The only trouble with Jule Nydes, whom I consider one of my most gifted former students, is that it is difficult to get him to the point of actually publishing his often brilliant ideas. It took three-and-a-half years of unflagging encouragement until he finally completed the paper here presented. It continues a line of research that I only vaguely anticipated in my book, Masochism in Modern Man (1941), and penetrates virginal land of psychopathological exploration. That long time of preparation has been only beneficial to the contribution, whose lucidity of formulation and surprising insight will be recognized by every reader having a true interest in psychological problems.

Theodor Reik

The interpretation of masochism in this article is, in essence, derived from the view of social masochism presented by Theodor Reik in Masochism in Modern Man. In the presentation that follows an attempt is made to complement Reik's conception in some measure, by exploring the dynamics governing the relationship of the paranoid and the masochistic character structure.**

“Love” and “Power”

The paranoid and the masochistic character structures are very closely related, if viewed as two strategies in a futile and conflicted struggle for control with an “omnipotent will.” More specifically, the essential similarity and polarity that obtains in the masochistic


** By referring to my lecture notes and letters Reik discusses this relationship in his books, Myth and Guilt, and Jewish Wit.
and the paranoid character orientations may be formulated: The masochistic character appears to renounce “power” for the sake of “love”; and the paranoid character appears to renounce “love” for the sake of “power.” The words love and power are in quotes for the purpose of making it clear that for both character orientations (as they manifest themselves separately and in combination) love and power have special definitions. As the words are used here, “love” means to obtain love through apparent submission to the love object, and “power” means power to enforce submission from another or others.

The love to which I am referring may be characterized as pre-Oedipal or dependent love. It is love which affirms weakness and the need for tender care and protection. It is as if the identity of the masochist is surrendered to the love object whose power must then be employed in behalf of the weak one.

Power, too, as it is used here does not refer to the power to exercise real efforts or to create. It is power which is conferred by those who respond to it, rather than strength in itself. Such, at least in part, is the nature of infantile omnipotence. The infant's power is conferred by those who feel responsible for him, who heed his cry and gratify his needs.

The infant is as God whose wish is the world's command, and obedience to God is the condition for his love. “In Thy will is our peace.” In the megalomaniac phase of delusional paranoia, the patient is God or some powerful figure who is equated with God. The masochist, on the other hand, projects his wish for omnipotence onto another person and appears to renounce being God for the sake of God’s love.

These limited conceptions of love and power are referred to quite frequently in the psychoanalytic literature on masochism. But they have not been applied with equivalent pertinence to the psycho-dynamics of the paranoid character. One reason for this may be that (with relatively few exceptions) the designation “sado-masochistic character” has been used to identify psychic phenomena which in my view may more appropriately be termed paranoid-masochistic. What then is the difference between the paranoid and the sadistic? But before we can distinguish them from each other we must attempt to isolate each from other constituents with which they are frequently associated.
Sadistic and paranoid aggression

Some confusion attends the use of the designation “paranoid” because it is so frequently used to identify one type of schizophrenia. It is perhaps significant of paranoid dynamics that, more than most categories, the adjective “paranoid” is employed as an epithet to convey the impression that such a person is really quite offensively sick. Such usage tends to obscure the fact that paranoid traits may be quite mild, are almost universal and are often found in persons whose ego strength may be otherwise quite sound. Frequently, in fact, paranoid attributes are mistakenly identified as ego strength because the capacity of the paranoid character to be oppositional is often confused, by more timid souls, with healthy and courageous self assertion.

Almost every variety of hostility has been identified in the literature and in numerous oral case presentations as either sadistic or paranoid or both. These include everything from righteous denunciation to petty malice. Physical violence, biting remarks, torture, vindictive behavior, contempt, patronizing kindness, tormenting indifference—which anything that by conscious or unconscious design tends to injure another person may be termed sadistic or paranoid. Paranoid and sadistic features, to be sure, are often intermingled and mutually reinforcing, but is there no difference between the two kinds of hostility? Could it be that we must look for the difference not in the manifest symptoms but more so as a difference of underlying motivation?

Often, apparently identical symptoms are governed by almost opposite needs. For example, a blow may be struck in retaliation for one actually received; or it may be struck with equal force in order to avoid one that is anticipated. The former is reactive against a real injury; the latter is defensive against an anticipated one. Both reactive and defensive aggression, however, may be directed against completely innocent objects. A man who shouts at his wife after having been abused by his employer is reacting to a real hurt. Retaliatory aggression is discharged with relative impunity by identification with the aggressor against a weaker victim. The same man may recriminate against his devoted wife and accuse her of infidelity in order to disqualify her and disarm her punitive judgment against his own transgressions. As Freud points out, the projective mechanism typical of the paranoid orientation is essentially defensive against
an inner feeling of guilt. Unlike the sadistic orientation, it involves identification as the victim whose cause is aggressively championed. Identification with the aggressor, on the other hand, is more central to a sadistic orientation and is more in the nature of a vindictive triumph in reaction to injury and humiliation actually endured. That both dynamics may be operative in the same personality does not mean that they are indistinguishable.

Violent sadistic fantasies often function to maintain a real life masochistic position. I remember Mr. A., a 35-year-old man who had in fact been subjected to the tyranny of a brutal father. He consulted me following the death of his previous analyst with whom he had been under treatment for several years. Following a pattern to which he apparently was accustomed, he virtually plunged onto the couch, began beating it with his fists and cried out in a loud voice, “If only I could plunge a dagger into his heart and see him lying here at my feet in a pool of blood. I wish I could cut his hamstrings so that he would have to grovel on all fours and whine for the garbage that I would feed him.” As he continued to describe in vivid detail every imaginable torture that he would like to inflict, he interrupted himself to inform me in a mild voice that, of course, he was talking about his father who had been dead for about twelve years. Very shortly, however, he addressed himself directly to me and spoke of the ecstasy he would experience if he could but plunge a dagger into my heart. Then, in a conversational tone, he added, “Of course, you realize that you, my other analyst and my father are all one and the same.”*

He persisted in the same vein for several sessions, apparently experiencing considerable relief. His expressions of violent rage were curiously non-frightening and had almost a pathetic, impotent quality. I assured him that I appreciated his ability to express himself to me so freely and fully, but reminded him that I knew very little about him as he actually functioned in daily life. It was only then that he let me know that he wrote light verse which was published in popular magazines, and that his main employment was as an editor of dull, secondary school textbooks. The picture of himself that he presented, was that in his actual functioning, he was extremely

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* Mr. A. was not an epileptic, but the intensity of his sadistic fantasies are quite similar to the fantasy productions of some epileptics, a discussion of which is reserved for another paper.
obsequious to his superiors and abjectly apologetic even when he recommended routine corrections in an author's manuscript. Obviously, his sadistic fantasies served to relieve the pressure to which his daily self-humiliation subjected him, and through granting such relief served also to perpetuate unchanged his masochistic position.

More usual examples of sado-masochism, properly so called, may be found in the kind of woman who turns against her lover when he “threatens” her with marriage. Her fear of marriage is, to be sure, a paranoid fear in that she unconsciously dreads the retaliatory wrath of the oedipal mother. But she assuages her fear by identifying with her aggressor (mother) and launching curiously guilt-free attacks against the man. She masochistically submits to mother, feels inwardly humiliated and sadistically discharges her anger against the more vulnerable man. Her malice against the man she loved, who now offers her what she had thought she most desired, is, of course, highly rationalized. But, more deeply, it is guilt-free because the more sadistically she attacks the man, the more she demonstrates her innocence of any wish to replace the oedipal mother. She (mother) is the punitive judge who must be placated by despising and discarding the object of rivalry. Even though it had its defects, when the relationship was illicit and secret it was much safer and much more enjoyable. There was no open contest with mother. I recall one patient who attacked me with the most incisive malice and then had the fantasy that her dead mother was smiling down on her from heaven. She then realized that her attack on me duplicated almost word for word the recriminations her mother used against her father.

The most uncomplicated example of sado-masochism (related to, but distinct from, paranoid-masochism) may be found in hierarchical societies in which reactive aggression is discharged in rank order. The captain slaps the lieutenant; the lieutenant slaps the corporal; the corporal slaps the private; the private slaps the peasant; and the peasant kicks the goat. In fantasy vindication, the rank order process is reversed in the Jewish passover song: “A kid, a kid that my father bought for two suzim.”

As indicated above, the sadistic and the paranoid may be contrasted as follows:
SADISTIC
1. Identifies with the aggressor.
2. Hostility is reactive and compensatory.
3. Affect of rage is accompanied by a sense of malicious triumph and relief is experienced as affect is discharged.
4. The motive for aggression is to hurt someone who seems unable to fight back, and the effect is often intimidation of the victim.

PARANOID
1. Identifies with the victim in the sense that he is being persecuted.
2. Hostility is defensive against anticipated attack because of unconscious feeling of guilt.
3. Affect of rage is accompanied by self-righteousness and often leads to mounting fury rather than to relief.
4. The apparent motive for aggression is to avoid being hurt by counter-attacking an assumed aggressor. The effect is often to provoke punishment;—gratification of a repressed wish,—and a reality confirmation of preconceived persecution.

It is of course quite true that many paranoid personalities have, in fact, suffered real injuries against which their rage is in part reactive. But their reactions are overdetermined. Genuine injustices, no matter how slight, are carefully selected, nurtured and employed in the service of self-vindication. “... we may infer that the enmity which the persecuted paranoiac sees in others is the reflection of his own hostile impulses against them.”

It is also necessary to determine the nature of the defensive motivations that govern the projective mechanism.

For the time being, let us assume that the paranoid's guilt is a fact, without attempting to explore its genesis. How does he defend himself? His maxim is, “The best defense is an offense.” He revises the biblical injunction “Judge not lest ye be judged” to read, “I will judge you before you judge me.” In anticipation of accusation by the authority figure he accuses the authority figure and tries to make him feel guilty. Rather than submit to judgment, he indicts his judge. This tactic is sometimes exquisitely devious.

An unmarried young man, Mr. B., who had been consulting me for over a year, returned from his vacation and began at once to confront me with a carefully documented, surprisingly accurate catalogue of my sins. Ten months ago and at other times as well,
I had made inaccurate interpretations. At another time I failed to remember an episode he had related during the previous session. The tone of my voice on several occasions was inappropriate. Moreover, by my choice of words not long ago, I was subtly attempting to influence him to leave his father's home when he was not yet prepared to do so. It was all true and I had to restrain a powerful impulse to confess that he was right. I was almost ready to submit to the authority of his judgment. Instead, I finally remarked something about the care with which he treasured all my defects. He responded at once, “You sound very defensive. Are you?” I remained silent.

He had been stalking me and now he was ready for the kill. “All my life,” he continued, “I have doubted my own perceptions of reality. If you fail to confirm or deny my perception of your defensiveness, you are perpetuating my morbid and completely disabling self-doubt.” No self-doubter ever spoke with such conviction. I was the self-doubter. But happily my awareness of my feelings of culpability helped me to recognize that he was succeeding in distracting me from his dread of being judged for his transgressions. And so, instead of discussing my “defensiveness” I reminded him that he hadn't said a word about his vacation. “You're trying to get off the hook!” he almost shouted. Then in an almost pleading voice he gave an anxious and guilt-laden account of his sexual intimacy with a young married woman during his vacation.

To discuss and concede the validity of his indictment of me would have served only to collaborate in his need to evade his own sense of guilt. His effort to make me confess my guilt and inadequacy was motivated mainly by his need to disqualify me as his judge. Rather than plead for my “love” and forgiveness he tried to enforce his “power” and make me feel a deep sense of obligation to which he, as my outraged victim, could righteously lay claim. When this failed, he changed to the masochistic role and he became the pleader. We will return to a more detailed consideration of the back and forth changes of the masochistic and the paranoid positions, and to the similarities of objective which underly their manifest differences.

Meanwhile, let us consider another paranoid method of exercising power. It is based on the notion that “whoever is not for me is against me,” and consists in the overt or covert demand that the authority figure, the analyst, confirm all the patient's ideas as valid,
defend him against his “persecutors” and detractors, and become in almost
every sense, his loyal ally and devoted admirer. His need for approval is a
need to be acquitted of his guilt. If the analyst complies he becomes a co-
conspirator and no longer need be feared as a judge. Since he is not feared he
is no longer respected, and is dismissed eventually with a kind of benign
contempt. If he fails to comply, he is almost invariably identified as a
persecutor. I once said to one such patient who insistently demanded that I
side with him against his business partner. “I am very much inclined to agree
with you, but I’m troubled by a very disturbing thought. Maybe both of us are
wrong!” He was stunned to realize that explicit confirmation from an authority
figure was much more important to him than objective validation.

The paranoid power operation is in the nature of a counterattack against
an assumed accuser. The judge is judged. The judge is disqualified. The
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weakness in any form, and is proud of his capacity to endure physical hardship and even excruciating pain. One such patient endured having his teeth drilled quite close to their nerves rather than accept an anesthetic. To wish for love is to admit weakness, and to accept subjugation. *It means yielding to castration, and to homosexual degradation.*

**The paranoid, the homosexual and Schreber**

Freud's view of paranoia and paranoid mechanisms is most extensively presented in his paper on the Schreber case,5 which I have discussed elsewhere.21 Freud considers paranoid manifestations to be the consequence of the severe repression and unequivocal rejection of homosexual impulses derived from fixation at an infantile psycho-sexual level in which the child loves the parent whose genitals are like his own. Ideas of persecution are based on the formulation: “I don't love him, I hate him.” “I hate him” is then projected in the form of: “He hates me.” It should be borne in mind, however, that the paper on Schreber was written in 1911. At that time Freud was still concerned mainly with the vicissitudes of instinctual life. His interpretation of paranoia and of homosexuality was not then enriched by later conceptions,8,9,10 which were closely associated with the subsequent development of Freudian ego-psychology. *The Ego and the Id*, for example, was not published until 1923.

In his later writings (after 1911) he recognizes that not only fixation at the homosexual level, but regression to that phase as well, play a powerful role in the etiology of both homosexuality and paranoia. Guilt-laden oedipal strivings; competition for the love object not only between parent and child, but also between siblings; and the dread of such rivalry; narcissistic identification with, and introjection of, the mother in the attempt to resolve castration anxiety; all receive careful attention. His recognition of other contributing and complicating factors notwithstanding, Freud continues throughout to maintain that the rejected wish for homosexual gratification remains the nuclear dynamic underlying paranoid symptom formation. He never adequately explains, however, why there is such rigorous rejection of what is so avidly desired.

In my view, (which, of course, does have the benefit of Freud's later writings and of the contributions of others), Schreber's success when he was appointed president of a panel of judges of the Supreme
Court of the Kingdom of Saxony revived a feeling of infantile omnipotence. An unconscious oedipal wish to overthrow God=father is projected and God's retaliatory wrath requires that Schreber, who is identified by voices as the “Prince of hell” be transformed into a woman or suffer annihilation. For three years during his acute psychotic period, Schreber is severely afflicted by many delusional and hallucinatory agonies. Like Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

*Him the Almighty Pow'r*
*Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky*
*With hideous ruin and combustion, down*
*To bottomless perdition, there to dwell*
*In adamantine chairs and penal fire*
*Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.*

Schreber finally surrenders and regains some measure of sanity (i.e., a much greater contact with reality and capacity to function) when he becomes a transvestite in order to appease God. He appears to renounce his power over God for sake of obtaining God's love and protection. Rather than be annihilated he submits to castration, and instead of God's rival he becomes God's wife. It is as if Satan the paranoid is transformed into Christ the masochist. At the end of his memoirs Schreber does compare his sufferings to the martyrdom of Christ. But unlike Christ, he may also enjoy the “voluptuousness” of sexual union with God and become the mother of a new race of superior beings. In Theodor Reik's formulation he achieves “victory through defeat.” But he only appears to have renounced power for the sake of love. He has retreated from an open paranoid contest and by masochistic submission he acquires the power to compel God to use his omnipotent power in Schreber's behalf.

Schreber's regression from an open oedipal power struggle with God the father is three-fold:

1. Instinctually in line with Freud's view, he regresses to a homosexual level of psychosexual development.
2. His ego regresses to a passive-dependent state and achieves some integration.
3. In a certain sense it is “regression in the service of the ego” since it permits greater contact with reality. The proud j'judge who sought to judge God submits to humiliating emasculation; but by virtue of such self-abnegation he achieves greater safety and some measure of gratification. The mode of regression is through masochistic...
4. submission. Schreber's suffering during his more openly violent paranoid phase serves as an atonement for sinning against God, and having so atoned, the sin of sensual pleasure becomes a virtuous submission to God's will as long as he does not compete with God's masculine power. The struggle for omnipotent power has not abated; it has gone underground.

This view of latent homosexuality and its relationship to paranoid mechanism is similar to that of Ovesey22,23 in its emphasis on power and dependency motives. But it is quite different in other respects. In his “adaptational revision” of Freud's theory, Ovesey recognizes the defensive nature of the repressed homosexual wish— but then proceeds to desexualize it almost completely. In this he fails to recognize that the peculiar intensity of paranoid competitiveness and dread of retaliation involve a failure to desexualize and neutralize strivings that are central to an unresolved oedipal conflict. Ovesey stresses the patient's failure to meet societal demands, but he ignores (except in one instance which contradicts his main thesis) the fact that the paranoid patient unconsciously equates highly selected negative features of otherwise positive societal reactions with his punitive infantile superego. Contrary to mature reality experience, the paranoid character expects to be punished for his success rather than rewarded. Paranoid-masochistic trends may sometimes serve adaptational needs but they are motivated by a need to resolve intrapsychic conflict rather than by an attempt to adjust to objective reality.*

The paranoid character's first line of defense is invulnerability. When this fails, as inevitably it must, he sometimes is subjected to what is commonly termed “homosexual panic.” In economic terms, if the pain of his anxiety is greater than the pain of admitting his homosexual feelings into consciousness, he may experience surprising relief by freely engaging in homosexual fantasies. These, then, become his second line of defense. They have multiple functions,32 but mainly they involve placation of, rather than continued contest with, a punitive authority figure.

For example: Mr. C., a 32-year-old man who had never been aware of homosexual feelings and who consciously regarded himself as nonconformist and fearless of authority, returned from what

* I am indebted to Dr. John L. Herma for a clarifying discussion of the meaning of adaptation.
he described as a most enjoyable vacation. He had spent several weeks in intimate sexual association with two attractive young women. He described in glowing details their affectionate relationship, of how they frolicked and bathed in the nude on an isolated beach, and of how they anointed each other with suntan oil. But a curious note crept into his voice. He began to speak of his refreshing and exhilarating experiences in anxious, halting phrases. He looked awful. At length he admitted that he was unable to sleep and that he had never felt so ill and nervous in his life. He thought, perhaps, that he was suffering from some fatal disease. His physician, however, could find nothing wrong. But something must be wrong, he insisted, because he had lost all interest in sex.

One night as he lay sleepless, his heart palpitating and fearful of sudden death, he found himself speaking the words of a completely alien thought: “I wish I had a great big penis to suck.” He then found himself flooded with sexual excitement and with the fellatio fantasy still in mind, he masturbated to a climax which he found intensely satisfying. Afterward, a sweet sensual calm pervaded his spirit, and he slept blissfully for twelve hours. When he awoke he felt somewhat bewildered by his experience, but he was so grateful for the relief from anxiety he did not permit himself to be too concerned about it, especially since he found himself once again thinking quite avidly of heterosexual experiences and desires.

It was as if he had made peace with an unnamed God of vengeance in whom he did not consciously believe. His regression served to appease the father figure and to insure safety from retaliation. Such safety then became the condition for satisfaction of latent homosexual wishes. The fellatio fantasy also served to reunite him with the father figure and incorporate his strength. Through regression, masochistic appeasement, security, satisfaction and incorporation he was liberated again to enjoy the sin of heterosexual pleasure. His sadistic superego, the power of which he had consciously disavowed, manifested itself as a formidable aggressor who had to be seduced by means of masochistic, homosexual submission and gratification. Unlike Schreber, Mr. C.’s homosexual episode was a fantasy, not a delusion, and enabled him to move toward a heterosexual resolution.

The paranoid-masochistic features in Schreber, who was clearly schizophrenic, are governed by the same dynamics observed in wellfunctioning
persons whose ego strength is much greater. Freud suggested, “What seems to me essential is that paranoia should be maintained as an independent clinical type, however frequently the picture it presents may be complicated by the presence of schizophrenic features.”

Schreber's schizophrenia was a function of his ego's incapacity to accommodate the profound turmoil of his repressed emotional life. When paranoid-masochistic psychodynamics broached consciousness they were severely ego-alien and could only be projected onto the external world in the form of delusions and hallucinations.

In those whose egos are more intact, the extremes of paranoid-masochistic development are constantly checked by the contact with reality. Even in psychopathological terms greater flexibility in moving from the masochistic to the paranoid position and back again, while deceptively disarming during therapy, nevertheless may elicit a benign response such as: “At times he may appear arrogant, but he is also capable of true humility.” But if we set aside the problem of ego strength and consider the paranoid-masochism in itself, in what further ways may the relationship be defined? What are similarities and the differences between the paranoid and the masochist?

**The paranoid and the masochistic**

As indicated in several examples cited above, both the paranoid and the masochistic characters are in the grip of unresolved oedipal conflicts from which they attempt to extricate themselves by means of paradoxical psychodynamic maneuvers. Both have failed to achieve healthy identification with the parent of the same sex, who is still unconsciously regarded as all-powerful. Both wish to replace the parent of the same sex. Both dread retaliation in the form of annihilation or castration. Both wish to acquire all the advantages of maturity and at the same time retain all the consolations of dependency. In one session a patient fearfully “confessed” that his income had risen to $400 per week. He then experienced a sharp pain in his genitals, and in the next breath murmured plaintively, “Who's going to take care of me?” The same patient at another time said: “If I fight with my father, I will lose my father or I will lose my balls. If I don't fight with my father, I will remain mother's 'play-toy from heaven' and she will eat me up like a jelly-roll.” Both types of personality, for the most part unconsciously, engage
in role-playing in an attempt to gratify their conflicting wishes and to distract the accusing and prohibitive superego figures.

For each, as reality perception is disregarded, nothing happens by chance or as the consequence of impersonal cause and effect. Events are more or less unconsciously construed as the reward or punishment meted out by omnipotent design. One winter's night my wife and I were riding in a car on very icy roads with a couple who were old friends. The man, an expert driver, seemed to be in complete command, and kept reassuring his wife, who was almost whining with fear, that everything would be all right. But his soothing words did nothing to allay her rising panic. We came to the top of a hill and saw, at the bottom below us, two cars which had skidded and were blocking the road. As the driver gently applied the brakes, the car swerved, turned around, went backwards, gently struck a snow embankment, turned around again and stopped on the right side of the road, pointing in the right direction within two yards of an obstructing car. All the while, the driver's wife had been crying in anguish, "We're going to be killed!"

After this experience, we continued on our way; and the driver, who realized he had underestimated the danger, hunched over the wheel and peered at the road ahead with anxious but realistic concern. His wife began to sing! After a while he turned on her and snapped, "What the hell are you singing about?" "I don't know really," she laughed, "I guess it's just that we've had our accident." The reality dangers that lay ahead were of no consequence. Since God had spared us there was nothing more to fear. Her tormenting anticipation of disaster served in the nature of masochistic atonement which in turn gave credence to the illusion of freedom from danger.

But if God is merciful toward those who suffer and submit, He is without pity toward those who rebel, and it requires enormous strength to oppose him. A patient once told me that she felt like throwing skyscrapers and freightcars at my head. I replied that I was not that formidable and that if she wanted to kill me, a blow with a hammer would suffice.

Throughout this discussion the implication is clear, that self-assertion—even when it is not competitive—and reality success—even when it excites little or no hostile enviousness—are unconsciously construed by both paranoid and masochistic characters as defiance of, and transgression against a supreme authority figure. Success
equals incest with the parent of the opposite sex. Success means murder of the parent of the same sex. Such murder, since it is perpetrated by a little boy (let us say) against his gigantic father, implies great power. The fantasy exercise of such power leads to intolerable guilt and dread of retaliation from the introjected parental superego, which in turn is projected onto surrogates in the world of contemporary adults. For the most part, the sense of guilt is repressed and remains unconscious even when, for tactical purposes, it seems to be openly avowed. It is the attempt to defend against guilt that is openly demonstrated, though it is not necessarily perceived as such. It is, of course, the underlying purpose of the defense to keep continually in hiding the profound guilt of incest and of murder. From an understanding of paranoid-masochistic symptom-formation and the diversionary nature of the defenses, we may resist the attempt, understandable though it is, to divert us from the central problem. What follows is an attempt to outline and distinguish the defensive maneuvers of the paranoid and masochistic characters in line with the formulation presented on the opening page of this article: The masochist appears to renounce “power” for the sake of “love”; the paranoid character appears to renounce “love” for the sake of “power”:

1. The paranoid character revises the biblical injunction, “Judge not lest ye be judged” to “I will judge you before you judge me;” the masochistic character revises it to: “I will judge myself before you judge me.” By a full and even exaggerated confession of his sins, the masochist pleads for reassurance and exoneration. His judge is in effect called upon to defend the accused against his own self-accusations. Through self-abnegation and suffering he lays claim to merciful sympathy. But the paranoid character is the accuser who disdains pity. He righteously and proudly demands “justice.” The masochistic character says in effect, “Thy will be done.” The paranoid character says, “My will be done.”

2. Both obtain temporary relief from guilt as they suffer punishment. But the masochistic character openly submits to punishment, while the paranoid character in the name of avoiding unjust punishment unconsciously provokes punishment.

3. Because both overestimate the strength of the opposition, they both recoil from healthy, socially acceptable competition. The masochistic character denies self-interest, often yields credit to others for
4. his achievements, and in any contest tends to surrender before he is defeated. He may, however, devote himself most effectively to a “noble” cause as long as there is no implication that he is “self-seeking.” But even in so doing, his underlying need to demonstrate his helplessness may unexpectedly emerge.

For example: Mr. D. consulted me on and off for many years. He came from a poverty-stricken home and his father died after a long illness, when he was still a child. His family was then obliged to depend completely on public and private charity. He would recall with intense humiliation how his mother would hold him up as a pitiable orphan before her neighbors and beg for food. His miserable condition was an asset, an unhappy one to be sure, but one which maintained a tenacious hold on him in later life. He became a very successful fund-raiser. He felt most comfortable and was in fact most effective when making claims for deprived children.

Several years ago at the height of his career, Mr. D. consulted me again about some specific problem, but in the course of the session, he began enthusiastically to talk to me about all the help he could give my professional association in its effort to establish a clinic. He became hypomanic as he described in great detail the fortunes of little known families to whom he could appeal in behalf of our clinic. He would make our clinic the best endowed institution of its kind in the entire country. In the midst of his excitement he paused and in absolute earnest exclaimed, “All that I ask in return is your assurance that the clinic will accept me as a free patient for the rest of my life!” It took him several moments before he understood my laughter.

Unlike the masochist, the paranoid character is a righteous champion in his own behalf. He claims credit for the achievements of others and insists that others are trying to deprive him of what is rightfully his. When he achieves success in his own right, he is certain that his defeated, and often only imagined, rivals are combined against him. He is quick to detect the hidden malice in congratulations and rather than feel secure in his new position, he is wary that any expression of good will is an attempt to disarm and ultimately to overthrow him. “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.” He may not coexist with his rivals; the opposition must be crushed or rendered impotent and harmless. There can be only one God, one father, one husband, and once that status is reached, the existence
of an independent will becomes a mortal threat. One patient, who had a measure of such problems, was convinced that his plane would crash while enroute to a well earned vacation in Europe. He was startled and relieved when I remarked, “Do you think God is so merciless that He would sacrifice the lives of a hundred other people simply to get at you?”

Another such example is that of a young woman, Miss E., who developed strong paranoid fears shortly before her forthcoming marriage which she unconsciously experienced as an outstanding triumph. This was at the time the “mad bomber” was planting his lethal weapons in subway cars. She was certain that she would be destroyed by a bomb, and so she avoided the subway. “Aren't you afraid of the 'mad bomber’?” she asked me. And then before I could reply she sneered, “Of course not. You ride only in taxicabs.” I assured her that I rode the subways and that I was unafraid for the very good reason that I knew the “mad bomber” was out to get her, not me.* She responded with laughter but subsequently developed other kinds of reactions and defenses against her unconscious guilt. Some of these were as follows:

1. She minimized her triumph by carefully noting the shortcomings of her fiancé.
2. She identified with the fantasied aggressor by effecting a more or less tender reconciliation with her mother and joined her in her attacks against the father.
3. She attempted to appease supposed rivals by entertaining a number of unattractive, unmarried women, in whom she had no real interest, and by trying to help them find husbands.
4. She magnified minor issues at her place of employment (which she was privately preparing to leave) and, with the aid of carefully enlisted collaborators, self-righteously denounced others for their unethical conduct. As she departed from any place or anyone, her impulse was to leave destruction in her wake. Separation, even though initiated by her, aroused an unconscious feeling that she was being punished and discarded. She, therefore, sought to overcome her anxiety by counterattacking and discrediting those whom she left behind. In so doing she consoled herself with the notion that she was not missing anything and relieved herself of any sense

* This maneuver is a sort of “siding with the resistance,” a technique prominent in paradigmatic psychotherapy.16

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5. of obligation by presenting herself as the victim rather than the aggressor. Actually, she was neither, but in behaving as she did, often succeeded in provoking against herself the very aggression which she unconsciously feared.

6. In line with the above, she attempted to make me feel guilty by declaring that I had not helped her and that she was getting married in spite of my efforts rather than, in any respect, because of them. Her marriage was completely her own achievement. When I remarked that she talked as if her future husband had absolutely no choice in the matter, she reluctantly admitted that, contrary to reality, it seemed to her to be all her doing.

The underlying assumption of Miss E.’s masochistic, sadistic and paranoid reactions was that her success in getting married was a criminal offense for which she was solely responsible, and that she had to employ every device in order to get away with it. At one point she declared fiercely, “I am going through with this no matter what happens.” She then quietly reflected on the simple and unbelievable fact that no one was really trying to stop her.

In our era, (especially for women, though men are often equally afflicted) it is often not sex but marriage that gives rise to the most oppressive problems. While sexual freedom is increasingly endorsed and all prohibitive measures are treated with contemptuous disdain, we may, nevertheless, observe that the avoidance of marriage has, in some strange way become, for certain types of people, a condition for the enjoyment of sexual intimacy. For the paranoid-masochistic character marriage implies the public exposure of incest and murder. It involves the presumption of equality with, and therefore the displacement of, the parent of the same sex. It is a deadly competition which at once deprives the aspiring competitor of the right to claim the consolation of “love” from the protective parent, and at the same time exposes him to retaliation from the “power” of a punitive parent for daring to defy the incest taboo. Under such circumstances to venture to marry requires special precautions. But often that competitive hazard is avoided while other symptoms and defenses intervene. Some of these may be outlined as follows:

a. The man is ineligible. He is of another religion, or worse, he is of another race; and moreover he is already married. She says in effect: “Sex with him was marvelous until we begin to talk about
b. how happy we would be if he should leave his wife and children and marry me. I renounce the ‘power’ of winning him away from his wife in favor of retaining mother's love because:

c. I am only a child. I don't know how to cook or sew or raise children. I need my mother to protect me and take care of me. In fact, he was like a mother to me until he asked me to be his wife.

d. Moreover, I am really a whore. How can other women envy me when it is obvious that I am a degraded person and therefore no threat to them? Through promiscuity I avoid commitment to one man and at the same time retain in conscious or unconscious fantasy the image of one man (my father), my love for whom I may never openly avow. For me sexual intimacy does not grow out of knowledge of, and a sense of consanguinity with the other person. I go to bed with a man quickly in order to discard him. It is frightening to let a relationship develop slowly; it gives the man the power to hurt me. He may use me and get rid of me before I get rid of him. That deprives me of power and makes me feel helpless.

e. But I am not helpless; I am more of a man than the man. I can make him dance to my tune. Girls find me attractive. I don't have to compete with girls for his love. He may have to compete with me for the love of girls. In fact, I'm quite ready to give him to my girl-friend. We won't fight over him. Instead we will love each other, and laugh at him.

f. I really don't care about anyone. I care only about food. If I make myself fat and unattractive, I will succeed in disqualifying myself from competition for the love of men. Instead, I will secretly reunite with mother. She is the one who first fed me and took care of me. I still need her too much to risk any contest with her. The more I eat, the fatter I get, the more I am one with her.”

These, among others, are the devious ways in which freedom is proclaimed and the competitive challenge of maturity is evaded.

4. Since competition implies mortal combat with a projected infantile superego figure, an attempt is made to substitute a kind of magical control in which not only the behavior, but even the thoughts and wishes of others are secretly manipulated and mastered. The paranoid character in particular fears the independence of others even when, as indicated above, their intentions are benign. One young woman remarked with astonishment and some concern
that, quite by accident, she learned that her neighbors thought highly of her. She kept repeating, “But I didn't even try in the least to get them to like me.” It was as if she could not accept the reality of any reaction which she had not contrived to stimulate.

It is the nature of the exercise of such magical control that wishes are the same as deeds. An attempt is made to deflect the retaliatory wrath of the infantile superego and at the same time to avoid frustration. This is accomplished in part by the repression of wishes that may not be gratified or for which punishment is anticipated. A patient who at length accepted the fact that his death-wishes were not responsible for the fatal illness of a hated rival, exclaimed, “It's just like a sunset. I can enjoy it even though I know I didn't do it.”

More usually an attempt is made to effect certain private compromises. Success may be tolerated in one area, if defeat is endured in another. Here the paranoid and masochistic components serve to complement each other. It has often been observed, for example, that sex may be enjoyed before marriage but not afterward with the same partner. The sin of acquiring the same status as the parent is atoned for by the denial of pleasure. Or a man who becomes successful in his career may avoid jeopardy by finding himself almost completely devoid of sexual interest in his wife.

Sometimes, as with Mr. C., sexual gratification is possible only if the rival male authority is placated. During one session a patient reported the fantasy that he was “screwing all the women in the world” while I, the analyst was “screwing him in the ass at the same time.” That made everything fair and square; but there also was another feeling that the analyst's penis was through some deep connection giving strength to his.

The acceptance without shame or guilt of both power and love, (even though ridden with paranoid and masochistic elements) may sometimes have deeply restorative and constructive consequences. I cite Mr. F. as an example:

Mr. F.'s wife had already had many hours of analysis and Mr. F. was in the process of terminating his. At the time of this episode, he was engaged in a power struggle for the control of a large corporation, with a group of formidable competitors. He was capable of devoting enormous energy to his task. Both he and his
rivals had many allies; and those on his side continually turned to him for guidance. He was the rock on which they leaned.

He was under heavy pressure, and one night as he lay in bed exhausted, his wife wanted to have intercourse. He tried, but was unable to get an erection. This had rarely happened before, and his wife wondered what was wrong. He began to talk of his great responsibility, and of how everyone turned to him and regarded him as a tower of strength, and of how unequal he felt to his task. “I'm not a tower of strength. They can't depend on me that much.” And then with a sense both of confusion and of calm he found himself saying, “I'm only a little girl.”

His wife stroked his head, embraced him and said, “Yes, I know. You're my little girl and I love you.” In a few moments he became as male and as potent as ever.

5. The masochistic character is overly grateful for kindness, but he persists in his misery since it is only through a show of continued suffering that he can claim the right to “love.” The paranoid character hates his benefactor, and demands deference, gratitude, reimbursement and even payment for damages, when he has been most benefited.

Noyes cites the case of a woman law student who sued the school because she was awarded the annual prize for the greatest improvement in scholastic work. She felt more maligned than rewarded and insisted that the awarding of such a prize was for the purpose of representing her as having been unsuited for the study of law. The recognition of her success was unconsciously misconstrued by her as an exposure of her phallic strivings, which in turn aroused the need to launch a defensive attack in order to allay her castration anxiety. Women, especially, suffer a double burden of guilt. When, in order to defend against the oedipal conflict, they manifest latent aggressive homosexuality and try to compete with men, they then dread retaliation from men. I once remarked to such a woman, who was about to undergo oral examination for her doctorate, that the examination was really oral not physical, and that her knowledge of the subject, not the “defect” of her genitals, would be explored by her examiners.

To be grateful means to concede power and to submit to humiliating subjugation. One simply does not owe a fee. He owes
his life and life-long servitude. Above all, to feel indebted means the renunciation of the oedipal love object. The tables must be turned. I remember an occasion when a patient-therapist asked me to determine whether analysis with me would be recognized for training purposes by a training institute with which I was not affiliated. Since I was personally acquainted with the director of the institute in question, I made the mistake of complying with the patient's request. I took time off and exposed myself to an uncomfortable examination of my credentials, only to discover that their rules precluded official recognition of me as a training analyst.

At the next session I informed my patient of the results of my interview with the director of the institute where he hoped to be accepted. He listened attentively and then interrupted to ask, “Do I have to pay for this part of the session? After all it's not analysis. You are only giving me some factual information.” I restrained my annoyance when I realized that he was too grateful for my special efforts in his behalf, and unconsciously too apologetic for having exposed me to rejection. Such feelings, to be sure, were unconscious. He insulated them from awareness by means of an obsessional preoccupation with the correct “rules of analytic procedure.”

To accept the aid of the authority figure means a loss of independence and craven submission. A patient once said that he could marry happily only if he were certain that such a marriage would be against my wishes. Only in that way would his triumph over the oedipal father be complete.

Concerning the relationship between people of paranoid and masochistic character structure, Theodor Reik in a personal communication writes:

I would like to add one point, namely that in the marriage relationship or in the relationship of the sexes, it seems that very often there is attraction between masochistic and paranoid characters. Either the man or the woman approaches this type. It is remarkable that during long marriages a change comes about in that the characters are slowly transformed either from the masochistic to the paranoid or the other way around, which results either in adjustment of the couple or in conflict. The mutual attraction of paranoid and masochistic characters works in the sense of Goethe's Selective Affinities and deserves a special treatment because it is highly important for the psychology of the sexes and their relations.
Paranoid-masochistic jealousy

Freud made several important distinctions as among “normal” jealousy; projection as defense against guilt because of extramarital heterosexual desires or acts; and paranoid delusional jealousy, which has repressed homosexuality at its core. The paranoid nature of jealousy has since been taken for granted, but the peculiar combination of paranoid and masochistic elements in the phenomenon of objectively groundless jealousy has, for the most part, passed unnoticed.

After about two years of a highly satisfactory premarital relationship, Mr. G., with deep inner misgivings, decided to marry his attractive girlfriend who then became a very devoted and loving wife, and he reported their happiness together in glowing terms. He laughed at himself as he recalled an “absurd” recurrent fantasy which he had while he still had doubts about getting married. It involved the pleasant notion that she would marry a rich older man and that he would remain her lover. It was not very long before it occurred to him that he was now in the vulnerable position of the fantasied older man, and he began to suspect his wife of infidelity. He questioned her closely about her former boyfriends and wondered if any of them called or visited her while he was away at work. He imagined that his neighbors regarded him with pity and ridicule when he came home at the end of the day. His wife's love and reassurance served to allay his doubts only temporarily. It soon became clear, in fact, that his self-tormenting suspicion became most intense precisely when his wife seemed most attractive and loving. He would piece together bits of “evidence” from a dozen sources including the tone of her voice and old letters which he found in the bottom drawer of her bureau, and then triumphantly confront her with his absolute knowledge of every detail of her “unfaithfulness.” This would provoke bitter quarrels and then when he had reduced his wife to tears, he would become abjectly apologetic. He also noticed, with a feeling of disappointment in himself, that the sight of his wife pleading and crying aroused him sexually.

Mr. G.'s painful feelings of jealousy were, among other elements, a form of masochistic self-punishment and atonement for the guilt of having symbolically displaced his father through marriage. His dread of retaliatory castration took the form of assuming that he had surrendered his power, his penis, to his wife. He became, as it
were, an impotent old man who was threatened by younger men with whom he
formerly identified. Paradoxically, but consistent with his self-abnegation, he
also became in his unconscious self-image, a little boy who was ridiculed for
presuming to be a grown man. His omniscience concerning his wife's
"infidelity" was a highly condensed expression both of masochistic feelings
of worthlessness, and the compensatory arrogation to himself of complete
power through knowledge. The tearful pleading of his wife was inwardly
experienced as submission to his superior power, and became, in that sense,
restorative of his masculine effectiveness. The sadistic element was also
present as a reaction against his feelings of humiliation. As he felt wounded
and degraded, he had to degrade and wound her. In this he was effecting a
quasi-homosexual reunion with the oedipal father by deriding the love object.
Just as women who feel unloved console each other by saying, "All men are
dogs," so men seek to avoid separation from each other because of rivalry by
saying, "All women are whores." Consider the plaintive Russian ballad,
Stenzo Razin, in which the Cossack captain makes peace with his resentful
crew by heaving his bride into the Volga.

The masochistic feature in jealousy is, to a large extent, confirmed in that it
often stimulates a sadistic reaction. A woman who cannot make a man jealous
rightfully feels that he is indifferent and that she has no power over him. To be
jealous is to concede importance to the object of rivalry. To deny jealousy is
to maintain superior independence. One woman, when she saw a very
attractive woman come out of my office, said impulsively, "Who is she?", and
then swiftly corrected herself by saying, "Please don't answer that. After all, I
couldn't care less." In order to maintain their power, some women who sense
a man's jealousy strive to maintain their advantage by subtly confirming the
validity of his feeling, especially when it's quite groundless. But difficulty
arises when they go too far. The man may withdraw completely, or become
enraged to the point where she feels resentfully observed even in the most
harmless encounter with another man. As the man's anger is stimulated to
paranoid proportions, she may attempt to appease him by a show of
masochistic submission.

The show of jealousy, even though painfully experienced as genuine, may
be unconsciously designed to terminate an unhappy and guilt-ridden
relationship. The paranoid-masochistic character
finds it most difficult simply to assert his wish to end one relationship in favor of committing himself to another. It is essential to prove that he has been wronged. He defends against his guilt, (and also against vestiges of repressed regret) by a self-righteous and often destructive denunciation of his former partner. Since a relationship means either to possess or to be possessed, the contract may be broken only by insisting and demonstrating that there has been a gross violation of its implied conditions. The one who is rejected becomes the accuser. The accuser must then be rendered ineffective and worthless by being accused. In a moment of insight a woman patient once said, “I cannot simply leave Jim and go to John. I must destroy Jim by ruining his reputation, so that no one will believe him if he tries to get even with me; and I must prove that he is rotten so that no one else will want him.” Much to her consternation, Jim became aware of what she was doing when, completely without justification, she accused him of trying to injure her reputation. Her predominantly masochistic relationship with Jim became paranoid as she entered into a masochistic relationship with John.

Spotnitz identifies frustration-aggression as the nuclear problem in schizophrenia. In contrast, it is the fantasy or the implication of aggression gratified against which the paranoid-masochistic character is constantly defending. But there are instances where for defensive purposes, on another level, the gratification of aggression is openly avowed.

**Paranoid-masochistic depression**

Throughout the course of this discussion an attempt has been made to outline the various defensive maneuvers to which both paranoid and masochistic characters resort in order to avoid accusation. But such efforts notwithstanding, the deep underlying guilt which characterizes paranoid-masochistic characters remains unresolved. To defend against guilt serves to keep it intact rather than to confront it and discover its foundation. Even when the predominantly masochistic character avows guilt, this is done more in an effort to elicit reassurance and exoneration rather than genuinely to confess. The deceptive nature of masochistic confession can be readily demonstrated by accepting the confession as valid. Almost invariably such confirmation creates a sense of dismay. As the masochist confesses, another voice inside of him keeps pleading, “Say it isn't so.” There
are instances, however, when paranoid-masochism becomes marked by depression, and when this happens the sense of guilt is openly avowed and clung to with a tenacious obstinacy.

Depressive features seem to be manifest when a patient with a predominantly masochistic orientation attempts to assert himself in his own behalf. Such an act of self-assertion violates the self-abnegation on which his sense of security is founded. He not only dreads retaliation based on the premise that any self-assertion represents a defiant transgression against an authority figure, but also feels that in the open demonstration of his effectiveness he is losing his dependent rights to love and protection. His self assertion, therefore, may be an unsuccessful attempt to move in a more paranoid direction, but instead of developing paranoid defenses, he may become painfully anxious and defend against his anxiety by retreating to the sense of hopelessness of a depressive state. It is in the exploration of some of the psychodynamics of depression that the reasons for the obstinate conviction of guilt becomes more clearly illuminated. In spite of all attempts to defend against guilt and to deny it, the deep inner sense of guilt (as distinct from the feeling of shame) is equated with a sense of tremendous power. And even if such power involves its own terrifying problems, it is preferred over the feeling of complete helplessness.

Mr. H. came to my office for the first time and after a few minutes declared that he was an army deserter. He asked me to appreciate fully the gravity of his problem, since the penalty for desertion is death. He said that at any moment he might be apprehended by a military policeman, be confronted by a court martial, convicted, and shot by a firing squad. He then disclosed that he had an honorable medical discharge, which was granted to him after several months in an army mental hospital, where he was given shock treatment for depression. He insisted, however, that even though his honorable discharge was a genuine army document, he could not possibly rely on it for protection. It was a mere technicality and in fact represented proof that he had deceived army psychiatrists and army authority. According to him, he had dissembled mental illness in order to get out of the army because while he was overseas he was certain that his wife at home was having sexual relationships with other men. At present he was living with his wife and children and was managing to provide for them on what he called a “beggarly
level.” He complained of feelings of apathy and complete loss of interest in various projects that formerly absorbed him. He felt, for example, that with sufficient application of his intelligence he could discover the secret of life and compound a formula which would permit him to live forever. He also once was interested in inventing a rocket by means of which he would be the first man to visit the planet Mars. But these grandiose schemes were now completely futile. Since he was guilty of a crime, desertion, which was punishable by death, all efforts on his part were bound to be frustrated. And so he lived on from day to day, wearing his brother-in-law’s cast off clothing and not really permitting himself to become seriously interested in anything.

It was difficult for me to determine what he hoped to achieve by coming to me for therapy, and it was several months before he admitted that his conscious reason for continuing to undergo therapy was to protect himself against being apprehended. His visits to me would serve as proof that he really was mentally disturbed, and that the pension which he was receiving from the army was not being granted to him on fraudulent grounds. In spite of his dread of being executed as a deserter, he was nevertheless adamant in his conviction that he was guilty, and no amount of reality confrontation could dissuade him. At one point, since all other approaches had no effect, I pretended to accept the validity of his sense of guilt and suggested to him that since his life was so difficult to endure under the constant threat of being caught, it might be welcome relief if he simply gave himself up. He began at once to imagine himself in the act of confessing his guilt to an army officer. He would tell him that he was a deserter, whereupon he would be seized by several military policemen. As they questioned him further he would produce his honorable discharge, which then would be scrutinized to determine whether it was a forgery. When it was found to be genuine, he would explain that he obtained it by pretending to be mentally deranged and that therefore it was clear that he was in fact, if not according to the letter of the law, a deserter from the army. He paused at this point and I asked him what he thought would happen to him. He replied at once, “Why of course they would commit me to the neuro-psychiatric ward of an army hospital.” For a moment I had a feeling of elation that Mr. H. had at last recognized the delusional nature of his sense of
guilt. But Mr. H. could not be so easily swerved from his conviction. In the next moment, he smiled and said, “Of course, those stupid army psychiatrists would never admit that they were wrong.”

Mr. H.’s need to insist on his guilt functioned for him in several ways. The major function of his paranoid delusion that he was an army deserter was, to be sure, to evade his feeling of helpless inadequacy as a soldier. He would rather believe that he had deceived the army than confront the obvious reality that the army found him incapable of meeting its requirements. He would rather be in constant dread of punishment for something that he did—the commission of an imaginary crime—than to be held in contempt for being inadequate. His delusion also served other self protective needs:

1. It kept in check his grandiose ambitions, the failure of which he unconsciously dreaded, and, in that sense, permitted his daily functioning to be more reality oriented.
2. It permitted him, since he was going to die anyway, to accept his dependency needs. He could now renounce his illusion of grandiose power in favor of being provided for in a large measure by his wife and other relatives. As with Schreber, his paranoid delusion permitted a masochistic adjustment.
3. It permitted him to refrain from putting his grandiose ideas to a reality test. His greatness therefore remained forever potential, and he could continue to believe in it as long as he was consoled by the notion that under the circumstances all efforts were useless.

What emerges with some clarity from the discussion of Mr. H.’s situation is that while the sense of guilt is defended against by the paranoid-masochist, in the more depressed patient the sense of guilt is in itself a defense against an underlying feeling of helplessness. It protects the sense of omnipotence and denies the infantile constituent that is inseparably associated with it.

**Family background features in paranoid-masochism**

The scope of this paper permits only the most superficial examination of the early family history of paranoid-masochistic characters, since we have been concerned mainly with meaning and consequence of current psychodynamics. There is however one important finding to which attention must be given, if only in passing. On the basis of
ordinary common sense, it would normally be assumed that any person who seems to suffer from so many grave problems in his relationship with authority figures had, in fact, undergone a childhood experience in which he was subjected to constant prohibition and punishment. It is startling even when we are familiar with many paranoid-masochistic case histories to discover that in many instances it was the absence of rational, consistent parental authority rather than the harsh experience of such authority that contributed to subsequent developments. In the case of men, for example, (with women the family background pattern is often strangely similar) we learn in spite of the patient's presentation of himself as having been harshly treated that, in many instances, he was in fact overprotected and overindulged by a dominant mother, while his father in contrast was remote, indifferent, separated, divorced or dead. Why then, should a man with such an apparently neutral early experience with an authority figure develop in later life such profound overt or covert rebelliousness?

It is as if the very absence of a rational authority figure of the same sex who is both supportive and restraining fosters the conviction that the illusory infantile superego figure is, in fact, real. The seeming reality of such an illusion is in turn given credence by the implication that the temptation to gratify forbidden incestuous impulses may actually be realized. Since limits are not imposed the child is confronted with the temptation to satisfy in reality whatever he desires; and as he is tempted in that direction, he is also confronted by the dread of being punished for presuming to a status which he is both physically and emotionally unable to fulfill. Such a status is often implicitly conferred on him by a mother who reacts to her own dissatisfactions with her husband by seductively seeking from her son the gratifications which for one reason or another her husband is unable to offer. The implication that is conveyed to the child is that he has nothing to fear from his father and that the strong mother figure will protect him from all reprisals. But since, in fact, he is only a little boy, he continues unconsciously to perceive his father as a formidable giant against whom he is transgressing, and who will murder him for his presumption. Since the father figure is in effect absent, it is as if the dreaded infantile superego figure remains unmodified by reality experience.

Paradoxically, we also discover paranoid-masochistic developments
which are quite severe when the father figure is, in fact, exceptionally harsh and prohibitive. In the first instance, the absence of the father figure permits the fantasy of a powerful prohibitive superego force to go unchecked. In the second instance, the realistically experienced irrational tyranny of the father figure serves, in effect, to validate the primitive fantasy.

With women patients the paranoid-masochistic development seems to follow the pattern of the second alternative outlined above. Here it is the mother figure who, through her domination and hovering overprotection, confirms the childhood impression that safety lies in complete compliance with mother. If the father figure has been held in contempt or has been otherwise rejected by mother, it is understandable that the father might have seductively turned to his little daughter for the love and consolation, which he missed in his relationship with his wife. Since mother does not want him, the temptation to accept and return father's love is very great; but to love father means to contradict mother's view of him. To be secure with mother, the little girl must look at father through mother's eyes. There are then two fathers: the strong loving father who (his reality shortcomings notwithstanding) is uncritically adored, consciously or otherwise, during the oedipal period; and the father of later years in whom the child is disillusioned both because safety demands that she side with mother, and, more deeply because he was unable to rescue her from her phallic mother and serve as a bridge to a man of her own.

**Therapeutic approach to problems of the paranoid-masochistic character**

In several of the examples already cited, suggestions for appropriate therapeutic intervention have been indicated or implied. Rather than attempt to recapitulate such suggestions, I would like first to cite another example in which during a single session a dramatic change from a masochistic to a paranoid position was demonstrated.

Mr. I. is a man of outstanding abilities in his field and of an international reputation. He has constantly complained that his wife is a social liability rather than an asset and that he therefore hesitates to invite her to gatherings of his colleagues. He fears that she will antagonize others and reflect badly on him.

His outstanding success in his work seems to be counterbalanced
by a continual picture that he presents of a wretched home life. He complains that his wife continually abuses him and complains about his failure to provide adequately, to be considerate of her, etc. It is almost as if he is always saying “Do not blame me for my success in work; look how completely miserable and unhappy my love life is at home. Certainly in my home life there is no occasion for anyone to envy me.”  

Mr. I. came in and complained that he was feeling miserable. He did not know what was bothering him. All that he knew was that he was very unhappy and confused. He said he felt frightened of me and that I appeared to him as a forbidding judge; that I was contemptuous of him and that he was certain that I regarded another patient, whom he knew personally, much more favorably. He continued to berate himself and then said that he had been with his wife to a gathering which included professional colleagues. After he left the gathering, he had fantasies of scolding his wife because she had disgraced him by drinking too much and by being too loud and brazen. Even while he had these fantasies he realized that they were irrational, he said, because actually his wife turned out to be the most attractive woman there and was extremely pleasant and cordial to everyone. He proceeded again, after relating this incident, to speak of his feelings of inadequacy and misery.

At this point I intervened and said that it seemed very much as if he were trying to get me to pity him in order to distract me from his feelings of guilt that he had a desirable and attractive wife and that he had let his colleagues know about that fact. He responded at once with a recollection of a remark that one of his colleagues made when he introduced his wife. “How do you come to have such a pretty wife?”  

The patient's mood, after he recalled the remark, changed from one of self-abnegation and self-degradation to one of arrogance and abusiveness. He told me that I was a stupid bastard, that I was very gullible and that on a number of occasions this year, I had permitted him to divert me from problems that were really troubling him. He had succeeded, he said, in engaging me in all kinds of irrelevant discussions. He then proceeded further to disqualify me, by telling me that on TV the night before he had seen an analyst whom he admired greatly. That analyst, he continued, was one who could earn his respect. He recalled that the analyst on the TV
program remarked that all you need nowadays to become an analyst are the 4 C's, couch, clock, cleenex, and chutzpah (audacity). He then laughed uproariously and with obvious contempt for me. From time to time during this period, I mistakenly conceded some kernel of truth in some of his complaints against me. My concessions, however, failed to mollify him. Instead, they added fuel to the fire and served only to redouble his efforts to grind me into the dust.

Finally, I observed that even though some of the things he said about me were true, surely they were not true this session. I wondered why he brought them up now. At the beginning of the session I was a forbidding judge, and now I was a fool. He accused me of allowing him to divert me, but I had the impression that now he was attempting to divert me. Apparently he felt too guilty about having presented his attractive wife to his colleagues. He felt so much in danger of being condemned by me, that he adopted the tactic of making me look at my shortcomings, in order to disqualify me as his judge and to distract me from his sense of guilt.

As long as I seemed to be ignorant of his “guilt,” Mr. I. attempted to keep me in a state of ignorance by deferring to my superior wisdom. He appeared to submit to me in order to disarm me. When that maneuver was unsuccessful, and he sensed that I knew his “crime,” he proceeded at once to counterattack. In the first part of the session he conferred a power that I did not have. In the latter part he derided a power that I appeared to have.

From the above example, it is clear that one of the major therapeutic problems in dealing with the paranoid-masochistic character is to avoid the temptation to yield to the patient's diversionary tactics. The analyst's inner emotional reaction serves as a clue to the patient's intention. To express such reactions often serves only to fortify the mechanism rather than to undermine it. In the predominantly masochistic phase an attempt is made to excite in the analyst a sense of great compassion for the hardship which the patient is enduring. But to extend pity serves only to add to the patient's investment in suffering as a means of demonstrating his innocence. What may appear to be a ruthless denial of pity to the suffering masochist, is in effect a genuine respect for his strength. To extend pity where none is needed is to join the patient in his demonstration of inadequacy. To withhold pity tends to frustrate his need to be the victim and to confront him with his real effectiveness.
ness. Often it is necessary to be sensitive to the patient's tone of voice rather than to the content of what he is attempting to convey. He may speak of happy events with a subdued mournful affect as if to say, “Even though good things have happened, don't blame me; I'm really not happy.” On the other hand, he may sound quite forceful and even exuberant when discussing the injustices and hardships to which he has been subjected. It is essential that the analyst understand the dynamics underlying the patient's mood rather than yield to the temptation to adopt the same mood while relating to the patient.

It has often been noticed, with considerable dismay, that following a period of apparent mental health achieved as the result of comparatively brief psychotherapy, the patient seems to take a turn for the worse. A number of writers refer to this phenomenon as the end of the “honeymoon period.” They attribute the change to some disappointment in the therapeutic process. The patient has unconsciously expected a reward for his cooperation and his “good behavior” and having been frustrated, his identification with the therapeutic process and with the analyst turns sour. Such a transformation, however, is often indicative of a change from a masochistic to a paranoid position. A meek plea turns into an arrogant demand; a cherished privilege into an inalienable right. The patient no longer needs love, but boasts of his power to endure hatred, in the reality of which he has an unshakable conviction. Whining placation may turn to fierce provocation which, if it incurs retaliation, may either force a retreat to masochism or reenforce, through defensive self-vindication, the foundation of a paranoid orientation.

When the paranoid phase is dominant, the analyst may detect within himself a number of inner responses such as I indicated while citing the case of Mr. B. These may include a wish to admit the justice of the patient's accusations, an impulse to defend oneself, or a temptation to react with anger to the patient's provocations. The temptation to react with anger has been rationalized by some analysts as justified since it confronts the paranoid patient quite directly with the effect that he is having on another person. This point of view, however, ignores the fact that the paranoid patient has no difficulty whatever in provoking anger against himself in his daily relationships. His problem is that he is unaware of his provocations but uses the angry reactions that he excites, further
to justify his paranoid position. It is the obligation of the analyst to understand his patient's need to provoke rather than to permit himself to be provoked. For the most part, it is not helpful to the patient to know whether he has succeeded in creating a specific emotional reaction in the analyst. It is much more important that he know the motivations within himself that give rise to such responses. There is, to be sure, a danger that if the analyst remains too consistently patient and understanding under a continued barrage of abusiveness session after session, that the implication may arise that the analyst is absolutely inhuman. It therefore is sometimes therapeutically desirable that under extreme circumstances the analyst be free to give vent to his feelings.*

The implication of the point of view outlined above is that the analyst remain a rational and realistic authority figure in contrast to the infantile superego attributes with which the patient endows him. It is, as it were, part of the mental hygiene of the analyst neither to accept the godlike status which the masochistic patient confers, nor to defer to the godlike status which the paranoid patient arrogates to himself. Such discipline on the part of the analyst hopefully conveys to the patient that he, the patient, is himself an authority figure and helps him to distinguish between the reality and the superego which he is constantly projecting. I am reminded of one patient who sought to assuage his guilt for having divorced a devoted but dominating wife by constantly berating himself for his ingratitude. His tearful self-flagellation reached its height just a few weeks before his marriage to what seemed to him to be a much more desirable woman. One day in the midst of the painful experience of his self-inflicted suffering, it suddenly occurred to him that his sadness was really quite useless since his former wife could not possibly know anything about it. That simple reality fact served to remind him that it was his infantile superego and not his former wife whom he was really attempting to appease.

Life, however, and its vicissitudes is unhappily not so simple for the paranoid-masochistic patient nor for the therapist who is striving to help him. The object of therapy is to reduce the sense of irrational guilt with which the patient is burdened and to substitute the perception of reality consequences in its stead. There are

* I am indebted to Dr. José Barchilon for bringing this point to my attention.
many occasions when this does not take place. The patient is relieved of his guilt but instead of becoming more reasonable he develops the conviction that he has nothing to fear. In having disposed of his punitive superego, he also disposes of the limitations of reality with which he unconsciously equated it. Like the Count of Monte Cristo liberated from his dungeon, he is impelled to exult, “The world is mine.” We are then confronted by the phenomenon of paranoid megalomania. Since there is no one there to condemn him and to punish him, he may develop the illusion of complete invulnerability. It is as if there is a complete fusion, at this point, with the parent of the opposite sex and the rival has been defeated and discarded forever. The analyst at this point may be startled by the euphoria of his formerly tormented and persecuted patient. One such patient for example, spoke of his ecstasy when he identified the setting sun as the red nipple on his mother's breast. To be relieved of guilt often implies that the king is dead and that the prince (long live the king) is universally acclaimed as his successor. At this point the patient generally finds himself confronted by reality limitations which, if he denies them, may lead to institutionalization; and which, if he acknowledges them, may lead to a depressive but enlightening recognition that he too is mortal.

One of the major complications of therapy is that the paranoid-masochistic patient finds it much more comfortable to discuss for hours on end all of the problems relating to his pre-oedipal dependency orientation rather than to confront the terrors implicit in the oedipal conflict. The danger is that the analyst may collaborate with the patient's evasiveness and in so doing fail to confront him with problems involved in his feelings of competitiveness and identification with the parent of the same sex. In the name of fixation at a pregenital psychosexual level of development both analyst and patient are deflected from the realization that full maturation cannot be achieved in the absence of identifying oneself as a spouse and a parent. In effect, the underlying theme of paranoid-masochistic dynamics is an evasion of that responsibility. The more analyst and patient talk about the humiliating need for love and protection the more the trials implicit in rational competition on the level of maturity are ignored.

A gifted young patient recently observed that his father was his first disappointment in love. He felt that such a disappointment
was most abnormal because it was the first. Had his development taken a healthier course, it would be his mother, not his father, who should have disappointed him first. But his mother never disappointed him, even to this day. His father did. With a sense of deep illumination and despair he finally exclaimed, “I could not be a child without my mother. But how may I become a man without a father!”

Consider, if you will, the story of Abraham. When he was 99 years old and his wife, Sara, was 90, he came before God and was promised that if he made a covenant with God, his barren wife would bear a child. God promised that Abraham's seed would multiply and that his descendants would be respected as the leaders of nations. But what was the covenant? God decreed that if Abraham were to become the progenitor of his chosen people, he must submit to circumcision, and that all of his sons and sons of his sons must be circumcised as well. Here, paradoxically, God promises fertility but demands symbolic castration as a guarantee of the covenant. It is as if in a kind of omniscient mockery, God offers to Abraham what he may no longer expect and at the same time deprives him of the instrument with which he may fulfill what God now promises.

But this bewildering paradox somewhere contains a core of divine wisdom. The castration is only a token castration. It does not involve total impairment. It is rather as if God says, “As you, Abraham, accept Me as your God, your Father, and accept My authority as your Creator, so may you then aspire to be as I am. You may then emulate Me and become an authority—a progenitor in your own right.”

References
10 Freud, S. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. New York: Norton, 1933. [→]