

*The Mastery of*  
**Submission**

*Inventions of Masochism*

*by John K. Noyes*

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**Beyond the  
Death Instinct  
History, Control,  
and the Gendering  
of Masochism**

On 4 June 1938, Sigmund Freud left Vienna for England, where he would spend the last year of his life. Less than three months prior to his departure, the Nazis had invaded Austria, achieving the long-sought *anschluss* with the Reich. Freud refused to leave the city where he had spent most of his life. Just days after the invasion, the Gestapo visited the Freud house, and Freud's daughter Anna was arrested, held overnight, and interrogated on the activities of the International Psycho-Analytic Association. Freud, who had vowed never to leave Austria, finally had to admit that history had caught up with him in deadly earnest.

The past ten years had been turbulent ones in the native land of psychoanalysis. Political allegiances were split between left and right, with a weak Christian Socialist government unable to play a unifying role. As a result, the 1930s saw the Nazis constantly gaining power in Austria, as in Germany. In 1934 the country was briefly plunged into civil war, and in the same year Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss was murdered by the Nazis. His successor,

Kurt von Schuschnigg, did his best to resist the rising Nazi tide, but under threat of invasion he was forced to admit Nazis into his cabinet early in 1938.

Looking back on the last decade of Freud's life in the light of these changing political circumstances, his theory of masochism starts to take on a new significance. Freud's story of masochism starts looking like a parable of man's helplessness, cast out in a hostile world, trying to balance the urge for life with the irrepressible forces of death all around — and within. The year before the masochism article appeared was when Freud's cancer first announced its presence with unmistakable finality, and at the age of sixty-seven he spoke openly of the grim choice facing him — to die in suffering or to “disappear from the world with decency.”<sup>1</sup> After his first operation in 1923, he underwent a total of thirty-seven operations before finally disappearing with decency sixteen years later.

Freud had from the outset recognized the force with which biological and historical phenomena threaten to break into the psychical world, that delicate interiority of the subject that he continued to distinguish with such brilliant acumen from biology and history. But in the course of these years, the individual's disappearance from the world becomes increasingly visible, not only in Freud's metapsychology but as a biological and historical fact. The old problem of human nature versus human history had reared its head once again. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud showed that where human history fails, it fails because human nature fails to master its own aggressive and self-destructive impulses. And the place where failure is acted out is the psyche.

Throughout Freud's life, the twin practice of psychoanalysis and metapsychology seemed to provide a means of mastering this failure. But what if the idea of the death drive was not simply a theoretical construct that might explain a difficult set of psychic phenomena? What if it manifested itself in history and the body in a *real* way? Although the psychoanalytic articulations of masochism may have provided a narrative capable of containing the irrational, self-destructive forces that rule over life, the force of history seemed to want to prove that no rational discourse was powerful enough to counter man's inherent self-destructiveness. From Freud's theory of primary masochism and his own imminent death to the rise of Nazism, the psychoanalytic attempt to master biology and history — and with it, death — seemed to be fighting a losing battle. The psyche's delicate and unstable position, isolated from history and biology, seemed about to collapse under the surge of death and barbarity all around it.

The years between 1924 and 1938 saw the concept of masochism gaining



significant ground in professional circles.<sup>2</sup> These were the years when the first writings on masochism were published by second-generation Freudians, the young psychoanalysts whom Freud and his colleagues had trained and, usually, analyzed. Helene Deutsch (1884–1982), Karen Horney (1885–1952), Theodor Reik (1888–1969) and Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957) were all born (along with the theory of male masochism) in the decades of declining empire. They studied during the final years of the Wilhelmine era and built their careers in the polarized political climate of post–World War I Europe. This generation was not prepared to accept Freud’s passive attitude toward the inevitability of the masochistic bind. In their conception, masochism was more real than it was for Freud. This meant that they approached it in the first instance as a clinical phenomenon, and not a metapsychological problem. It also meant that they started asking not only whether self-defeating tendencies in the organism were inevitable, but also whether they were curable. And finally it meant asking questions about the biological, sociological, and political foundations of masochistic behavior. This often led to a reductionistic simplification and a naive biologicistic interpretation of Freud’s ideas. This was the generation that invented women’s masochism, ego psychology, and the orgone accumulator — the metal and organic box invented by Reich in 1940 (in the words of his son, Peter, “you sat in it and it made you feel good”).<sup>3</sup> But they also applied the Freudian conceptual apparatus creatively in ways the master had apparently not foreseen.

The second-generation Freudians were far from convinced that a death drive was lurking in the shadows with sharpened scythe and bony fingers. For them the human subject struggled in a different arena from Freud’s mythological colosseum, where man fought an “epic struggle between life and death . . . , a combat to the end.”<sup>4</sup> Unlike Freud, they had not had to watch, in the course of their adult lives, the liberal view of progress in history collapse all around them.<sup>5</sup> Since history could not force them to abandon a view they never held, they saw no need to erect metapsychological theories to explain this collapse. They were also not as resigned as Freud appeared to be in their reactions to the course of evil in history. Without exception, they left Europe before Nazi barbarism raged out of control. They asked important questions about the kinds of political interventions open to psychoanalysis. And they developed theories of masochism in which the subject displayed a similar tenacious unwillingness to relinquish control over life. In their hands, the technologies of control in which Freud inextricably bound his masochistic subject became matters of rational choice, of parody, theater, and political practice. In the years between 1924 and 1940, Deutsch, Horney, Reik, and Reich added their views to Freud’s theory of masochism, pro-

viding the outlines for the complex of problems that we still debate under the heading of masochism. They had new and contentious ideas on each of the three forms of masochism that Freud had isolated in 1924 — feminine, moral, and primary masochism.

The year 1924, when Freud's definitive article on masochism appeared, was also the year that his pupil and ex-analysand Helene Deutsch became founding president of the Training Institute of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Deutsch is often described as one of the major pioneers in the theory of feminine sexuality. In the 1950s, she enjoyed widespread popularity in the United States, where she had lived, taught, and practiced psychoanalysis since 1934, and where she was viewed as a Benjamin Spock-style champion of stay-at-home motherhood. As Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester have shown, this led to a reverse reaction in the 1960s, when she came to be seen (inaccurately, in their opinion) as "the reactionary apologist of female masochism, echoing a catechism which would make of woman a failed man, a devalued and penis-envying servant of the species."<sup>6</sup>

Deutsch was born Helene Rosenbach in the village of Przemysl, just sixty miles west of Lvov, the birthplace of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. Her parents belonged to the Galician Jewish community, which Sacher-Masoch had tried so hard throughout his life to identify with, her father being a successful lawyer of Sacher-Masoch's generation. According to Appignanesi and Forrester, Deutsch introduced the familial, social, and gender pressures of her childhood into her psychoanalytic theories. As the youngest child in a family striving for bourgeois respectability in a community already stigmatized as socially inferior, Deutsch learned through personal experience that to be a woman meant either to internalize the submissive role society had defined for her, or to fight. Fighting was what she did. An intellectually gifted young woman who ran away from home and returned only after her father had signed a contract allowing her to write the university entrance examinations, she must have known deep inside what kind of game the masochist plays. And yet, the masochistic game is strangely overlooked in her theoretical writings.

Deutsch succeeded in breaking out of the role her family and society had intended for her, but the price she paid was guilt. How could a woman live her whole life fighting, when the woman's role in society was dominated by her biological task as a mother — a task that apparently condemns her to self-sacrifice? Deutsch's predicament — and in her own perception, woman's predicament — was that she desired to succeed in a world where success was open only to those who were active and aggressive — in short, to men — but had been born into a body she believed was ruled by passivity and submission. It was this perception of woman which caused Deutsch to

expand on Freud's theory of feminine masochism. The girl next door to Sacher-Masoch became the first psychoanalyst to argue scientifically and systematically that woman's predisposition to masochism is anchored in her own anatomy.

In 1925 Deutsch published her first book, *Psychoanalysis of the Sexual Functions of Women*, in which she put forward the views on masochism that have earned her the revilement of feminists since the mid-1960s. By now, the term had been in currency for thirty-five years. From the very outset, it had been intimately linked to questions of gender and culture. And yet, in these thirty years, not a single woman had written on masochism. One of Freud's legacies in the genealogy of masochism was to have trained a generation of female analysts, giving them a voice, a problematic, and a forum in which they could speak of sexuality, including their own. And as this generation came into their own, they began to realize that with this voice they had inherited the theme of their own subjugation. The first generation of woman analysts was forced to confront the position they had been assigned by sexology and psychoanalytic theory. And this meant confronting the question of masochism.

In *Psychoanalysis of the Sexual Functions of Women*, Deutsch clearly follows Freud in assigning a feminine valence to masochism. But where Freud saw masculinity and femininity as qualities that are not reducible to individual biology, Deutsch believes that the sexes are biologically predetermined to activity or passivity. She argued that since Freud had shown masochism to be characteristically passive, and since women are biologically passive, women are biologically predisposed to masochism. Like the earlier sexologists, she situated the biological foundation of the passive-masochistic attitude in the reproductive act.

It is only with the advent of the reproductive period that the identification of feminine with passive and masculine with active attains full validity, also implying a link between femininity and masochism and between masculinity and sadism, not only in the functional sense but also in that of suffering or inflicting pain. Above all the differentiation that now sets in imposes a much greater burden on the female, not only in the physical but also in the psychical respect. While the male reproductive function consists of sadistically mastering the sexual object and is completed with the attainment of organ pleasure, it is only the beginning of the complicated activity that devolves upon the female for the purpose of maintaining the species.<sup>7</sup>

By claiming such an easy correspondence between feminine anatomy and feminine masochism, Deutsch defuses the radical insights into biological es-

sentialism that Freud had provided in his masochism essay. Freud had always insisted on keeping “psychoanalysis separate from biology,”<sup>8</sup> although he did not always do so himself. Whereas Freud takes the nineteenth-century mythology of feminine passivity and extends it into a self-contradictory elaboration of masochistic staging, Deutsch reduces the same mythology to a psychobiology of female masochism. Women’s masochism was popularized by Deutsch, not by Freud.

Women’s masochism, Deutsch explains in 1925, results from the transition in puberty from clitoral to vaginal sexuality. Like the sexologists, she begins with the unquestioned assumption that to be a normal human is to be male and sadistic. And this means having a penis. The girl child is compensated for her lack by the presence of the (albeit diminutive) clitoris. But, while the clitoris may be an adequate organ of infantile masturbation, it is assigned a secondary position in the sexually mature woman. The vagina cannot assume the same active status in sexuality as the penis, hence the sexual primacy of the vagina condemns woman to passivity in the sexual act, and in life itself. Passivity becomes a sexual urge, which Deutsch calls the “passivity boost of puberty.” It comes about “only when the sadistically outward drive turns inward in secondary repression as a consequence of the impossibility of discharging it. In this sense the female ‘passivity boost’ is a typical example of what Freud calls secondary masochism, which arises only out of regressive sadism. It is added to the primary erogenous sadism, and the two together result in the ‘masochistic position’ of woman” (*SFW*, 50).

In 1930, Deutsch’s article “The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women” was published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*.<sup>9</sup> This essay is an inquiry into “the genesis of ‘femininity,’ ” which for Deutsch means “the feminine, passive-masochistic disposition in the mental life of women” (*MMW*, 49). Building on her initial statement of 1925, Deutsch refines her explanation of how the female child’s sadistic impulses are reversed in the experience of lacking a penis. Drawing on an essay of Freud’s from 1927 concerning the difference between the Oedipus complex in boys and girls,<sup>10</sup> Deutsch posits what she calls a “post-phallic” phase in girls, in which “the seal is set upon her destiny of womanhood” (*MMW*, 51). In this phase, the girl abandons her previous conviction that the clitoris is equal in value to the penis, a belief that had been based on the autoerotic experience that it could serve as an organ of self-induced pleasure. The wish for a child, which Freud sees as providing a compensation for the missing penis, “is, nevertheless, in comparison with the reality of the penis, for which it is supposed to be exchanged, a very unreal and uncertain substitute” (*MMW*, 52). As a result of the inhibition of infantile autoerotic pleasure, “the hith-

erto active-sadistic libido attached to the clitoris rebounds from the barricade of the subject's inner recognition of her lack of the penis and, on the one hand, regressively cathects points in the pregenital development which it had already abandoned, while, on the other hand, and most frequently of all, it is deflected in a regressive direction toward masochism" (*MMW*, 52). The regressive cathexis becomes masochistic in the "castration-complex," which allows the girl to retain the focus of pleasure on the clitoris, while internalizing what she perceives as her father's sadistic castrating desire. "Then, at the same time as she conceives the desire to be castrated and raped, she conceives also the fantasy of receiving a child from her father" (*MMW*, 58). The pleasure associated with these fantasies are later carried through into motherhood, allowing the woman to derive a masochistic pleasure from her relation to the child.

What Deutsch derives from her clinical experience is a genesis of feminine sexuality governed by what she calls — in keeping with the three features Freud (*EPM*, 162) had named when tying masochism to feminine sexuality — "the masochistic triad: castration, rape and parturition" (*MMW*, 57). Having arrived at this fundamental masochistic determination, she proceeds to investigate the consequences that can arise when the adult woman represses her masochistic tendencies. The central symptom of this repression is frigidity, the refusal of biologically normal, adult female pleasure seeking. According to Deutsch's theory of masochism, the adult woman is placed in a double bind. She can resist the self-destructive determination of her instincts and commit herself to frigidity and a "masculinity complex," or else she can surrender to masochism. The pathological surrender to masochism makes women "the wretched victims of a passion for men who ill-treat them, thus fulfilling the women's unconscious desires for castration and rape" (*MMW*, 55).

But Deutsch believes that there is a normal, benign surrender to masochism, a sublimation, in which penis envy is successfully overcome, giving rise to the quintessence of femininity, the desire for a child. The normal woman is the one who knows how to transform her biological disposition to masochism into motherhood. "In the deepest experience of the relation of mother to child it is masochism in its strongest form which finds gratification in the bliss of motherhood" (*MMW*, 58).

Deutsch's insistence upon the masochistic triad of rape, castration, and the child-wish means that a woman's fate is to be either frigid, a beaten wife, or a happy mother with her vaginal orgasms and her demanding children. The normal woman harnesses the masochistic instinct in the services of

preservation of the race. Through incorporation of the fantasy of parturition into the masochistic triad, the masochistic instinct bridges “the gulf between instinctual and the reproductive tendencies” (*MMW*, 58). As Deutsch notes in the closing sentence of her essay, “Women would never have suffered themselves throughout the epochs of history to have been withheld by social ordinances on the one hand from possibilities of sublimation, and on the other from sexual gratifications, were it not that in the function of reproduction they have found magnificent satisfaction for both urges” (*MMW*, 60).

Deutsch’s theory has the aura of a monstrous attempt to make a hopeless situation look good. What the woman lacks — social power — she lacks biologically. And woman’s biological deficiency is at the same time a biologically determined failure to gain mastery over the world. When the human animal comes of age, that is, when it is time to leave the shelter of home and go out in search of victories, woman finds “the organ that was sufficient for autoerotic activity now fails as an organ of conquest in relation to the outside world” (*SFW*, 49). Where the penis “thrusts ‘in masculine fashion’ into the outside world,” the vagina waits, like the dark continent itself, to be conquered. Because of “the lack of an appropriate organ” with which to discharge “the urge to conquest into the outside world,” any urges she might feel to master the world remain in the organism, taking “the individual herself as its object” (*SFW*, 49).

Freud’s dialectic of sadistic mastery and its masochistic failure has been reduced to a stereotype of gendered sexuality grounded in anatomy. If the fin de siècle male masochist emerged as the failures of imperial man to conquer the world, Deutsch’s invention of the female masochist seems to be a later expression of a similar failure of the New Woman to succeed in a man’s world. The New Woman’s failure finds compensation in the knowledge that even if she is condemned to a life of self-sacrifice, at least imperial man with his conquering penis can still make it in the world. She knows that her own failures are not because of lack of talent or commitment, but because of the organ of conquest that nature has decided to withhold from her. And she can still reassure herself that even if she cannot conquer the world, at least she can establish herself in motherhood, raising armies of little male conquerors.

The biologicistic reading of Freud’s feminine masochism is not the only possible one. True, it proved remarkably tenacious, producing such passionate self-castigations as Marie Bonaparte’s essay of 1935, “Passivity, Masochism, and Femininity,” which Paula J. Caplan calls “the most hilariously extreme form of the notion that woman’s body leads her to masochism.”<sup>11</sup> But other second-generation Freudian psychoanalysts had different ideas about

feminine masochism. Karen Horney was an analyst of Karl Abraham and Hanns Sachs. In 1920 she joined the teaching staff of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. Like Deutsch, her primary interest in psychoanalytic theory and clinical practice concerned feminine psychology. Where Deutsch constantly attempts to reduce Freudian theory to a deterministic commentary on female biological dispositions, however, Horney develops a subtle reading of the cultural position of women and the importance of this position for a psychoanalytic symptomatology. According to Mario Rendon, this involved a shift in the psychoanalytic perspective away from “excessive biologism” to “the human context of human development. Roughly, culture is for Horney what language is for Lacan.”<sup>12</sup> Luce Irigaray credits her with being the first analyst to refuse “to subscribe to Freud’s point of view on female sexuality.”<sup>13</sup> Michele Massé places her at the head of a line of theorists who have insisted “on masochism’s reality *and* its construction,” and thereby pointed the way “to a reconstruction where no woman will ‘naturally’ take pleasure in pain nor assume that ‘of course’ dominance is a part of love.”<sup>14</sup>

The insistence on the cultural dimension of behavior is a fundamental aspect of Horney’s thought. For her, anthropology and sociology are at all times the limit disciplines of psychoanalysis. Their importance lies in their ability to shed light on the close connection between clinically observable modes of behavior and specific cultural constructions. The anthropological perspective in Horney’s discussion of masochism is used not to demonstrate the universality of masochism, as the sexologists had done, but to address the cultural conditions of masochistic behavior. This allows us to understand Deutsch’s loving wife and self-sacrificing mother as culturally constructed — what we would call stereotypes — and not as a biological predisposition of woman. In her essay “The Overvaluation of Love,” Horney addresses the importance of sociological and environmental factors in the emergence of stereotypes of femininity.<sup>15</sup> Having left Nazi Germany for Chicago two years before the essay was published, Horney must have been intensely aware of how fictions of universal woman and man can be appropriated in ideologies of racial supremacy. These fictions can best be countered by taking sociological factors into account.

This attitude toward woman, whatever its basis and however it may be assessed, represents the patriarchal ideal of womanhood, of woman as one whose only longing is to love a man and be loved by him, to admire him and serve him, and even to pattern herself after him. Those who maintain this point of view mistakenly infer from external behavior the existence of an innate instinctual disposition thereto; whereas, in reality, the latter can-

not be recognized as such, for the reason that biological factors never manifest themselves in pure and undisguised form, but always as modified by tradition and environment.<sup>16</sup>

This view was informed by the sociology of Georg Simmel. Simmel had attempted to address the fluid boundary between individual psychology and social form. He had spent most of his academic career in Berlin, where Horney gained her medical and psychiatric training. There he attracted considerable attention, and enjoyed a reputation as an innovative and highly popular professor, but also as a proponent of unconventional ideas. He permitted women to attend his lectures as guests well before the Prussian academies permitted them entry as full students in 1908, and his liberal leanings and association with socialist circles were well publicized.<sup>17</sup> Anti-Semitism and jealousy within the university hampered his career considerably, and he was accused of being anti-German and a revolutionary.

In an article of 1926 entitled “The Flight from Womanhood,” Horney noted Simmel’s conviction that “our whole civilization is a masculine civilization. The State, the laws, morality, religion and the sciences are the creation of men.”<sup>18</sup> According to Horney, this insight into the patriarchal nature of Western culture is needed if we are to gain a new perspective on established scientific beliefs. The domination of culture by patriarchal forces has given science a status that appears objective, at least in the eyes of men. But a historical perspective reveals that the category of objectivity itself is a product of patriarchal cultures. Horney quotes the following passage from Simmel’s *Philosophische Kultur*:

The requirements of art, patriotism, morality in general and social ideas in particular, correctness in practical judgement and objectivity in theoretical knowledge, the energy and the profundity of life — all these are categories which belong as it were in their actual form and their claims to humanity in general, but in their actual historical configuration they are masculine throughout. Supposing that we describe these things, viewed as absolute ideas, by the single word “objective,” we then find that in the history of our race the equation objective = masculine is a valid one.<sup>19</sup>

Simmel — and with him Horney — is formulating a view which has become commonplace in the feminist critique of science but was radically innovative at that time. Sandra Harding states that science sets up a series of dichotomies which are “inextricably connected with specifically masculine — and perhaps uniquely Western and bourgeois — needs and desires. Objectivity vs. subjectivity, the scientist as knowing subject vs. the objects of his



inquiry, reason vs. the emotions, mind vs. body — in each case the former has been associated with masculinity and the latter with femininity. In each case it has been claimed that human progress requires the former to achieve domination of the latter.”<sup>20</sup> For Irigaray, “the opposition between ‘masculine’ clitoral activity and ‘feminine’ vaginal passivity, an opposition which Freud — and many others — saw as stages, or alternatives, in the development of a sexually ‘normal’ woman, seems rather too clearly required by the practice of male sexuality.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Sarah Kofman criticizes Freud’s arbitrary designation of libido as masculine in the essay “Femininity” in *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. The convention “that confuses masculinity and activity and forbids the libido to be labeled feminine, forbids to women in reality more than to men the unreserved expression of their libido.”<sup>22</sup>

It did not escape Horney’s attention that this masculine bias in her culture and the ensuing mode of gender stereotyping also affects psychoanalytic theory. Freud, in keeping with nineteenth-century assumptions concerning the universality of scientific observation, believed that his clinical observations could be used inductively to formulate general principles of psychic life in human beings. He even felt that woman analysts faced particular difficulties overcoming the impediments that the psychic structures of the analyst place between analysis and truth.<sup>23</sup> Horney realizes that clinical observation and psychoanalytic theory formation are not independent of the observer and theorist. The asymmetrical power relations between male psychoanalysts and their female objects is written into psychoanalytic theory, where it is disavowed in the name of objectivity. Anticipating Irigaray’s critique of Freud, Horney observes that “Like all sciences and all valuations, the psychology of women has hitherto been considered only from the point of view of men. It is inevitable that the man’s position of advantage should cause objective validity to be attributed to his subjective, affective relations to the woman, and . . . the psychology of woman hitherto actually represents a deposit of the desires and disappointments of men” (*FW*, 56).

The stereotype of women which precipitates into psychoanalytic theory is also at work in cultural practices, where it is so powerful that women find themselves acceding to male fantasies of femininity. Horney’s observation that “women have adapted themselves to the wishes of men and felt as if their adaptation were their true nature” (*SFW*, 56–57) is the first feminist critique of Freudian psychoanalysis, and its terms have proven to be of lasting significance. In this view, psychoanalytic theories of femininity arise out of the same ideological moment that makes women act in ways we have come to associate with the feminine. For Horney as for Irigaray, one of the cultural requisites of woman’s being is the enactment of male fantasies. And this is

where masochism comes in. In the sexual imagery of our patriarchal culture, Irigaray explains, woman is “only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man’s fantasies. That she may find pleasure there in that role, by proxy, is possible, even certain. But such pleasure is above all a masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own, and it leaves her in a familiar state of dependency upon man.”<sup>24</sup> In this view, Deutsch’s ideal of womanhood is nothing but an ideological construction of male fantasy.

Horney, being aware of Deutsch’s model of masochistic woman, realized that masochism is not simply a figure of speech (as Irigaray uses it above) but one of the central issues at stake in the struggle for an adequate feminine psychology. For this reason she is much more careful in the way she defines the term. Horney addresses masochism as a central ideological construct in the production of a feminine stereotype, and she is extremely cautious in making general statements about women and masochism. One of the most important and consistent features of her early work is her refusal to generalize clinical observations irrespective of individual, cultural, and gender differences. The thrust of this move is to insist that these differences cannot be reduced to the biological foundations common to all human beings, or at least to all of the same gender. For example, in a footnote to her paper “The Problem of Feminine Masochism,” presented to the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1933, she states: “Freud’s assumption that women are generally more jealous than men . . . probably is correct so far as the present German and Austrian cultures are concerned. To deduce this, however, from more purely individual anatomical-physiological sources (penis envy) is not convincing.”<sup>25</sup>

Later, she became even more hesitant concerning the derivation of general theories of femininity from the Freudian conceptual apparatus. In *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, she begins the chapter on “masochistic phenomena” by casting doubt upon the assumption that masochism is “essentially a sexual phenomenon; that it is essentially a striving for satisfaction; and that it is essentially a wish to suffer.”<sup>26</sup> Instead, Horney develops a concept of masochism as a protective function of individuals within an essentially threatening environment — a strategy for seizing control from hostile agencies within society. In an attempt to retain a protective facade of perfection, the individual appropriates culturally entrenched forms of atonement and perfection, utilizing them at will (*NWP*, 269). This has become an important way of looking at masochistic behavior patterns in women. It prefigures Birgit Rommelspacher’s observation that these behavior patterns provide abused women with a means of keeping a certain amount of control over a situation that would otherwise be intolerable.<sup>27</sup>

The importance of Horney's later work on masochism has been recognized, but her earlier essays deserve more attention. Although she did not always acknowledge it, her theoretical move amounts to an attack on the fundamental principle on which Freudian psychoanalytic explanation was based — the transformation of biological facts into psychic mechanisms. Whenever Horney casts doubt on this method, she bases her argument on the diversity of cultural phenomena. Thus she criticizes Deutsch's feminine psychology as an "overgeneralization" that presents as anatomical and physiological facts phenomena that for Horney are clearly cultural in origin and manifestation (*PFM*, 231). Horney suggests that we will understand masochism better if anthropologists "seek data concerning questions like these: under what social or cultural conditions do we find more frequently in women than in men

- (1) the manifesting of inhibitions in the direct expression of demands and aggressions;
- (2) a regarding of oneself as weak, helpless, or inferior and implicitly or explicitly demanding considerations and advantages on this basis;
- (3) a becoming emotionally dependent on the other sex;
- (4) a showing of tendencies to be self-sacrificing, to be submissive, to feel used or to be exploited, to put responsibilities on the other sex;
- (5) a using of weaknesses and helplessness as a means of wooing and subduing the other sex. (*PFM*, 229)

Horney believes that anthropological investigations into feminine masochism are necessary, since previous psychoanalytic research has shown such a pronounced biological bias. Once Deutsch's conception of women's masochism has been accepted, virtually all aspects of feminine experience become evidence in the grand scheme of woman's inferiority. This includes the sexual wishes of the female child, menstruation, the female attitude to the sexual act, childbirth, motherhood and the relation to the child, and the way all of these are colored by fantasies of mutilation, castration, rape, and humiliation. Such a view of feminine masochism cannot help but regard feminine sexuality as pathological. As a result, research into feminine masochism is destined to see its primary task as tracing the genesis and the biological necessity of masochistic tendencies in the individual female subject. At the time Horney wrote, the most vociferous theories of feminine masochism adhered to the three-stage theory of primary sadistic cathexis of the clitoris, narcissistic recognition of lack of a penis, and masochistic reversal of active libido against the self. Penis envy, masculinity complex, the sadism of clitoral

autoeroticism, and the like were staple fare for psychoanalysis in the late 1920s and 1930s.

For Horney, however, these theoretical constructs remain hypotheses as long as they are not adequately grounded in clinical observations. Of course Freud, Deutsch, Bonaparte, and Rado<sup>28</sup> all believed that their theory of feminine masochism was based upon clinical observation. But Horney was convinced there was a big difference between clinical observations obtained within the German and Austrian middle class and their application to woman in general — including “little American Indian girls, or little Trobriand girls” (*PFM*, 217). She concludes that a correct evaluation of clinical observation requires an understanding of how Western culture defines what it means to be a woman. “Interest in the problem of feminine masochism extends far beyond the merely medical and psychological spheres, for to students of the Western culture at least, it touches on the very roots for evaluating woman in her cultural definition” (*PFM*, 214).

Where Freudian psychoanalysis has constructed theories of feminine masochism, it has done so within culturally constructed stereotypes of woman. If a feminine psychology is to succeed in doing justice to both psychological and cultural phenomena, it will have to undertake “to evaluate the weight of social conditionings in the genesis of any sex-limited peculiarities in the distribution of masochistic trends” (*PFM*, 214). Just as the Oedipus complex as described by Freud should be regarded as an “emotional pattern in the relations between parents and children [which] arises only under certain cultural conditions” (*PFM*, 223), feminine masochism as described by Deutsch and Rado can be mistaken as a universal quality of feminine sexuality only by disregarding the social or cultural factors in which masochistic behavior arises.

What then does it mean to take cognizance of a sociological or cultural context of feminine masochism? Having devoted the first half of her essay to refuting the assumptions on which Deutsch and Rado founded their theories of universal feminine masochism, Horney now turns to this question. She begins by observing that we possess insufficient clinical evidence concerning the way masochism relates to gender and culture. Before psychoanalysts can even think about making blanket claims about the nature and gender of masochism, sociologists and ethnographers would have to provide them with data concerning “the frequency of occurrence of masochistic attitudes toward female functions under various social and cultural conditions” as well as “the frequency of general masochistic attitudes or manifestations in women, as compared with men, under various social and cultural condi-

tions” (*PFM*, 224). Psychoanalysis would only be justified in pursuing the origins and causes of feminine masochism if these data were to indicate that it is a ubiquitous condition among women. If the data disallow theories of universal women’s masochism (and this is obviously Horney’s assumption), the next task of sociological and ethnological research is to ascertain “the special social conditions under which masochism connected with female functions is frequent” and “the special social conditions under which general masochistic attitudes are more frequent in women than in men” (*PFM*, 224–25). As long as the evidence for universal women’s masochism is not conclusive, the psychoanalyst should not spend her time conjuring up teleologies of ontogenesis. She would be much better advised exchanging notes with ethnographers, anthropologists, and sociologists.

This understanding of the psychoanalyst’s task indicates considerable foresight on Horney’s part. Once an ethnography and a sociology of masochistic practice began to emerge in the 1960s, it became clear that its findings would affect not only the psychoanalytic understanding of masochism but also the central ideas of Freudian psychoanalytic theory itself. As soon as psychic phenomena are placed in an ethnological and sociological context and evidence accumulates about the psychic lives of individuals in different cultural settings, it becomes increasingly difficult to accept the kinds of generalizations that sexology and psychoanalysis have aspired to. Resistance to these generalizations sets up tensions concerning the cultural parameters within which it is possible to speak of the origins and genesis of psychic structures. And these tensions affect the distinction between the interiority and exteriority of subjectivity, psychic life and social life, the unconscious and the conscious. This is well illustrated by Jacques Lacan’s celebrated return to Freud, a return that owes much to the anthropological and ethnographic perspective, particularly as formulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss.<sup>29</sup> Lacan could not have formulated his understanding of the order of culture without taking note of a field — the Symbolic — in which the logic of psychic phenomena requires cultural encoding and decoding, and projecting this field onto another nebulous field — the Real — in which cultural codings are acted out in bodily arrangements.

It was in this direction that Horney was taking tentative steps. One of these steps involved rethinking the nature-nurture problem in terms that Freud had overlooked. The nature-nurture paradigm cast the human psyche between two different determinations: the genetic predispositions of individuals and the environmental conditionings of organisms. Horney rejects outright the genetic model whose Lamarckian bent Freud never completely abandoned. While it might be tempting to regard her as a forerunner of the

environmental psychologists, she does not see “nature” as a stimulus acting on the closed biological system of the organism. The biological is one dimension of the open system in which the organism functions, and which is presided over by a nonbiological mediation, social form. Horney, following Alfred Adler,<sup>30</sup> adhered to a holism that saw “environment and organism as a unitary process, each influencing the other.”<sup>31</sup>

Horney departs fundamentally from Freud’s focus on the ontogenesis of neurosis. Freud’s entire writings on masochism center on the need to generalize the mechanisms — economic, dynamic, or topological — of pain-seeking behavior. Horney sees masochism as a much more makeshift and contingent response of the individual to a given sociocultural environment. Sometimes her focus is on the psychodynamics of interpersonal relations, and sometimes it is on the psycho-logic of unequal social empowerment. But at all times, the masochistic individual is seen as acting out a controlled scenario of success and failure — a scenario that offers the individual protection simply because it is controlled.<sup>32</sup> The idea of masochism as both a socially conditioned mode of sexuality and a controlled response to social conditioning leads Horney ultimately to a concept of masochism that is best described as a dialectic of social stereotyping and strategies of survival. Horney does not elaborate on the political significance of her theory of masochism, but it is tempting to see it as a response to the apparent helplessness of racially stereotyped individuals in the face of Nazi persecution.

Horney’s dialectical model of masochism had far reaching consequences for her understanding of a whole series of Freudian and pre-Freudian themes associated with the masochism problem. Male masochism appears in a completely new light. Horney has little to say on this topic, but in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, she points out that cultural stereotypes of helplessness and dependency in women permit a corresponding enactment of dependency without giving rise to neurotic self-castigation. “For the masochistic person, however, there is no cultural pattern to give prestige for such an attitude” (*NWP*, 257). It would follow that male masochism is best understood not as a pathological prevalence of the feminine sexual disposition within the male, but as a neurotic attempt at self-preservation, a strategy of enactment whereby rituals of helplessness and dependency are performed for the sake of maintaining some positive relation to perceived stereotypes. In her later work on masochism, Horney has much to say about the masochistic striving for the appearance of perfection. It seems that her intention here is to emphasize that the masochist is responding to culturally produced stereotypes and to perceptions of his or her own inability to live up to these stereotypes.

Horney’s changed emphasis on how cultural stereotypes exert force on

individuals leads to a revision of Freud's moral masochism. Freud's view of moral masochism hinges on the idea of the super-ego, a theoretical construct Horney rejects as unfounded. For her, Freud's super-ego is "an inner agency of a primarily forbidding character. It is like a secret police department, unerringly detecting any trends of forbidden impulses, particularly of an aggressive kind, and punishing the individual inexorably if any are present" (*NWP*, 211). It is this policing function of the super-ego that causes Freud to conclude that its actions on the ego are primarily of a destructive nature. For Horney, however, the moral injunctions under which the individual places herself do not constitute a social code antagonistic to the ego forces. Moral injunctions represent a negotiated interaction with the social environment, an appropriated standard which the individual is constantly modifying according to her self-image. As such, they "are not ego-alien but are an integral part of the self" (*NWP*, 230). The subject who negotiates moral injunctions and standards partakes in a process that has little to do with Freud's cruel policing of the ego by the super-ego. And where the masochistic subject voluntarily accedes to self-sacrificing, self-humiliating, or self-defeating behavior, this cannot be grasped as a dynamically necessary restriction of the instincts in the name of civilization. It is an exaggerated perfectionism, an acting out, aping, and counterfeiting of moral values (see *NWP*, 230). Its logic is that of parody.

Horney explains moral masochism in terms of the subjective performances and negotiations required by culture in the production of identity. Here she departs from Freud, for whom the mapping of primary masochism onto moral masochism is a drama of cultural production and cultural collapse that plays itself out in a colossal struggle between psychic principles and social form. For Freud, the subject remains eccentric to this process, being produced as a place where struggle is performed. For Horney, the subject presides over a similar but not identical struggle. First of all, the subject indeed presides, not as the site of "rational motivations, conditioned reflexes and habit formations" (*NWP*, 24) but as a motivated consciousness that is constantly negotiating and renegotiating its interests, feelings, and identities with respect to culturally determined imperatives. Particularly in her description of masochism in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, the masochistic subject is seen to be pursuing strategies aimed at retaining a functional identity in the face of sociocultural imperatives, while at the same time minimizing anxiety.

Because she refuses to partake in the Freudian decentering of subjectivity, she does not emphasize the conflict between self-destructive and self-preserving impulses within the organism. Instead, she attempts to grasp

psychic phenomena, including even masochism, in terms of the need for self-preservation. The core element of the masochistic personality is “the attempt of an intimidated and isolated individual to cope with life and its dangers by dependency and unobtrusiveness” (*NWP*, 274). For Horney, masochism presents the possibility (albeit an unsatisfactory one) of a negotiated settlement between cultural stereotypes and individual feelings. The universalist argument concerning a fundamental masochistic urge in human beings therefore becomes difficult if not impossible to uphold. Horney notes that one of the consequences of masochism theory is that it has shifted the discursive domain of feminine behavior away from sociocultural modes of inquiry to the psychoanalytic. As a result, feminine masochism has been projected onto cultural images and myths such as “feminine character portrayal in literature, or in examination of women of somewhat foreign mores, such as the Russian peasant woman who does not feel she is loved by her husband unless he beats her” (*PFM*, 223). It is evidence such as this that psychoanalysts draw upon in order to conclude that they are dealing with “a ubiquitous phenomenon, functioning on a psychobiological basis with the regularity of a law of nature” (*PFM*, 223). Such a conclusion can only be upheld by neglecting the sociocultural conditions in which such imagery and myths arise.

Horney’s dialogue with Freudian theory represents one of the pioneering debates on feminine masochism in the 1930s and 1940s. During these decades, psychoanalysts increasingly raised questions about control and its relinquishment. Is control exercised by the rational mind in the face of hostile environmental circumstances? Is the relinquishing of control a surrender to biologically determined forces, or is it an eclipse of individual will behind the conventions of social life? In other words, how is agency and the control of bodies to be conceptualized and applied to the phenomenon of “masochism” within the parameters set down by psychoanalytic language?

In 1940, when Theodor Reik’s book *Masochism in Modern Man* first appeared, Horney had already shown how questions like these force a confrontation with moral masochism. Reik’s book remains the most comprehensive attempt to develop Freud’s ideas on moral masochism. Reik was in many ways typical of his generation of psychoanalysts. One of Freud’s first pupils, and later a colleague at the Psychoanalytic Institute in Vienna and in Berlin, he left Germany for Holland in 1934. From there he emigrated to the United States, where he founded the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis.

Reik saw his own research as a continuation, refinement, and correction of his teacher’s work on masochism. He finds Freud’s theory of masochism inadequate on two counts. He rejects the theory of primary masochism, and



he believes the dynamics of masochism require considerably more elucidation than Freud offered. Like the other second-generation Freudians, Reik remains closely oriented toward clinical practice; he gives clinical considerations priority over the metapsychological problems of masochism. He is primarily interested in the idea of a desexualized masochism, “a particular attitude toward life or a definite type of social behavior: of enjoying one’s own suffering or one’s own helplessness.”<sup>33</sup> This desexualization of masochism was one of the threads that had run through theories of masochism since Krafft-Ebing. As a Freudian, Reik was interested in the question of “the paradoxical pairing of pain or discomfort with sexual pleasure” (*MMM*, 14). The problem is quite clear: human beings seek situations of pleasure, not pain or unpleasure. The masochist is no different in this respect, he simply develops complex strategies for deriving pleasure from situations of unpleasure. Reik’s book is intended as an exposition of these strategies.

Reik’s adaptation of Freud is a strange attempt to adhere to Freudian theory while avoiding its self-contradictory consequences. Thus Reik declares his adamant support of the death instinct, calling the theory of Eros and the death instinct “one of the greatest creations in the explanation of the world” and noting its application to “the tremendous scale of instinctual phenomena of all creation.” Like Freud, he sees masochism and sadism as “an offshoot of the death urge [*Todestrieb*] which has been libidinally bound” (*MMM*, 33). And yet, he rejects the idea that there is such a thing as primary masochism, the self-destructive expression of the death instinct within the organism. For Reik, masochism “is no original drive, but a secondary instinctual formation” (*MMM*, 186). In other words, Reik simultaneously accepts Freud’s turn to the death instinct and rejects the modifications it entails in the dynamic theory of masochism. In the process, Reik raises a problem that Freud had glossed over. It was essential for Reik to reject Freud’s theory of primary masochism if he wanted to retain the idea of the masochistic subject as a functional social agent. By connecting the death drive to primary masochism, Freud rendered his masochist helpless, leaving him at the mercy of his own history. Reik, however, understands masochism as just one possible strategy for dealing with the discrepancies between historical, social, rational, and psychodynamic dimensions of subjectivity. This is why he follows Freud’s economic theory only as far as it permits a logic of exchange within a teleology of pleasure. “Can the statement be maintained that the masochist originally aims at discomfort [*Unlust*], asks for pain and disgrace? Is his goal shame and abashment? No! He does not enjoy pain, but what is bought with pain! He does not strive for discomfort, but for lust [*Lust*] that must be paid for with discomfort” (*MMM*, 191).

Reik reduces Freud's economy of the instincts to an economic metaphor, a Calvinistic domestic economy of pleasure seeking, in which pleasurable experiences must be purchased with pain. This allows him to adopt the economic model to explain the logic of masochism while adhering to the view that masochism "retains its sadistic character in the intermediate and in the end-phase of the development, where aggression turns against the ego and where its execution is ceded to another person" (*MMM*, 187).

Probably the most important contribution Reik makes to the theory of masochism is the emphasis he places on fantasy in the psychodynamics of masochism. According to Reik, masochism is incomprehensible purely as a direct reversal of sadism against the self. This reversal can only take place through the mediation of masochistic fantasy. The masochistic fantasy eroticizes social relations by coupling interpersonal relations with certain markers of social power. Thus, for example, one of his patients visits prostitutes and asks them if they give "Russian lessons." Reik explains: "The phrase is used in certain newspapers of his country to advertise masochistic practices. In the patient's imagination the term connotes the terror of pogroms and scenes in Russian prisons which he has read about" (*MMM*, 42).

In this respect Reik is probably the psychoanalytic theorist who remains truest to the writings of Sacher-Masoch. Like his literary forerunner, he recognizes that fantasies of sexual submission take their cues from social relations of power, recasting the stereotypes of cruelty in scenes of pleasure.

Alongside the vital role of fantasy, Reik names two other constitutive aspects of masochism: the moment of suspense and the demonstrative character of masochism. Because of the passive nature of the masochistic instinct, fantasy is the most important of the three. Reik uses the example of a masochistic man walking down the street and suddenly being insulted and struck on the face by a strange woman who has mistaken his identity. The man, so Reik argues, will derive no pleasure from this incident, since the necessary preparatory fantasy has not been mobilized in order to eroticize the scene. Fantasy is the key subjective element needed to transform social violence into masochistic pleasure. Where the derivation of pleasure depends on a passive attitude to the instincts, the fantasy serves as a prelude to passivity, allowing the masochist to direct the course of the masochistic scene, *producing* it like a play:

In the beginning there is no action, as far as masochism is concerned, but the phantasy. The actual scene corresponds thus to the staging of a drama and is related to the phantasies as is the performance to the dramatist's conception. They are exposed to the same accidents, incidents and nec-

essary adaptations to the means at hand and are just as dependent on the mood and the cooperation of the actors. . . . The rules, given in such a scene, are comparable to directions to the stage manager. (*MMM*, 49)

And like the play, the masochistic fantasy uses suspense as its prime moving device. Reik once again takes the cue from Freud, this time developing the asymmetrical relation between pleasure and tension (*Spannung*) in the organism, which Freud had noted in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. According to Reik, masochism uses the ambivalence inherent in the build-up and release of tension in order to derive maximum pleasure. Masochism thus relies upon a situation of suspense in which pleasure is derived from the tension which arises from postponing unpleasure. “Masochism is not, as has been surmised up till now, characterized by pleasure in discomfort, but by pleasure in *expectation* of discomfort” (*MMM*, 67). Like the masochistic fantasy, the manipulation of tension has one purpose — to place the masochistic subject in control. This is why Reik refers to the “masochistic mechanism” as an “escape through advancing” or a “flight toward the future” (*eine Flucht nach vorn*) (*MMM*, 70).

The theatricality of masochism also includes the element of display, which Reik calls its demonstrative nature. Masochistic suffering has an “external aspect distinctly designed to confront the environment, a facade designed for the outside world,” in the same sense that some people “make a parade of their sufferings” (*MMM*, 76). The demonstrative feature of Reik’s social masochism is, as Silverman notes, an exaggeration of the essential sacrifice required of cultural identity. The resultant “parade” is a display of the irredeemable lack underlying cultural identity. The masochist “acts out in an insistent and exaggerated way the basic conditions of cultural subjectivity, conditions that are normally disavowed. . . . The male masochist magnifies the losses and divisions upon which cultural identity is based, refusing to be sutured or recompensed. In short, he radiates a negativity inimical to the social order.”<sup>34</sup>

By acting out the breakdown of cultural identity, the masochist forces the analyst to confront difficult questions concerning the nature of suffering. The display of suffering noted by Reik is exaggerated to the point where it becomes unclear whether the masochist is engaged in this act of display in order to demonstrate the fact of his suffering or in order to distract the analyst from the fact that he does not suffer. This ambivalence is the same as that discussed by Freud in his article on negation.<sup>35</sup> Reik confronts this ambivalence with a certain amount of discontent, and he is correct in doing so. For it is here that he recognizes masochism’s central strategy, which is to

produce scenes of suffering in order to create spaces of control. Masochism acts out society's negation, the horror which social arrangements are intended to surmount, and it displays this horror as the founding force of social arrangements. Control becomes a question of aesthetics, of the formal presentation of cultural identity. Masochism dramatizes the fact that the analyst, like the masochist, is engaged in a struggle for control, both of truth and of history.

As a willful staging of an erotic fantasy in which the subject appears to play out his or her own failures, masochism contains elements of strategic agency normally associated with the motivated subject in control of his own history. Reik repeatedly returns to those places where masochistic stagings seem to be repeating the construction of subjectivity's social field. Masochism is a strategy aimed at gaining control over what Reik calls "social fear," an internalization of the childhood fear of those repressive instances of authority that Freud identified with the super-ego. This strategy seizes on passivity, the designated role of the submissive socialized subject, and converts it to activity, while at the same time retaining the external appearance of passivity and submissiveness. Hence the theatrical staging of masochism's submissiveness, a strategy that frames submissiveness in a logic of subjective control.

The masochistic staging also involves a manipulation of subjective temporality, presenting the sequence of authoritative domination according to the fantasizing subject's own script. Drawing upon Freud's observations concerning the pleasurable perception of tension, Reik concludes that time — or more accurately, temporal rhythm — is the single decisive factor in determining whether variations in tension are experienced as pleasurable or painful. In the masochistic staging, the fantasizing subject uses techniques of tension in order to control the temporal sequence of submissiveness to authoritative domination. The role of the ego "changes from a passive role to an active one" (*MMM*, 101). The authoritative technology of control based on a transgression-punishment-correction sequence is appropriated in a way that is intended to maximize pleasure. Reik states bluntly that "a future event becomes a present one" (*MMM*, 101). The masochistic staging recasts the mechanisms of authority in order to dramatize only those sequences that are most conducive to subjective pleasure. "The dreaded danger situation is not brought about in its entirety but only partially and playfully" (*MMM*, 101).

The masochistic subject is staging a perverted fantasy of his own historical agency. In Reik's words, "the ego has made himself master of the world's events, and . . . master of the time at which they have to occur" (*MMM*, 101).

His own passive helplessness is fantasized as an active control over situations of domination. In other words, social domination enters a subjective economy in which it is neutralized — at least for the duration of the fantasy. Like Freud's masochist, Reik's believes in the inevitability of suffering, but where Freud sees his masochist eventually succumbing to history's negativity, Reik allows his masochist to master the world. The masochist's knowledge of the inevitability of suffering is used to manipulate subjective temporality, extending the suspense of anticipation and thereby creating a dialectic of pleasure in anticipation of unpleasure. In other words, the masochist's relation to his own historicity plays itself out under the sign of a sovereign mastery of time — and therefore of history itself. History's utopian myth is reversed in order to stage a utopianism of the present moment, a strategy not unlike Walter Benjamin's concept of the *Jetztzeit*. And consequently, the masochist is rewriting or re-presenting — and therefore aestheticizing — history within the requirements of his own subjective economy.

In his discussion of aestheticized history, Reik seems to be describing the writing and the life of Sacher-Masoch. Seen from this point of view, it is no chance matter that Leopold von Sacher-Masoch was and remained a historian. But he was a perverse historian. His perversity was of the order noted by Silverman: it “turns aside from both biology and the social order, and it does so through the improper deployment or negation of the binarisms upon which each regime depends.”<sup>36</sup> Masochism, like the writing of history, aestheticizes history's impossibility, and the impossibility of being a subject-in-history. And it is a strategy aimed at restoring subjective mastery.

For this reason, the masochistic display always verges on parody. Reik notes that the masochist's “overdone and intentionally distorted scenes frequently give the impression of a parody or travesty, of a sarcastic demonstration of the defeat of educational methods or of later discipline” (*MMM*, 153). This, Reik tells us, is also how feminine masochism should be read.

Masochism, looked upon from a certain angle, may be the expression of a feminine inclination in a man, but the feminine conduct in itself is certainly not the expression of masochistic feelings. Here again, as so often in the observation of masochistic phenomena, we are confronted with the impression of the paradoxical. The masochist who plays the female part in his phantasies and scenes seems at the same time to make fun of it by his distorted presentation. What he shows is less a picture of femininity than its parody or caricature. (*MMM*, 197–98)

This view of the male masochist's femininity as a parody of the feminine might be read as a development of Freud's views on feminine masochism.

Like Horney, Reik shows how Freud's understanding of feminine masochism escapes the binarism of masculinity and femininity that defines the subject as a gendered being. He also shows how Freud's ideas on moral masochism unsettle the binarism of authority that inscribes the subject as a social being. Here the masochistic staging parodies the performances that cultural form requires of subjectivity. In his subversion of the temporal order of pleasure and unpleasure, the masochist succeeds "in substituting the cultural rhythm for the instinctual rhythm. . . . He has not adjusted himself to the cultural rhythm, he has exaggerated and thereby falsified it. The aim of education has not been attained. What has been attained is a distortion or caricature of this aim" (*MMM*, 114).

By extending the Freudian model into an unsettling of the subject as a gendered being and a socially controlled being, Horney and Reik both address an issue that was emerging as a central concern in the discussion of masochism. This was the awareness that within the masochist's body there rages a struggle for control. The feminine masochist is engaged in a struggle for the control of a body he is forced to see as biologically determined. The social masochist is struggling to gain control of a body that is already cast in the multiple power relations required by society. Both of these struggles are body struggles. They are played out along the interface of subjective interiority and social exteriority. In a way, this interface was designated by Freud's theory of the death instinct as the place where subjectivity is always masochistic. The masochistic struggle for control attempts to clear a space where the body can persist as an unstable organism caught between life and death.

This is the struggle of "primary" masochism, and it was addressed by Wilhelm Reich. It was the strange and neglected achievement of Wilhelm Reich to realize that the power struggles surrounding the human body are played out first and foremost in the various technologies that compete for control within it. In Reich's work, the theoretical debates over primary masochism center increasingly on technologies of control and their interruption.

Wilhelm Reich studied medicine in Vienna from 1918 to 1922. In 1920 he became a member of Freud's Vienna Psychoanalytic Society as "the only young medical man among all the 'grown-ups', people ten to twenty years my senior."<sup>37</sup> From 1924 to 1930 he was the elected head of the Seminar for Psychoanalytic Therapy in Freud's Vienna Psychoanalytic Clinic. Reich, like so many others in Freud's circle, had a number of fallings out with the master, culminating in his exclusion from the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1934, primarily because of his leftist political views and his insistence that psychoanalysis be politicized. More specifically, it was the appearance of *The Mass-Psychology of Fascism* in 1933, that Freud quite rightly

regarded (in the context of Nazi Germany) as a threat to the psychoanalytic movement.<sup>38</sup> Reich believed it necessary for psychoanalysis to face this threat if it were to live up to its revolutionary potential. As a Marxist, he felt it his task to promote this potential wherever possible. In 1928 he joined the Austrian Communist Party, and in the same year he founded the Socialist Society for Sex Consultation and Sexological Research.<sup>39</sup> In the following year he visited Russia, where his book *Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis* was published. He also contributed to editions of the journal *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, which discussed the relationship of Marxist thought and psychoanalysis. In 1933 Reich was expelled from the German Communist Party as a result of his antiauthoritarian, revolutionary politics. In 1939 he emigrated to the United States, where he set up a research institute for the study of the orgone. In 1954 he was served with an injunction by the United States Food and Drug Administration preventing him from using or distributing the products of his research, primarily the orgone accumulator boxes he had developed to treat biological and psychological dysfunctions. He disregarded the injunction, and in 1957 he was imprisoned in Lewisburg, where he died eight months later.

Reich is an idiosyncratic thinker who is difficult to place in psychoanalytic, political, or sociological theory. Paul Robinson calls him “a difficult intellectual,” whose “theoretical boldness” is accompanied by an “alarming intellectual simplicity.”<sup>40</sup> His intellectual development is usually divided into a “good” phase — his critical revision of Freudian theory and the development of new therapeutic techniques — and a “bad” phase — his later experiments with the bioelectrical energy of life, the discovery of orgone energy, orgonomy and orgone therapy. In Charles Rycroff’s words, “Reich’s career and ideas up to the mid-1930s are clearly related to time and place,” whereas “after 1934 his ideas take a private course.”<sup>41</sup> Robinson criticizes this attempt to divide Reich’s work into periods, emphasizing the consistence and unity in Reich’s thought: a central concern with the development of a functional and effective therapy and a Freudian politics aimed at preventing neuroses and mental disorder. In other words, Reich was interested in the political technology of bodies and the psychoanalytical strategies it requires. I will not discuss the theory of the orgone and its therapeutic applications, but it should emerge in the discussion of Reich’s theory of masochism that his later work with orgone accumulators arose out of this central concern.

Unlike Freud, Reich was convinced that the struggle against mental disease must be fought by implementing an appropriate technology of bodies. If the political technologies that seize on healthy bodies, converting and per-

verting them into armored bodies, are to be effectively combated, they must be combated by developing alternative technologies. These technologies are therapeutic, in the sense that they involve direct manipulations of the body with the aim of healing, and they are political, since they require an active restructuring of socioeconomic life if they are to be and remain effective. Reich's most important contribution to the history of masochism lies not so much in his characterological theory of masochism but in his conceptualization of a therapeutics based on the political technology of bodies.

In his early work on the development of neuroses and characterological dysfunctions, Reich tended to view these within the context of cultural determination and conditioning. Like Horney, he saw the need to contextualize psychoanalytic theory by introducing an ethnological perspective. Reich used ethnographic research, primarily Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islanders, as evidence for the sociological determination of sexual dysfunction, or as he later put it, the "sociological origin of sex denial" (*FO*, 228). In Reich's reading, Malinowski had, in 1926, "rejected the concept of the biological nature of the sexual child-parent conflict discovered by Freud (i.e., the Oedipus conflict)" (*FO*, 228).

Like others of his generation, Reich was too quick to understand Freud's models in biological terms. But even if it is not always grounded in an accurate reading of Freud, his dispute with Freudian thought is interesting. One of his main therapeutic preoccupations was the social etiology of neurosis. To this end, he developed the concept of "character-analysis," which regarded character as a unified defense system erected by the organism in response to a hostile environment. The following passage from the 1942 version of *The Function of the Orgasm* succinctly presents Reich's topology and to some extent his economy.

The patriarchal, authoritarian era in human history has attempted to keep the secondary antisocial drives in check with the aid of compulsive moral restrictions. Thus, what is called the cultured human came to be a living structure *composed of three layers*. On the surface he carries the artificial mask of self-control, of compulsive insincere politeness and artificial sociality. With this layer, he covers up the second one, the Freudian "unconscious," in which sadism, greediness, lasciviousness, envy, perversions of all kinds, etc., are kept in check, without however, having in the least lost any of their power. This second layer is the artifact of a sex-negating culture; consciously, it is mostly experienced only as a gaping inner emptiness. Behind it, in the depths, live and work *natural* sociality and sexuality, *spontaneous* enjoyment of work, *capacity for love*. This third and

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deepest layer, representing the *biological nucleus* of the human structure, is unconscious and dreaded. It is at variance with every aspect of authoritarian education and régime. It is, at the same time, man's only real hope of ever mastering social misery. (*FO*, 232)

One of Reich's pupils, Ola Raknes, observes that Reich enjoyed a reputation in Berlin as "an excellent clinician and competent theoretician" but that students were warned that "he confounded psychiatry and politics and claimed that every therapist should help to expose the social and ideological causes of mental illness, and also concern themselves with general prophylactic measures."<sup>42</sup> The kind of prophylactic measures Reich had in mind may be seen from a resolution adopted in 1931 by the German Imperial Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics, an organization which Reich had created under the auspices of the German Communist Party in the same year.<sup>43</sup> The resolution was aimed at providing an environment in which children might enter life with a minimized exposure to conditions predisposing them to neurosis. It called for, among other things, free distribution of contraceptives to economically disadvantaged persons; abolition of anti-abortion laws and the provision of free abortions; rescinding of all laws concerning marriage and divorce, including incest laws; and the introduction of mass programs for combating venereal disease, sexual crime, and the sexual abuse of children. Although the focus of the resolution was on social reform in matters of child rearing and sexual relations, one of the items on Reich's sexual reform program was the combating of neurosis and sexual dysfunction through educational and clinical means. Reich was convinced that the perpetuation of neurosis was a social problem, like other social diseases, and it was to be combated not only in individual therapy but in social programs aimed at alleviating the sources of neurosis. In his preface to the first edition of his psychoanalytic study *Character Analysis* (1933), Reich states that "neuroses are the results of a home atmosphere that is patriarchal and sexually suppressive; that, moreover, the only *prophylaxis* worthy of serious consideration is one for the practical implementation of which the present social system lacks every prerequisite; that it is only a thorough turnover of social institutions and ideologies, a turnover that will be dependent upon the outcome of the political struggles of our century. . . ."<sup>44</sup>

In spite of this insistence on the sociopolitical causes of neuroses, Reich remained committed to discovering the "biological foundations of the living emotions."<sup>45</sup> Psychic structure is for him "a dynamic unification of biophysiological and sociological factors" (*FO*, 248). In this sense, he understood his work as a continuation of Freud's most essential discoveries, which Reich

positioned within the field of biogenesis. Commenting in 1942 on the legitimate continuation of Freud's work, he stated:

It was a matter of the continuation of a gigantic discovery; . . . it was, primarily, a matter of *giving a foundation to the libido theory through biological experimentation . . .* Today, many of those who are familiar with this new, biopsychological branch of medicine, understand the fact that the character-analytic theory of structure is the legitimate continuation of the theory of the unconscious. The most important result of a consistent application of the libido concept was the opening of a new avenue of approach to the problem of biogenesis. (*FO*, 57)

For Reich, the problem of biogenesis centered on the question of how essentially positive, life-giving sexual impulses could undergo transformations resulting in neurosis and mental illness. Reich had little doubt about the nature of the sexual impulses. They are to be understood in economic terms, and their economy is a teleology of pleasure. This necessitated a radical departure from many central aspects of Freudian theory. Reich's concept of the instinct itself was one important point of divergence. Reich considered the instinct to be "nothing but the '*motor aspect of pleasure*'" (*FO*, 70). Sexuality is therefore not simply pleasure-seeking activity in the service of reproduction. Its main function is to regulate the energy balance within the organism, ensuring "the healthy functioning of the human organism, rational thinking, natural feelings and meaningful actions."<sup>46</sup> Furthermore he regarded the instinct as "no longer something that exists *here* and seeks pleasure *there*" (*FO*, 71). As a result, the concepts of aim and object — and with them the subject's relationship to the world — acquired a meaning completely different from the one they had for Freud. Instead of drawing a fluid boundary between normal and pathological sexuality, Reich concentrated on the sexual economy of the healthy organism and on its interruption by a world that is hostile to natural sexuality and the forces of life. This is why Reich's psychoanalysis possessed such a marked political dimension. The organism exists in a sociopolitical environment in which nature and life are repressed and suppressed.

The character structure of man of today — who is perpetuating a patriarchal, authoritarian culture some four to six thousand years old — is characterized by *an armoring against nature within himself and against social misery outside himself*. . . . Human beings have taken a hostile attitude toward that in themselves which is living, and have alienated themselves from it. This alienation is not of biological, but of social and economic

origin. It is not found in human history before the development of the patriarchal social order. (*FO*, 29)

Since Reich was convinced that the economy of the organism had both a biogenetic, sexual dimension and a sociopolitical, repressive dimension, he believed passionately that reform had to be both therapeutic and political. Freudian theory and therapy seemed compelled to move outside any political technology of bodies. For Reich however, it was precisely the technology of bodies which presented the possibility of interventions that were both therapeutic and politically effective. Reich considered himself first and foremost a therapist, and like so many of his generation of psychoanalysts, he strongly objected to what he saw as Freud's neglect of questions concerning therapeutic technique.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the main reason why Reich's career followed the strange and at times even bizarre paths it took was his stubborn insistence that neurosis could be alleviated through a technology of the body. This began with his clinical theory of character armoring and his technique of character analysis, and it led directly to the development of the orgone accumulator.

Reich's rejection of the Oedipus complex opened a central rift between his model of culture and that of Freud. Freud had put forward the idea in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that unhappiness and neurosis is the price that human beings have to pay for culture. Reich believed that the forms of culture and the institutions of unhappiness were caught in a vicious circle that made life — sexual as well as social and cultural — increasingly impossible. Reich felt that Freud's theory of culture, particularly Oedipus and the death instinct, was directly connected to fascism and its authoritarian social institutions, primarily the authoritarian family. In *The Function of the Orgasm*, he chides Ernest Jones for believing “that the Oedipus complex, as found in the European, was the *fons et origo* of all culture; and that, therefore, the family of today was an unalterable *biological* institution” (*FO*, 228). For Reich it was a simple matter of choosing sides in “the decisive question as to *whether sexual repression is biologically determined and unalterable, or sociologically determined and alterable*” (*FO*, 228).

It was in this connection that Reich broached the problem of masochism. Reich follows Freud's dynamic model when he sees masochism as a secondary drive. But he introduces a new aspect when he sees this as resulting not from sadism but from a repression of the natural sexual drive. And he further insists that the repression of the sexual drive is founded in the “ideologies and perverse drives of parents and educators.”<sup>48</sup> Parents, educators, and other instances of authority function to perpetuate an essentially perverse

cultural and social order by repressing the instincts. The perversion that authoritarian ideology requires is matched in the fascist social order by a voluntary submissiveness to authority. Fascism is characterized by a mass commitment to subjugation: “What is new in Fascism is that the masses of people themselves actively assented to their own subjugation and actively brought it about. The craving for authority proved stronger than the wish for independence” (FO, 236).

In this view, masochism is a political problem, not a biological or meta-psychological one. Reich also explains women’s masochism from a political perspective. “Hitler promised the subjugation of woman to man, the abolition of her economic independence, her exclusion from the process of determining social life, and her relegation to the home and the hearth. The women, whose individual freedom had been suppressed for centuries and who had developed the idea of an independent way of living in a particularly high degree, were the first to hail him” (FO, 236).

The masochistic character, irrespective of gender, is a product of the authoritarian institutions of fascism. Reich’s impassioned rejection of the death instinct, and with it his rejection of primary masochism, has to be seen in this context. If masochism is a socially conditioned, self-destructive act, then both the death instinct itself and the theory of it are social symptoms of a specific political system. As Reich saw it, the theory of the death instinct was a denial of political agency, and it had to be debunked in order to restore the subject’s control over life. As Paul Robinson explains, Freud’s cultural philosophy, if true, would have undermined Reich’s activities as a sexual reformer, and “the hypothesis of a death instinct was yet more tendentious. It made even a commitment to radical *social* and *political* criticism impossible, or at least pointless. The death instinct implied that suffering was inevitable, under socialism as well as capitalism.”<sup>49</sup> By clinging to the idea of the death instinct, Freud had allowed his own economic theory to become perverted.

Reich’s theory of masochism was formulated in an essay, “The Masochistic Character,” which appeared in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* in 1932 and was later incorporated as a chapter into the book *Character Analysis*. It was Reich’s intention in this essay to refute Freud’s theory of primary masochism and to demonstrate that masochism cannot be taken as evidence of either the death instinct or the repetition compulsion. Reich’s essay, which is subtitled “A Sex-Economic Refutation of the Death Instinct and the Repetition Compulsion,” could also have been called a defense of the pleasure principle. The argument is straightforward and does not require extensive elucidation. The thrust is that Freud was correct in seeking a dynamic and economic explanation of masochism as a reversal of biologically

primary sadistic impulses. When he introduced the idea of the death instinct, however, he misunderstood socially determined restrictions on the sexual impulse as an immanent tendency of the impulse itself. According to Reich, the only context in which a death instinct might possibly be conceived is political. “Should it eventually turn out that the socially imposed restrictions upon sexual gratification accelerate the sexual stasis that accompanies the structure-forming processes, thus also accelerating the process of dying, this would not be proof of the derivation of anxiety from these processes but only of the life-damaging effect of sex-negating morality.”<sup>50</sup>

Reich felt that by introducing the idea of the death instinct, Freud was abandoning what had proven to be a theoretically and clinically productive concept of neurosis. He objected to the lack of clinical data for such an instinct. Freud the metapsychologist believed he could extrapolate a psychoanalytic concept from its own silence, but Reich saw here only the silence of ideology. As a result, it appeared as if this theory of the instincts was a clinically unfounded attempt to move a conflict between the organism and its environment into the sphere of the biologically immanent. For Reich the scientific and disciplinary consequences of such a move were clear:

This new formulation blocked the difficult path into the *sociology* of human suffering, into which the original psychological formula on the psychic conflict had made considerable headway. The theory of the death instinct, i.e., the theory of self-destructive biological instincts, leads to a cultural philosophy of human suffering (cf. *Civilization and Its Discontents*). Human suffering is said to be ineradicable because destructive impulses and impulses striving toward self-annihilation cannot be mastered. The original formulation of the psychic conflict, on the other hand, leads to a critique of the social system.<sup>51</sup>

Reich’s criticism of Freud always returns to what he saw as the latter’s projection of biological and physiological phenomena onto a fatalistic concept of history, the history of *Civilization and Its Discontents*. For Reich, historical materialism and the theory of secondary masochism went hand in hand, just as he felt that Freud’s historical pessimism went hand in hand with the theory of primary masochism and the death instinct. This is a misunderstanding of Freud’s intention with respect to the death instinct, but Reich seems to have anticipated quite accurately the consequences of the death instinct for a philosophy of history and a psychoanalytic politics.

Vehement is the only way to describe Freud’s reaction to Reich’s essay. As far as Freud was concerned, all Reich was saying was that “what we call the death instinct is a product of the capitalist system.”<sup>52</sup> As the translator of the

American edition of *Character Analysis* noted in a preface to the chapter on masochism, Freud wanted to publish Reich's article only with a statement in which he, Freud, as editor of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, distanced himself from the ideas expressed therein. In this statement he accuses Reich of being a Bolshevik who subordinates scientific inquiry to the dogma of the party in the same way as a Jesuit would submit to the dogma of his church organization.<sup>53</sup> According to Jones, Freud was "naturally" intent on "disclaiming any political interests on the part of psycho-analysis."<sup>54</sup> Reich apparently agreed to this, but when some psychoanalysts in Berlin objected, the article was published together with a critical reply formulated by Siegfried Bernfeld.<sup>55</sup> Bernfeld himself had expressed the concern that any editorial comment of Freud's was bound to be seen by the Soviets as an act of hostility. Apparently he saw himself as a small enough fish that the Soviets would overlook his insubordination.

Bernfeld's answer to Reich's article is so obsessed with Reich's political commitments that it has virtually nothing to say about masochism. His article was aimed at discrediting Reich in similar terms as Freud's intended preface. It is in the first instance a protracted polemic against Marxism. Where it addresses Reich's theory of masochism, it does so fleetingly, dismissing it as the confused product of a person more concerned with communist propaganda than with psychoanalysis or psychotherapy. The single point where it touches the masochism debate is the correct observation that Reich regarded the death instinct as an idealistic betrayal of what he saw as Freud's earlier, more materialist views. Bernfeld is also correct in accusing Reich of confounding the pleasure principle and the experience of pleasure, as well as the death instinct and the destructive drive.<sup>56</sup>

It is my belief that Reich misunderstood and simplified the theory of the death instinct, but that the terms of his misunderstanding are implicit in the theory of the death instinct itself. Reich rejected the death instinct because he could not locate the biological principles from which Freud had deduced it. Instead, he sought clinical evidence for what had been intended as an explanatory model. But the question of clinical evidence is only peripherally important in the appraisal of the death instinct. Reich's attempts to demonstrate the secondary nature of masochism are in this respect not particularly remarkable. They concentrate on the logic of the pleasure principle and its clinical evidence, and are therefore similar to the ideas of many analysts of his generation. For Reich, the clinical experiences with masochistic individuals are themselves adequate evidence for the secondary nature of masochism, and thus for the deviation of the death instinct theory from empirical science.

But the question of empirical evidence leads to another far more fundamental question: whether Freud's theory of the death instinct — and with it the theory of primary masochism — is, as Reich suspected, an idealistic denial of political agency and a metaphysical statement of cosmic despair, or, as Jean Baudrillard has suggested, a profound and irreducible break with the metaphysical and dialectical tradition in Western thought.<sup>57</sup> Does the death instinct speak of the subject's helplessness in the unfolding of history, or does it require us to seek new terms for understanding history and agency?

Freud's writings on the death instinct allow both points of view. It seems equally possible to derive from the death instinct either the kind of cultural pessimism that Reich criticizes or the radical deconstruction of the scientific distinction between human life and inorganic matter that Baudrillard proposes. In either case we are following Baudrillard's (as well as Bersani's) advice and interpreting the death instinct against Freud and psychoanalysis in order to retain its radicalness. "The death drive is not just the limit of psychoanalysis's formulations nor its most radical conclusion, it is its reversal, and those who have rejected the concept of the death drive have, in a certain sense, a more accurate view than those who take it, as even Freud himself did, in their psychoanalytic stride without, perhaps, understanding what he had said."<sup>58</sup>

Reich's rejection of the death instinct is to be understood in just this sense. His misunderstanding of Freud's intention articulates (it would be inaccurate to say that he recognizes) that psychoanalysis cannot be a historical materialism of sexuality if it is to be a biology of sexuality. Freud — and later Reich — gave voice to the dispute of the historical and biological disciplines that was leading to their increasing incompatibility. The death instinct is a prime point of contention. Baudrillard has stated this succinctly: "As for the biological, it is clear that scientific rationality produces the distinction of the living and the non-living on which biology is based. Science, producing itself as a code, on the one hand literally produces the dead, the non-living, as a conceptual object, and, on the other, produces the separation of the dead as an axiom from which science can be legitimated."<sup>59</sup>

What this means is that there is much less distance between Freud's theory of the death instinct and Reich's rejection than either of them seem to have realized. Freud's "metapsychological," "metaphysical" theory of the death instinct may look very different from Reich's clinical obsession with techniques of bodily expression and manipulation. But in both, the masochistic body emerges as the place where the distinction between materialist economies and psychophysical economies breaks down.

This, I believe, is the key to the controversies which the second-genera-

tion Freudians initiated with respect to primary masochism, moral masochism, and feminine masochism. The issue at stake is not whether there is adequate clinical evidence for the death instinct, for social masochism, or for women's masochism. Nor is it whether psychoanalysis can be practiced as a pure science and isolated from the realms of history, biology and the political passions. The issue is how we conceptualize the breakdown of the body's economies, what technologies we see the body to be immersed in, and which technologies we accept or reject as appropriate technologies of control. Death is the crucial issue here, since it marks the human organism as caught up in not just one technology, but many. Death genders the masochistic body, marking it with its own biological demise; death positions the body within history, and it defines the bodily sacrifices required in the social world. Death draws the fine line between the inside and outside of the subject, the human body and the world, the historical agent and history, the analyst and his own life.



40. Max Nordau, *Paradoxes* (Chicago: L. Schick, 1886); quoted in Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, 252.

41. Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *SE*, 19: 37.

42. See John K. Noyes, "The Voice of History: Freud — E. T. A. Hoffmann — G. H. Schubert," *Journal of Literary Studies* 6, no. 1/2 (1990): 36–61.

43. For this reason, it is also not viable to rescue stage b, as Silverman attempts to do, by inventing a term ("reflexive masochism") intended to allow an active participation in the subject's own enjoyment of pain. When Silverman claims that "reflexive masochism . . . fosters the production of two contrary images of self — the image of the one who pleurably inflicts pain on behalf of the exalted standard which it purports to be, and that of the one who pleurably suffers the pain," she is simply restating the central contradiction which Freud was addressing — the apparent divergence in the dynamic orientation of the instincts within one individual. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 325.

44. Strachey is not using the term here the way he does when he translates Freud's *Instanz*. There it can be taken to refer to a system or a part of the psychical apparatus. Nevertheless, there is a certain correspondence to that use of the term. As Laplanche and Pontalis observe, Freud "speaks more readily of agencies when dealing with the super-ego or the censorship, in that they exert a positive action and are not defined simply as the points through which excitations pass" (*The Language of Psychoanalysis*, 16). According to Frances M. Moran, agency was a problem for Freud from the very beginning of his scientific pursuits. Consequently, "Freud deals with the problem of agency by means of (a) incorporating an explanatory homunculus analogy that itself contained the concept of agent; (b) reverting to a basically neurological or energy-bound explanation that requires no agent but rests on the premises of the medical sciences; or (c) simply imputing agency to the systems themselves" (*Subject and Agency in Psychoanalysis: Which Is to Be Master?* [New York: New York University Press, 1993], 53).

45. A. Andrews, "The Major Functions of the Noun Phrase," in *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. 1, ed. T. Shopen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 68.

46. *Ibid.*, 68.

47. According to Ducrot and Todorov, aspect is the relationship "between the period that is the topic of the utterance and the one in which the process is situated ('process' is the action of the qualification expressed by the subject-predicate group)." Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Sciences of Language*, trans. Catherine Porter (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 307.

48. Réage, *Story of O*, 204.

## Chapter 6. Beyond the Death Instinct: History, Control, and the Gendering of Masochism

1. Comment made to Felix Deutsch, quoted in Ernest Jones, *Sigmund Freud: Life and Work*, vol. 3, *The Last Phase, 1919–1939* (London: Hogarth, 1957), 95.

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2. See, for example, J. L. McCartney, "Sadism and Masochism: With a Discussion of Erotic Flagellation," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 68 (1928); R. Dupouy, "Du masochisme," *Annales medico-psychologiques* 5 (1929); W. Stekel, *Sadism and Masochism*, 2 vols. (New York: 1929); Marie Bonaparte, "Passivity, Masochism and Femininity," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 16 (1935); Ludwig Eidelberg, "Beiträge zum Studium des Masochismus," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 21 (1935); and Fritz Wittels, "The Mystery of Masochism," *Psychoanalytic Review* 24 (1937).

3. Peter Reich, *A Book of Dreams* (London: Picador, 1974), 4.

4. Gay, *Cultivation of Hatred*, 531.

5. Thanks to Sander Gilman for this observation.

6. Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, *Freud's Women* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 308.

7. Helene Deutsch, *Psychoanalysis of the Sexual Functions of Women*, ed. Paul Roazen, trans. Eric Mosbacher (New York: Karnac, 1991), 31–32; cited in the text as *SFW*.

8. Freud to Carl Müller-Braunschweig, 21 July 1935, quoted in Appignanesi and Forrester, *Freud's Women*, 431.

9. Deutsch, "The Significance of Masochism in the Mental Life of Women," in *The Therapeutic Process, the Self, and Female Psychology: Collected Psychoanalytic Papers*, ed. Paul Roazen, trans. Eric Mosbacher et al. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1992), 49–61; cited in the text as *MMW*.

10. Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Difference between the Sexes," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 8 (1927).

11. Bonaparte, "Passivity, Masochism, and Femininity," 325–33; Caplan, *Myth of Women's Masochism*, 19.

12. Mario Rendon, "Hegel and Horney," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 51 (1991): 293.

13. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 49.

14. Massé, *In the Name of Love*, 6.

15. Karen Horney, "The Overvaluation of Love: A Study of a Common Present-day Feminine Type," in Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, ed. Harold Kelman (New York: Norton, 1993), 182–213.

16. Horney, "Overvaluation of Love," 182–83.

17. David Frisby, *Georg Simmel* (London: Tavistock, 1984), 27.

18. Horney, "The Flight from Womanhood: The Masculinity-Complex in Women as Viewed by Men and by Women," in Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, 55; cited in the text as *FW*.

19. Georg Simmel, *Philosophisch Kultur: Gesammelte Essays* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt, 1911), quoted in Horney, "Flight from Womanhood," 55–56.

20. Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 23.

21. Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 23.

22. Sarah Kofinan, *Enigma of Woman*, 158. See Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in *SE*, 22: 112–35.

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23. Freud, "An Outline of Psycho-Analysis," in *SE*, 23: 144–207.
24. Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 25.
25. Horney, "The Problem of Feminine Masochism," in Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, 230 n. 8.
26. Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1947), 246; cited in the text as *NWP*.
27. Rommelspacher, "Der weibliche Masochismus," 32.
28. Sandor Rado, "Fear of Castration in Women," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 3–4 (1933): 425–75.
29. For elaboration see "The Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real: Lacan, Lévi-Strauss, and Freud," in Wilden, *System and Structure*, 1–30.
30. See Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 631–32, 639–40.
31. Harold Kelman, introduction to Horney, "Problem of Feminine Masochism," 14.
32. The "protective function" of masochism is particularly emphasized in Horney's later work.
33. Reik, *Masochism in Modern Man*, 4; cited in the text as *MMM*.
34. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 206.
35. Freud, "Negation," in *SE*, 19: 235–39. See Deleuze's discussion of negation in *Masochism*, 109–10.
36. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 185.
37. Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Theodore P. Wolfe (London: Panther, 1968), 66; cited in the text as *FO*.
38. See Paul Robinson, *The Freudian Left: Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 37–38; Ola Raknes, *Wilhelm Reich und die Orgonomie* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1973), 31.
39. Charles Rycroff, *Reich* (London: Fontana, 1971), 11.
40. Robinson, *Freudian Left*, 9.
41. Rycroff, *Reich*, 16.
42. Raknes, *Wilhelm Reich*, 46.
43. *Ibid.*, 47–49.
44. Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno, 3d ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), xxi.
45. Reich, quoted in Raknes, *Wilhelm Reich*, 17.
46. Raknes, *Wilhelm Reich*, 29.
47. Robinson, *The Freudian Left*, 11–12.
48. Raknes, *Wilhelm Reich*, 30.
49. Robinson, *Freudian Left*, 36.
50. Reich, *Character Analysis*, 231.
51. *Ibid.*, 232–33.
52. Jones, *Sigmund Freud*, 3: 166; quoted in Robinson, *Freudian Left*, 36.
53. Wilhelm Reich, *Reich Speaks of Freud*, ed. Mary Higgins and Chester M. Raphael (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967), 155; quoted in Robinson, *The Freudian Left*, 37.

54. Jones, *Sigmund Freud*, 177.
55. Siegfried Bernfeld, "Die kommunistische Diskussion um die Psychoanalyse und Reichs 'Widerlegung der Todestriebhypothese,'" *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 18 (1932): 352–85.
56. *Ibid.*, 380.
57. Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Sage, 1993), 149.
58. *Ibid.*, 153.
59. *Ibid.*, 152.

### **Chapter 7. Disappearing and Reappearing Subjects: Masochism, Modernity, Postmodernity**

1. Sacher-Masoch, *Venus im Pelz* (1870), 11; my translation.
2. I have modified the translation in order to be more faithful to the original.
3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), 20–21.
4. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiii.
5. Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 71.
6. Quoted in Wetzstein et al., *Sadomasochismus*, 210.
7. Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, 303.
8. Deleuze, *Masochism*, 67–68.
9. Geissler, *Lust an der Unterwerfung*, 151.
10. I disagree with Baumeister (*Masochism and the Self*, 81) that the masochist relinquishes control over symbolic and abstract identities while retaining control over direct experience. Control proceeds in the opposite direction. The masochist relinquishes control over experience in order to heighten pleasure. But this takes place within the framework of a carefully controlled symbolism of cultural identity. What the masochist strives to control is access to this symbolism.
11. Wetzstein et al., *Sadomasochismus*, 175.
12. See the story related by Bianca, a forty-year-old female heterosexual sadist, *ibid.*, 180–81.
13. *Ibid.*, 181.
14. *Ibid.*, 182.
15. V. Sitzmann, "Zur Strafbarkeit von sado-masochistischen Körperverletzungen," in *Goldammers' Archiv für Strafrecht* 2 (1991): 81; quoted in Wetzstein et al., *Sadomasochismus*, 182.
16. *Der Spiegel*, no. 1 (1994): 77.
17. Baumeister, *Masochism and the Self*, 11.
18. Reik, *Masochism in Modern Man*, 319.
19. Wetzstein et al., *Sadomasochismus*, 182.

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