "breadwinner" so that they no longer felt
responsible toward women.²⁹ They may feel "free" to leave
women without child support and to rationalize fear of
intimacy (the kind of intimacy, I might add, which would not
be sadomasochistic in character) and objectification of
women as symbolic of their being more feminist than
feminists themselves. In this regard, feminists have
become increasingly concerned about child custody decisions
favoring men who have larger incomes than women (including,
of course, the recent Baby M case) -- women may be losing
out from policy changes which supposedly were to benefit
them.

According to Sidel, desertion by men in some cases
affects women from all economic classes being forced into
poverty; the much written-about "feminization of poverty"
refers to the fact that the majority of the "new poor" of
the 1980s are women and children, frequently living in
female-headed households. This group of new poor is also
differentially composed of minority women: the poverty rate
for white female-headed families in 1984 was 27.1% where it
was 51.7% for black and 53.4% for Hispanic female-headed
households.³⁰

For these and other reasons, divorce rates have
skyrocketed, doubling between 1970 and 1981 for all groups;
this increase has been differentially higher for blacks
(tripling between 1970 and 1981 where it doubled for
whites),³¹ probably reflecting racially oppressive practices

which have made the situation of the black male particularly traumatic in terms of employment, social opportunities, and a sense of self-worth.

Still another shift in the traditional nuclear family paradigm has occurred in relation to working women. It is now a commonplace that women have entered the labor force in record numbers, whether to boost a family's income, to support themselves in alternative arrangements, and/or because they wish to devote themselves to careers. Whether the particular woman is middle or upper class and enters a well-paid professional career, or could be classified as relatively more working class and is employed in an underpaid and routinizing position, over 50% of American women are now in the labor force, as opposed to the hegemonic 50s model of the housewife who may have indeed felt confined within the domestic realm.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, even in the past, this "traditional nuclear family" may itself have been a form which described the situation of some groups rather than others. Within the last ten years, radical feminism itself has been criticized for failing to account for historically specific differences among women of different races and classes; for emphasizing universal traits of patriarchy while undervaluing those variations that occur within its basic theme; and for concerning itself primarily with benefits which accrue to white middle and upper class women. This argument can easily

be extended to forms of family structure. Angered by Daniel Moynihan's thesis that the black family was "pathological" in that it tended to be female-headed and deviated from what I have called the "traditional nuclear family" model, an entire corpus of literature (much of it written by black scholars) has transferred attention toward the strengths of the black family. Some authors make the interesting argument that kin networks between women in America continue similar patterns which were common and already established in Africa: Carol Stack, for example, positively examines these networks as they were established in a Midwestern community and contends that they significantly facilitated survival in a racist
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environment.

What the re-interpretations proffered by black scholars have in common is that each takes exception to the assumptions that: a) the traditional nuclear family is a normative ideal; b) that deviations from it produce "social disorganization" and "pathology" (the implication of Moynihan's thesis having been that the way to solve the problems of black poverty, and the turning to drugs and crime in the black community, was to simplistically reunite the nuclear family); and c) that, in any case, this model does not necessarily conform to the experience of non-white racial groups. Of course, it would also be simplistic to say that this re-interpretation is itself hegemonic within the black community. Many influential blacks are extremely

concerned about whether families which differ from the nuclear model reflect their own choice and predilection, or whether the black family is "overdetermined" by social, economic and political consequences of racism that might lead in any event to the "deviation" Moynihan had noted.

The relevance of this brief discussion to the present study is to enable the dilemma of gendered sadomasochism to be broached again. Given changes in the nuclear family itself (particularly the fact of huge numbers of women who now work full as well as part-time) and the fact that children today frequently grow up in homes which do not conform to the traditional model, would sadomasochism be produced at all and, if so, would it tend toward the same gendered forms? The question begs empirical reformulation as well as theoretical speculation of the type I will quite tentatively suggest below, in the hope that others will take up what is beyond the purview of the present discussion. Nor is an "answer" necessarily possible, given the elusive nature of sadomasochism: analogous, say, to a Freudian defense mechanism or the Buddhist's celebration of a meditative state, it does not lend itself to testing by conventional 'scientific' methodologies, ultimately referring to the direct experience of subjects for whom the concept may or may not ring true. Suffice it to say here, nevertheless, that the family exists in a social setting to which it is not reducible, nor is the social setting reducible to it. As Millett described in relation to the

concept of patriarchy, forms of family organization may reflect and be basic to the assumptions of a particular society, but that society still exerts influence in other spheres quite apart from the family. The family, therefore, exists within a patriarchal system, is acted upon and acts back upon it, but it is not identical with it: as Millett wrote by way of definition, patriarchal domination pervades the organization of the military, of culture and the arts, of police, state, corporation, academic and scientific apparatuses (to borrow Althusser's term) as well as being microcosmically present in the family form. By this, I do not by any means intend to deny the truth of the feminist aphorism that the "personal is political" but merely to add that the "political is personal" as well: the two, it seems to me, are dialectically related and not entirely reducible to one another. This points to another shortcoming of Chodorow's call for dual parenting: we are not referred both to the family and to the totality of other social institutions which reflect a patriarchal orientation; unless both are changed, the possibility still exists that gender will be reproduced. Socialization arguments, for all their aptly stated flaws, are nonetheless based on the recognition of coercive "social facts" which are as real and possessing of their own independence as the psychological reactions we have in reference to them.

By extension, the fact that particular individuals live

in arrangements at odds with patriarchal mandates does not mean that they are immune to its dictates in other spheres. For example, women emerging for the first time into the labor force from conventionally organized families may, and more frequently than not do, find themselves consigned to jobs which reproduce traditional female roles of nurse, teacher, day care worker, etc.: although many women are able to transcend the dichotomies of gender at work, there is no question that, unfortunately, this is still not possible for most. The boss may interact with his secretary (or even a female junior executive) not all that differently from the way in which he would approach his wife. Thus, whether she herself goes home to an empty room or her own husband may not alter the fact that her day at work could have left her feeling powerless and insecure about her sense of self and self-worth. Compounding the problem is that when she arrives home, chances are she will find that changes which allowed her to enter the male world have not correspondingly sparked a desire for her lover or husband to enter hers: childrearing and household responsibilities are likely to remain her particular province. Thus, the changes she experiences may have resulted from tankering with old familial structures rather than from their overhaul. Similarly, in a female-headed household which does not conform to the traditional nuclear family detailed above -- so that there is no man present who tends toward a sadistic position in relation to which the woman is cast

masochistically -- the woman may be nudged toward similar feelings by other social settings in which she finds herself. She may feel subordinated at work, in relation to bureaucracies with which she may have to negotiate, both of which may tend to be infantilizing; she may feel insulted by media images, by men with whom she interacts outside 'the family' as such. Or, very significantly, she may feel as though racial categories are also attempting to impose feelings of inferiority in a not terribly dissimilar way as would the sexual. She may face both types of attack on her confidence, racial or ethnic as well as sexually-based; or, even if she experiences only one form directly, it may have a negative impact on how she responds to the other. In short, she may feel powerless and unable to develop a sense of confidence in her own legitimacy as a person in the world around her. And this may make her vulnerable to persons (or for that matter, to situations in which she finds herself) who seem relatively powerful and are willing to provide substitute self-legitimation, however conditionally.

There is, however, one area in which women who find themselves feeling powerless in other spheres can feel powerful, regardless of whether they live inside or outside a traditional nuclear familial arrangement -- that sphere is children. The right to possession of children is probably one of late capitalism's most cherished and socialized benefits (though its transcendence of class and racial boundaries are called into question to some extent by the

Mary Beth Whitehead case). In The Dialectic of Sex,
Shulamith Firestone passionately pointed out what she called
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children's "enslavement"; children are second class
citizens, not citizens at all, because they have absolutely
no power freedom of choice. If they are desperately
unhappy in their environment, if they feel mentally or
physically abused (there is something that can be done about
physical abuse if it is called to someone's attention,
while mental suffering is truly unassailable), if they feel
totally unloved, there is little which can be done. They
may be, far too often, stuck. Hopefully, in most cases,
children do not languish in despair. Yet, the fact of a
culture in which women may feel powerless for a variety of
reasons does not bode well for the children's ability to
eventually individuate, to separate. Perhaps the mother
feels, as I'm sure many teenagers indeed do feel, that a
baby is the one being in the world over whom I can have
control, who will love me unconditionally. The baby is
helpless vis a vis me: if I cannot be the 'boss' anywhere
else, at least I can be in charge with my baby. In this
way, the child becomes a locus for displacement of
aspirations and satisfactions denied in other realms; this
is not a surprising tendency in any culture where these
satisfactions are otherwise inadequate and unavailable. In
terms of sadomasochism, of course, this means that children
are to some extent cast into a masochistic position
regardless of sex, simply because they are children.

They come to be dependent on their caretaker/parent to an extreme degree, just as the caretaker/parent is overly dependent on them. This may happen precisely because the older person's needs from childhood are projected onto the child -- a need for unconditional love, perhaps a need for supposed detachment which might allow the unseparated parent to separate. However, the child is however only a child, far too dependent, undeveloped and now particularly incapable of developing her or his own separate being to provide the parent the parent/child really needs. And so the cycle continues, as Alice Miller astutely theorized. A given parent -- let us say, one who is not embedded in a traditional nuclear family structure -- may or may not go one step further beyond the child's structural masochistic position, treating the child differently depending upon gendered positions. If this further step is not taken, then there is no reason why boys could not be constituted in certain cases as primary masochists and girls primary sadists, or vice versa; numerous sadomasochistic permutations spring to mind, variations on an underlying theme. Yet, if my argument above holds true, even a woman (assuming again a female caretaker/parent, as is usually the case) who is not in a traditional nuclear family may, for extra-familial reasons or because of vestiges of her own more traditional upbringing, recreate the gendered sadomasochistic pattern I describe above.

It should be pointed out before proceeding that it is

also perfectly conceivable that none of these eventualities will take place. Sadomasochism may be a structured tendency within the traditionally conceived family and within patriarchal institutions at large. It may also be a structural danger faced by all children who find themselves the objects of displaced hostility and highly symbiotic needs, needs generated by the inadequacy of other spheres of life for large numbers of people. But it is also possible that sadomasochism will not develop at all. Some people, to repeat, may have escaped it because of a great deal of compassion and intelligence accorded them within their families, nuclear and traditional or not, families which manage to resist the sadomasochistic current by various means. Many children are no doubt mothered by loving and wonderful women who are quite capable of allowing both symbiosis and separation to occur; fathers in many cases exert crucial countervailing tendencies. And women and men living in non-traditional arrangements, whether heterosexual or lesbian or gay, may indeed not reproduce the sadomasochistic cycle. Still again, I do not wish to develop a deterministic model while simultaneously not wishing to ignore what is implicit in the organization of our social and psychological, our psychological and social, worlds. The child who emerges sadomasochistically from the family may be particularly vulnerable to the feelings received when moving to the next social institution she or he will encounter -- the school. Will the child who managed

to avoid acquiring a sadomasochistic orientation thus far be as invulnerable in the future as she or he was in the past? Will a non-sadomasochistic orientation, if in fact one was garnered in a particular family, serve to ensure a non-sadomasochistic orientation after other social structures have been encountered?

Chapter 5: Notes

1. See Karen Horney, "On the Genesis of the Castration Complex in Women" and "The Problem of Feminine Masochism" in Feminine Psychology (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1967).

2. Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 131.

3. See Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944).

4. It strikes me as in bad faith that sociobiologists like Steven Goldberg, who argue on 'scientific' grounds that patriarchy is inevitable, are not eager for traditional sexual relations to be radically altered, preferring instead that they remain as they have been in the past. Their biologically deterministic theses would only be provable, or empirically falsifiable, in a setting which had revolutionized gender relations and then found them unalterable.

5. Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), pp. 33-34.

6. Of course, the same claim made by Millett and Shulamith Firestone in The Dialectic of Sex (New York: Bantam, 1970) has been elaborated within more recent feminist theory. See, for example, Nancy Hartsock's Money, Sex and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1985), pp. 231-247, in which she uses Marxist categories to argue for relations of reproduction as a deeper and more inclusive form of oppression, leading to the "standpoint" of women being potentially more inclusive and therefore more liberatory for human beings in general than the standpoint of the proletariat.

7. See Sherri Ortner, "Are Men to Culture as Women to Nature," in Women, Culture and Society, ed. Rosaldo and Lamphere (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1974).

8. The profound ramifications attendant upon bifurcating the world into public and private spheres, and associating men with the former and women with the latter, have also been described in rich detail by a multitude of subsequent feminist theorists. I cite only a few here: Dorothy Dinnerstein in The Mermaid and the Minotaur (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Carol Gilligan exploring consequences in gendered reasoning processes throughout her In A Different

Voice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Evelyn Fox Keller exploring the implications of gender for conceptions of science in Reflections on Gender and Science (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

9. I used the chapters from The Second Sex which relate to gendered experiences in the traditional nuclear family in a class I taught one year ago at New York University, and found that for both male and female students (there were 22 women and 9 men in the class), the book's descriptions were uncomfortably familiar and often revealing of assumptions about gender they took for granted in day-to-day life.

10. I have written an unpublished paper entitled "Phenomenology and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex," which attempts to show a relationship between de Beauvoir's ideas and those proffered by Sartre in Being and Nothingness and to reveal the philosophical underpinnings of her approach. I believe de Beauvoir saw the situation of women as a case study in the systematic denial to one group of the ability to be "for itself" by another who had its own interests in this group remaining "in itself." Of course, it is not surprising that de Beauvoir and Sartre shared a similar perspective, given their lengthy intellectual collaboration and personal relationship.

11. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, op cit., p. 303.

12. Ibid., p. 305.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 307.

15. Ibid., p. 315.

16. Ibid., p. 316.

17. Ibid., p. 328.

18. In Women and Children Last: The Plight of Poor Women in Affluent America (New York: Viking, 1986), Ruth Sidel lists this as one of several reasons behind the precipitous rise in teenage pregnancies over the last decade. She also cites male unemployment and a general scarcity of meaningful social and economic opportunities for teenage women, who then embrace the prospect of having a child as one of the sole areas left them for feeling important, loved and in which they can exert some control in their worlds. My discussions with Annamaria

Morales, a psychiatric social worker who works with teenage mothers at the Allerton Hotel in New York City, also confirms this impression.

19. I think here of Jessica Benjamin's brilliant essay in Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983) entitled "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination." While I am wholeheartedly in agreement with her analysis, and see much of this work as benefitting from hers as well as attempting to develop similar insights, I felt she did not sufficiently elaborate the crucial importance of male dependence on women as a basis for sadistic forms of interaction.

20. De Beauvoir, op cit., distinguishes on pp. 444-446 masochism from the orientation of the young girl already described in which the girl fantasizes quasi-religious (masochistic) surrender. However, she does not use the term in the sense that I have been defining it. Rather, de Beauvoir takes masochism to signify true pleasure being taken in pain, revolting appropriately against this Freud-Deutsch connotation. This, she says, is not at all the case for the young woman (or most women). But de Beauvoir does not address the possibility of sadomasochism being a defensive pattern of interaction.

21. Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Ca.: University of California Press, 1978), p. 33.

22. Ibid., pp. 99 and 108.

23. See Chodorow's chapter, op cit., on "Preoedipal Gender Differences," pp. 92-111, particularly the section in which she discusses pre-oedipal mother-daughter relationships.

24. Ibid., p. 101.

25. Ibid., p. 109.

26. Ibid., p. 105.

27. Ibid., p. 126.

28. Sidel, op cit., p. 16.

29. See Barbara Ehrenreich, The Hearts of Men (New York: Anchor Press, 1985).

30. Ibid., p. 3.

31. Ibid., p. 17.

32. See, for example, Bell Hooks' Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984), which takes up the question of the relationship between feminism and issues of race; in addition, in her chapters on radical and socialist feminism in Feminist Politics and Human Nature (New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983), Alison M. Jaggar summarizes criticisms of feminism for lack of historical specificity.

33. See Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

34. See Firestone's chapter entitled "Down with Childhood," op cit., pp. 72-105.

Chapter 6. From Individual to Social Symbiosis:
The Mass Psychology of Schooling

Going to school evokes hopes and dreams along with apprehension and fear for most children. It may be a longed-for escape, a respite from conflicts within families, or it may be a dreaded confrontation with insecurities not noticeably aroused by already established intimacies. Common to either contingency is the fact that the child who attends her or his first day of kindergarten or elementary school is by no means a blank slate. In all likelihood, the 'family' -- whether it conforms to the traditional model of the last chapter or to rapidly increasing alternative forms of intimate associations -- will have left its mark. I have tried to argue that this mark tended toward the development of sadomasochistic characteristics insofar as several conditions were already encountered and experienced by the child. Simply being a child, of course, meant participating in a hierarchical relationship of extreme powerlessness and dependence upon one's parent(s) or caretaker(s). This would implicate sadomasochism if and only if the more powerful other, the particular parent, did not encourage the child to transcend what is at first an unavoidably unequal and dependent situation. Given the structure of traditional nuclear families within a patriarchal system, the fact that women still bear primary responsibility for childrearing and have

themselves been placed in positions of inequality and dependence, the parent may very well have her or his own motives for not wishing children to achieve an independence which threatens their own power and prerogatives. Consequently, non-traditional as well as traditional familial arrangements frequently reproduce gender-based divisions within a sadomasochistic mode, with boys inclined toward sadism and girls toward masochism. For all the phenomenological differences between them, the sadistic and masochistic child share feelings of great dependence and uncertainty; neither has been able to achieve the afore-mentioned balance between self and other, dependence and independence, and thus both may have the potential makings of a sadomasochistic character structure. If the child has existed in an insecure and precarious relationship to the world symbolized by the parent, neither boy nor girl will possess genuine confidence either internally or externally (despite sadism's indications to the contrary). In this event, the "social fact" of the familial environment amounts to familiarity with a life in which symbiotic enmeshment is given. The sado-masochistic dynamic would not determine the individual child's pattern of interaction but would require significant effort and conflict in order to be altered.

With this tendency, the child moves into the even more social realm of the school, at least physically

separated from her or his family. School, allegedly, symbolizes growth and transition to adulthood. Yet, is the structure of the new world different from the old? In what follows, I will intersperse my own description with references to ethnographic, popular biographical and theoretical writings on contemporary education in both the American and British contexts. I begin, as in Chapter 5, by referring to what most observers depict as paradigmatic features of standard educational experience. This is not to deny, however, that many children attend schools which attempt to provide alternatives to traditional structures of education. My point is simply to sketch the implications of those aspects of daily school life with which a majority of students are still familiar.

The most basic and universalizable feature of school life, characterizing educational structure from grade school to high school and through all types of graduate education, is the hierarchical organization of the classroom. The significance of this virtual truism cannot be underestimated in terms of its effect on the student's daily existence. Whether in kindergarten or seventh grade, children share perceptions of the teacher as authority figure, rule-maker and 'boss.' The teacher is the older adult in charge, a person in power not coincidentally but because of greater knowledge and accumulated social resources of which she or he is allegedly symbolic.

The teacher by definition possesses something to 'teach'; for she or he, borrowing Foucault's insight, knowledge indeed is power; the teacher is someone the child is counted upon to 'respect.' The power of the lectern is also independence, for the teacher alone can set the day's agenda and mold its perceived reality; she or he can dismiss class early, decide whether or not to give a test, whether to call upon or discipline a given student, whether to slow down the teaching pace or charge ahead to more difficult material. In contrast, the student is generally powerless, unable to leave the class at will without considering the possibility of negative repercussions from the teacher/other, unable to avoid participation or the experience of being singled out. The student may be able to affect decisions about mundane curricular matters, but she or he has no official control over their final resolution. Thus, the student, relatively lacking in knowledge, is rendered relatively dependent within traditional educational structure.

Secondly, and just as commonplace, is the presence of grades as another hierarchical structure intimately connected to the student/teacher division. The teacher's role is also to judge, to begin a process of separation between 'better' and 'worse' students to which children progressively become more and more accustomed. Her or his power extends to the selection of favorites, and to the consequent fact that some children will then

inevitably feel disfavored. The 'test' becomes a crucial feature of schooling, establishing rank and hierarchy through the symbolic evaluation of the grade; simultaneously, the teacher's authority is reinforced by her or his structural ability to be the grader. Consequently, for the graded child, the student, an "A" will frequently be met with joy and elation: it represents approval, recognition from the paradigmatic authority figure. It may 'make' the child's entire day or week (or that of the older student, the high school student, the law student, the science graduate student), bringing a sense of surprising happiness because the high grade carries with it a sense of one's worth, acceptability, a feeling of belonging. At the other end of the spectrum, the child who "fails" or is given a low grade commonly experiences an overwhelming sense of rejection; she or he feels glum, dejected by what is felt at many levels to be a verdict of worthlessness.

The negative potential of this classroom situation, with its dual hierarchies of teacher/student relationships and divisions among students emerging inevitably with the institution of grades, has been subject to surprisingly similar criticisms by a number of educators writing popular versions of "how to" books for teachers. These books are usually directed toward individual teachers who are urged to reform their personalities and to take a more compassionate approach toward their students. Take, for

example, the following samples aimed at teachers of elementary school children. In Teacher and Child, Dr. Haim Ginnett writes as though a Dr. Spock for teachers unnecessarily impatient, harsh and judgmental toward the children with whom they deal. Rather than saying, "Alfred, what are you waiting for -- an invitation to sit down?.... Are you naturally slow?" or "Make up your mind, if you have any," he advises this language: "Alfred, when the class is ready to begin, I find it annoying to see you still standing." ¹ (Ginnett seems immune to the comic underside of his exhortations.) A more systematic and biting, but just as personally oriented critique, is made by Esther Rothman, a school principal, psychologist and teacher of thirty years, in Troubled Teachers. Rothman depicts many elementary school teachers as analogous with prison guards, often more concerned about establishing their authority than ensuring the intellectual and emotional well-being of their students. Teachers, she says, are frequently filled with rage, yet cannot acknowledge the anger behind the enjoyment they take in exercising classroom power. They repress their aggressive feelings, just as they "...have been suppressed by their own teachers, and parents, and they have been trained to suppress themselves." They may feel a certain satisfaction in insisting that children say the 'pledge of allegiance' and in the sound of hearing "Yes, Miss Jones" or "No, Miss Jones" repeated in unison. That

teachers desire to express anger through use and misuse of power is an insight Rothman claims stems from personal experience of her own fears and sense of powerlessness as a teacher. She writes:

My primary purpose was to show those second graders that I could handle anything and everything, that I was strong and smart. I wanted them to know I was boss....I needed to be boss. I needed to be boss because I was so afraid of almost everyone around me, other teachers, the principal, the parents -- even the 'sixth graders' who seemed so awesome in the way they swaggered about the school on their way to monitorial duties...Oh, to have had the assurance of those sixth graders....2

Rothman, at least, is honest about having felt "troubled" as a teacher. Yet, many teachers may not be as candid. Several friends who agreed to be interviewed for this work recall their education in a religious elementary school where punishment for various childrens' 'infractions' regularly involved physical as well as psychic expression of the teachers' ire;³ their sadism remained unacknowledged as such, the source of their visible anger invisible.

Indeed, one writer, John Holt, concludes from a nationwide survey in 1982 that 1.5 million children may have been "formally and officially" beaten in a school year ("official" meaning recorded punishment, perhaps "paddlings" taking place in the principal's office).⁴ Holt, too, was an elementary and secondary school teacher, and has written nine books on education. His perspective merits quoting at length for its similarity to that proffered

by Rothman. Holt exclaims

How much more unofficial violence may be done to children--slaps, cuffs, pullings of hair, twistings of arms and ears...For every instance of physical brutality, there are many more of mental and spiritual brutality: sarcasm, mockery, insults -- what Professor of Education Arthur Peal, who has spent much time in classrooms himself, calls 'ceremonies of humiliation.'

.....
Of course, there are some teachers, just as there are some nonteachers, who really like, trust, and respect children. But these seem almost everywhere to be in a minority...The evidence for this is of course not statistical....How could it be? Shall we send teachers a poll saying, 'Do you hate children?' No, the evidence comes entirely from reports. But I have read and heard so many of these, from students, from parents, from teachers, from classroom volunteers, above all from teachers themselves, as well as many others who have had long contact with the schools, that I can only assume that what they report is not the exception but the rule. 5

Unfortunately, neither Rothman nor Holt proceed to an in-depth theoretical consideration of why it is that teachers are sufficiently frightened and insecure that they often exercise arbitrary powers. (Holt merely notes that it is hard to see how these feelings, which "lie in the insecurity, weakness and fear of the teachers themselves" can be changed "since they are shared by so many of the general public.")⁶ Rarely in these descriptions is the structure and organization of the classroom itself questioned or the teacher's "personality" placed within a larger social context. Yet, the fascinating aspect of these writings is the admission by educators themselves that pleasure in power is a key, problematic aspect of teacher-student dynamics. This is not to say, of course,

that teachers relate to students only in terms of a person sadistically positioned in reference to another who is situated masochistically, although I would argue that structurally these roles would initially be adopted as dominant. However, given both the inner transmutability of the sadomasochistic dynamic and the fact that different personality traits in teachers may not at all conform with sadism, it is possible that teachers will often feel themselves forced into a masochistic role vis a vis their students. A particular teacher may feel fearful of her students' power in the classroom, and sense difficulties in keeping control of those upon whom she or he depends to fulfill the requirements of the teaching job. This is the other side of the dynamic from the sadistic one Esther Rothman described.

Yet, within this literature, all teachers are exhorted to change, to be, interestingly enough, "better mothers." In The Caring Classroom, Dewey J. Carducci and Judith B. Carducci counsel the foreswearing of desires for obedience and conformity. Rather, teachers must "love" students, not unconditionally but intelligently: "the 'caring' classroom is based on the belief that it is the business of education to support and assist the growth of the student toward maturity -- that is, toward the fulfilling of personality in the ability to love and be loved, for all that implies. Conversely, it is based on the belief that education is not merely the imparting of

knowledge, the training in a skill, or the conditioning of one person by another to do what the person in authority describes." ⁷ Teachers should demonstrate true caring for their students, allowing them to express a wide range of emotions; without "consistent mothering," they say, quoting Bowlby's studies of infant deprivation, children will not learn to function normally and their frustration may lead to disruption within the classroom. This reference to "mothering" is not taken as cause for reflection on either a) the implications of equating the teacher's role with that of the parent, b) why children already "mothered" would need consistent mothering (or, as Winnicott puts it, "good enough parenting") in elementary or secondary school, or c) the gendered reference to "mothering" rather than "fathering" or "parenting."

Yet, the gendered reference alludes to the reality that most elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States are still women. The fact that the majority of these teachers are women relates to cultural associations made between children in the home and child care in social contexts outside the home; women continue to dominate within daycare centers as babysitters, within the field of child psychology, and so on. Their preponderance within teaching suggests that the same gender-based inequities to which women are subject in the family as daughters, and (as Chodorow writes) which will later affect their responses as mothers, may affect

the psychosocial relations of teaching in an analogous manner. To the extent relative powerlessness and insecurity has been engendered (an ironically loaded choice of words) in each sphere, teachers may express anger to children in both places. They may, similarly, feel a desire for children to be dependent on them so that a feeling of power is created by contrast. The cry for a 'caring' classroom and consistent 'mothering,' then, refers to far deeper problems and a need for more radical changes than educational reformers like the Carduccis anticipate. Moreover, it is obvious that 'uncaring' teachers who exercise arbitrary power are by no means limited to women: for men, teaching may exercise a similarly gender-created tendency for dominant rather than subordinate masochism. Both men and women, as we have seen, may have learned patterns of sadomasochistic interaction originating within familial relations. And, as I will return to later, the hierarchical structure of the school itself places men as well as women in positions of powerlessness vis a vis their own superiors, so that an analogous anger and need for power may unfold on the part of teachers as a group toward children as a group.

Indeed, taken together, these educational accounts all but directly accuse teachers of being involved in a sadomasochistic dynamic: at the very least, they are described as abusing and taking arbitrary pleasure in

the authority with which they are vested; I would argue that significant variation on this theme can also occur in cases where teachers are afraid of this power, and feel that the student is indeed more powerful than they are. Certainly, the accounts evidence that teacher/student relationships often fit the first characteristic deduced in Chapter 2 from an example of S&M sex: the teacher's position is a potentially sadistic one insofar as it occupies one half of a hierarchical relationship, a dominant location which derives its superiority and apparent independence from the inferiority and relative dependence of an other. The teacher's power is possible only in relation to a student's relative lack of power. Thus, whether or not actualized, the position of the teacher is rife with sadistic possibilities.

But what about the student -- is there similarly a tendency toward masochism? Let us return to the child since it is her or his development I am tracing, postponing until later further exploration of how the teacher came to assume that particular persona. Herbert Kohl, in yet another book for teachers, no written from a radical perspective, comments in On Teaching that teachers expect "good students" (who are not necessarily the "brightest" students) to have the following characteristics:

1. A student must pretend to respect all the the adults who work in professional roles at the school...
2. A good student must be willing to

perform the craziest tasks, such as asking permission to go to the toilet or to throw a piece of paper in the wastebasket...3. A good student must accept his or her own inferiority and fear revealing his or her own innate stupidity.... 4. A good student will understand that his or her parent is dealing with the teacher, so that there is no alternative to obedience...5. Good students know that they must take no initiative. They must have the sense that all objections they make to anything that happens in school can only be made at the moment and in the form permitted by the teacher or principal. 8

In How Children Fail, Holt tries to persuade teachers and other educators that the most insidious aspect of the teacher/student relationship is the former's ability to create external standards and expectations the child must fulfill in order to please the authority figure. This, of course, is a problem related to the second hierarchical characteristic of the classroom, grading and its consequences. Grades cannot be perceived as neutral evaluations of progress, simple indicators, unless children are already confident about their ontological worth, so that "As" or "Ds" do not take on global proportion, condemning or inflating the child's entire being. If the child, however, still feels symbiotically attached to the parent or caretaker who has not loved the child as both a dependent and independent developing person, it is unlikely that such confidence will exist.

Holt's concern is not the child's familial background but her or his experience upon classroom attendance. His account stresses that children have not learned to value their own curiosity and intellectual interests, but

rather to orient themselves predominantly toward learning that which will please their teacher. They learn to be other-oriented and adaptive rather than self-oriented, perceiving (correctly, according to Holt) that the teacher will not reward but disapprove of deviations from an agenda set in advance. Holt advises that:

There is one...reason, and the most important one, why we must reject the idea of school and classroom as places where, most of the time, children are doing what some adult tells them to do. The reason is that there is no way to coerce children without making them afraid, or more afraid. If you think it your duty to make children do what you want, whether or not they wish to, then it follows inexorably that you must make them afraid of what will happen to them if they don't do what you want. You can do this in the old-fashioned way, openly and avowedly, with the threat of harsh words, infringement of liberty, or physical punishment. Or you can do it in the modern way, subtly, smoothly, quietly, by withholding the acceptance and approval which you and others have trained the children to depend on.... You can, as many skilled teachers do, learn to tap with a word, a gesture, a look, even a smile, the great reservoir of fear, shame, and guilt that today's children carry around inside them. Or you can simply let your own fears about what will happen to you if the children don't do what you want, reach out and infect them. Thus, the children will feel more and more that life is full of dangers from which only the goodwill of adults like you can protect them, and that this goodwill is perishable and must be earned anew each day. (My emphasis) 9

The child/student begins to worry that he or his worth to the teacher is not intrinsic but highly conditional upon being seen as 'smart,' knowing the 'correct' answer. To be wrong, to question, to disagree become extremely risky propositions -- will the student be 'put down,' seen as dumb, no longer be favored? The child becomes terribly

fearful and nervous about whether she or he will give the 'right' answer. This is borne out both by my own experience as student and graduate student, and by my experience teaching college, having noted the poor response of students to any question that directly elicits a definition of something for which I appear to be searching. Students feel uncomfortably cornered, frightened of thinking aloud lest they be ridiculed, worried about vulnerability stemming even from questioning that which is unclear to them (lest they seem 'dumb').

Whether or not consciously intended, the existence of the teacher's a priori standards will have had the effect of inducing dependence in the student, who progressively learns to devalue internally generated thought in favor of that which has been generated by another. In this sense, the teacher's power is perpetuated rather than transcended, as it might be were the student/child to develop self-confidence which slowly could erode the necessity of "teachers" per se. Rather than education's goal being its own transcendence, the expectations implicit in conventional teacher/student relationships creates a self-reproducing systemic dynamic. Teacher/student relationships are perpetuated, never overthrown in favor of equality. And so the child, now the student, learns what Holt calls "strategies" for knowing, or seeming to know, the "right" answers. One strategy is the "mumble strategy," in which children

answer in extremely low voices so that they may sound 'right' even if they are 'wrong.' He dubs another "guess-and-look," the strategy of scrutinizing the teacher's face to see whether "you are on the right track...With most teachers, no further strategies are needed." ¹⁰ These might more properly be called tactics in the larger strategy of learning -- here, learning meaning how to prioritize the approval of others as an ongoing permanent practice (instead of as a means to learning self-approval as well). This, again, is a defensive move, expressing the child's fear that she or he will not be accepted unless pleasing to the teacher/other in specifiable ways. (Obviously, this is true of the sadomasochistic dynamic as well: its inequities are chronic, never intrinsically self-surpassing.)

The child does not, then, feel the exploration of her or his own curiosities to be as important as adapting oneself to the interests of others -- it is the other's approval which is sought and felt vitally necessary. An extreme example of just how "vitally" necessary this ontological recognition can be is found in Japan, where students have been reported to commit suicide upon being rejected from particular universities. Such deaths give tragic evidence of a profoundly sadomasochistic culture in which some students felt they actually had no life without the sense of belonging and approval admission to the university would have provided. I

define this response below as symptomatic of what I will call "social symbiosis," a concept which attempts to locate the problem as more dynamic and central to social interaction than Durkheim's notion of altruistic suicide would indicate. In this sense, the student/child is cast in a role not unlike that of the classic masochist who is particularly dependent upon and desirous of the approval of the other. As we saw in Chapter 5, the child may already be disposed toward dominant or subordinate masochism based upon her or his experience in familial settings. Perhaps the child is accustomed to seeking approval from a parent to whom she or he is symbiotically attached, and from whom independence is sought. The child is not masochistic for masochism's sake but, in my view, only because she or he knows no other way of attempting to escape toward a healthier balance between self and other. Seeking that which Mahler termed "rapprochement," the child through masochism tries to gain approbation of her or his independence without losing or in any way sacrificing a sense of connection with others and, most importantly, that essential feeling of belonging to a human community. Unhappily, as we have seen, this approbation is usually impossible to attain from a sadistically cast other(s) who have an interest in maintaining symbiotic attachment. If approval has not been satisfactorily internalized to the point where it can be taken for granted and is still sought, the child

in all likelihood will experience a sense of familiar continuity between the psychosocial relations of the family and those of the school environment: in both worlds, she or he must earn approval over and over again; in both worlds, it may be the process of earning this approval which comes to be the child's psychic modus vivendi rather than rational, reflected-upon concern for whether the approval is ever satisfactorily attained. The interests of parent/caretaker and school may be quite analogous in this regard, both encouraging and perpetuating the child's dependence while reinforcing the other's relatively independent power. An example of this type of corresponding interests between parent and school is cited in an ethnographic study of twelve Australian comprehensive schools, published in book form as Making the Difference. The authors found that working class parents were often hostile to reform 'child centered' curricula, curricula proposed precisely to develop confidence in independent thought and counteract traditional education's tendency toward adapting children's learning to the desires of others. After all, parents had been disciplined themselves and wished to see the same discipline imposed on their children that they had been forced to accept. Again, anger is expressed below rather than above, toward a relatively powerless other rather than the more powerful other(S) who truly provoked the anger in the first place. In terms of sadomasochism, this means

"They see kids answering back to teachers, classes in uproar, apparently unplanned curricula, no measurable learning, and they are worried. Some see it reacting back on the family and creating discipline problems there. If this is what new ideas in education mean,¹¹ they could do with less of them." The parents are worried about the effect of children separating from school discipline (symbolized in the teacher) on their own power. As we shall see below, this is particularly ironic in light of their own working class background and the fact that schooling may very well have devalued and inferiorized them. Again, the anger at powerlessness to which they have been exposed as children/students exerts itself powerfully as parents/teachers, aimed not at the source from which it arose (their own parents/teachers) but at the next generation of children/students.

Returning still again to the child, it would not be surprising if she or he now perceives that earning approval at home and obtaining good grades in school are mutually reinforcing in certain situations where both are rewarded: the parent or caretaker is especially pleased when the child does well in school, leading to clear continuity between masochism in one sphere and masochism in the other. Alternatively, the child may sense that doing well in school is a way of gaining recognition in the outer world, a sense of worth seemingly impossible to obtain, even conditionally, within the family. Yet, I would take

this analysis even one step further. Given that sado-masochism is only a structural tendency, one which is not in any way determined and which may be for numerous reasons resisted by particular individuals, it may be that many children approach the educational system not symbiotically attached to parents or caretakers. As posited earlier, their parents may not have treated them sadomasochistically at all; possibly, a particular child may have garnered independent resources (not explicable in reductionistic or social 'scientific' terms) that enabled resistance of the dynamic. Such children may, of course, remain in a non-symbiotic state or, I would argue, it is possible that the structure of school may itself engender masochistic tendencies in children who hitherto were able, or enabled, to avoid them. For the institution of education certainly possesses its own social specificity; it is different from and not reducible to an easy identity with the familial situation in which the child was raised. School represents a new level of sociality. For the first time, the child can be compared with other children from other families; racial, ethnic, class distinctions may rear their ugly heads in a formally new and official manner, suggesting judgments of social inferiority and compounding gendered tendencies already encountered. A particular child may feel perfectly worthwhile and accepted within the family returned to at the end of the school day, but suddenly doubts herself or himself within

the context of the educational environment. Her or his status in the outside world is called abruptly into stake -- and the stakes are high, implicating long-term social judgments about wealth, status, life opportunities, etc. She or he may all at once feel dubious about or ashamed of a family never before questioned, perhaps even turn away from it in a move of defensive rejection. Even if extreme conditional standards were avoidable at home, they may not be at school. For social reasons originating with class or racial exclusion, the child may feel disadvantaged, for example, in terms of test-taking. Indeed, the ironic success of an SAT teaching service called "Princeton Review" has been to prove an almost complete correlation between class status and ability to 'perform' well on standardized examinations as promulgated by the Educational Testing Service; little wonder that ETS is suing Princeton Review, trying desperately to save the concept of innately testable intelligence.

The child, as a consequence of these new feelings, may now wish to please teachers representative of social figures other than the parent or caretaker. Teachers are distinctive in being relatively more superseded and unstable figures; they are different from and yet similar to one another, identifiable as symbolic of a transitional link to the larger social universe. It seems to me, consequently, that the 'psychological' concept of symbiosis must also be extended to something I

will call 'social symbiosis.' In referring to the possibility of 'social symbiosis,' I wish to stress that the processes and feelings experienced in the family (relative to particular individuals) and in the school (relative to social institutions, though of course here, too, symbolized in particular individuals like teachers, principals, administrators, etc.) are so similar as to be indistinguishable in the dynamics they create. A child may very well be symbiotically attached to both, to people and processes encountered in the educational sphere as well as to representatives of the family. Or the child may be symbiotically attached to persons encountered in school but not at home. A third option exists as well, i.e., attachment to certain family members but not to teachers. Here, I mean to include the fact that teachers are often extremely supportive influences on children, and in some cases can partially counteract sadomasochistic tendencies the family has generated. Again, it should be emphasized that, of course, not all teachers are sadistic, even if a potentiality for sadism is structured into their 'official' personae.

The basic criteria, then, of 'social symbiosis' in both or either of these spheres is that the child feels she or he cannot be accorded respect, acceptance, and a sense of ontological and social belonging unless certain definite criteria have been fulfilled. The vital indice is whether the following question can be answered

in the affirmative: if a given child rebels, protests, disagrees, is angry, asserts independent thinking and being from either family members or teachers -- themselves representative of social institutions and the psychological perceptions they generate -- will that child still feel accepted and worthwhile? Alternatively, is disagreement taken to be incompatible, *prima facie*, with the maintenance of social/psychic order? If the child cannot express anger or disagreement without fear of overwhelming and seemingly total loss, without fear of sacrificing the sense of belonging she or he humanly requires, then it seems to me that some sort of social symbiosis has been created.

By this, I do not mean to imply that there are no limits to what teachers and students can tolerate. What, someone will reasonably inquire, if a child threatens to kill someone or is actually violent? Should a student not be limited if she or he will not allow others to speak? I will address the philosophical question of conditionality and unconditionality in the next chapter and in conclusion, wishing to indicate here only that encouraging and allowing the expression of feelings does not equate with a refusal to discipline or delimit acts. A potentially revolutionary insight which social and political thought (as well as movements for historical change) rarely borrow from psychoanalysis is exactly this: the expression of thoughts and feelings do not

equate with that which psychologists and psychoanalysts¹² from Freud onward would call "acting out." In fact, if libidinal principles of psychic energy suggested by Freud have any validity (and I think they do), the expression of feelings probably undercuts the need for their corresponding enactment. The 'bottom line,' however, remains that some conditionality is unavoidable: even the decision to avoid conditionality is a condition. The burden of my argument, rather, is to suggest that human beings need to start life feeling loved and accepted in childhood for the full panoply of their authentic emotional experiences. Ideally, this base of emotional acceptance provides a sense of ontological security which can allow conditionality inevitably encountered later to be more tolerable; though unavoidably painful at first to the child who seeks constant attention and immediate instinctual gratification, the secure, growing young person can accept these conditions more easily than the insecure one. The former may have been allowed to feel anger and to separate, while at the same time still feeling loved. A major problem of the contemporary psychosocial, sociopsychological world is that no basis of complete emotional acceptance (which I think is experienced as love) may ever be experienced (a basis which, again, does not imply the absence of law in the broadest sense) in the inner and/or external realms. Condi-

tionality, however, reigns supreme -- demanding, excessive and in surplus, it monopolizes any other form of interaction which may seek to supplant it.

But I have not yet considered another issue. Backtracking once more, the student/teacher relationship has been characterized here as another case in point of interaction comparable with that between the classic masochist and sadist. But, if so, is it really the case that the teacher unambivalently desires the student's dependence, rewarding conformity and punishing displays of independence? This may be to oversimplify the case in many instances. Schooling in Capitalist America, probably Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' best known of several books in the educational field, argues from a Marxist perspective that the major function of education in capitalist society is ideological preparation of a docile labor force. Their work has been criticized by Henry Giroux and Stanley
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Aronowitz for providing a far too mechanical and determined portrait of the educational system's inability to foster social reproduction, failing to account for students' frequent resistance to these systemic tendencies. Yet, it is interesting that a study cited by Bowles and Gintis to document their contention that the educational system, like work, rewards authoritarian personality traits, does not fully conform to their own quasi-deterministic expectations. The results of Peter Meyer's

study of positively rewarded and negatively sanctioned characteristics of 237 senior class members of a New York State high school, are cited in tabular form by Bowles and Gintis as follows:

<u>Positive</u> (Rewarded Traits)	<u>Negative</u> (Sanctioned Traits)
Independent Likes to be independent and wants to arrange his or her own activities; dislikes being told what to do.	Is able to accept directions easily, follows the teacher's directions, even if doing things another way seems better.
Aggressive Is aggressive, sometimes steps on other people's toes; does not mind speaking up; sometimes shows off.	Is the most consideration to other people; does not try to push his or her own ideas too hard; doesn't show off.
Predictable Is predictable, usually reacts to situations as you expect him or her to....	Often has reactions to people which surprise you; you cannot predict what this person will do...
Identifies with school	Identifies closely with this school....
	His or her main interest is in something outside of class.

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Bowles and Gintis translate this study and several of their own into quantitative terms that affirm the rewarding of docility and penalizing of aggressivity, independence, and creativity. Yet, the qualitative results above show aggression and independence viewed as desirable characteristics of the successful student and future worker; correspondingly, dependence and passivity are derided. Moreover, within the "positive" category, not only are independence and aggressivity rewarded but predictability and close identification with school as well, even though only the latter would

indicate the social symbiosis I have been suggesting. .
Why this seeming contradiction? Perhaps the problem leads back to ramifications of grading as a mechanism which facilitates hierarchical divisions between students. Ideologically, the stunning, 'brilliant' student cannot be one who conforms entirely, passively, to external expectations. This may appear to be the goal of capitalist education but, within Bowles and Gintis' own terms, contradicts systemic imperatives toward constant innovation. If all students were meek and docile, so that grades measured merely the meekest and most docile among them, social systems would have to admit rewarding their own stagnation; in terms of the "problem of recognition" broached in Chapter 1, they would flirt with their own death, the death of movement and historical life. Rather, it would seem to me that teachers, though undoubtedly more positively disposed toward 'cooperative' than 'uncooperative' students, are not fully satisfied by seeing their input mechanically reproduced. This result is secretly boring to the teacher, and belies ideological illusions in being, uncomfortably, neat. That, instead, teachers and administrators might reward students for being both independent and predictable could correspond to the sadistic characteristic of seeking disapproval in the mode of approval, as hypothesized earlier. The 'first-rate' student is expected to both challenge and not challenge the system; this is what differentiates her or him --

artificially, of course. The student who challenges with civility, within limits and the 'rules of the game,' is in all likelihood the one who receives the A rather than the A-, the A+ rather than the A. Later, it may be this same student who rises to the top of General Motors rather than remaining mired in middle management. And, as I will argue in conclusion, the same relation probably holds true in communist as well as capitalist societies where I suspect controlled creativity is also a mark of distinction and superiority (take, for example, the rise of a Gorbachev, who reforms in some respects while in others adhering to the traditional political line). But the student who rebels too much, passing the tolerated boundaries, is quite a different story, a troublemaker and social problem. Consequently, arguments based both on empirical research and theoretical logic anticipate the teacher/student dynamic resembling the second characteristic of sadomasochism suggested in Chapter 2 from an example of S&M sex, i.e., the seeking on the sadist's part of disapproval within the mode of approval. The corollary of this characteristic for the student/masochist is the seeking of approval within the mode of disapproval. Even though the student generally conforms to the authority structure the teacher regenerates, his or her goal is not denigration but praise; evidently, the student is not by 'nature' masochistic any more than are women, but is constrained to adopt a masochistic moe to gain approbation

otherwise denied.

One effect of teachers rewarding disapproval in the mode of approval is the facilitation of divisions among students based on class as an economic, status-ridden reality. Say that this analysis has some merit, so that the 'better' student is one who thinks independently within a dependent mode, the 'worse' one who either exceeds those tolerable bounds (the 'rebel') or conforms placidly within them. It would not be surprising, then, if this distinction coincided with pre-existing social divisions: perhaps the more 'independently' minded student comes from an upper class family and has imbibed (within or without a sadomasochistic orientation) a sense of relative superiority; perhaps the more 'dependent' feels economically and culturally at a disadvantage. According to Making the Difference, at the Australian upper class, independent fee-paid school studied by the authors, teachers responded favorably to students who seemed to display confidence based upon their privileged backgrounds. Such teachers sensed that their own social advancement depended on their students, in contrast to the experience of the working class school where students depended on teachers for social promotion. ¹⁵ Thus, for a moment, roles are reversed within a class context: some students take on a certain sadistic potential vis a vis their teachers, while others are consigned toward remaining masochistic; similarly, the teachers' role may be reversed relative to particular

students' class backgrounds. Pre-existing class differences which have already led to students attending different schools, or being tracked into contrasting academic programs, are assumed to exist, as they did in the Australian study. But what are possible mechanisms by which these pre-existing class differences arose or arise again? Here, it seems to me that the significance of teachers rewarding disapproval in the mode of approval is to allow some students to gain superiority vis a vis each other. Take one student, or several students, who become the favorite of the teacher. As such, according to Schad-Somers, they are rewarded and reinforced in a way which may cast them predictably within a masochistic tendency. This is true if the student has intuited (a la the sort of strategy John Holt describes) that the teacher responds favorably to a bit of a challenge; the student remains in the masochistic position of wishing to manipulate the teacher's still-needed recognition, just as, for example, a lover/masochist in a sadomasochistic relationship may try to be more valuable and attractive to a sadistic/other through jealousy, being valued by others. But the student is probably angry at the teacher/other who has necessitated this complex variety of disguised submissiveness, yet cannot bring this anger to consciousness. If my sense of sadomasochistic dynamics is accurate, this student, cast relative to the teacher in a position of dominant masochism, can feel

sadistic at a subordinate level in relation to other students. Anger forbidden at one level can be displaced and expressed at another; moreover, in terms of concepts developed in Chapter 5, the need for recognition which is denied and unfulfillable at one level (relative to the teacher) can perhaps be satiated relative to an other who is subordinate. Consequently, sacrifices to conformity are psychologically justified and made pleasurable vis a vis the relative denigration of others and therefore the ability to exert power in relation to them. In terms of schooling, processes of hierarchical selection and grading allow students who are all initially placed in positions of masochistic potential to differentiate among themselves. Some remain masochistic and others turn sadistic, a move made possible only relative to (allegedly) subordinate others. This process of sado-masochistic transmutation is psychologically facilitated by teachers themselves burdened with sadistic tendencies, who may 'grade' not only at an official and structural level (because systemic imperatives compel them to do so), but who may also 'naturally' favor students who challenge them in an unthreatening manner. Just as Chodorow calls attention to the fallacy of believing that gendered mothering can be coerced, so already may the hierarchically structured relation of teacher to student be reproduced vis a vis an insidiously 'satisfying' sadomasochistic mode of interaction.

With the emergence of self-differentiation among students comes the creation and recreation of class differences as well, differences which may or may not have preceded the educational process. Again, students may have come to school with feelings of class superiority; others may wish to acquire them. Yet, the student who begins to emerge masochistically in a dominant sphere (relative to the teacher) but sadistically in a subordinate one (relative to other students) will probably never feel satisfied that recognition has been won in the former realm, that the latter can be abandoned. The successfully conforming, emerging or already emergent middle or upper middle class student realizes that she or he may be superior to a student below -- nevertheless, chances are she or he is inferior to a yet-unidentified student in the outside world. I may be one of the top students in my high school, but how will I 'rank' in college? I may be doing well in college, but how will I do in graduate school? I'm doing fine in graduate school, but how will I 'compete' on the job market? I have a job, but will I be promoted? The process is unending, indeed, infinite. It is comparable to dynamics of infinite sadomasochistic regree in the family, as well as to the experience I described in relation to one lover who cast me as inferior and another who cast me as superior. In each of these realms, persons are immersed within sado-

masochistic triangles that extend chain-like in both directions: the triangle is composed of the self, one other in relation to whom that self is masochistic, and a second other in relation to whom that self may be sadistic. (Interestingly enough, Oedipal triangles are a sexualization of this type of triangular dynamic.) The process itself is justifiable only in its own blind terms, so long as rationality is never called into question and the process is pursued only for its own sake. The student sadomasochist, therefore, can never really attain the recognition, the rapprochement which leads to a balanced sense of independence and dependence she or he once sought beginning in childhood. And so the student/teacher dynamic accords, also, with the third characteristic of sadomasochism deduced in Chapter 2 -- the unattainability of the dynamic's alleged goal, within its own terms.

Of course, the teacher and the student are not so different in that the teacher sadomasochist can no more attain satisfaction within the dynamic than her or his pupil. The teacher whose development I bracketed out earlier was, after all, once a student. In the process of her or his own education, the teacher, too, may have experienced feelings of superiority to some students and inferiority relative to others. By the time she or he is a teacher at the elementary or secondary school level, hierarchical relationships in the school will have

been encountered in such a way that it is likely the teacher partakes of a (subordinate) masochistic relationship vis a vis the school administration above, just as a (dominant) sadistic relationship may unfold relative to students. It is not at all unlikely that this administration reinforces or even provokes sadistic tendencies in the teacher (now cast masochistically) by administrators' own desires for student discipline: they 'bind' the teacher symbiotically, the teacher then binds students, students may bind other students, on and on ad infinitum. Moreover, the teacher, like the student, was once a child, perhaps was raised in a family which may have had a tendency toward sadomasochistic dynamics. She or he may once have been situated masochistically in both spheres.

So much can be said for the student and the teacher who emerge into situations that enable them to be simultaneously masochistic and sadistic due to situations at once relatively powerful and powerless. What of the student who is not favored by the teacher, the student who feels inferiorized because of class or racial or ethnic discrimination, the student without whom the middle, upper class and/or white student's superiority in contrast would be inconceivable? Does this student simply accept a passive judgment within the educational system? Forced into a masochistic role which, unlike the situation of the middle or upper class student, may

not be rewarded (or, in Schad-Somer's terminology, "redeemed"), how will this student respond? Will the student resist an educational system which accords she or he so little recognition and approval? Will she or he try to separate, break away, from it? Again, in both Henry Giroux's Theory and Resistance in Education and Stanley Aronowitz and Giroux' Education Under Siege, these authors, as radical critics of educational theory and practice, call attention to the danger of overly deterministic perspectives which portray students (and, by extension, children) as passive recipients of educational structures deeply embedded in capitalist imperatives. Instead, they wish to conceptualize the person of the student dialectically, both acted upon and acting back on systems of education. The underlying impulse is, once more, to understand mechanisms by which the hierarchically organized school -- and the larger society of which it is a part -- is reproduced non-coercively, with the active and not merely a passive involvement of student and teacher 'reproducers.'

A superb study of these mechanisms is Learning to Labor, Paul Willis' 1977 study of working class boys in an English comprehensive high school, or "How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs." Willis' fascinating ethnography revealed that the working class boys he studied did not at all enact the masochistic tendency to which structural imperatives of the educational system

might wish to consign them. Rather, as a group, they perceived (a perception not, however, necessarily expressed in an explicit manner though the knowledge existed as implicit, shared understanding) that school was not in their class interest. School was a place to be ridiculed, to be enjoyed "for a laff": to this end, the young men were determined to have a good time by making fun of teachers, arguing and playing jokes. In addition to the figure of the teacher, a favored target of scorn were the "ear'oles," a group not unlike the students I refer to above as being rewarded for masochistically-inclined conformity. (In the United States, I have heard 'ear'oles referred to as "nerds" or "grubs.") To the "lads," "ear'oles" are anything but admirable, representing a sort of deadly adherence to questionable social practices. A radical moment in the "lads'" consciousness, as Willis describes it, is that they see the ear'oles' deferral of immediate gratifications as an ongoing trap, also deferring indefinitely any real enjoyment of life: they are seen as if waiting for godot. The lads, on the other hand, want to bask in the immediate pleasure of each others' comraderie and shared enterprises, most notably, the creative project of 'troublemaking' and rebelling from the oppressive environment of the educational institution.

It seems to me that the lads perceived, not only that the comprehensive school belied their class

interest, but also the sadomasochistic social relations in which they were embedded. The lads refuse to be symbiotically dependent on the school, to play out their masochistic positioning. In this regard, it struck me as intriguing that Willis uses the word "differentiate" throughout Learning to Labor to refer to the lads' process of separating themselves out, seeing themselves as part of a working class culture independent from the politically hegemonic bourgeois culture which would inculcate them with the sort of passivity Bowles and Gintis anticipate. How is it possible that this "differentiaton" from what I would see as simultaneously a sadomasochistic dynamic can occur? Its possibility is enormously facilitated by collective support the lads receive from each other and from their working class families (who went through the same processes themselves) so that

the culture...starts from the school and steadily moves out to the street and neighborhood, drawing with it a larger and larger content of working class values, attitudes...It is clearly this expanding area which supplies informal and unofficial materials for the differentiation of the educational paradigm in the school...there is a huge reservoir of class feelings to be drawn upon once trust has been decisively withdrawn from the school. Neighborhood, street and the larger symbolic articulations of working class youth culture supply themes for, and are themselves strengthened dialectically by counter-class culture. 16

This point is a critical one to bear in mind, for it suggests that the founding of an alternative sense of community, with concomitant provision of support networks, may be one means of individuals as well as groups cast

masochistically breaking out of a sadomasochistic dynamic.

But -- and this, too, is crucial -- have the "lads" actually broken with S&M and its insidious tendencies toward social symbiosis? I would argue that, unfortunately, their "differentiation" stops short of completion despite the genuinely radical impulse which inspired it. The process remains incomplete for several reasons. One is that the young men, cast in a masochistically dominant position by the educational system, do not leave the S&M dynamic altogether, but swing within it to a relatively sadistic position. This swing is, above all, defensive, unconsciously acknowledging the social fact of structured inferiority to which it is a response. It is not they (the "ear'oles") who are superior and we inferior, but -- the lads respond with justifiable defensiveness -- we who are superior and you inferior. In making this switch-over, however, the world of work is left untouched as a site of social relations which continues to produce sadomasochistic judgments of superiority and inferiority on its own, even as those judgements are reversed by the lads in the educational sphere. Indeed, as Willis makes absolutely clear, another element of the boys' confidence in mounting their educational challenge (an element also bound up with their families' placement within working class culture) derives from the fact that they envision work as a positive alternative to school. Thus, part of their strength in differentiation, in turning back sadistically on the

educational institution which would posit them masochistically, is drawn from the conviction that they are separating from one social world into another. In this sense, their situation is not dissimilar from that of the daughter who, within the traditional family described in the last chapter, turns her subordinate sadism dominant relative to her mother, only to find that relative to her father she is again positioned with a tendency toward dominant masochism. Like her, the working class lad who turns his subordinate sadism dominant relative to the school finds himself cast again as dominant masochist at the workplace. Willis writes that the lad may afterward look back at the school with regret and longing, just as he had earlier longed to leave school and go to work, and feel that opportunities had been lost. (Recall here also that in the last chapter's interpretation of sadomasochistic relations within the traditional nuclear family, the father's subordinate masochism could only unfold outside the nuclear unit, relative to work or possibly to a challenging lover or mistress.) In this way, "how working class kids get working class jobs" is psychosocially a non-coercive process of reproduction in which one dominantly masochistic position is trickily, subtly, replaced by another: the social symbiosis is never truly transcended.

But, at school, the lads were able to derive pleasure and express inverted anger toward 'ear'oles. Is there a

correlate to this when they move to the workplace? This relates to the other reason "differentiation" from the larger S&M scenario fails: the lad, slowly moving from a school to a job, from being a working class boy to a working class man, may be able to derive comfort for the masochistic position again assumed. That comfort may stem from power which remains intact vis a vis the working class woman, the girlfriend (the good woman, that is) the lad already refers to as the "missus." Willis is quite clear about the importance of machismo to the reproduction of the working class culture he describes. Take, for example, these passages:

The 'girlfriend' is a very different category from an 'easy lay.' She represents the human value that is squandered by promiscuity....The model for the girlfriend is, of course, the mother and she is fundamentally a model of limitation. Though there is a great deal of affection for 'mum,' she is definitely accorded an inferior role...And within the home there is a clear sense that men have a right to be waited on by the mother...This sense of masculine pride spreads over into the excessive confidence of the rest of the 'lads' culture. It adds a zest to their language, physical and boisterous relations with each other, humiliation of 'ear'oles,' and even to a particular display style of violence. 17

In making this analysis and stressing the important role played by subordinate relations with women in class reproduction, Willis, however, does not consider the effect of this secondary status on the life of the working class girl. Where is her rebellion, who are her 'ear'oles? She has been cast at the bottom of the S&M

enmeshment. Yet, being treated as inferior will anger her as well. Short of direct expression of this anger, it will probably be directed, similarly, downward, not at the source of her actual (though also symbolic) oppression. Positioned masochistically by the lad, later her husband, her only sense of power may be in relation to her children. And thus the processes of sadomasochistic reproduction suggested in the chapter on the family may come into being, with women expressing a tendency toward subordinate sadism toward girls and possibly a dominant masochism relative to boys -- yet, in another sense, children as children may feel powerlessness over and above the powerlessness any child will feel based on its early helplessness. For, if women only feel powerful in relation to children, it is quite to be expected that they will feel particularly invested in children remaining symbiotically attached and not separating from their own gender-created needs.

As a case study, Learning to Labor highlights the immense difficulty of separating from a masochistic situation without reacting defensively by adopting a sadistic one which has the danger of perpetuating the dynamic. A similar though not entirely analogous danger exists for the sadist whose persona may not transcend its reversal into masochism. How can this problem be averted? What, if anything, can intervene to break the cycle's reproduction? At first glance a dismal scenario, there seems to me to be one very optimistic note within

the reproducing dynamic I have been describing in the family and school settings. That optimistic note is movement. Neither sadist nor masochist ever seem content within the relations they have pursued: consciously, it is their dream and yet unconsciously they seem to eschew it, to constantly be moving away from what they allegedly desire. Moreover, the anger experienced at masochistic subordination is continually re-expressed, cannot remain repressed indefinitely: unfortunately, the anger is generally not expressed at the individual who aroused it but at someone powerless who is not threatening. And, to the extent social symbiosis exists and is personified in particular individuals, that original 'individual' may not be the true source of anger in any event. The sadomasochist's desire for separation has more radical social implications. Nevertheless, separating from symbolic individuals may also affect persons' ability to challenge social institutions and practices as well. More will be said about this in conclusion. What seems to be missing is not the desire to move away from sadomasochistic dynamics but conscious awareness of its seductions. How might such an awareness come about?

The radical impulse in Willis' work may be to suggest that rebellion from the sadomasochistic tendencies of one psychosocial sphere is inadequate when they loom active and reproducing in others. But how could sado-masochism be broken away from, given its multiple manifesta-

tions? How is such a separation possible or conceivable?
Again, I will bracket these issues as ones better taken
up after the child's progression (that child now, of
course, an adult) from family to school and, finally, to
a job, has been more fully explored.

Chapter 6: Notes

1. See Dr. Haim G. Ginott, Teacher and Child (New York: Macmillan, Avon Books, 1972).
2. Esther P. Rothman, Troubled Teachers (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1977), p. 10.
3. Interviews, Lynn Tierney and Isabel Pinedo.
4. John Holt, How Children Fail (New York: Dell Publishing, 1982), p. 286.
5. Ibid., p. 287.
6. Ibid., pp. 287-288.
7. See Dewey J. Carducci and Judith B. Carducci, The Caring Classroom (Palo Alto, California: Bull Publishing Co., 1984).
8. Herbert Kohl, On Teaching (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), pp. 126-127.
9. Holt, op cit., pp. 294-295.
10. Ibid., pp. 23-25.
11. R.W. Connell, et al., Making the Difference (Sydney, Australia: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 61.
12. Examples of the distinction between thought and action being absent from sociopolitical theory and movements abound. Two which immediately come to mind are the pornography debate within feminism, to the extent the simplistic aphorism "pornography is the theory, rape is the practice" is adhered to; and socialist revolutions on the Soviet model which have fostered bureaucratic policies by which the expression of dissatisfaction is taken to signal the possibility of counterrevolution.
13. See Henry A. Giroux, Theory and Resistance in Education (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey Press, 1983), and Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, Education Under Siege (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey Press, 1985).
14. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America (New York: Basic Books, 1976), Table B-1 of Appendix B based on Peter Meyer's questionnaire, p. 298.

15. Connell, et al., op cit., p. 90.

16. Paul Willis, Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 72-73.

Chapter 7. Sadomasochistic Tendencies of Everyday Life at the Workplace

Just as school usually represents a rite of passage from childhood to adolescence, so does taking a job generally symbolize 'graduation' from an educational institution to the 'real world' of employment. It is the third occasion on which the child, young person or adult confronts a social situation not of her or his own making. As in the last two chapters, my interest here is in the feelings and psychological dynamics one would expect to encounter at the workplace as it is structured for most Americans. How do these feelings and psychological dynamics compare with those experienced within the family or at school? Are they similar or dissimilar to those associated with sado-masochism?

For the three most noted theorists within sociology, Durkheim, Marx and Weber, work is perhaps the quintessential "social fact." As detailed in Chapter 1, Marxist and Weberian analyses have provided crucial insights into structural features of work in capitalistic and bureaucratic settings; in addition, a huge body of post-Marxist and post-Weberian literature has examined 20th century transformations of workplace conditions, seeking to understand how capitalism has survived changes in the internal composition of labor, the growth of corporate monopolies and multi-nationals, and the problematic effects

of bureaucratization. In the chapter which follows, my concern is to again investigate psychological implications of many of the features of capitalism and bureaucracy described by Marx and Weber. While the writings of Marxists and Weberians have detailed these rules and regulations, less attention has been paid to their psychoanalytic implications. How is life at the workplace experienced in psychological terms? How does the structure of work affect relations between self and other as they have been described by Freud and by object relations theorists? How does it affect what I have argued is an analogous mode of description in terms of existential relationships which take on a sadomasochistic tinge? Of course, both Marx and post-Marxists have brilliantly detailed the oppressive aspects of "alienation," an alienation which for Marx stemmed from workers' being robbed of the product, and control of the product, of their own labor. Far less elaborated is the effects of alienation on the way in which self and other relationships are experienced psychoanalytically in the workplace. How might Freudian and object relations concepts fit into this experience? In what follows, I will once more draw upon a combination of theoretical deduction, personal experience and ethnographic literature in trying to sketch a psychosocial picture of feelings implicit in everyday life at a bureaucratic capitalist workplace.

Clearly, the relationship between capitalist and

proletarian is a hierarchical one in which the former party holds a position of power, the latter a position of powerlessness. (In this respect, at least, the capitalist/proletarian relationship is analogous to that between the teacher and the student and the parent and the child, although obviously possessing its own specific characteristics.) Obviously, the capitalist's power is possible only relative to the powerlessness of the worker. Thus, because of the structural relationship in which the work situation is embedded, the capitalist feels a sense of superiority which derives from the other's dependence. Yet, as Hegel noted with reference to the master/slave dialectic and Marx in relation to the specific systemic characteristics of capitalism, the situation of the capitalist is even more dependent in the following respect. Without a worker, the existence of a capitalist is impossible in two related ways. In an existential sense, one which also relates to labelling theory in the field of deviance, the capitalist cannot feel superior unless the worker is by comparison inferior: his or her sense of identity is bound up with the existence of a worker. Simultaneously, it is the worker, and not the capitalist, who labors, who produces the commodity which then yields the capitalist's profit. Without the laborer, the capitalist would be lost whereas, without the capitalist, the worker would be in a stronger position, the position of the producer. Yet, this

very real structural dependence must be at all costs hidden, leading the capitalist or bourgeoisie of Marx's description to create ideologies in which present relationships appear eternally given rather than as the product of a humanly chosen historical epoch. The capitalist's protectiveness about maintaining his or her powerful and independent self-image is of utmost importance: indeed, the shattering of the illusion would threaten the capitalist's very survival qua capitalist. For, were the worker to perceive the capitalist's dependence, her or his own power would simultaneously be intuited, and relations of dominance and subordination hitherto passively accepted might be called into question. I will describe below efforts on the part of capitalists to avert the calling into question of the basic 'rules of the game,' attempts documented in the annals of industrial psychology beginning with unsuccessful Taylorism through the development of human relations theory, job enlargement and enrichment programs, and so forth.

In this sense, it can be said, drawing at this point on nothing more than logical deductions from a now-Marxist mode of analysis, that the capitalist is symbiotically attached to the worker/capitalist dynamic insofar as he or she perceives its disruption as literally life-threatening. The capitalist is not able to conceive of life itself outside the systemic relationship in which he or she and the worker (or workers) are entwined. Dependence is all too

real, gaping and disturbing. It must cause the capitalist untold anxiety, must create fearful nightmares that the balance of power at any moment can be over-turned. Because it is linked to perceptions of elemental survival, the capitalist will be willing to resort to physical coercion if necessary to preserve the relationship, a fact which demonstrates the depth of the dependency. But, for multiple and complex reasons, force will never be a preferred method, simply a means of last resort. For, if indeed the capitalist wishes to preserve an image of personal invulnerability from dependence and need, force is to be disdained since it manifests the true intensity of desire. Far preferable is a situation in which it is the other, the laborer, who appears dependent and in need of the work situation. And thus the capitalist will be in a constant state of anxiety, of nightmarish anticipation and expectation, anxious (as in Marx's term) that accumulation continue so that the capitalist can compete in the world market but ever wary about the loss of control over the laborer, the other. The capitalist must perpetually keep the laborer in a state of neediness lest his or her own true vulnerability be uncovered. He or she, it seems to me, can never really relax this vigilance.

Certainly, capitalism has been successful in placing the worker in a position of need. This reality is just as clearly demonstrable based on Marx's observations. The

worker works because of the need to support life and limb, for physical survival. If the capitalist appears relatively independent but can be surmised as in reality extremely dependent, so the worker(s) potential for independent strength is carefully hidden by the phenomenal reality of her or his dependence. It is the worker, not the capitalist, who must work for a living, and who is placed in a position where she or he must accept rather than create the conditions under which work is undertaken. One is forced by sheer physical necessity to accept certain conditions of operation set by the capitalist, never the worker. A situation of dependence comes into being for the worker insofar as it is the capitalist/other who 'calls the shots' and dictates a set of constraints: again, it is obvious that the worker's sense of powerlessness in the situation correlates with the capitalist's ability to bask in his or her sense of power.

Rich description of this dependent situation confronted by the worker (or workers) has been provided by several journalists and academics who have themselves entered the workforce so as to more directly understand employment experiences. In Barbara Garson's ethnographic study, All the Livelong Day, it is apparent that dependence is the common denominator in work situations otherwise variable according to the degree of workers' isolation from one another or union organization, or according to a particular

employer's relatively more or less paternal practices. For example, in the non-unionized ping pong factory where Garson interviewed a large number of workers whose job was to assemble rackets, management took no trouble to disguise its lack of real concern about pleasant work conditions. Quantity produced was all that mattered, and particularly rigid regulations were enforced to that end. Workers could not talk with one another freely, take breaks or even use bathroom facilities without 'permission' from repressive supervisors. ¹ At the other end of the spectrum, in a Helena Rubenstein lip gloss factory, Garson approvingly describes improvements gains made when the women in that plant organized a union, leading to a rotating job system, high industry wages and good maternity leave. Yet, even at Helena Rubenstein, workers who provide collective support for one another still find themselves in a reactive position, responding to terms and conditions of employment the employer has dictated. This reality is painfully apparent with regard to the experience of 'speed up,' or, as one woman put it, the fact that the machines had a peculiar habit of "accidentally" increasing the rate at which make-up bottles came down the line. But, the union has no control over the speed of the line, recognizing in its bargaining agreement that "'the employer shall have the exclusive control and supervision of its operations, and the union agrees not to interfere with any of the employer's rights

2
and preogatives.'" Even where important differences in worker organization exist, setting the 'rules of the game' are still unambiguously the prerogative of the capitalist, leaving the worker in a dependent position.

The structural conditions of capitalism, then, dictate a situation in which the worker is rendered dependent on a capitalist who is relatively independent by comparison (though in need of hiding the even more insidious dependence which alone makes this 'independence' possible). The worker is rendered secondary to the primary capitalist; the seemingly inessential relative to the essential. And with these relations go the clear implication that it is the capitalist who is superior and the worker inferior -- how else would this dependence be justifiable? Indeed, it would be surprising if the worker's experience of structural dependence did not bring with it deep feelings of self-doubt and inferiority. Garson describes the experience as follows:

People are treated like children at work. They can be moved, they can be scolded, they can be punished by being made to stand next to a pole and of course they can be fired.

Some benevolent companies manage to operate with small sticks, few threats. Still the workers are infantilized. Their jobs are made as simple as possible. They are told as little as they need to know about the operation. The company creates the impression that things are complicated beyond the understanding of ordinary human beings.

Under these conditions people start to act babyish themselves. The more hemmed in they are by management

the more they fight with each other...Still it's just a matter of degree. At both places one is constantly reminded, 'You're little; we're big.' 3

There are several reasons for these feelings of inferiority. First is the obvious, structural powerlessness of workers under capitalism, eloquently decried in much of Marx's writing as built into a situation in which people cannot exercise control over their situation. A strong sense of power and self-actualization in the world can emerge only with its own exercise; the child, as we saw in relation to object relations theory, begins to develop its sense of independence by striking out on its own, without fearing loss of a feeling of connectedness to others and the human community (a feeling usually experienced in childhood in relation to a parent/caretaker, generally, given patriarchal relationships, the mother). If the child is not able to strike out on its own, chances are it will feel negatively toward the self which is weak and dependent on others. It will tend to endow the other with an image of superiority, seeing the other who seems to be in a position of control and power as better, more certain about reality, than oneself. Unfortunately, the structural situation of the worker is one in which in fact there is no possibility of exercising independence without fear of loss. The hundreds of workers interviewed by Garson were painfully aware that failure to follow the company's dictated rules and regulations by questioning them, exercising relatively

independent judgment in relation to them, would not be met with understanding or even toleration. Rather, workers know quite well that they would be fired, replaced, and rejected as if worthless if they did not 'play the game' as it was given. Since for most people work is not a matter of intrinsic satisfaction or luxury but represents survival, questioning the symbiotic bond the capitalist has set up equates to calling one's very existence into question, challenging and risking one's life both literally and figuratively. The stakes, then, could not be higher.

Not only, then, is the capitalist/proletarian relationship under capitalism one which corresponds psychologically to a structural bifurcation having been created between independent and dependent, superior and inferior, but it is also replete with an extreme form of conditionality. In this respect, it, like the teacher/student relationship described in the previous chapter, corresponds to a form of social symbiosis. The crucial criteria of social symbiosis, it seems to me, is whether or not a one or the other party within it can question the relationship or become angry within it without fear of extreme consequences. The situation of the worker is clearly not a situation in which both parties can maintain a dialectical, mutually shifting sense of simultaneous dependence and independence. The worker is forced to repress any anger she or he may feel at the

dependence of the structural situation in which she or he has found himself. In Freudian terms, then, a second critical reason for negative internal feelings is the inability to direct anger outward at the (sadist) capitalist other. There is no place for anger to be directed except inward, at the self which now feels inferior and is consequently more likely to accept the conditions of her or his own psychic and social symbiosis.

Of course, it is not only factory workers who are subjected to a state of extreme dependence upon an external other for setting the terms and conditions of everyday life. The factory worker was Marx's classic "proletarian," reflecting historical developments of his time which displaced the land-based peasant of feudalism and transformed she or he into the wage-earning laborer of capitalism. Post-Marxist theorists, however, have noted 20th century changes in the composition of work which have led to an increasing number of jobs in the service sector. More and more persons are employed in 'white' or 'pink' collar jobs, working in office or store locales which are physically and organizationally distinct from the 'blue collar' manufacturing jobs based within the factory. For example, in Labor and Monopoly Capital, a classic description of these changes, Braverman states that "service workers," which he defines as including persons employed in cleaning, food, health, personal (airline stewardesses,

welfare services, barbers, child care personnel) and
protective services (police, firemen, etc.) have grown as
a group by a factor of nine since 1970, whereas employ-
ment as a whole less than tripled.⁵ The growth in clerical
jobs is just as striking, as is its feminization: in 1900,
200,000 women were clerical workers (3/4 of the clerical
jobs were held by men) whereas by 1970, the figure had risen
to 10,000,000 (3/4 of all the clerical jobs, those held by
men dropping to a mere 1/4).⁶ Braverman attributes these
changes to several factors, stressing the "scientific and
technological revolution" of 20th century monopoly
capitalism which has displaced millions from manufacturing
and agricultural occupations, and has led to the
proliferation of subsidiary labor functions which support
capital accumulation. The "operating functions of the
capitalist," therefore, has been transformed
from

a personal activity into the work of a mass of
people...These management functions of control and
appropriation have in themselves become labor processes.
They are conducted by capital in the same way that it
carries on the labor processes of production: with wage
labor purchased on a large scale in a labor market and
organized into huge production 'machines' according to the
same principles that govern the organization of factory
labor. Here the productive processes of society disappear
into a stream of paper -- a stream of paper, moreover,
which it processes in a continuous flow like that of the
cannery, the meatpacking line, the car assembly conveyor,
by workers organized in much the same way. 7

Perhaps the fundamental message of Braverman's work is his
insistence that 20th century changes in capitalism's pro-

ductive relations that seem to make Marx's emiserated and alienated worker an obsolescent category -- replacing this worker with a supposedly upgraded, more educated and fulfilled 'white collar' bureaucrat -- are illusory: in fact, work has become even more segmented and deskilled than it has been in the past. The wage-earner who happens to work in a clerical or service setting has far more in common with the person employed in a factory, with a Marxist "proletarian," than capitalism would like to believe. As in Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man, both experience a form of alienation which originates in lack of control over conditions set externally by the capitalist. Although itself a classic, Braverman's work is strikingly devoid of consideration of psychological consequences of the changes in terms of their effect on everyday life. This aspect of the story is not explored, rendering his descriptions at this level one-dimensional, sterile and hard to relate to in basic psychological terms.

In The Managed Heart, sociologist Arlie Hochschild takes this analysis even one step further, aptly criticizing many male theorists (including, she specifies, Braverman) who have failed to investigate "what it is that 'people jobs' ⁸ actually require of workers." She notes that in 1983, less than 6% of workers are employed on assembly lines, whereas the number of people engaged in that which Hochschild calls "emotional labor" has grown to

approximately 1/3 of the workforce and 1/2 of all working
9 women. Emotional labor is defined as requiring "one to
induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward
countenance that produces the proper state of mind in
others -- in this case, the sense of being cared for in a
convivial and safe place. This kind of labor calls for a
10 coordination of mind and feeling." Hochschild studied
flight attendants in particular, but believes her analysis
holds true for any job which entails

...some handling of other people's feelings and our
own...The secretary who creates a cheerful office
that announces her company as 'friendly and dependable'
and her boss as 'up-and-coming,' the waitress or
waiter who creates an 'atmosphere of pleasant dining,'
the tour guide or hotel receptionist who makes us
feel welcome, the social worker whose look of
solicitous concern makes the client feel cared for,
the salesman who creates the sense of a 'hot
commodity,' the bill collector who inspires fear,
the funeral parlor director who makes the bereaved
feel understood, the minister who creates a sense
of protective outreach but even-handed warmth -- all
of them must confront in some way or another the
requirements of emotional labor. 11

According to Hochschild, 6 of the 12 standard occupational
groups used by the U.S. Census Bureau involve emotional
labor, including professional and technical workers,
managers and administrators, sales and clerical workers and
service workers inside and outside of private households,
involve emotional labor. That she concludes women are
overrepresented in these jobs is not at all surprising,
given the patriarchal bifurcation examined in Chapter 5
which has historically confined women to certain spheres and

ghettoized the display of certain emotions as gender-specific. The gendered sadomasochism which first arises in the family, rooted in patriarchal imperatives, reproduces itself at the workplace in women's well-known assignment to jobs associated with the home, domestic life and mothering. This also means, as suggested in Chapter 5, that they are encouraged to take jobs which tend to cast them in a relatively more masochistic role, whereas men are geared toward the more sadistic personae. However, again, these associations are not at all essential since a majority of male workers are also cast masochistically.

But are they? According to at least the first criteria of sadomasochism, i.e., the promulgation of a relationship of dominance and subordination in which only one party can recognize symbiotic dependence, the typical work relationship between capitalist and proletarian is sadomasochistic. As in the basic prototypical example deduced in Chapter 2 from a case of S&M sexuality in which physical coercion is clearly visible, this hierarchical relation corresponds to one in which superiority is upheld implicitly or explicitly by the sadist relative to the masochist who is cast as inferior. But what about the other characteristics cited? Are they analogous as well? It was noted in Chapter 2 that the sadist's relationship with the masochist is eminently conditional, and depends upon the masochist's performance of specified tasks in a specifiable manner.

How, if at all, does this unfold at the workplace in the interaction between employer and employed?

Returning to Hochschild and her concept of "emotional labor," she argues that this labor involves not only the regulation of one's bodily motions (as in traditional factory labor)¹², but one's emotions as well -- even, as Hochschild puts it, one's "soul." The attendants she studied at Delta are trained to at all times place the happiness of passengers above their own emotional gratification; the passenger wishes the stewardess to smile, to reflect pleasantness and contentment. If this passenger should happen to anger the attendant by obnoxious behavior, she (indeed, male stewardesses are still so rare as to be virtually non-existent) should "think about the other person and why the're so upset, {then] you've taken attention off of yourself and your own frustration. And you won't feel so angry.'" Thus, one cannot respond as one actually feels emotionally: the labor itself demands that the feelings and needs of the other be prioritized over one's own. For, as another trainer "who affected the style of a good-humored drill sergeant, barked out," the stewardesses were not "'selling Delta...but you're selling yourself. We're in the business of selling ourselves, right? Isn't that what it's all about?'"¹⁴

For stewardesses, selling themselves occurs in a particularly sexist context which, as Hochschild describes

it, requires not only smiling and 'pleasantly' learning to put the passengers' needs above your own but also includes the airlines' concern for the meeting of physical requirements through "weigh-ins," "girdle checks" and "wig checks."¹⁵

This idea of "selling oneself" is reminiscent both of Marx's definition of commodification and the interpretation given to it by Georg Lukacs in History and Class Consciousness (see Chapter 1). According to both Marx and Lukacs, perhaps the most distinctive feature of capitalism, differentiating it sharply from prior historical forms of social and economic organization, is that the totality of life becomes subject to commodity logic. It is not only products which are bought and sold but the producer as well¹⁶ who becomes "reified," or thing-like, in everyday life. Lukacs emphasizes that not only does the objective world become fragmented and alien to the producers' experience but her or his subjective state as well. Yet, like Marx and Braverman, Lukacs does not explore these "subjective" implications in depth, nor frame them in psychological categories that include as part of "totality" the panoply of day-to-day emotions alienation may produce in workers. Nonetheless, Lukacs' stress on the growing omnipotence of commodification in a fragmented and alienating capitalist setting accords with what Hochschild considers an increase in "emotional labor" that forces the employed person to sell

not only her or his 'objective' product but an entirety of affect as well: all distinction between product and producer fade before the reality that both are the object of marketplace transactions.

But I would attempt to take this analysis even further so as to argue that the dependent position of the 'seller' in which the person who works under capitalism is placed amounts to a masochistic one. To be a commodity to oneself and others, to be forced by physical and psychological necessity to be obsessed with how well I sell, whether or not others will buy me, whether I have said the right thing or worn the right thing or smiled the right way so that others will not reject me, is to be placed in a masochistic situation. I must be Willie Loman or Jay Gatsby, both famed working class, American literary symbols of the self-destructiveness inherent in socially generated obsession with whether or not one is acceptable or pleasing enough to others: if we feel worthless or inadequate in our true emotions and experience, it becomes necessary to 'sell' oneself or 'lie' rather than face sure rejection. As a salesperson, I must constantly accord priority to the judgments and evaluations of others (the buyer), who are thereby rendered more important than investigating whether I agree or disagree with those sentiments: a grave imbalance comes into being between the significance of the opinions of self and that of others. And, if masochism (as well as

sadism) is indeed indicative of symbiosis, as has been described both in psychological terms by Freud and object relations theorist and more existential, Hegelian terms by feminist theorists such as Jessica Benjamin, then the worker under capitalism may find herself or himself in a state of psychic/social symbiosis structurally analogous to that of a student or a child who is unable to separate. In terms of Mahlerian psychoanalytic concepts, the prototype I am sketching of this person who works -- be this person one of Hochschild's stewardesses or Miller's salesman -- is that of someone who finds themselves in a situation which renders a balanced and dialectical tension between dependence and independence, or autonomy and connectedness, virtually impossible to attain. The person who must sell body and soul on the marketplace exists in a state of social symbiosis insofar as she or he sensibly fears the cost of disagreeing with or threatening the balance of power (or, as I am arguing, imbalance) established by the capitalist who occupies a correspondingly sadistic position. As Mahler and other object relations theorists observed about childhood dynamics, separation and individuation cannot occur unless the infant does not fear loss of a consistent object who represents security and emotional dependence on others. For most people who work under capitalism, whether she or he is someone who performs physical, emotional or as in most cases a compound of both

types of labor, loss of membership in and approval from a human, social community -- feelings which relate to physical and psychological survival simultaneously -- is a valid fear consequent upon not following the rules and regulations given by the particular organization and/or employer by whom one happens to be employed. Just as with the child who in no way is masochistic by nature but for whom masochism is taken up as a defense mechanism, a self-denigrating mode of survival preferable to no survival at all, so the worker feels little choice but to accept the imperatives of her or his type of capitalist employment, commercializing feeling rather than not feeling at all.

If the capitalist/proletarian relationship is analogous to a prototypically sadomasochistic one, does the analogy extend to considerations of the former, like the latter, being a dynamic rather than static form of interaction? Far greater complexity must be taken into account when it is remembered that sadomasochism referred, above all, to a dynamic rather than a static process. (Similarly, as described by Freud, libidinal energetic processes cannot rest in a death-like state but are continually channeled and rechanneled. What sort of movement takes place within capitalist processes analogous to dynamic processes observed in Chapter 2 on the part of sadist and masochist? In the former case, that of the capitalist now compared to a sadist, Marx's detailed study of capitalism again

provides a clue to the possible aptness of the analogy. Like sadomasochism, capitalism, wrote Marx, is a dynamic process in which the capitalist is observed as constantly in flux, always in search of new markets for accumulation. Marx, of course, did not devote attention to the psychological texture of the capitalist's Weltanschauung, nor have post-Marxists in his wake; the issue has been explored in a sense one-sidedly, in terms of economic categories which omit simultaneous attention to their emotional and psychological underpinnings. A well-known theoretical exception springs from the Weberian tradition. Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism brilliantly locates the motivating force of the burgeoning capitalist in the Protestant's obsession with winning religious salvation from God. Pursuing the analogy, it is interesting that, if so, the burgeoning capitalistic Protestant has characteristics which resemble the prototypical masochist, searching as he (the capitalistic Protestant) does for the approval of an external other (God), an approval which can never come in this lifetime, only, he hopes, in death. The capitalistic Protestant then, illustrates both the tendency of sadomasochism to point toward death rather than life as well as the dynamic's inner transmutability. For how else could the capitalist, who Weber describes as motivated by a Protestant ethical culture, be both masochistic and sadistic unless

they two were related, only unfolding in different manifestations from their origins in the same dynamic? The Protestant, perhaps, also finds or found himself constituted by dominant and subordinate moments within the same sadomasochistic dynamic. Perhaps dominantly masochistic in relation to God, he is subordinately sadistic in relation to the human beings who become instrumental in this pursuit. Yet, of course, it is only this subordinate sadism -- or, as suggested previously, the anger which arises from an impossible and therefore frustrating pursuit -- which will ever be visible because only it takes place within the materiality of life. The impossible approval from God sought by the capitalistic Protestant is just that, impossible within this life.

But the modern capitalist, as Weber himself prognosticated, has no scruples about God if even vestiges of former Protestantism remain. Why, then, is the modern capitalist never content? Other theories proffered by Marxists are relevant. Is it simply because of greed (a theory of innate human nature which most Marxists would be forced to reject)? Or is it due to variation upon the more logical theme of scarcity, i.e., that the capitalist must continually innovate and search out new sources of profit because of competition from other capitalists? But, in the latter case, upon what is this competition based -- what is it which motivates the first capitalist who began

competing? Neither explanation seems entirely satisfactory for understanding the obsession by which the capitalist is driven.

However, if the nature of the capitalist's enterprise is analogous to a sadomasochistic endeavor, then in both existential and psychological terms, he or she could not be satisfied even if there were no competition from other capitalists -- one capitalist would nevertheless start the cycle rolling. He or she would in all likelihood do so for the following reason. It is an empirical and theoretical truism that a capitalist is motivated by the desire for profit, for reinvestment, by a seemingly limitless acquisitiveness. Less obvious, less theorized, is the psychological and existential question of why? What lies beneath the surface of the capitalist's observable acts -- what is his or her sociopsychology? It is inarguable that quests for profit, money, wealth, are merely symbolic of a desire for power. But the desire for power can itself be interpreted as indicating a desire for complete control, independence and the transcendence of human contingency: it could be taken as symbolic of a longing to somehow escape death, that most paradigmatic reminder that human beings are indeed incapable of escaping many limitations, vulnerabilities and restrictions. (Even Weber's Protestant capitalist can be interpreted in this regard, his masochism in relation to God motivated by a desire to control, by

earning approval, a destiny otherwise frightening because it is unknown and uncontrollable.) Consequently, in reality, there is no such thing as human power which is not contingent on considerations of the body's frailty, the environment's reciprocal power, and the existence of other human beings. Independence and power can only go so far before it encounters some inescapable reminder of dependence and powerlessness -- before it must in some way acknowledge the reality of an other who makes claims of her or his own and who cannot be controlled unless rendered dependent and controllable. For the capitalist who seeks limitless power, however, no such acknowledgement is possible. To the extent he or she pursues a goal of limitless power, the capitalist cannot acknowledge that as a human being, he or she is not only independent but dependent as well. The capitalist, therefore, pursues an impossible goal but pursues it nevertheless. That the pursuit continues despite its absurdity means that the capitalist, by virtue of the dynamic in which his or her enterprise is embedded, can never be content. Complete power forever disappears beyond his or his grasp, for as with the sadist who innovates continually out of frustration, contingency and dependency one's workers or employees can never be eliminated. The capitalist needs the other, a la Chapter 1, for recognition of himself: if there were no proletarian who was subordinate, there could be no superordinate capitalist,

just as a sadist is inconceivable without a masochist. But the recognition the capitalist achieves is peculiarly frustrating in that the person rendered dependent cannot provide satisfying recognition. How can recognition and acknowledgement of non-contingency be bestowed by someone like the worker, who has little choice but to be part of the dynamic the capitalist himself instigated and perpetuated? Perhaps the capitalist, like the sadist, will momentarily be satiated, but is hard to believe satiety can last given the existential and psychological inauthenticity upon which it is built. The capitalist, in other words, will be unable to believe his power is truly secure, and indeed it is not because it is impossible and utterly insatiable. And so the capitalist can never be secure, can never relax or rest any more than could the Weberian Protestant pursuing salvation. No effort satisfies; it must be retaken, but that is unsatisfactory as well: all that remains, ultimately, is the process as its own justification, for it is, as Marx noted, highly irrational in any other terms. Rather than give up the effort altogether, the capitalist knows no other way than to try some new effort, to reach deeper and deeper into new forms of technology, new methods of control, all aimed at the ultimate goal of a limitless power which can never come. Desperate, he will forever experiment, research and innovate new modes of investment, new ways to keep the process in motion rather than eschewing it altogether. For,

like the sadist, the capitalist fears that death of the process will mean his death as well, knowing no other way to live than in an endless pursuit of never-satisfying power. What the capitalist, like the sadist, is unable to grasp is that the process in which he is engaged is the true path to death, physical and psychological, since in his obsession with an unattainable and insatiable goal, he is compelled to destroy not only the other, and the environment, but himself as well. Appearance to him is the opposite of the reality, for, tragically for us all, just as in a sadomasochistic dynamic envisioned psychologically, acknowledging dependence -- that is, giving up the impossible enterprise -- would allow the emergence of a dialectic tension which alone is capable of sustaining life.

Yet, there is still another dimension to the picture. Another motive for the capitalist's continuing, infinite quest may be an ironic, peculiar dissatisfaction with any goal which has been attained. If a certain level of power has been reached, then what? The renewal of interest, curiosity, liveliness requires still another project. In terms of control over others, this might mean that, unconsciously at least, the power and acknowledgement of subordinates is not something the capitalist, as a person in a position of power, enjoys. I think here of Stanley Kubrick's film Full Metal Jacket, in which a clearly sadistic marine sergeant is the 'boss' of a platoon of

recruits. The sergeant appears to desire total compliance and subordination on the part of his unfortunate underlings. Yet, his response to two young marines belies his professions. The former, who is obviously frightened and awed by the sergeant, is nicknamed "Gomer Pyle" and continually browbeaten by him, while "Sergeant Joker, a young marine who holds his grounds and challenges the sergeant, is admired and given a promotion. If this dynamic characterizes the capitalist as well, one would expect that he, too, secretly wishes to be confronted, to be challenged by an equal rather than a subordinate. Why? At an unconscious level, this response probably indicates that the capitalist, like the sadist, is just as enmeshed in a symbiotic dynamic as is the worker, or the masochist. Consequently, wishing to be challenged may relate to an unconscious desire to acknowledge the dependence which is assiduously denied by the superior persona the capitalist adopts; it may relate to a desire to be rid of the anxiety of maintaining that persona. But, like the sadist, the capitalist will only reward disapproval in the mode of approval -- a small degree of confrontation can be brooked, but not a challenge which threatens to topple the system altogether. The latter is too frightening, too overwhelming, because the sadomasochistic system is that with which the capitalist associates life, assuming (incorrectly, according to this analysis) that no other

life is possible.

Rewarding disapproval in the mode of approval may be a criterion for hiring or promotions. Looking over books written about personnel requirements within industrial psychology, I noticed that, in addition to other factors, "independence" was often held to be important in personnel evaluations. For example, the author of a 1985 textbook on industrial psychology reports the conclusion of a nationwide survey of 100 personnel directors and managers (1/2 of whom worked for Fortune 500 companies) that they preferred job candidates who were a bit distanced, favoring those who did not seem to need a job badly over those who displayed obvious eagerness; nonetheless, though overconfidence was seen as preferable to shyness, the successful applicant should be enthusiastic and responsive about the particular¹⁷ job prospect. This accords easily with commonsensical understanding drawn from day-to-day experiences of the person who is 'good' seeming to possess a certain independent self-assurance, even if that person is an "applicant" (a position which structurally implies acknowledged need and dependence). Assuming two applicants with similar credentials, why might the more confident job candidate appear preferable? Returning to the analogy between the capitalist and the sadist, one would expect a person who seemed unambiguously dependent to be preferable. Yet, for the capitalist/sadist who projects outward his own

feelings and sentiments, the acknowledgement of dependency accords with inferiority and is to be feared and avoided. Moreover, and probably more to the point, the person who seems needy is a little too capable of being controlled, and therefore incapable of providing authentic recognition. On the other hand, managing to hire someone who is slightly distant, and therefore seems to be a more valued commodity to the capitalist, reverts to the capitalist's sense of his own value as well. (This dynamic is reminiscent of the dynamic between the infatuated lover and her or his beloved with which we began. Their, and my, interaction was also commodified in this sadomasochistic direction, so that the more valued lover whose approval needed to be seductively captured also tended to be the one who was distant, unavailable and relatively disapproving -- though not entirely disapproving, for then the dynamic could not come into existence.)

According to some of the literature on industrial psychology, promotions, too, might be influenced by a desire for a certain independence within the generally dependent character of the capitalistic employee/employer relationship. To take another example, in a sort of how-to book of employment entitled Survival in the Office, Andrew Durbin urges the company subordinate who wishes to get ahead to help the boss succeed, to remember that the boss has problems too (just as Hochschild's stewardesses

were exhorted to think about the passenger's situation when anger arose at that passenger's possibly obnoxious behavior), to discover the boss's objectives, and to display loyalty rather than disloyalty. These tidbits of advice seem consistent with the conscious expectations of a worker who work has cast in the masochistic position. But just a few pages later, Dubrin goes on to say that if the employee wishes to get a promotion, to "stay on the move," more than loyalty is required: one must take "initiatives," as someone he names Gloria did not: "...Hardworking, dedicated Gloria made the mistake so many loyal employees make. She waited passively for promotions to come to her without taking the initiative to alter her career path...Gloria should have displayed much fancier footwork earlier in her career." In Chapter 2 entitled "A Guide to Power Grabbing," the first rule of thumb mentioned is to "Be Distinctive and Formidable," the second to "Maintain Alliances with Powerful People." No contradiction is cited between the two rules but then, again, demonstrating contradiction is not the subject matter of Survival in the Office. Employees are urged to show independence and to take initiatives, yet too much initiative is just as problematic. In Top Executive Performance: 11 Keys to Success and Power, authors Cohen and Cohen, who also run management training seminars, present the case of two vice presidents, of whom only one rose to be company

president. The first vice president worked just as hard as the second, and may even have been more productive than his competitor. However, the second vice president was the one who, unlike the first, consulted with and constantly reported back to the 'boss.' According to the Cohens', the second was better at "marketing himself" as a result:

"Therefore, take note: Successful marketing to your boss will determine how well you do..." "Try to find out about what kind of communication (written or verbal) your boss likes, and then use it...", "Positioning has to do with where you position yourself relative to other managers as perceived by your boss..you want to position yourself for your strengths so that you will be perceived as strong"²¹

(this last exhortation whether or not you actually are strong). Or, as Robert and Dorothy Bolton put it in a 1984 American Management Association publication, one must learn to adjust one's own "social style" to that of others if "performance" is to be improved and one is to fit in well²² with the workplace and one's boss. Even the word

"performance" takes us back full circle to the situation of the prototypical masochist, acceptable only under certain conditions -- i.e. accepting the rules of the game as they were promulgated by the sadist. And these rules demand both that the masochist place the interests of the other ahead of her or his own, and yet very subtly reward strength, independence and initiative.

Thus, what I take to be a very definite capitalist capitalist psychology begins to emerge: it is a psychology of excessive conditionality, loving only when love is earned and therefore not really loving at all. Existence cannot be its own justification, deserving support for no other reason than simply because it is, but must be justified. Put slightly differently, the psychosocial organization of capitalist society is not based on the belief that human beings are worthwhile, worthy of food, shelter and clothing as consonant with love, for no reason other than because they are human, but must deserve and earn their survival.

This begs the issue of whether an 'unconditional' sense of worthiness is possible, raising the philosophic question of whether any society could function without conditions, rules and regulations, etc. How could a particular work organization not have some rules, how could some criteria of 'better' and 'worse' not exist amidst hiring practices, even in the most restructured and seemingly utopian of social structures? In fact, it would be entirely utopian to make this type of blanket contention. Instead, an answer may lie in distinguishing between what I will call 'limits' and 'conditions.' The notion of 'limits' might again draw inspiration from a conception of childrens' development: it is cliched within psychological commonsense that children require some degree of dis-

cipline and limits to their activities, without which they in fact will not feel loved. The logic behind this truism is that limitations are tied to both the child's physical survival and social survival in the world, and therefore a complete lack of discipline from parents will be interpreted by the child as a lack of concern for its well-being. However, if the discipline does not stem from sadistic tendencies within the parent, the child will understand that its own failure to abide by these limits and 'discipline' will not mean total rejection, withdrawal of love and psychological abandonment for the child. Should these dire and traumatic consequences result, I would say that the child did not feel 'limits' but 'conditions,' conditions which will tend to cast the child masochistically precisely because she or he perceives that behind 'disciplinary measures' is not love and caring but hostility and perhaps even hate. A similar distinction can be made with regard to social systems, which may provide 'limits' to action which do not have to equate with 'conditions.' Thus, even in a socially and psychologically transformed society, students could not, for example, attack or continually disrupt the classroom situation nor would a given person in a workplace be liked even if she or he refused to cooperate with others. Yet, these 'limits' would stop short of becoming 'conditions' in that the offending party would not face

a sense of being utterly rejected and thrown from a human community if she or he refused to accept the types of authority which would hopefully stem from socially chosen and (again hopefully) non-arbitrary decisions. Conditions, of course, reign in capitalist societies and indeed, as I argue in conclusion, in communist societies as well. Limits might hold true in another more radical society of future envisionment. Moreover, in a different type of society where one was able to express anger without radical social consequences, there might be more of an ability to deal with rules and regulations -- the present excessiveness of rules and regulations assume that if workers were not controlled, manipulated and coerced, they would never come to work. But is this really the case? Freud's insights are useful here in suggesting that were feelings allowed to be expressed, they would not need to be 'acted out.' If the student could protest and the child say she or he felt guilt-mongered or the worker feel that participation at work was possible, accepting limits would be far less painful -- thus, changing conditions into limits, a change which allows for greater expression of reservations about those limits, would probably facilitate rather than inhibit social fulfillment.

But the superordinate capitalist accepts the subordinate worker under certain conditions and certain conditions only. The worker/masochist must seize initiative and be

able to work 'independently' (exhortations curiously akin to those given the student of the last chapter) only so long as these tasks are performed under the aegis of the capitalist/sadist's power resting untouched, unquestioned and unquestionable. Corresponding to this at an emotional and psychological level is that the employee, or worker, like the masochist can express some emotions but not others. "Emotional labor" must be invoked, not only at certain service sector jobs, as Hochschild argues, but to some extent at any sort of labor which entails a petrified structure of dominance and submission. Above all, anger is taboo, and must be disguised if felt at all. Yet, how could anger not exist to some extent at the realization that one's ability to earn a living, to physically survive, is utterly contingent on saying the right thing, looking the right way, performing properly, "weighing in" at the prescribed level, or any of thousands of other subtle gestures which form a sort of psychic if not biological straitjacket? One would feel anything but cared about under conditions of such excessive conditionality and psychic restrictiveness. One is unequivocally rejected and abandoned psychologically and socially, in terms of one's physical as well as emotional survival.

The situation is quite analogous to that of the child who has little choice but to develop masochistically.

thereby remaining symbiotically attached to and dependent upon her or his parent(s). The child may act masochistically, but in Freudian terms, anger has been turned against the self rather than at the parent who provokes it by failing to lovingly support the child's separation and potential attainment of both independence and dependence. Yet, for a Freudian, anger as a form of energy cannot have disappeared entirely. Where has it gone? One argument presented here is that it is turned against the self (dominant masochism), but has the ever-present potential of being reactivated in a sadistic manifestation (vis a vis a vis subordinate sadism). Viewed from an existential perspective, masochism creates anger, too, because it cannot but fail at its apparent objective of winning unconditional approval from the other. But what happens to the anger of the employed person, the worker? A similar anger may have been activated before by other social encounters, perhaps in the family or at school. On the other hand, she or he may have managed to avoid it until this juncture. In either case, the tendency toward masochism implicit within the situation at work will in all likelihood create emotions which cannot entirely be repressed or repressed indefinitely.

Perhaps anger provoked in an employed person by the veiled masochistic situation at work unfolds outside the workplace in other locales where its expression is not as threatening. It might find expression in a setting where

the worker is more powerful relative to a less powerful other, in contrast to the situation at work where the worker is distinctly less so than the capitalist. For instance, referring back to the traditional family discussed in Chapter 5, the male worker who is cast masochistically at the office, due to capitalism's structure, may relate in a more sadistic mode to a wife and children over whom he feels a greater degree of control, due to the structure of patriarchy and the privileges it historically bestowed. That this anger arose originally at the workplace may not at all be consciously realized. Or a woman who feels powerless and belittled at both workplace and, in the traditional nuclear family, relative to her husband as well, may find pleasure (again, not at all necessarily consciously) and some emotional release of repressed anger in the way she interacts with her relatively powerless and dependent children. This might similarly characterize the teacher's relationship with students, a situation which links the social institutions of education and employment: a given teacher may feel powerless relative to a boss located above, and vent some degree of anger relative to less powerful students below. This anger may not seem at face value to take a sadistic form, bearing a greater resemblance to masochism -- the teacher may be overly solicitous to students, the father or mother inspire guilt in children by extreme and apparently self-sacrificing behavior. Yet, behind these postures may be a desire for control over, and

fear of separation from the other, feelings which may in many cases originate in a feeling of powerlessness encountered at work.

There is another possibility as well, drawn now from a Weberian more than a specifically Marxist mode of analysis. One of Weber's most crucial contributions to social theory, a contribution which provides a useful supplement to Marx's observations, is his positing of bureaucracy as a uniquely modern form. According to Weber, bureaucracy has slowly pervaded all forms of social organization, including not only corporations but government agencies and even unions. Consequently, bureaucracy is a modern problem which would have to be addressed in any socialist system which supplanted a capitalistic one; to Weber, the Soviet Union would appear as its own oppressive "iron cage" because of the presence of massive bureaucracies. Following from this Weberian analysis is the expectation, which correctly accords with empirical reality, that huge organizations within the capitalist context would be characterized by greater and greater gradations of hierarchical layers between superordinates and subordinates. In a book on American monopoly capitalist organization, Richard Edwards portrays the phenomenon of job stratification as one of the most significant transformations of the 20th century workplace. Edwards argues that there have been three types of control used by capitalists since the turn of the century to discipline a potentially problematic workforce:

simple control (or direct physical coercion between capitalist and worker, using foremen as intermediaries), technical control (which is embedded in technology itself, for example, speed-up processes) and bureaucratic control. It is the last which has been found to be most effective:

The defining feature of bureaucratic control is the institutionalization of hierarchical power. 'Rule of law' -- the firm's law -- replaces 'rule by supervisor command' in the direction of work, the procedures for evaluating workers' performance, and the exercise of the firm's sanctions and rewards; supervisors and workers alike become subject to the dictates of 'company policy.' Work becomes highly stratified; each job is given its distinct title and description; and impersonal rules govern promotion. 'Stick with the corporation,' the worker is told, 'and you can ascend up the ladder.' The company promises the worker a career. 23

More specifically, bureaucratization means that in most workplace settings, whether they be multinational corporations or welfare state bureaucracies, many people will find that they may be both subordinate and superordinate, both bossed and boss (even if, as frequently, the latter capacity is negligible). At the Polaroid Corporation, a case study cited by Edwards, 9,000 employees were classified for purposes of regulations and benefits into 6,397 workers covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and paid on an hourly basis, and 3,016 "exempt" employees who were salaried. Within and without this division were 18 different job families, 300 job titles and 14 different pay grades. This system resulted in 2,100 "individual slots"²⁴ for the 6,397 hourly workers. According to Edwards, this type of stratification plays a role in effecting

"bureaucratic control" because it internally divides the workforce and reinforces this division in terms of supposedly 'objective' laws. I would add that in psychological terms, the effectiveness of bureaucratic control's insidious hold is its tying the worker into an infinitely regressing sadomasochistic structure. For in a highly stratified bureaucratic and capitalistic workplace such as the Polaroid example Edwards uses, a given employee will often be both bossed and boss. Subordinate to one unit head, the worker, now redefined with a new title (so that, for example, the former appellation "secretary" is now transformed into an "administrative assistant"), may be put in charge of his or her own few subordinates. Angry feelings can then be redirected, not at all necessarily at a conscious level, toward others over whom has relative power -- its redirection functions as a kind of unconscious compensation. In my own experience, having worked at a large New York City law firm for four years, I watched a process of corporate bureaucratization take place which created many new jobs and stratified gradations. Secretaries were low on the totem pole; above them were floor supervisors of secretaries who were themselves supervised by a firm secretarial supervisor who was supervised by a personnel director who reported to a lower level attorney who reported to a higher level attorney, etc., etc., etc. And while secretaries were certainly not if high status in the firm, they were considered to be, and

generally felt themselves, relatively privileged employees in comparison to xerox operators and messengers, themselves hooked into subsidiary chains of authority.

It is possible, then, that anger induced by a tendency toward masochism implicit within the structure of a bureaucratic and capitalistic workplace is rechanneled toward subordinates, rather than toward either one's particular superior or, more importantly, into indignation at the system as a whole. That some degree of anger can be vented toward an other over whom one has at least relative control facilitates the perpetuation of the sadomasochistic symbiotic system as a whole, and ensures a certain level of psychological sustainability within it. Originating at least in part from "social facts" of capitalist workplace structure, compounded by patriarchal imperatives which pervade the family, a sadomasochistic character structure is 'engendered' en masse, definable in terms of one's being linked into triangular, socially general structures of simultaneous domination and dominance. One may be constituted by structural tendencies in these social institutions toward either dominant masochism or dominant sadism, but the potential constantly exists for inner transmutation into the subordinate opposite. Such transmutation, from sadist to masochist or masochist to sadist, stances often coexisting in the same person relative to different others in altered settings, superficially appear to represent different phenomena. Yet, they are

fundamentally related, merely different sides of the same dynamic. The opposite of sadism is not masochism, nor the opposite of masochism sadism, but rather something altogether different -- a radical psychological and social alternative which transcends the characteristics of the dynamic altogether by acknowledging the validity of both sides of human existence, dependence and independence. For a society which in its various institutions generates sadomasochistic mass character structure, however, social and psychological symbiosis means that: a) persons feel excessively dependent insofar as they fear self-assertion of a potentially separating anger will result in loss of membership and approval from the social community of which they are a part, and b) that independence which does appear may often take a sadistic form because it masks and obfuscates the symbiotic dependence which lies beneath it. This analysis renders sociological diagnoses like that made by Christopher Lasch about America's "culture of narcissism" questionable, as it does popular renditions on the theme of the obsessively self-interested 'me' generation. Rather, it may be that people are excessively concerned with themselves because they are excessively worried about the opinions of others, that this apparent narcissism disguises a frantic inability to feel secure. Thus, whether this mass sadomasochistic character structure manifests itself in what is taken to be more traditionally 'psychological forms' (in intimate relationships of love, between family members or

friends) or in more 'sociological' loci (such as at work or school) is less important than that both suggest a similar underlying dynamic. It is this latter point which I sense has often been theoretically ignored, and which renders a distinction between the personal and the political, the psychological and the social, academic.

Nevertheless, at the same time, the specificity of each arena cannot be overlooked. I have explored the possibility that from a dynamic perspective, the capitalist seeks disapproval in the mode of approval from subordinate employees in an analogous fashion to the sadist's paradoxical expectations of the masochist. In addition, I have tried to develop the implications of this attitude for the worker cast in a masochistic position, suggesting that subordinate sadism may unfold both at and outside the workplace context. But how does the worker respond in the mode of dominant masochism? Does the worker, like the classic masochist, seek approval within the mode of disapproval? Secondly, have I exaggerated the degree to which workers direct anger away from its true origins? I have not yet considered the fact that here, too, masochism is merely a tendency which may or may not be played out, and is often belied by actual worker protest.

To repeat, people who work for wages in capitalist environments are not intrinsically masochistic, but rather are forced into a masochistic position and mode of interaction as a defense, a method of survival where no

other preferable choice has been presented. This may explain the apparent paradox that the prototypical masochist of Chapter 2 sought approval for independent strivings, or approval within the mode of disapproval, although from a sadistic persona incapable of bestowing it. Do many people employed within a capitalistic context exhibit the same paradoxical tendency? Do they seem to be motivated by desires for personal recognition and fulfillment of independent creative exertion, desires which mock any plausibility conceivably attributed to innate masochism on the part of the worker? In addition, the fact remains that significant worker rebellion has existed and continues to exist within monopoly capitalism. Thus, it is not uncommon just to seek approval within the dynamic but to attempt (as with Willis' "lads" of the last chapter) to break out of it altogether.

A debate exists about the nature of worker reaction to the workplace situation within Marxist-influenced literature on the subject. According to Michael Burawoy's fascinating account of this controversy, some theorists contend that workers form a separate and distinct culture in opposition to capitalist imperatives, while others see them as coming to participate in the capitalist "game." In the former category, he places not only Marxists like Cornelius Castoriadis but industrial psychologists and organizational theorists who have tried to study work patterns to better control workers within them. (Burawoy places Elton Mayo, an

important figure in the history of industrial psychology who taught at Harvard Business School in the 1930s, in the latter category.) Burawoy quotes Castoriadis as follows: "... 'people are forced to ensure the functioning of the system half of the time against the system's own rules and therefore in struggle against it...when the [shop-floor collective] constantly constitutes and reconstitutes itself in 'informal' groups that respond to both the requirements of the work process and to personal affinities, it can only be actively opposing to capitalist principles new principles of productive and social organization and a new view of work.' " ²⁵ Consequently, both Marxists and observers like Mayo have alleged that workers purposely restrict output as a form of sabotage and protest. Burawoy has quite another perspective, culled from his experience working as a machine shop operative at a small plant in Illinois; this experience formed the basis of his doctoral thesis, and by coincidence was gained at the site of Donald Roy's Roy's thesis about the identical shop Roy's thesis having been written in 1935, forty years earlier). In Burawoy's opinion, it is not why so many people rebel from their work situation under capitalism which needs to be explained, but why so many people do not rebel. His explanation is that rather than workers forming a culture in opposition to the capitalistic enterprise (as Castoriadis and, from a different viewpoint Mayo, would contend), they come to participate, with management's ready consent, in a "game" which contributes to

the system's maintenance and perpetuation. Burawoy calls this game "making out." "Making out" is the process of workers coming to actively participate in trying to do the best they can on a particular job, irrespective of monetary gain and the fact that greater output accrues predominantly to the capitalist's benefit. Since the machinists studied by Roy and Burawoy worked on a piece rate basis, they, too, earned more money with greater quantities of output. But their deeper motivation in "making out," in working as hard and skillfully as they could even when less effort would pass unnoticed, was the desire to make boring labor into a more challenging game, relatively more fulfilling in that they were succeeding at something -- even if that something also accorded with the capitalist's interest. (Burawoy's research thus led him to conclude that restriction of output resulted less from protest than from conditions set by the capitalist as to desired quantity.) Consequently, workers were hooked into a systemic "game" from which they garnered psychic satisfactions above and beyond the coercive roots of the capitalist/worker relationship. This "game" functioned to maintain the capitalist dynamic without constant and visible exercise of force. Burawoy's perspective is in this sense analogous to Chodorow's analysis of mothering. The reproduction of working would also be impossible without perpetual coercion unless intrinsic psychological satisfactions were somehow present. These satisfactions

relate to the invoking in workers of the ordinary human desire to be recognized, to feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment even within the parameters set by the capitalist/other. Note some of Burawoy's observations:

The rewards of making out are defined in terms of factors immediately related to the labor process--reduction of fatigue, passing time, relieving boredom, and so on -- and factors that emerge from the labor process--the social and psychological rewards of making out on a tough job as well as the social stigma and psychological frustration attached to failing on a gravy job....It is not so much the monetary incentive that concretely coordinates the interests of management and worker but rather the play of the game itself, which generates a common interest in the outcome and in the game's continuity....Games do, indeed, arise from worker initiatives, from the search for means of enduring subordination to the labor process, but they are regulated, coercively where necessary, by management. Once a game is established, however, it can assume a dynamic of its own...26

Burawoy's perspective accords with that of other writers who have similarly done 'field research' interviewing and themselves working at factories and in other employment situations. Returning to Barbara Garson's study, she, too, believed that

Whatever creativity goes into sabotage, a more amazing ingenuity goes into manufacturing goals and satisfactions on jobs where measurable achievement has been all but rationalized out. Somehow in an unending flow of parts or papers, with operations subdivided beyond any recognizable unit of accomplishment, people still find ways to define certain stacks of work as 'theirs,' certain piles as 'today's' and 'tomorrow's.' Almost everyone wants to feel she is getting something accomplished -- to see that stack of paddles, the growing pile of dark meat, or to master the job blindfolded since there's not much to master the other way. 27

With Burawoy, Garson would agree that the deskilling, progressive subdivision of tasks and consequent degradation

which Braverman cites in Labor and Monopoly Capital as fundamental to work within 20th century monopoly capitalism, have nonetheless not been able to eradicate workers' determination to find some satisfaction in an otherwise seemingly oppressive situation. Yet, Burawoy goes even further, suggesting that the capitalist himself (or herself) may often play an active and approving part, encouraging these satisfactions -- within limits. That the capitalist plays an active role in the "making out" game Burawoy describes contradicts an argument made by other Marxists (usually the same writers who took restriction of output to be consciously oppositional), namely, that capitalists opposed making out" because it resulted in greater wages for the worker employed on a piece-rate basis (and therefore less profit for the capitalist). Rather, Burawoy claims that making out was in the interest of the capitalist insofar as it kept workers hooked into a psychosocial system; workers might question the particular rules of the making out game, but rarely the game itself. Consequently, according to his account, making out may be reinforced by capitalists, managers and foremen within a given plant. If the dynamic was not reinforced by the capitalist/other (or the foreman or manager taken to be the capitalist's representative), the game would not have the capacity to engage the worker's energies for it would hold no rewards; simultaneously, if the worker felt that the game's rewards were guaranteed and too easy to attain, the game would also

hold no interest. For the game to continue, it had to have a certain degree of uncertainty -- the worker had to work for rewards. Yet, it could not be totally unrewarding lest²⁸ the worker, demoralized, abandon the game altogether. Here, the game is reminiscent of sadomasochistic psychological processes, particularly the relationship between the lover and beloved whose interaction I described as sadomasochistic in Chapter 1. The worker can only be cast in a masochistic position if she or he receives approval of an inconsistent nature. Similarly, for a masochistic lover to take part in a sadomasochistic dynamic requires that the sadistic beloved be at least sporadically approving -- without some 'positive feedback,' there would be no basis for interaction to be initiated or continued. If, on the other hand, the beloved were loving on a more consistent basis, the dynamic would not by definition be sadomasochistic. For the masochist to be involved in a sadomasochistic psychosocial system means that she or he must work for an approval which comes with the meeting of certain conditions but which is never entirely certain. As psychologists and psychoanalysts know about children, inconsistency is thus a highly effective means of the child staying hooked into a symbiotic system, never knowing when a positive message will be forthcoming, yet spurred on by the experience of it coming once in a while. Skinnerians have come to a similar conclusion from experiments with inconsistent positive reinforcement of rats, a sad commentary indeed on day-to-day interactional

processes within workplaces pervaded by capitalist psychology.

Thus, Burawoy's study can be interpreted as showing not only that workers, like the prototypical masochist, seek approval within the mode of disapproval, but as demonstrating an essential paradox at the heart of this 'masochism.' A masochist by definition is allegedly self-destructive, supposedly taking pleasure in painful experiences. I am arguing that, on the contrary, the worker comes to be in a masochistic situation only as a defense, based on the need for psychological and physical survival. The absurdity of masochism as innate and static is demonstrable in the worker/masochist seeking the opposite behavior to that which is conventionally associated with masochism. The worker/masochist seeks approval within the mode of disapproval precisely because she or he is trying, possibly unconsciously, to separate from the dynamic, to garner an independence from inside a relationship that has fostered excessive dependence. She or he may be motivated, then, by inner impulses which seek to transcend the sadomasochistic dynamic itself toward a more sustainable interaction of simultaneous dependence and independence between self and other. At their deepest level, these impulses may originate in an (again, possibly unconscious) intuition that relationships without this balance and dialectical tension are ultimately destructive, pointing toward the dynamic's death rather than sustainability within

life. In psychological terms, the impulse toward separation is reminiscent of children who in their first years of life seek instinctively both to develop independence and to be (dependently) supported in this development -- their desire for this balance appears to be intuitive. Masochism which develops later does so because the child cannot separate without great cost. Yet, it is my contention that the desire for both independence and dependence continues and is re-enacted over and over to redress in later life processes stymied earlier. Unfortunately, the corrected re-enactment of this early drama is often sought with characters who resemble the original actor(s) or actress(es), who can no more allow a different script than could the original. The worker cast in a masochistic position may, as Burawoy would argue, have had no analogous experience in childhood whatsoever. Or, as I would argue, she or he may or may not have had psychologically encounters in the past which resemble the sadomasochistic mode of interaction. More important is that the work structure itself generates an analogous psychology which resembles the child's situation at least insofar as the capitalist, like the parent interacting in a sadistic mode, has no intention of allowing an authentic separation to occur. The worker/masochist strives for approval, recognition and independence from a capitalist/sadist who is willing to grant these feelings only sporadically and conditionally, wishing only to keep the worker engaged in an ongoing and dependent pursuit. Yet,

the strivings themselves are real and critically important, demonstrating a recurring desire on the part of the worker/masochist to break out of the sadomasochistic dynamic. This recurring desire evidences a constant potential for the system's demise (for, if the masochist were to break from the dynamic, the sadist would be forced to alter his or her form of interaction as well), a demise unrealizable unless the worker/masochist is able to break entirely with the capitalist/sadist and look elsewhere -- to self, supportive others as intervening third parties -- for approval. For the capitalists/sadist will resist attempts to break away from the dynamic either a) coercively, or b) by injecting new and seductive doses of approval into the situation (in this strategy, I would include paternal capitalism and efforts at 'cooptation').

The history of industrial psychology is at once the history of these strategies to control an unruly workforce. Ironically, the field's longevity is ensured by the fact that it has never succeeded at its alleged goal of control -- for the worker, cast in a prototypically masochistic position, attempts over and over (albeit unsuccessfully) to break away from a problematic form of interaction. Edwards detailed this history in Contested Terrain, elaborating what appears in the 20th century to have been a zigzagging dialectical pattern of interaction between methods of direct coercive control on the part of the capitalist, labor struggle, more paternalistic methods on the part of the

capitalist met by more struggle which led to renewed coercion, etc. Following "brute repression" of worker rebellion against a rigidifying industrial capitalism at the turn of the century came a period of "welfare capitalism." It was hoped that welfare benefits

....would persuade workers of the corporations' genuine concern for their well-being and, by actually improving their existence, undermine worker militance. In a somewhat more heavy-handed vein, the participating corporations also sought to bind their workers to them by creating stronger dependence--a dependence based not only on the worker's income but also on essential services. For example, workers who joined strikes found that their leases required them to vacate company-owned housing immediately...Throughout the period of the most intense strike threat, McCormick family members dangled before McCormick Works employees the prospect of substantial stock bonuses for 'faithful' workers. 29

Yet, of course, the underlying inequality of the structural situation remained untouched. The structural situation, as Edwards describes it, was fundamentally sadomasochistic in that an excessive conditionality clearly reigned: only workers who did not object to, question or express anger at the power relations at the workplace would be 'rewarded' with welfare benefits or stock bonuses. No authentic independence or equality, no balance between exercising this independence and nevertheless needing to be part of a human community, was possible within this game, amidst these rules: if the worker attempted to separate from the social symbiosis the capitalist wished to create, she or he would be punished with rejection and abandonment, physical and psychological. Not surprisingly, the "ungrateful" workers

rebelled, and a series of huge strikes occurred at International Harvester and U.S. Steel in 1916 and 1919. Edwards comments that "...in reading the transcripts of the company executives' statements, one also senses something more than calculated play-acting, more even than honest anger at the ingratitude of the workers. What one perceives is the capitalists' realization of the bankruptcy of welfarism as a method of coopting and controlling workers."

30

Undoubtedly, it is not coincidental that a new method of control, scientific management as developed by the infamous Frederick Taylor, was seized upon with interest in many places where welfare capitalism had failed. Taylor, the son of a wealthy Philadelphia family who rejected a law career in favor of four years working as a gang boss at the Midvale Steel Works, based his system of "scientific management" on impressions garnered from his own experience of work. Taylor would have heartily agreed with Burawoy that workers exert significant independent control over their labor; just as passionately would he have disagreed with the latter's contention that restricted output was not intentionally oppositional. According to Taylor, the grave error of capitalist efforts to dominate labor was that too much potential for independent control of the work process rested in workers' hands; the capitalist, Taylor boldly admits, was thereby rendered uncomfortably dependent on workers (despite his or her contrary ideological protestations). "Scientific

management" would correct the problem by instituting time and motion studies aimed at wresting this control from the workers, allowing management to calculate and rationalize a work process raised to new levels of technological precision. According to both Braverman and Edwards, the enduring results of scientific management's influence would be to generate the afore-mentioned mode of "technical control" through speed-up and other processes built into the work process itself. But, in terms of my concern here, scientific management conformed to a coercive rather than paternalistic manifestation of sadomasochism at the workplace. The sadomasochistic texture of scientific management was not in the least bit subtle. Here is Braverman, quoting from Taylor's The Principles of Scientific Management in regard to a worker named Schmidt who had the misfortune of encountering the would-be lawyer turned industrial 'scientist':

'Schmidt, are you a high priced man?'

'Vell, I don't know vat you mean.'

.....

'Well, if you are a high-priced man, you will do exactly as this man tells you to-morrow, from morning till night. When he tells you to pick up a pig and walk, you pick it up and you walk, and when he tells you to sit down and rest, you sit down. You do that straight through the day. And what's more, no back talk. Do you understand that? When this man tells you to walk, you walk; when he tells you to sit down, you sit down, and you don't talk back at him. Now you come on to work here to-morrow morning and I'll know before night whether you are really a high-priced man or not.'

.....

'This seems to be rather rough talk. And indeed it would be if applied to an educated mechanic, or even an intelligent laborer. With a man of the

mentally sluggish type of Schmidt it is appropriate and not unkind, since it is effective in fixing his attention on the high wages which he wants and away from what, if it were called to his attention, he probably would consider impossibly hard work...31

Blatantly coercive, scientific management failed as a perfectible mode of labor control even as its technological rationality became widespread. It failed, writes Edwards, because "workers simply fought it to a standstill. Taylor's claim that scientifically managed shops had never suffered a strike was contradicted by the record." ³² Labor opposition to the imposition of time and motion studies and speed-up was considerable, reflecting the clear realization on the part of the "mentally sluggish" workers that even the illusion of their independence was being appropriated. In terms of sadomasochism, interpreted both from a psychological and existential perspective, scientific management's failure also related to its inability to provide adequate positive reinforcement to workers cast in a masochistic position. This harks back to Schad-Somers' observation that a masochist must receive some positive affirmation, even if inconsistent, lest demoralization lead to a sadistic strategy of last resort -- an observation borne out in Burawoy's explication of the making out game in which both capitalist and worker participate. Scientific management of the Taylorist variety had nothing but money to offer the worker, an incentive Burawoy, Roy, Garson and others observed to offer necessary but insufficient satisfactions. One would think that the capitalist, of all

people, would understand that dimension of the dollar which is symbolic.

Returning to the chronological annals of industrial psychology, still another form of management control evolved in the late 20s and early 30s to deal with the "contradictions" Taylorism had not resolved. Prominent in this "human relations" school of industrial psychology were the already referred to Elton Mayo and his colleague at the Harvard business school, Roethlisberger, both of whose work drew inspiration from the well-known "Hawthorne Experiments" conducted at the Western Electric Company's facility of the same name. By Mayo's account, the experiments were initially undertaken to discover the effect of variable quantities of lighting on worker performance and job satisfaction. This part of the experiment was abandoned when it was found that workers who labored under conditions of dimmer lighting produced no less quantity of output than those who worked in full light. A second experiment was then commenced over a five year period, beginning in April 1927 and lasting until mid-1932. A group of six operatives who assembled telephone relays, all women, were segregated from the majority of their co-workers into an isolated physical space. The experiment proceeded to vary their work conditions over a 13 period sequence, with the majority of the early phases corresponding to an improvement in the workplace atmosphere. Workers' output was tested and seen to increase during the course of these reforms, such as in

response to short breaks being provided in the morning and afternoon, to the company paying for refreshments served during these breaks, to being let out a half an hour earlier each day, being able to rotate jobs, etc. But the experiment also yielded the result that the workers' output increased even during the ensuing phase in which each and every improvement was suddenly withdrawn. Mayo's conclusion, and that of the human relations school generally, was that output continued to increase due to a fundamental change in the quality of attention the workers were receiving. It was affected as well by a sense of workers having acquired a greater degree of self-determination: the women were consulted about subsequent phases and could occasionally even veto them, indicating that by my definition, the dynamic in which they were engaged was being reshaped in a less sadomasochistic direction. Mayo writes that "What the Company actually did for the group was to reconstruct entirely its whole industrial situation...the individual workers and the group had to re-adapt themselves to a new industrial milieu, a milieu in which their own self-determination and their social well-being ranked first and the work was incidental."³³ The new milieu included the "girls'" perception that they no longer were being bossed (though, as Mayo notes, their "...opinion is of course mistaken: in a sense they are getting closer supervision than ever³⁴ before.."), and their enjoyment of a situation in which

there was no one, no "bogey" or boss or slavedriver to
35
work up to. The obvious conclusion was not lost on Mayo,
namely, that contrary to bosses' both conscious and
unconscious fears, loosening or eschewing altogether the
hierarchical, dominance/submission structure of the coercive
capitalist work dynamic did not result in the grinding-to-a-
halt of the capitalist economy. In fact, output sharply
increased when the capitalist relaxed the tightness of his
grasp -- an apparent but existentially comprehensible
paradox. If such a thing were possible, Mayo would be the
father of a sophisticated and enlightened capitalist
paternalism -- his goal was not to overthrow capitalism but
to reform and humanize it for its own good, for its health
and longevity. His Human Problems of an Industrial
Civilization even chronicles, approvingly, Western
Electric having tested a 'progressive' interviewing
policy contemporaneous with the conducting of its Hawthorne
experiments. Workers were encouraged to express their
feelings to interviewers (Mayo prefers to use the term
"analyst" rather than interviewer or supervisor) trained to
listen to and not interrupt the worker. Mayo reports the
remarkable effect of this experimental interviewing
procedure on a former "problem" worker; owing to the
"emotional release" of having been able to express and
acknowledge to the interviewer her dislike of a supervisor,
who resembled a hated relative, the worker's attitude
improved and she was no longer a problem case. The Freudian

method itself, then, is incorporated by Mayo into his enlightened capitalism -- he, at least, could not be accused of ignoring the importance of psychological considerations, of failing to realize that emotions expressed are less likely to be 'acted out.'

The Hawthorne experiments, then, provide still another case study in the worker/masochist's desire to separate from the sadomasochistic dynamic, of her or his seeking recognition and approval of self-worth allegedly alien to the masochistic pursuit. They also demonstrate the effectivity for capitalism of acceding to this desire for at least some approval within an intrinsically disapproving mode, a mode which in fact structurally undermines authentic fulfillment of these desires. However, by providing a series of "perks," the experiments demonstrated that capitalism might be able to hook the worker into a psychological system which was in its own self-interest. Yet, with the coming of the Depression, Mayo's human relations approach was discredited. For one thing, in hard times, it was expensive. For another, it could be perceived as threatening to jettison the borders of the sadomasochistic dynamic in toto. To many capitalists less 'progressive' than Western Electric owners and managers, the notion of worker autonomy over conditions of the workplace and the idea that many workers enjoyed working without a boss may have been too anxiety-provoking -- these principles might lead to the game itself being overturned rather than

its rules simply being altered. Nonetheless, it seems to me that just as Braverman doubts reports that Taylorism was completely discredited (arguing instead that it was incorporated into the norms of capitalist technological rationality), Mayo's message was certainly not entirely lost on capitalists. Quite the contrary. Fears aroused in the 30s during the Depression era that the Communist threat could come to America, coupled with the economic necessity of reviving a failing economy, led to the revitalization of welfare capitalism in the Welfare State architected by the likes of Keynes and Roosevelt. Much more recently, the proliferation of stock option plans, worker management experiments (such as, for example, the now-defunct People's Express venture), and other combinations of benefit packages attest to capitalism's having adopted and perfected Hawthorne-inspired paternalism -- a strategy which simultaneously revitalizes the sadomasochistic sociopsychology. Yet, as with former methods of control, the underlying hierarchical structure with its accompanying bifurcations between dominant and subordinate, superior and inferior parties to the dynamic, remains untouched.

In sum, efforts on the part of people whose work situation tends to cast them masochistically to break away from this sadomasochistic dynamic will meet enormous resistance, of both a coercive and seductively paternalistic (inconsistently so) variety. The power of the capitalist, cast sadistically, to 'call the shots' indeed appears

overwhelming, for he or she has the power to withhold the means of not only psychological but basic physical survival as well. It is the capitalist who has historically been in the position to create what Durkheim called "social facts," conditions given to the employed person and not of her or his own making. I have been arguing that the psychological interaction between self and other, between the capitalist in a position of power and the worker in a position of powerlessness, tends to be analogous to a sadomasochistic dynamic and that this, too, constitutes a "social fact" within capitalist societies like our own. Nevertheless, not only the worker but the capitalist or manager or foreman or foreperson is trapped in the dynamic as well; the increasingly bureaucratic nature of this capitalism, with its complex forms of stratification, breeds incestuous forms of intercourse between sadist and masochist, masochist and sadist, boss and bossed. But only the worker, like the prototypical masochist, perceives her or his dependence and therefore wishes to separate, to break away, from the dynamic. In this respect, she or he is both psychologically and existentially one step closer to walking away. But how can the masochist -- whether cast in this position within the 'love' dynamic of an intimate relationship, the family, the education or at the workplace -- break away? How is separation from the dynamic as a whole possible when one is separating from an other who relates sadistically? I turn to these questions below.

* * * * *

What happened to the child who may have encountered conditions conducive to sadomasochism in the family, only to find variations on their basic theme reiterated at school, and finally finding herself or himself, now fully grown, feeling even more inferiorized at the workplace? In each of these locale, excessive dependence on the other was fostered in such a way that a balanced interaction between autonomy and connection with others could not be attained. The adolescent at school, and now the adult at the workplace, feels assaulted by worries about self-worth, feels insecure and inferior. Having found oneself in a potentially masochistic position made it unlikely self-confidence would be gained; self-confidence could only be developed out of the ability to exert oneself independently from an other upon whom one was nevertheless dependent. But now the child is an adult and becomes a parent, bringing the cycle back to its beginnings. How is the adult who was the child likely to feel toward a child of his or her own? If indeed the adult has come to feel insecure and inferior, symbiotically dependent, within the psychosocial, the sociopsychological world, he or she may desperately welcome a child who is likewise dependent. This child may be the only creature in relation to whom a feeling of power is possible. With the child, the adult feels a security based upon his or her power and the child's dependence, a security greater than

that he or she feels with anyone else in the world. And so it is possible, as Alice Miller argues in The Drama of the Gifted Child, that the adult will wish the child to be the parent, the adult to be the child. The adult may wish to re-enact with the child the drama which miscarried in her or his own childhood. But how is this possible if the child leaves, if this lovely dependent creature deserts me in favor of his or her own life, a life both separated from and yet interrelated with mine? I see the child desperately needing me to love her, him, even if she or he grows away, but how can I approve of a separation which takes away my own ability to separate, which takes away the pleasure of a power I lack throughout the remainder of my life? And so the adult is loathe to part with the child, and the child, like the parent who is also still a child, may be rendered similarly symbiotic. The cycle continues, coming full circle. How, if at all, can it be interrupted?

Chapter 7: Notes

1. Barbara Garson, All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), pp. 12-13.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

4. Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1974), pp. 368-369.

5. Ibid., p. 366.

6. Ibid., p. 296.

7. Ibid., p. 301.

8. Arlie Russell Hochschild, The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Ca.: The University of California Press, 1983), p. 10.

9. Ibid., pp. 8 and 11.

10. Ibid., p. 7.

11. Ibid., p. 11.

12. Of course, this type of labor, too, has clear psychological implications.

13. Hochschild, op cit., describing a training seminar at Delta, p. 25.

14. Ibid., p. 109.

15. Ibid., p. 102.

16. See, especially, Georg Lukacs, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" in History and Class Consciousness, op cit.

17. See L.N. Newell, Contemporary Industrial/Organizational Psychology (West Publishing: 1983).

18. See Andrew J. Dubrin, Chapter 1 of Survival in the Office (New York: Mason/Charter, 1977).

19. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
20. Ibid., p. 19.
21. William A. Cohen and Nurit Cohen, Top Executive Performance: 11 Keys to Success and Power (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), pp. 79-86.
22. See Robert Bolton and Dorothy Glover Bolton, Social Style/Management Style: Developing Productive Relationships (New York: American Management Association, 1984).
23. Richard Edwards, Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979), p. 21.
24. Ibid., pp. 133-134.
25. Michael Burawoy, Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 72-73.
26. Ibid., pp. 85-86.
27. Garson, op cit., Foreward, p. xi.
28. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
29. Edwards, op cit., pp. 91-92.
30. Ibid., p. 96.
31. Braverman, op cit., pp. 104-106, excerpted from Frederick W. Taylor's The Principles of Scientific Management.
32. Edwards, op cit., p. 103.
33. Elton Mayo, The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 73.
34. Ibid., p. 78.
35. Ibid.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

At the beginning of this work, I presented several reasons for my interest in writing about sadomasochism as a generalizable phenomenon and potential "social fact." The first had to do with my own experience in "relationships" between men and women, my curiosity about why I pursued one young man who seemed aloof and distant toward me while disdaining the attentions of another who claimed to be "in love" with me. That interest in better understanding my own psychic reactions extended to wonderment about why I observed so many others, friends and acquaintances, being drawn and repulsed in such similar fashion. So many people I encountered seemed to share a consciously or unconsciously self-denigrating sense telling them that a person who liked or cared for us must be somehow flawed: it was the person who withheld recognition, making it conditional upon earned favors and who by virtue of that structural characteristic was perceived as more valuable as a lover -- therefore reflecting more favorably on our own, obviously deflated self-esteem. Why? The enigma now seems less puzzling, linked to phenomena which are both psychological and sociological in origins, as those terms have traditionally been defined. For it is "psychology" which conventionally deals with the source of my stated enigma insofar as it involves conflicts arising from childhood, "sociology" which treats those aspects which might conceivably stem from encounters outside the psychodynamics of the family in

social institutions such as the corporation or academy. But the argument I try to suggest throughout the preceding chapters is that there may indeed be a crucial relationship between those various institutions insofar as each, for reasons intimately connected to its interface with the others, may create analogous and related patterns of interaction between self and other.

These patterns may be sadomasochistic in that they involve excessive dependence, forms of symbiosis which can occur inside the family (the psychoanalytic site which is generally the only locale in which symbiosis is usually mentioned) or outside it in institutions which also encourage symbiotic dependence. The significance of such psychosocial symbiosis is that, whether beginning in childhood or at school or at work, a tendency is created toward a dominant masochism in which one feels very dependent upon and unequal to an other. This other cannot be fully loving -- and here I intend the term love to be radically different from the "being in love" which characterizes the sadomasochistic lovers -- because this other cannot allow the dominant masochist to "separate," to achieve the simultaneous balance of dependence and independence which object relations theorists such as Mahler generalize from children to be developmental, human necessities. The self who cannot separate, positioned with this tendency toward masochism, will in all likelihood come to experience strong feelings of dependence. Indeed, she or

he has been rendered excessively dependent, denied the ability to gain a sense of confidence and independence, and looks to the sadistic other who appears well endowed with these characteristics. The fact that this sadistic other inferiorizes the person positioned masochistically accords with the latter's diminished feelings of self-worth. The masochist wishes to correct this sense of inferiority, and is willing to work at pleasing the sadistic other to have the negative self-judgment reversed. Thus, the appeal of a distant other, positioned sadistically, who allows for the playing out of a drama in which the masochist casts herself or himself in "love." In contrast, there is no script for the love of a more approving other, an other who cannot bestow value by first withholding it, and who seems suspicious, anomalous to the masochist's negative self-image. Yet, the effort fails, for the sadistic other has an interest in the masochist's dependence and the masochist does not feel sufficiently strong to search internally rather than externally for the approval and love which has been denied. The masochist's anger at her or his incapable judgment of inferiority may then be transferred into a subordinate sadism, released not above toward the original sadistic persona but to an other who appears positioned masochistically relative to the original masochist.

As we have seen, this tendency toward dominant masochism (and its correlate, subordinate sadism), toward feelings of inferiority, dependence and a damaged sense of

self-worth, may have numerous sources. It may have evolved within the family, rooted perhaps in a patriarchal system which has historically placed all children in positions of extreme dependence upon the two adults who happen to be their parents. This same system of gender classification has rigidly bifurcated the world of intimacy and dependence into associations with women, that of autonomy and independence into associations with men. The sphere of women has been forcibly ghettoized and inferiorized, resulting in "sexual politics" that verge on creating a system of gendered sadomasochism within the family. Or the tendency toward dominant masochism may be based on hierarchical relationships as experienced at school, or reflect patterns of inferiority and superiority experienced in a modern bureaucratic capitalist structure within offices and factories. The sense of powerlessness, worthlessness and inferiority (what could be called an attack on the self) encountered in any or all of these spheres may then affect the psychic dynamics within the family, causing symbiotic patterns to be produced and reproduced in relations between children and parents at home. If one feels powerless, one is particularly dependent on one's children, perhaps the only sphere in which power vis a vis others is ever felt. One needs and "loves" these children desperately, and is understandably loathe to let them go -- they may provide a sense of self-importance far too rare in any other aspect of one's life.

But is it only these hierarchically organized external systems, whether they be patriarchy or capitalist or bureaucratic structures or a combination of them all, which creates this tendency toward sadomasochism en masse? If outer social structures were changed, would sadomasochism simply vanish? I have come full circle, back to the other reason for my interest in sadomasochism -- the intellectual debate on sadomasochistic sexuality with which many feminists have been concerned since 1982. That debate hinted at the deeper question of sadomasochism's transhistoric or more socially specific origins. In examining various aspects of institutions such as the family, education and work, I have attempted to persuade the reader that changeable social structures are, at the very least, implicated at sadomasochism's roots. But what of arguments formerly referred to which suggest causes of sadomasochism not easily tied to social structure?

Three such arguments immediately strike me as deserving consideration. Some Freudians, for example, might object that children will in all cases feel enraged at their actual dependence, a dependence not mediated or ameliorated by social institutions. Perhaps the child will always long for total power, power which erases this dependence; or, possibly, a given child dreads separation, wishing to remain symbiotically attached to the parent or, in Mahler's terms's, to the mother: these longings may form the stuff either of actual interactions or of associations with sexual

fantasies. Secondly, someone acquainted with Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophic speculations in Being and Nothingness might contend that anxiety about death leads human beings to passionately desire others' subjection: the oppression of an other allows one to feel secure in the world because that other is fixed; the enslavement of the oppressed provides an anchor against which the oppressor can continue the illusion of freedom. (Weber's Protestant, who I suspect evolves into the accumulating sadomasochistic capitalist, may fall within this explanation -- again, the motivations of the very first accumulating capitalist, who drives the others on competitively, cannot be entirely explained in terms of a social structuralist position.) Obviously, death as a source of continued sadomasochistic longings cannot be simplistically affected by social intervention. The third and final argument relates to the excessive conditionality which has been deplored throughout this work. Though utterly deplorable, it is, again, completely utopian to expect conditionality to disappear in a society which was organized around more humane and compassionate principles. Evaluations and judgments are inescapable, in that they, too, in all likelihood relate to questions of identity: I know I am A because I am not B and have no other way of knowing myself. Therefore, I always have an interest in distinguishing and judging myself in contrast with others by whom I can be defined -- in a sense, I will continue to need someone to be deviant in relation to me regardless of the

historically specific situation in which I find myself. Related to the inescapability of some degree of conditionality is that some rules and regulations may continue to characterize work and school situations in even the most idyllic of communities. It is highly dubious that anything will go in the best of all possible worlds, And consequently, given the inescapability of conditionality, it is just as inescapable that people will feel angry at having to meet these conditions. They may fantasize or enact their desires to escape their grip, or become greatly adaptive toward those who have promulgated the particular conditions, rules or regulations.

Taken together, these arguments lead me to conclude that there is no cause to believe that even in the most beautifully reorganized society, sadomasochism, either enacted or fantasized in longings for dominance and/or submission of various types, would entirely disappear. Indeed, some degree of sadomasochism would probably persist, at least in the form of impossible dreams and yearnings. The necessity of this admission cuts to the heart of the feminist debate. Feminists, like other harbingers of radical social change, initially felt compelled to deny these limitations -- a denial against which other feminists later reacted, fearful of repressing any truths about psychic experience as if politically 'incorrect.' Yet, a most radical psychosocial transformation, one entirely in the realm of possibility and therefore of our control, is

to refuse the repression of precisely those human feelings which may be transhistoric in origin. Thus, what if children in families could express anger they felt at dependence or longings for merging, without fear of recrimination? What if anxiety about death were a permissible rather than taboo subject, an understandable fear which a compassionate community tried to assuage? And what if anger at inescapable conditions could be aired openly, acknowledged to others and/or merely oneself as if simply a fact of life? Each of these alterations would entail reconceptualizing human beings in a more holistic vision, one which included not only rationality and intellect (the dimensions of existence traditionally associated solely with the "masculine") but emotions and feelings as well (the dimensions of existence traditionally associated solely with the "feminine"). The rescuing of emotions (including, of course, sexual feelings) from the realm of the socially taboo and inexpressible would probably have an enormous impact on that degree of sadomasochistic tendencies which come to be enacted. As Freud observed, the compulsion to "act out" is inversely related to one's ability to express and thereby release energy bound up with feelings and emotions. Whether and to what degree sadomasochistic fantasizing would similarly be influenced is unknown, unknowable and to a large degree irrelevant.

However, the existence of potentially transhistoric

roots of sadomasochism in no way obscures the structural factors described in this work that are obviously and blatantly historical. To the extent sadomasochism in our society is general and can be characterized as a "social fact," it forms a dynamic constantly acted out in ways which are not momentary or phantasmical at all. Rather, the sadomasochistic dynamic I have elaborated distinguishes itself by its patterned nature rather than its fleeting and transient images. It is enacted compulsively by both sadistic and masochistic personas, disabling the achievement of any balanced tension between mutual dependence and independence; it tends toward the destruction of self and other. (However, as noted in Chapter 2, the tendency is one which may be postponed indefinitely by transferences to new partners, etc. I think here of one law partner I observed, whose not especially subtle sadistic tests resulted in his hiring and firing approximately twenty secretaries over the course of a year.)

The sadomasochistic dynamic may act itself out in the realm with which it is most commonly associated -- the sexual. Close analysis of a hypothetical and prototypical instance of S&M sex -- a classic example in which a given sadist has bound a given masochist for sexual activities -- reveals several prominent features within the dynamic. Those deduced characteristics were: 1) the existence of a hierarchical order of superior and inferior positions between sadist and masochist, 2) the sadist's

paradoxical desire for disapproval in the mode of approval and the masochist's desire, just as paradoxical, for approval in the mode of disapproval, and 3) the impossibility for either party of the dynamic's fulfillment in its own terms. If sadomasochism is characterized by these traits, which appear not only in sexual manifestations but in other settings as well, then one would have to question sadomasochism's supposedly deviant status. This mode of analysis suggests that sadomasochism may be far more general within our cultural. The specificity of each of its manifestations, of course, must be preserved since each setting, including the sexual, is different (though at once also similar) to that of the others. Sexuality displays its distinctiveness as a particularly graphic manifestation of longings which ebb and flow into other manifestations as well.

Yet, in associating sadomasochism predominantly if not exclusively with its sexual manifestations (and often with those which entail violence as well), attention is diverted from the possibility that similar dynamics occur on a day-to-day basis much closer, so to speak, to home. We may be loathe to call sadomasochistic relationships between friends, lovers or married persons which are not explicitly violent but which nonetheless entail patterns of dominance or submission. Or we may shirk from dubbing sadomasochistic interactions between a capitalist and factory worker, or one of Hochschild's "emotional" laborers (perhaps a secretary in

a fancy corporate office) and her boss, or that between a Wall Street junior executive and his senior partner. Whips and chains are not visible within any of these situations. The obvious physical evidence of sado-masochistic sex, however, acknowledges in extreme form longings and desires which can be seen as implicit within other spheres, I have tried to show that similar dynamics surface not only in intimate relationships such as the one in which I was involved but may (and, again, may not) appear in various teacher-student and student-student relationships at school, or in worker-boss interactions that occur on a daily basis for millions of Americans. The texture of these dynamics and ongoing processes of interaction are remarkably similar in these various manifestations. One is left to conclude that hierarchical social relationships of inequality into which patterns of dominance and submission have been structured coercively lead to sadomasochistic dynamics being more normally than pathologically distributed. In refusing to admit the peculiar resemblance between sadomasochistic processes of interaction in psychosocial situations not limited to the sexual, we simultaneously refuse to see the insidious nature of dynamics in which we constantly participate. This is the danger of ghettoizing "sadomasochism," a term useful (and therefore probably shunned) because it explicitly acknowledges psychic feelings preferably hidden or kept taboo from expression.

Let me turn one last time to the sadomasochism debate

in the feminist movement which emerged in the aftermath of the Barnard conference in 1982. A second central issue of contention between feminists was that many women felt judged for admitting sexual pleasure they experienced in sadomasochistic sexuality. Hopefully, this work makes clear my feeling that self-righteous condemnation is ludicrous and highly problematic, denying as it does the truth of feelings and longings having nothing whatever to do with convenient "judgments." Indeed, it would be extraordinary if large numbers of people did not have the potential to feel aroused by sadomasochistic sexuality, given both the possibility of "transhistoric" roots of its causation and the cultural generality of psychosocial situations arousing symbiotic desires in day-to-day-to-day life. Therefore, "judgment" of individuals is absurd and itself discreditable. However, this does not in any way deny that sadomasochistic dynamics may themselves be problematic insofar as they are linked to structures of dominance and submission not of our own choosing. Changing these structures means people not having to find themselves in a quite historically specific world where "social facts" tend toward creation of sadomasochistic character structure (that is, a character structure which features the dynamics I have described). In a less structured sadomasochistic social environment, the phenomenon might no longer be definable -- as now -- in terms of compulsively adhered to patterns of behavior. It makes no sense to judge sadomasochistic

desires nor does it make sense to pretend their appeal is rooted in consent and psychic freedom. Both attitudes can be held simultaneously. Real "consent" would only be possible if social sources that coercively generate sadomasochism were altered, allowing those of its causes which are actually "transhistoric" to emerge in purer form, in all probability themselves transformed by their newly found freedom to be expressed.

But the only way for these "social sources" to be transcended is for people themselves to be able to break from the sadomasochistic dynamic. Is this in fact possible, and, if so, how would such a thing occur? In the remarks which follow, I rely once more on both personal experience and theoretical deduction. It is apparent from the preceding chapters that of the two parties to the sadomasochistic dynamic, it is only the masochist who is likely to initiate a break from, or transcendence of, the dynamic. The masochist alone experiences the pain of undeniable, excessive dependence and of mistreatment resulting from her or his alleged inferiority. The pain may be physical, psychic or both, depending upon the particular manifestation of the dynamic in question. As postulated in Chapter 2, only the masochist will be psychically and/or physically beaten down by the greater lengths to which the sadist is driven, failing to ever reach his or her mythic goal of unconditioned power and independence. On the other hand, the sadist does not feel this pain on a day-to-day basis.

Rather, he or she exists in a state where feelings can be denied, and a sense of power can be gloated over. To be sure, the sadist will feel frustrated; for the sadist, too, the dynamic fails in its own terms. Yet, these vague feelings of discontent, the sadist's peculiar attraction to that which he or she cannot control, are rarely conscious. The sadist doesn't think for a moment of voluntarily relinquishing his or her power but only of trying new methods or persons to better attain the end which remains elusively beyond grasp. The sadist has no desire to change, believing passionately (a belief strengthened by the momentary glimpses of satiety which are associated to his or her power) that the dynamic is decidedly in his or her self-interest. For the masochist, however, her or his structural position affords no such luxury. The masochist may be compelled by the intensity of felt pain to try to escape the dynamic. Perhaps the pain is clearly physical, threatening the masochist's survival in a bodily sense: in that case, the initial defensive assumption of masochism is called into question, for self-sacrifice has become life-threatening rather than preservative. A given masochist within a non-violent but nonetheless sadomasochistically-oriented relationship may realize the cost of anger aroused by the sadistic other having been directed toward the self when symptoms arise. The repressed anger may be transformed into anxiety or depression that impede daily functioning and demand the dynamic's alteration. Or, to move to a different

sphere, a given worker who resisted unionization may come to change her or his mind when driven to distraction by speed-up processes or finding that massive layoffs have occurred. Alternatively, a masochist may simply wish to give up the dynamic before it has reached a point of extreme destruction, because it is perceived as pointing in that direction; an intense desire for change may be experienced. In any and all of these eventualities, the impetus to break away from the dynamic as a rule arises for the masochistic rather than sadistically-cast persona.

But how can the masochist actually escape? As already noted, the masochist may initially keep hoping that the sadist will somehow change. She or he might even leave one sadistic dynamic only to enter another one, on the chance that perhaps another sadist will be different from the first. For someone first cast masochistically in a childhood relationship with a parent, the initial proclivity to look to the sadist for change stems from desire to relive the primordial experience. The masochist hopes that a similar person will somehow respond differently. But this is the heart of her or his mistake for the sadist obviously has no intention of renouncing power or altering his or her ways. He or she has no immediately felt need to 'turn over a new leaf,' unless, that is, the loss of the masochist is perceived to be imminent. In that case, superficial changes on the part of the sadist -- unusually kind behavior, for instance, or repeated promises of changes or, within some

manifestations of the dynamic, promises of social reforms -- may ensue. They will in all likelihood ensue not because the sadist authentically experiences a problem within the dynamic in which he or she is engaged but because a seductive strategy is necessitated by the crisis of the masochist's imminent departure. The masochist may then be drawn back into the system she or he had consciously planned to bid farewell. This "push-pull" nature of the S&M dynamic would be evidenced in an analogous fashion were the sadist to threaten to leave due to something the masochist had done. Perhaps the masochist was manifesting too much independence, doing something "wrong" or displeasing to the sadist who perceived such actions as a threat to his or her powers of control. Indeed, this is another strategy with which the sadist might respond to the masochist's efforts to leave their dynamic system: faced with rejection, the sadist strikes back with an even stronger rejection (the sadist is used to being critical and rejecting, far more experienced and expert than the masochist). The masochist is suddenly confused, completely taken aback by the sudden reversal of her or his rejection of the sadist into the sadist's rejection of her or him. How did this happen? Faced with abrupt rejection, the masochist may re-enter the fold, her or his efforts at separation having been ideologically reinterpreted as something bad, deserving of guilt, a strike against the masochist which she or he must overcome in order to once again earn the sadist's favor.

Each of these scenarios make perfectly clear that any attempt on the masochist's part to change the dynamic from within, vis a vis an appeal to the sadist, is in the majority of instances doomed to failure. If the sadist is to change at all, chances are he or she will not do so voluntarily -- however one might argue that it is in his or her ultimate psychological and existential interests to do so. Another path of escape must be found. The masochist traditionally looked to the sadist for approval and love which never comes; used to looking externally, she or he must now find the internal strength to provide her or his own approval and sense of self-worth. But how can internal strength be found when the meaning of the masochistic pattern has been precisely to retard the development of such resources? In general, the strength cannot be expected to spring from nowhere. Only two realistic possibilities, then, may exist for catalyzing the masochist's self-extrication from the dynamic. The first is that of garnering strength by seeking support from others who have similarly been cast in masochistic positions rather than, as customarily, looking to the sadist for such support. The masochist seeks reassurance from a community which has had similar experiences that rejecting the sadomasochistic dynamic is a worthwhile and necessary endeavor. This community of others cast into analogous masochistic positions provides love and approval impossible to obtain from the sadist. It may strengthen a personal

resolve which would otherwise weaken. Thus, the importance of feeling part of an alternative community by which one will not be abandoned as a consequence of asserting freedom cannot be overestimated. These communities will be multifaceted and varied, depending on the particular manifestation of sadomasochism against which they have been mobilized to protest. This means of escaping from sadomasochistic dynamics is the theoretical underpinnings of most political movements, be the movement related to the building of "class consciousness" within the Marxist vocabulary of the last 100 years or to feminism, which gathered the strength of women during the 70s at communal "consciousness raising" sessions, or the black movement which has always understood the crucial need for solidarity. The empirical examples are endless -- Jews vis a vis the sadism of the anti-Semite, Sandinistas against the dictatorial regime from which they separated -- all pointing to the necessity of community building in processes of historical transformation.

These empirical examples indicate that encouraging the masochistically-cast persons to seek communal support is hardly a new or original proposition, since radical social changes long since effected relied precisely on this means for escaping sadomasochistic situations -- and still do so at present. Yet, do such communities embrace large numbers of people who are ensconced in masochistic dynamics which do not fall neatly under the rubric of, for example, "feminism"

or "socialism" or "gay rights," but who feel masochistic in a far more subtle, general and less specifiable manner? If indeed sadomasochism is a general dynamic, one which forms a common denominator beneath many otherwise differing phenomena, then perhaps a new theory is needed which accounts for sadomasochistic oppression more generally as well? The unfortunate fact remains that many people do not feel included in a sense of community which could help them to alter an amorphous sense of insecurity and worthlessness. Perhaps a language for understanding these amorphous feelings in more generalizable terms -- terms which can encompass the innumerable manifestations in which sadomasochistic dynamics appear -- needs to be created and transformed into a movement both "political and personal" in scope. Such a language would have to be characterized by a still all too rare attention to the importance of human feelings. Yet, with the exception of the feminist movement, few "political" movements have truly incorporated both intellect and emotions into the heart of their dialogue. In omitting to do so, they also fail to ease and encourage escape from coercive forms of sadomasochism.

If sadomasochistic dynamics are generalizable from various forms of lived oppression, yet another conclusion suggests itself as an implication for future organizing of a simultaneously personal and political variety. Breaking from one aspect of one's life in which a sadomasochistic dynamic has been manifest will probably have radical implications

for the way in which other aspects of that life are experienced. Thus, the focus of "political" change need not be limited to its traditional objects, though these, of course, are crucial to maintain. Just as important is that finding the strength and support to abandon one's sadistic lover can provide a greater sense of self-worth in relation to how one feels as a student in school, or how much one is willing to take before asserting angry to an arbitrary or unreasonable employer. Similarly, the fall out from a unionization battle might be to empower women in family situations where they formerly felt unimportant. Not only is the personal political but the political personal, yet it is still uncommon for "political" movements to fully understand the linkages between the two.

This brings me to the second possible means of breaking from a sadomasochistic dynamic open to the masochist. The masochist may seek to relive the original drama of childhood or school life not in relation to a similar other but in relation to an altogether different third party, someone never implicated in that earlier situation who is capable of providing more loving and compassionate responses.

Psychotherapy of varying types, ranging from its stricter psychoanalytic versions to encounters with a Gestalt or other non-orthodox therapist, attempts to provide this disinterested intervention. The figure of the therapist is one who, unlike the sadist, can allow the adult to relive a childhood in which rapprochement is possible, enabling the

experience of being both dependent and independent.

A sociologist with whom I am acquainted wrote recently that therapy is above all a cure based on love; indeed, it can insert itself between the dominant masochist and an excessively conditional culture by treating emotional experience as though completely valid. Yet, curiously, therapy is still thought of as an exclusively "individual" solution, one which is narrowly "psychological" (read again: individual) in its potential ramifications. Therapy has been criticized by those interested in "political" change as reinforcing of a conservative status quo and therefore reactionary, the exclusive province of yuppies, the upper middle class and others well-to-do. And, for the most part, those critics are accurate in their account of therapy's past and present functions and applicability. Nevertheless, as Juliet Mitchell and others have argued, therapy still wields a radical potential for greater human freedom. But, with the exception of Wilhelm Reich's sex clinics of the 30s, "political" movements continue their traditional rejection of therapy as a serious aid in effecting psychosocial transformation. The perspective I have tried to present here, however, is that anything which, like therapy, offers an opportunity for expressing formerly repressed sentiments must be thought of as highly political in potential significance. In conjunction with a more generalizable movement, therapy can intervene in the reproduction of recurring sadomasochistic dynamics. It

should probably be thought of as part of a movement rather than something which is in any way opposed to the realization of change.

However, the plain fact still remains that one can break with a sadomasochistic dynamic in relation to one's lover without in any way challenging the vested interests of bureaucracy, capitalism, patriarchy or any other system embedded in rigid and overwhelming social structures. One may become stronger but not strong enough, whether this strength is accrued collectively from many individuals who (in therapy, say) become more separate, or accrues from supportive communities back again to individuals. More likely, the person or persons cast masochistically will stop short of revolutionary forms of transcendence not strictly necessitated by experienced pain. Masochism is, after all, a defense, and American capitalist bureaucracy, patriarchal imperatives included, has managed to stop short of inflicting pain too great to be bearable. This is not to deny, of course, the worth of that strength the masochist can garner even within the boundaries of a continuing sadomasochistic social-psychological system. That added strength, the break from the sadistic lover, are categorical imperatives in and of themselves. En masse, individual strength turns to collective strength and may allow for some degree of radical change within institutions of daily life. But, again, the sadist has no interest in sharing or relinquishing the power he or she still believes vital to

"life." The masochist qua rebel, individually and collectively, must be quite determined to continue fighting. In Third World countries, however, capitalist-supported right-wing dictatorships have been far more blatantly cruel: like S&M sexuality, their excesses are obvious, their seductive appeals and commodified luxuries few or non-existent. Perhaps only in such horrifyingly real situations does the person cast masochistically feel no choice but to break entirely with the psychosocial system in which she or he is entrenched -- only in such a situation is she or he willing to risk life, a life which in any case is being both psychically and physically threatened. Yet, the masochist confronted by the impossibility of remaining within the sadomasochistic system, for whom even it seems in retrospect to have been a luxury, has to be aware of a perpetual danger implicit in the dynamic's own insidious nature. The danger is that in finally expressing anger outward rather than inward, toward rather than away from the sadistic persona through whom it was engendered, the masochist -- finally escaped, having established her or his own power and tying the hands of the sadist so that he or she is no longer dangerous -- may find sadistic pleasure in this long-stifled release. The masochist faces the ever-present danger of looking into the mirror and seeing the sadist. For now, the question arises as to whether the masochist will remember the texture of suffering, or will find with power the desire to do to the sadist what the

sadist once did to that masochist. Certainly, the potential for revenge exists once the masochist has broken away and suddenly found that now she or he is in a position of power, the sadist relatively powerless by virtue of a revolution (personal or political, probably both) which has occurred. Will the masochist act on this potential? It is understandable, psychologically it is probably unavoidable, that the masochist will remain enraged long after the sadist has been rendered powerless. But will the masochist act out this rage, or be able to satisfy its energy through the verbal expression of feeling? For the moment the masochist acts out onto the sadist what the sadist acted out onto the masochist -- i.e., restricting the former's freedom not for purposes of self-defense (a restriction which, in the aftermath of revolution, is necessary and justifiable) but for purposes of gratuitous pleasure -- the revolution is in a sense over. Its death will result from the fact that the former sadist, now cast masochistically, will wish to break from the former masochist, now cast sadistically -- history, as it generally has, will continue to be the history of oppression, repeating itself in cycles of sadomasochism. Thus, the importance of distinguishing between measures aimed at post-revolutionary defense, and those which mandate unnecessary restrictions on freedom that begin to rigidify the former masochist's power into potential sadism, is far from merely theoretical or academic. In a footnote to the famous master/slave passage of The Phenomenology of

Spirit, Hegel warns that the slave is not entirely free of the dialectic that bound them until the master, though powerless, is included in the slave's compassion. It may take all the fortitude the slave can muster to bring the dynamic full circle to the point where the master is disarmed, but not hated. Then, truly, the slave, like the masochist, would be separate from, free of, the oppressive dynamic in which both she or he, like the sadist, were entwined. Even if this level of equanimity is unreachable, humanly impossible, the former masochist can still hold to the intellectual and theoretical insight -- however emotionally difficult -- that both she or he and the unrelenting sadist were victims of dynamics that would ultimately destroy them both.

I have taken American society, a society wherein patriarchal, capitalist and bureaucratic imperatives are highly visible, as a case study in this exploration of sadomasochism. But what of other societies, such as the Soviet Union, where different forms of communist political and economic organization co-mingle with a largely untouched patriarchal system, with massive bureaucracies which (as in the U.S.) would send shivers down Max Weber's spine? Would such a society also feature sadomasochistic character structure as more of a normal than pathological phenomenon? An entire work could, and should, be devoted to analyzing the question. At first glance, one would expect a similar form of interaction to be present in many spheres of day-to-

day life, given the many hierarchical arrangements of dominance and submission which characterize that society. In addition, there is cause to believe social symbiosis would exist there as here, given the criteria of whether anger or disagreement can be expressed without extreme social consequences (abandonment, rejection or some sort of exile from the community and its ability to bestow favors and approval) for the individual who expresses it. To the extent that a Soviet-style society might also generate sadomasochism, it is apparent that changes aimed simply at external "social" institutions are inadequate in bringing about truly 'radical' or 'revolutionary' transformations. A Soviet-style society has made significant alterations, not themselves to be belittled or discredited, with regard to state intervention in providing everyday means of survival. Yet, the form in which these changes are wrought may very well belie their otherwise, allegedly radical, content. For when it comes right down to it, hierarchical relationships of inequality between self and other persist. Consequently, only changes in both the social and psychological (as this work tried to show, the two are intimately related), in the personal as well as the political and the political as well as the personal, will suffice to alter the generality of sadomasochistic interaction still dominant within this modern, some would say post-modern, culture.

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