

**BDSM. A search for the container-contained experience: An  
object-relations approach to the problem of masochism.**

**Gillian Walker**

**Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD**

**University of Essex**

**Date of submission: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**Word Count 80,094.**

**Abstract: BDSM a search for the container-contained experience: An object-relations approach to the problem of Masochism.**

Freud took two decades to fit pleasure in pain (masochism) into his instinct theory. In his endeavours to do so, he developed several models of masochism that were dependent on instinct vicissitudes and their governing principles. Freud took a marked turn towards a quasi-object-relating theory when he recognised the existence of unconscious beating phantasies, and the existence of an intrapsychic agency with punitive characteristics. Despite his move towards an object-relations theory, Freud always returned to the same place - the economic properties of the instincts - even when these directly concerned the Oedipus complex. An empirical investigation into the practices and experiences of consensual Bondage Domination and Sado-Masochism (BDSM) suggests that an object relating model offers a viable alternative for explaining pleasure in pain. From a preliminary investigation into the views and impressions of 'the Leather Family' - two female dominants and their shared submissive wife, a number of speculative themes emerged. One theme suggested that the submissive role in BDSM is an enactment of a primitive form of *containment* as described by Bion's model of maternal-infant communication. To investigate the hypothesis that the masochism of BDSM could be better described in object relations terms, a research study was designed. Bion's container-contained model was operationalised to create an assessment tool. BDSM-derived data was collected, and the assessment tool applied as an analytic device. The characteristics of the Dominant-submissive interaction show a correlative relationship with the characteristic features of the container-contained relationship. The masochism of BDSM can be seen to provide a transition from Freud

## CONTENTS

**THESIS SECTION 1. PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPTS: pp 1-208**

<b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b>	1-23
<b>A. Genesis of the Thesis</b>	1-3
<u>Initial Enquiries 1: Economic Theory</u>	3-4
<u>Initial Enquiries 2: Literature</u>	4-6
<u>Initial Enquiries 3: Engagement with BDSM</u>	6-9
<u>Initial Enquiries 4: Conversations with the Leather Family</u>	9
<i>a) Domination and submission</i>	9-10
<i>b) Experiential Pain</i>	10-11
<i>c) Experiential Fear</i>	11
<i>d) Trust and Safety</i>	11
<i>e) The Skin as an Experience of Self</i>	12
<i>f) BDSM: The Experience</i>	12-13
<u>Initial Enquiries 5: Conclusions</u>	13-15
<u>Initial Inquiries 6. Outcome: Formation of a research Hypothesis</u>	15
<b>B. Thesis Structure</b>	16-23
<b>Chapter 2. Freud on Masochism: An Economic Model</b>	24-
51	
Introduction	24-25

<b>Part 1. An Economic Theory of Instinct Function: Pre-‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’.</b>	26-51
Introduction	26
<u>Physiology</u>	26
a) Nerve Cell Function	26-27
b) Instinct Structure	27-29
c) Two Governing Principles of Mental Functioning: The ‘Pleasure’ Principle and the ‘Reality’ Principle	29-30
d) Instincts and Vicissitudes	31-32
<u>d(i). Instinct Function</u>	32
<u>d(ii). Erotogenic Zones</u>	32-36
<u>d(iii). Instinct Libinalisation</u>	37-38
<u>d(iv). Instinct Mutabilities</u>	38-
39	
<u>d(v). Instinct Vicissitudes: Masochism</u>	39-51
<b>Part 2. An Economic Problem: Challenges to the Pleasure Principle</b>	52-78
Introduction	52-53
<u>Compulsion to Repeat (A) ‘The Uncanny’ (1919b)</u>	53-56
<u>Compulsion to Repeat (B) ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (1920)</u>	56 -78
(a) War Neurosis and Dream Function	57
b) Children at play: The Cotton Reel Game	58-60
c) The Psychoanalytic Transference	61-63
d) Compulsion to Repeat: Unresolved	63
e) The Death Instinct	65-70

f) The Death Instinct and Masochism	70-72
g) Masochism: A New Theory	72
h) Further Economic Considerations	72-76

<u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Summary</u>	76-78
---	-------

### **Chapter 3. Erotic Beating Phantasies: Classical Psychoanalytic Perspective**

79-97

Introduction	79-82
--------------	-------

#### **Part 1. Instinct Repression, Instinct Regression, and the Oedipus Complex:**

##### **Freud's 'A Child is Being Beaten' (1919a)**

<u>The Structure of Beating Phantasies (in girls)</u>	84-89
---	-------

##### The role of sublimation

89

##### Regression to a pregenital phase

90

##### The *feminine* attitude in male masochists

90- 92

#### **Part 2. Instinct Sublimation and the Oedipus Complex: 'The Relation of Beating Phantasies to a Day-Dream' (Anna Freud 1923)**

##### Sublimated Beating Phantasies in Anna Freud's Case Material: An

##### Overview

93-98

<b>Chapter 4. An Economic Solution to the Problem of Masochism</b>	99-126
--	--------

Introduction 99

**Part 1. An Economic Solution (1): A New Model of Psychic Agency. The Superego. ‘The Ego & The Id’ (Freud 1923)**

1. The Skin as a Sense Organ 100-102

2. Instinct Fusion-Defusion 102-105

3. The New Structural Model of the Psyche: A New Psychic Agency

a) The Id 105

b) The ego 106-

107

c) The Superego: A New Psychic Agency 107-108

**Part 2a: An Economic Solution (1): New Models of Masochism: Genesis. ‘The Economic Problem of Masochism’ (1924)**

Introduction 110

Feminine Masochism 111-113

Erotogenic Masochism 114-115

Moral Masochism 116 -119

**Part 2b. An Economic Solution (2): A New Model of Psychic Governance: The Nirvana principle. ‘The Economic Problem of Masochism’ (1924)**

Solution to the Economic Problem: The Nirvana Principle 120-126

**Chapter 5. Bion’s Object-Relating Theory of Container-Contained: The History and Development of the Concept** pp-128-159

## **Part 1. Object Relations Theory of Container-Contained: The History of the Concept**

<u>A) Projection and Introjection: Classical Concepts; Freud; Ferenczi; Abraham</u>	129-132
<u>B) Excessive Projective Identification: Klein's development (PI<sup>(n)</sup>)</u>	133-136

## **Part 2. Object Relations Theory of Container-Contained: Development of the Concept.**

Introduction	137
<u>A) Bion's development of Normal PI<sup>(n)</sup></u>	138-155
<i>'Attacks on Linking' (Bion 1959)</i> <sup>1</sup> .	138-143
<u>B) Bion's development of the Container-Contained Model</u>	143
<i>'A Theory of Thinking' (1962 [1961])</i>	143-146
<i>'Learning from Experience' (1962).</i>	147-155
Discussion	155-157
Conclusion	158-159
<b>Chapter 6. Literature Review</b>	160-208
Introduction	160-164

---

1 Initially published in the *IJP* Vol. 40, Parts 5-6 (1959). Quotes here from *Second Thoughts* (1967)

<u>Literature Search Process: PEPWeb</u>	164-169
<b>Part 1. Classical Psychoanalysis</b>	169-179
Discussion	179-182
Conclusion	182
<b>Part 2. Kleinian Object-Relations Theory</b>	184-207
Introduction	183 -202
Conclusion	202-203
Discussion	203-207
<b>Literature Review Outcome</b>	207-208
<b><u>CONCLUSION to THESIS SECTION 1.</u></b>	208
<b><u>THESIS SECTION 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY</u></b>	<b>2010-294</b>
<b>Chapter 7. Methodology</b>	
Introduction	2010-245
<b>Part 1. Psychoanalytic Research: Operationalising Psychoanalytic Concepts.</b>	
210-229	
<u>Operationalisation of Psychoanalytic Concepts: Examples from Psychoanalytic</u>	
<u>Research.</u>	214-228
Conclusion	228-229



<b>Part 2. Operationalisation of Bion’s Container-Contained model and formation of an Assessment Tool.</b>	229-245
Introduction	229-230
<u>A. The Operationalisation and Differentiation of Masochism associated with BDSM and Sexual Masochism Disorder.</u>	230-236
<i>Krafft-Ebing. Sexualised Masochism (1886)</i>	233
<i>Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality (2014).</i>	233-234
<b>Operationalised Model of Masochism</b>	234-235
Conclusion	235-236
<u>B. Operationalisation of Bion’s Container-contained Model</u>	236-237
<i>Operationalising Klein’s PI<sup>(e)</sup></i>	237
<i>The Process of Operationalising Container-contained</i>	240-243
<b>An Operationalised Model of Bion’s Containment Theory</b>	243-244
Assessment Device: Sample Table.	245
Conclusion.	245-246
<b>Chapter 8. Data Analysis</b>	
Introduction	247
<u>Data Sets</u>	248
<b>Data Presentation, Application of the Assessment Tool and Data Interpretation.</b>	250-
294	
<i>Example 1. Michael P. and Genocide. Pandora’s Box.</i>	250-256

<i>Example 2. Pubescent Girl (Pink Smock-Man). Pandora's Box.</i>	257-262
<i>Example 3. Marie. Slaves. Pandora's Box.</i>	263-270
Reflections on Examples 1, 2, and 3	270-272

### **Further Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

Introduction	272-273
--------------	---------

#### BDSM Personal Narratives

<i>Example 4. Ayngel. Susan for Now</i>	273-277
<i>Example 5: Nazi Role Play. Pandora's Box</i>	278-281
<i>Example 6. Plantation Slave. Pandora's Box</i>	281-282
Reflections on Personal Narrative:Nazi-role play and Plantation slave	282-284
The Dominant Experience	284-294
<i>Example 7. Goddess Natasha and Joseph. Pandora's Box</i>	285
<i>Example 8. Dom Jarret. Needle Play. Susan for Now</i>	285
<i>Example 9. Wrestling Fetish. Amazonian wrestler. Pandora's Box</i>	286
<i>Example 10: Dom Jarret. Needle Play. Susan for Now</i>	287-288
<i>Example 11. Mistress Catherine and slave Jess</i>	289-290
<i>Example 12. Mistress Raven</i>	290
The Dominant Experience-Reflections and Comments	291-295

### **Chapter 9. Discussion**

296

1. Thesis Contribution to the Psychoanalytic Understanding of BDSM	296-304
2. Methodology: Success of The Assessment Device	304-306
Conclusions	306
3. Future work.	306-309

**References**

Page \*\*

*Books and Articles*

Page \*\*

*DVD Documentaries*

Page \*\*

*Legal Case*

Page \*\*

**Appendix 1: Data Set 1**

'Nick Broomfield's Fetishes' (H.B.O. 2005 Special Edition). Transcript.

Page \*\*

**Appendix 2: Data Set 2**

'Susan for Now'. Robin Franzi (2007).

Page \*\*

**Appendix 3. Data Set 3**

Impressions from a BDSM group.



## Abbreviations

♀♂	Container-Contained (Bion's notation)
$\alpha$ -f	Alpha-function
$\alpha$ -e	Alpha-elements
$\beta$ -e	Beta-elements
BDSM	Bondage, Domination and Sado-Masochism
BJP	British Journal of Psychotherapy
D-p	Depressive position
D-s	Domination-submission
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
H1	Hypothesis
H <sub>0</sub>	Null Hypothesis
ICD	International Classification of Disease
IJP	Journal of Psychoanalysis
PE <sub>x</sub>	Power Exchange
PI <sup>(e)</sup>	Excessive Projective Identification
PI <sup>(n)</sup>	Normal Projective Identification

P-S-p      Paranoid-Schizoid-position

**Acknowledgements.** Many thanks and much appreciation to my supervisor Prof Karl Figlio, and to Emily Hinshelwood for her proof reading and layout. Very much appreciation to my husband Robert for his long-suffering support and patience.

# **THESIS SECTION 1. PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPTS**

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **A. Genesis of the Thesis**

The original idea for this project, a psychoanalytic enquiry into BDSM (Bondage, Domination, Sadomasochism), began when I was undertaking a course as part of an MSc in research methodology. One of the topics addressed on the course concerned the ethics of research on human subjects, specifically the nature of 'consent'. My interest was caught by the 1993 British Law court case Regina v Brown, otherwise known as 'The Spanner Case'. Operation Spanner was a police investigation related to consensual, private, sexual, sado-masochistic activities. The investigation culminated in a report that named individuals, several of whom were then successfully prosecuted under the Offences against the Person Act (1861). They were subsequently convicted for assault occasioning 'actual bodily harm', 'unlawful wounding' and other offences against the person. The defence argued that the activities were encounters between consenting adults and, as such, no laws had been contravened. Something of a landmark trial, the key issue facing the court was whether 'consent' was a valid defence in these circumstances. The court answered that it wasn't, and the case subsequently went to appeal. The resulting House of Lords judgement ruled that consent was not a valid legal defence for actual bodily harm in Britain, and the convictions for five appellants were upheld.

As crucial as questions on the ethics of consent to research in general, as a student of psychoanalytic theory I wondered how psychoanalysis could help to explain the paradox of masochism or 'pleasure in pain'. I decided to focus on masochism rather than sadism as I found masochism more intriguing, more of a puzzle. BDSM, or 'kinky sex' is intriguing. To wonder 'what it is they do' can be titillating for some, whilst others find it disturbing. My own interest lay not in what they do but in why they do it. What are the motivations that drive masochistic activities; why does pain bring pleasure, what is the counter-intuitive paradox at play? Whether, and in what way(s) psychoanalysis has something of explanatory value to offer I deemed to be a question worthy of psychoanalytic enquiry.

My initial approaches to these questions were in terms of classical theory. Given Freud's long development of instinct theory and his intermittent, but persistent pursuit of ideas that could account for masochism, I considered instinct theory the obvious paradigm under which to investigate masochism. As a Biology graduate, I find Freud's economic instinct theory fascinating. The opportunity to establish a comprehensive understanding of that theory was a welcome challenge.

Initially I had intended to critique Freud's theory by assessing how economic principles fitted a model of BDSM. That is, how did Freud see economic principles in relation to the genesis and manifestations of masochism? Freud may not have spoken about BDSM per se, but as I shall show, the observations he reported provide clues suggesting he did have some contact with BDSM type sadomasochistic practices. I will show, by comparison and contrast, and by



analysis of novel data, that many of Freud's observations on masochistic behaviour, remain observable in present day BDSM.

As applicable as instinct theory to BDSM can indeed be shown, once I began to engage with the world of BDSM, my thesis turned towards object-relations. I will show how my preliminary enquiries suggested that Bion's container-contained theory offers an alternative model of masochism to that of Freud's economic model. Ultimately my thesis will argue that object relations theory, specifically Bion's container-contained theory is of greater explanatory value for masochism than instinct theory. My argument is not so much with Freud's observations of masochistic behaviour, but in his use of concepts to account for it. My thesis will both support and challenge Freud's theories of masochism, and I will show that in the case of masochism at least, object relations theory augments, rather than displaces Freud's classical theory.

### Initial Enquiries 1: Economic Theory

My goal was to become steeped in Freud's theorising, as I read, I came to recognise that Freud's own investigations into masochism followed two paths. One based on economic principles and how instinct function gone awry could give rise to masochism. The second, unsurprisingly in terms of classical theory, was Freud's application of the Oedipus complex or what I call Oedipal residues, and the guilt associated with it. One clear example of how Freud's observations meet my own observations of BDSM is in Freud's idea on 'over-valuation' and 'idealisation' of the object (Freud, 1905, 1921).

In BDSM, the person of the Dominant, particularly of the female Dominant (Domme) is an object of worship, her grace and beauty, her power and authority are lauded by her submissive/masochistic partner, she is perfect . Freud's notion of a highly erotised yet forbidden object of desire, fits his idea that at least one form of masochism has its origins in Oedipally derived guilt (1919a, 1924). As my research proceeded my focus shifted from classical theory to object relations theory as a preferred model to explain the masochism of BDSM. However, throughout my thesis, as in the cases of the over-valued object and of Oedipal influences I will be comparing, contrasting, and at times confirming Freud's observations with my own novel data (Freud, 1919a, Anna Freud 1923).

### Initial Enquiries 2: Literature

I began an initial review of recent literature on BDSM. I immediately discovered that although there is an abundance of literature on masochism and perversion, there appeared to be an extreme paucity of psychoanalytic literature associated with BDSM. I will show the extent of this paucity in my thesis literature review proper (chapter 6). As an example, one (then recent) edition of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (IJP) was dedicated to how psychoanalysts were thinking about sexuality, what does psychoanalysis actually mean by 'sexual and sexuality' (2016, volm 97 (3), editorial Birksted-Breen pp, 559- 560). The aim of the editorial boards, was to provide 'a random snap-shot of a moment in time' in thinking about sexuality, including what is to be understood by 'perverse' (Birksted-Breen, p. 560). To the most part there is a re-examination of Freud's 1905 three essays on sexuality, or a revision of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex. BDSM was not a feature even in the one clinical paper that addresses

beating phantasies. Strikingly, in this edition of the IJP, focusing on sexuality and what it means to psychoanalysis, object relations theory is absent.

By redirecting and extending my reading of the object relations school of thought, I ran into similar difficulties. BDSM is almost absent from that school of psychoanalytic literature too. The Kleinian psychoanalytic view tends to be on sadism rather than masochism and this contributes to the paucity of object-relations oriented literature on masochism, and further, discussions on sadism tend to be of a pathological nature associated with defences against the depressive position.

My thesis is going to argue that the paucity of literature is because, neither the sadism, nor the masochism of pathology, 'fits' BDSM. Freud himself had made this differentiation quite clear (1924). This differentiation, pathological from non-pathological, proved crucial to my thesis as it defines subject selection. This clarification, one that both the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) adopted, has come about not least because of pressure from the BDSM community itself. Like those before them who are attracted to same sex partners there is some movement to reject being pathologised. Unlike the current debates around transsexual people, the BDSM community is slow to grow in confidence by raising their profile and seeking acceptance and understanding. I see this as a consequence of the nature of sadomasochism, how can anyone willingly seek pain and servitude to another, it appears shameful, embarrassing and definitely 'perverse'. My thesis will have something to add to this debate and specifically from the psychoanalytic perspective.

The dearth of psychoanalytic literature specifically on BDSM suggested a potential gap in psychoanalytic knowledge. The lack of literature on the topic indicated that another line of enquiry was required and so I turned my attention to investigating the world of BDSM itself. This is where I formed an idea, a counter-intuitive one, that Bion's container-contained model could be of explanatory value in the paradox of pleasure through pain as I shall briefly explain.

### Initial Enquiries 3: Engagement with BDSM

I undertook extensive web searches to gain insight and knowledge about what BDSM actually is. I discovered a genuine body of knowledge in the form of groups and membership clubs for BDSM proponents (BDSMers). These are people who want to explore their sexuality and share their activities, 'their kink' as they call it, with like-minded others in a safe, confidential, and non-judgemental place.

I approached a group of BDSMers, 'The Leather family', by e-mailing their group leader, a British Dominatrix 'Goddess Isis'. I explained my interest and my wish to research the world of BDSM from a particular perspective, I described psychoanalysis to Goddess Isis as the study of unconscious motivations. 'The Family', comprised of Goddess Isis, her two wives, one an American Dominatrix, and one the submissive wife they shared, and an extended coterie of, to the most part submissive males.

I planned to carry out a formal pilot study, an inductive method, based on interview responses that would provide information and clarification on any number, of mostly unknown, aspects of BDSM. At first there was great enthusiasm on the part of the group members, but as time progressed, this part of my intended research methodology did not come to pass. Despite having gained their consent, the group members became somewhat shy of meeting face-to-face, mostly citing anxieties around confidentiality.

I adapted my approach by asking for a series of informal, private, anonymised telephone conversations during which I could ask questions and make notes, this was agreed to. I had five extended telephone conversations with Goddess Isis, her family and various coterie members. After each consultation I made notes on their impressions, my own impressions, their experiences, their feelings, and the knowledge they imparted about the physical and psychological aspects of BDSM.

This was an informal process, my aim was to explore my topic flexibly and in detail, utilising reflective and reflexive processes as these are usually framed with no predetermined hypotheses. This method suited psychoanalytically based enquiry because 'it allows different interpretive stances' (Smith and Osborn 2003, p.51). Because psychoanalysis is a subjective field, despite its early attempts to be objective, there is a great reliance on personal narrative. My own enquiry focused on personal narrative around feelings: the feelings evoked and satisfied by BDSM activity. I wondered if by focusing on the feelings that BDSM elicited, I may discover something of the motives that lead a person to seek out the kind of pleasure in pain facilitated by BDSM, what is the meaning of pleasure in pain.

The first thing I established, and what needs explaining before my thesis unfolds, is that BDSM activities are played out within a made-up scenario. I liken this to a game or an act in a play. The scenario, traditionally referred to as 'a scene', is a period of erotised role-play between two or more consenting adults. The role of Dominant participants is to provide the sadism which will satisfy the masochism of submissive participants, equally and conversely, the role of submissive participants is to satisfy the Dominant's sadism.

Prior to the scene there will be all-participant negotiations to establish limits, set boundaries, and to agree a safe-word or other way of indicating to the Domme, that the activities are to stop or be scaled back. For some, to participate in a scene without a safe word increases the imagined danger and so their excitement. Generally, to 'play' without a safe-word or other communicative means is considered unacceptable to BDSMers from both a safety, and an ethical standpoint.

Typically, for the duration of the role play the submissive is naked or semi-naked, blindfolded and restrained in some way, usually with ropes, handcuffs, collars, chains and so on. Typically, the Domme is provocatively attired, typically she will use some form of implement such as a riding crop, cane or whip (referred to as toys) for the meting out of pain and punishment. She is addressed as Mistress (Dom-Master), the submissive usually has a pet name, often affectionately flavoured (sweet-subbie) and/or of a phantasmagorical nature (firebird).

I have used the word 'typically' in the preceding paragraph several times, typical restraints, typical attire, typical toys, this is by design as my intention is to begin

to show that the BDSM scene is highly 'prescriptive'. This was a crucial realisation as I also began to see that there is a BDSM 'relationship' and this is also highly prescriptive. To find there is a rigid set of features to both the 'scene' and to the manner of relating, suggests that BDSM has the characteristics of a stereotypical structure. It is the nature of this structure, which I argue exhibits elements of a primitive Bionian containing process, that began to emerge from my interactions with the Leather family.

#### Initial Enquiries 4: Conversations with the Leather Family

As my telephone-based engagement with the Leather family, and at times their extended coterie progressed, I learned about the nature of BDSM, what it is and what it is not. I also began to note a set of thematic commonalities emerging suggesting that BDSM has a small, clear, standard set of features. As I have indicated above and the view I present throughout my thesis is that by consisting of a clear, characteristic set of features, this indicates a very specific organisation.

##### *a) Domination and submission*

Foremost, was that the Domination/submission (D/s) element is crucial to BDSM, without it there is no BDSM. Several members explained that the sadomasochism (S/m) would be missed if it wasn't present, but the D/s is mandatory. D/s is the essential bond that binds them. This suggests there is a very powerful central dynamic in a person-to-person interaction, clearly BDSM is a 'relationship', one with very specific characteristics. The features of D/s are an apparent blind obedience by the submissive to the will and whim of the Domme.

This may consist of servitude, fetch, carry, attend to this, clean the house and so forth. The scene may include being 'made' to carry out a corrective task accompanied by some form of corporal punishment for an infraction or disobedience. This dynamic is facilitated through what BDSMers refer to as Power Exchange (PEX). It is a surrender of autonomy and the entrustment of one's body and mind to the keeping of another, I argue that this is commensurate with the process of projection identification.

### *b) Experiential Pain*

Perhaps the feature most popularly associated with kinky sex, is the physical pain or corporal punishment (CP). I found much about the experience and nature of physical pain in BDSM surprising and even puzzling. Although pain in and of itself was often deemed unpleasant, equally, it could be experienced as exhilarating. Crucially, I saw that pain seemed to serve a specific purpose. I determined that the purpose of pain is to be 'traversed'. Pain represents a journey of personal accomplishment and victory, the over-coming of something that is challenging. There are feelings of deep satisfaction, relief, even joy when the pain provided by the Domme is met with the submissive's fortitude. There were many comments by submissive group members about their pride 'in being able to take it', and the disappointment in themselves if they had to use a safe-word. If a point was reached where they had to ask pain to stop, the submissive felt they had failed both themselves and their Mistress. There are feelings of disappointment, frustration, regret, and guilt, something, or someone, has failed. Although, the pain is delivered by the Domme, I am going to argue that the role of the Domme is to 'provide' rather than 'inflict' the pain that the submissive wishes to



experience, in this way the pain is put into, or given to the Domme by the submissive, this in order that she can give it back. I am going to argue that this is a process commensurate with projective identification.

### *c) Experiential Fear*

As much as pain, fear appears to be a common denominator, the wish to feel fear, 'but in a safe-way' was a common expression. To feel fear, to experience the anticipation of fear, is exciting and arousing. This is hardly unique to BDSM, humans do find risk and fear exciting whether it be a fair ground ride, a horror film, or any number of ventures we can invent to scare ourselves with. The fear experienced by the submissive is something he evokes himself, it is highly erotic, and, like pain it seemed to have a specific purpose, it is there to be traversed. Like pain, fear is in the person of the Domme, but it is placed there, in phantasy by the submissive, I argue that this is commensurate with the process of projective identification.

### *d) Trust and Safety*

Another strong feature is an emphasis on trust. This did not seem to just apply to having a safe-word in place and accepting responsibility for the physical safety of the bound, chained, blindfolded submissive. I began to see that the trust element concerned safety in an emotional sense. Not so much as, can I 'trust' you with my life, but can I 'entrust' you with my life, can I entrust you with me? I argue that this is commensurate with the process of projective identification.

### *e) The Skin as an Experience of Self*

A popular activity in a BDSM scene involves 'sensory deprivation', cutting off awareness and contact with the outside world, the focus of the subject's ego is the self. Various methods are used, from simple blindfolding to full rubber body suits, or wrapping the body in materials such as plastic (cling film) or bubble wrap. This was reported as evoking feelings of being disconnected from the outside, being at peace, deeply relaxed, warm, cosy and safe. I wondered if this is an experience of comfort such as the infant feels when he is swaddled, wrapped up next to his mother's skin, protected, somewhat separated from the outside world. It occurred to me that this so called 'mummification' may be understood in terms of Bick's idea (1968) of the skin as a container in the Bionian sense, and of Anzieu's idea of the skin envelope as a psychic wrapping (1985), as well as Freud's idea of the skin as an early experience of a psychosomatic ego boundary (1923).

### *f) BDSM: The Experience*

Together, these BDSM activities appear to bring about an experience of self and of something I am going to call 'personal growth'. The submissive members of the Leather family used phrases like 'my Mistress helps me to be the best I can be', 'my Mistress enables me to be free', 'I feel I can just be me' 'I don't have to feel guilt', 'I don't have to take responsibility', 'I feel freedom to just be'. As puzzling as this appears, the BDSM scene, and the relationship through which it is facilitated, seems to bring about a positive change in the submissive's internal state of being. This state is often described in spiritual terms, feelings of oneness,

peace and quietude, this is given the name 'sub-space' which I align with the Eastern Buddhist experience of 'Nirvana' or the more Western experience described as a 'State of Grace'. I am going to argue that this is commensurate with the infant's experience of maternal alpha-function as described by Bion.

### Initial Enquiries 5: Conclusions

My observations of the apparent need to undertake a journey of pain and fear to emerge triumphant, gave me an idea that Power Exchange (PEX) through which D/s is facilitated, may have some equivalence in the ego-function transfer described within the maternal-infant container-contained process. That BDSM may be an enactment of a process conversant with a primitive form of Bion's containing process, or a process in which elements of the containing process can be shown to be present, is a novel and original thesis. Certainly, the novel material gleaned from the Leather family, showed aspects of a process that could be understood in terms of projective identification and of maternal alpha-function and thus the provision of containment as I have hypothesised.

Specific to the containing process, if there are elements of the container-contained process to be observed in BDSM this is something 'felt'. This would suggest a primitive state, pre-symbolisation of thought where experience is processed as something physical. In this primitive state, 'thoughts' are things in and of themselves sometimes dreadful and intolerable, things that have to be 'thought' by an external ego, another mind. I will argue that this is the function of pain in BDSM. Pain is felt, pain is processed, pain is tolerated, and it is overcome, leaving behind satisfaction and peace, pain has been contained.

Essential to this process, is the maternal containing mind, essential to my thesis is that the role of the external mind lies in the role of the Domme. The need for pain experience of a very specific type, an external facilitator with very specific features and a very stereotypical structure to the relationship in which this occurs, suggests a primitive organisation, one not only pre-symbolisation of thought in Bion's terms, but also pre-genital in Freud's terms. This is an original, unique and novel argument that encompasses two concepts, pleasure in pain and a containing experience. The overwhelming message from the Leather family and the one that emerged most prominently is, that BDSM is a specific 'relationship'.

The conclusions of this initial research was that BDSM is not on the psychoanalytic radar. The paucity of literature is because BDSM is not pathological. BDSMers do not come for treatment, BDSM makes them very happy, it is a deeply satisfying and freeing experience. BDSM, is a deeply, loving, sensual, erotic relationship that shows a set of rigid characteristics within a stereotypical structure. The focus of the Kleinian school of psychoanalysis towards sadism contributes to the general paucity of psychoanalytic literature on masochism. So far, there appears nothing in the psychoanalytic field of thinking that links non-pathological masochism and the container-contained process. One aspect of my thesis is to challenge this absence, both on behalf of psychoanalytic theory, and on behalf of the world of BDSM. Freud had made it clear that only one of the three forms of masochism he identified could be deemed pathological and that is moral masochism (1924). Freud's clarification appears to be absent in object-relations literature, masochism is deemed perverse and pathological. BDSM carries the same sort of stigma that homosexuality once did, it is perverse,

it is not normal, it is shameful, I shall show support for Freud's clarification between pathological and non-pathological masochism.

My own, novel and counter-intuitive hypothesis (H1) is that BDSM activities demonstrate features of the containing experience described by Bion's model. I will not argue that BDSM is a complete model of the container-contained process, but I will demonstrate that elements of the container-contained model and a containing-type experience is felt by BDSMers. I will argue that this is pre-genital, I will argue that it is primitive, that it is pre-symbolisation of thought, and that it is enactment rather than inner representation. My thesis is not a clinical study, my thesis is an academic investigation into psychoanalytic theory, my thesis does not claim clinical application. However, I will show in my literature review, that my thesis can offer a different perspective to some clinical discussions and that clinical discussions can elucidate new theory when looked at from a new standpoint (Betty Joseph 1986, [1969]), Antinucci, 2014).

### Initial Inquiries 6: Outcome; Formation of a research Hypothesis

From my initial engagement with the Leather family, I felt I had identified a gap in knowledge. That gap in knowledge is the lack of appreciation and psychoanalytic understanding of the nature of masochism. Researching this gap in knowledge as I have in this thesis, has proven a project worthy of psychoanalytic enquiry. To further my study, to design, structure and guide this thesis, I have created a research hypothesis (H1) that,

**Masochism, as exemplified by BDSM practices, is a manifestation of the search for, and the repetition of, a form of the ‘maternal-infant container-contained’ experience as postulated by Wilfred Bion (1962).**

The aim of this thesis is to explore,

- Whether psychoanalysis is of explanatory value in the study of BDSM, and
- Whether a relationship between container-contained and masochism as exemplified in modern day practices of BDSM can be shown.

## **B. THESIS STRUCTURE**

I have divided this thesis into two sections:

Section 1. Psychoanalytic Concepts: Detailed expositions of Freud’s work on masochism and Bion’s work on containment theory.

Section 2. Empirical study: Detailed literature review, study design, methodology, data analysis and study findings.

**Thesis Section 1: Psychoanalytic Concepts: Chapters 2 to 6**

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I show that Freud's work on masochism followed two separate lines of enquiry, from which two different theoretical strands emerged:

- The economic model of the instincts.
- The discovery of unconscious libidinalised beating phantasies.

It can be said that the first strand concerns physiology while the second strand concerns subjective experience; or it could be said that one strand is quantitative whilst the other is qualitative; or that one strand is drive theory whilst the other is object-relating.

In Chapter 2, I focus on a series of original texts by Freud. I describe Freud's economic model of the form and function of instincts, with particular reference to masochism. I describe economic theory in relation to masochism, where I look at instinct structure, function and instinct vicissitudes. I describe how Freud struggled with 'fitting' the concept of masochism into his theory of the pleasure principle, and I outline Freud's attempts to solve the 'problem' of masochism by developing ideas around the 'compulsion to repeat' and the 'death instinct'. Ultimately, the death instinct would revolutionise Freud's view of masochism, or, as I argue, masochism revolutionised Freud's view of the instincts.

Chapter 2 falls naturally into two parts, with the first part describing Freud's early development of instinct theory and instinct nomenclature, and the second part focusing on his later developments and new theory of instinct nomenclature.

In Chapter 2, Part 1. I focus on his work prior to his seminal paper 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. I begin by presenting a review and analysis of three of Freud's papers on instinct theory: Essay I and Essay II of 'Three Essays on Sexuality' (1905); 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911); 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915). I show how Freud applied his understanding of physiology to the psychic apparatus and its governing principles to develop an economic theory of instincts, and I show how the flow of psychic, or biophysiological energy, functions according to the 'pleasure principle-reality principle' mechanism. For Freud the pleasure principle provided a valid model for psychic governance and he continued to develop instinct theory on that basis. However, eventually Freud had to question this simplistic view of psychic regulation because, significantly for my thesis, the pleasure principle could not account for the masochistic pleasure in pain. I examine other aspects of Freud's hypotheses such as libidinalisation of the erotogenic zones, and instinct mutabilities showing how they relate to instinct perversion in general, and masochism specifically. Freud classified masochism as a deviation 'of sexual aim' which includes 'overvaluation of the sexual object'. Overvaluation of the object manifests in BDSM as my thesis will later show. Typically, this takes the form of lauding the beauty and power of the Dominatrix but also supports my finding that genital sex is generally absent from BDSM activities. This fits Freud's notion of the desired but forbidden object and it fits his theory that masochism is pre-genital.

In Chapter 2, Part 2. I address the challenges to Freud's economic theory, in particular challenges to the pleasure principle and I present Freud's later developments as he attempted to solve these challenges. I discuss two papers:



'The Uncanny' (1919b) the focus of which is the compulsion to repeat, and 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) which culminates in the theory of the death instinct. As a consequence of death instinct theory, Freud formulated his final instinct nomenclature which had profound implications for the theory of masochism.

In Chapter 3, I temporarily put aside Freud's economic theory to discuss unconscious libidinalised beating phantasies in his paper 'A Child is Being Beaten' (Freud 1919a). This paper shows a startling shift in Freud's theory as he moves towards a quasi-object-relating view of masochism and its relationship to the Oedipus complex. The same stance is taken by his daughter, Anna Freud, in her own paper on the same subject (Freud, A. 1919) which I also discuss. The Freuds' enquiries into beating phantasies are a crucial part of my own thesis on the enactment of erotic beating phantasies in BDSM. Of particular importance to my thesis is Anna Freud's recognition and exposition of a generalised 'superstructure' to such phantasies.

In Chapter 4, I return to Freud's on-going elaboration of instinct theory and masochism to describe Freud's economic solutions to the puzzles presented by masochism. I will show how Freud finally accounted for the various phenomena associated with masochism. First, he reformulated the structure of the mind, identifying a new intrapsychic agency with punitive characteristics, the superego, and secondly he reformulated the governing principles of psychic functioning to give priority to the Nirvana principle over the pleasure principle. With a new instinct duality, a new model of the mind, and a new understanding of psychic governance, Freud could then identify and account for three separate forms of

masochism. Two of those forms, erotogenic masochism and feminine masochism manifest in BDSM as I will show as my thesis unfolds. I will also note the contrast between Freud's own focus on the capacity of the skin to become the site of sexual arousal (erotogenicity) and the skin's responsiveness to sexual stimulation (erotogeneity), and later object related views of the skin as a physical experience of psychic containment (Bick 1968, Anzieu 1985).

In Chapter 5, I present an exposition of Bion's object-related model of container-contained.

In Chapter 5, Part 1. I describe the evolution of psychoanalytic thinking around the concepts of projection and introjection of objects. I describe Klein's theory of excessive projective identification (PI(e)), a psychic process through which ego contents, along with part of the ego itself, are split off and projected into an object. In

In Chapter 5, Part 2. I describe Bion's crucial discovery of a normal form of projective identification (PI(n)), which enabled him to formulate a model of maternal-infant communication termed container-contained. It is Bion's model of container-contained, that I apply to the phenomenon of BDSM to test my thesis H1 that containment theory can provide a viable account for the phenomena of masochism.

In Chapter 6, I present a review of the relevant psychoanalytic literature. Having established a detailed exposition of the two thesis concepts, a detailed review of psychoanalytic literature sought to establish how the two concepts, masochism

and containment, have been considered in relation to each other. I describe the search process and show the general paucity of objected-related literature on masochism. No literature was found that directly related masochism to the container-contained model. However, careful reading identified a slim thread where a link could be discerned between the two concepts.

In Chapter 6: Part 1, I present three clinical papers from the classically oriented schools of psychoanalysis: Brothers (1997), the only paper that discusses a case of BDSM, Saketopoulou (2014), and Antinucci (2016).

In Chapter 6: Part 2, I present four papers from the object-relations school of psychoanalysis: Heimann (1955), Joseph, (1971 [1969]), Rosenfeld (1988) and Abel-Hirsch (2006). The outcome of the literature review established 'a gap in knowledge' reflective of the thesis H1.

## **Thesis Section 2. Empirical Study: Chapter 7, 8, and 9**

Study Design and Methodology. Data Analysis and Study Outcomes

In this, the second section of my thesis, I show how I designed an empirical study through which to look for evidence in support of my research H1.

In Chapter 7: Part 1, I describe the methodological design of my study. I describe the necessity and the process of operationalising concepts for research purposes. I describe and show a specific example (masochism) of the pitfalls of operationalisation if this is not done correctly. I provide examples of

psychoanalytically based research projects that utilised the operationalisation process: Hinshelwood (2008), Steggle (2015), Staminova (2013), Sanfuentes (2008) who operationalised Bion's concept of minus K (-K), Mendes (2012), who operationalised Bion's containment model for researching organisations, and Briggs (1997) who operationalised Bion's commensal relationship to build an assessment device for assessing the infant at risk.

In Chapter 7: Part 2, I show my own operationalisation of Bion's container-contained model for the purposes of data analysis. I describe the process of operationalising the sexualised masochism of BDSM for the purposes of subject selection by scrutinising the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM V, 2013) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10, 2014). I reiterate Freud's differentiation between pathological and non-pathological masochism.

My novel and original view of BDSM is reliant on differentiating between forms of masochism in the same way that Freud did. I have come to think that Freud's differentiation of forms of masochism has largely fallen off the psychoanalytic radar and this has contributed to the lack of interest in BDSM. For Freud only one form of the three he differentiated could be deemed pathological and that is moral masochism. I will show there is no evidence to support the presence of moral masochism in BDSM.

In Chapter 8. I present my data and data analysis. Some of my thesis data is graphic describing scenes of intense BDSM, some data may be found disturbing. My data is derived from scrutinising two documentaries on BDSM: Nick Broomfield's 'Fetishes' (2005) and Robin Franzi's 'Susan for Now' (2007).

In Chapter 8: Part 1, I give three detailed examples from 'Fetishes' filmed at Pandora's Box (Manhattan. N.Y). I apply the operationalised device as an assessment tool to the material to demonstrate the presence of elements of the container-contained process in BDSM scenarios.

In Chapter 8: Part 2, I show further material from Pandora's Box supplemented by material from 'Susan for Now' to illustrate aspects of the containment process in BDSM. I conclude that the thesis H1 - that masochism is a manifestation of a primitive form of the 'maternal-infant container-contained' experience - can be supported.

In Chapter 9, my discussion chapter, I show the limitations of Freud's economic theorising on the paradox of masochism; I show the explanatory power of object-relations theory to the paradox of masochism; and I show that a reliable tool can be designed to assess the presence of the components of Bion's container-contained model in BDSM derived data. I discuss my thesis findings, that non-pathological masochism, those forms Freud referred to as 'erotogenic' and 'feminine', are the types of masochism associated with BDSM, and that the BDSM scenario is an enactment of a search for a primitive containing experience of the type described by Bion. I discuss my thesis shortcomings and I put forward suggestions for further research based on these findings.

## **Chapter 2. Freud on Masochism. An Economic Model**

### Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, one of my aims is to show how Freud's problem with masochism was primarily a problem with an economic model of the instincts. Ernst von Brücke, Freud's teacher at the University of Vienna, postulated that all organisms are energy systems functioning under the principle of energy conservation or energy efficiency . Put simply, an economic model, as applied to an organism, is a model to which the basic laws of physics - and energy systems apply . In this chapter, I am going to describe Freud's economic model, and how he used it to develop a model of the form and function of instincts with particular reference to masochism.

In particular, I describe three aspects of Freud's theory:

- The history of Freud's economic theory of the instincts in relation to masochism. In particular, I look at instinct structure, function and instinct vicissitudes.
- How Freud struggled with the concept of masochism; with particular reference to the pleasure principle.
- Freud's attempts to solve the 'problem' of masochism by developing ideas around the 'compulsion to repeat' and the 'death instinct'.

I aim to demonstrate two points:

- That Freud's 'problem' with masochism was a problem with economic theory.
- That Freud's work on masochism is relevant for understanding my data.

This chapter falls naturally into two parts: divided by the date 1920, when Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' was published. Of the paper Strachey says, in the series of Freud's metapsychology papers it 'may be regarded as introducing the final phase of his views' (Strachey's, 1957, Introduction p. 5). This paper also marked the last great shift in economic theory, it was a profound shift, as Freud introduced the remarkable concept of a primary death instinct. In each part of the chapter, I will focus in detail on a selection of Freud's original texts to help unpick his thinking on masochism. Part 1 outlines Freud's economic theory and Part 2 outlines the challenges to economic theory. Later in Chapter 4, I will show how Freud solved the economic problem of masochism.

Part 1: An Economic Theory of Instinct Function: Pre-'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (Freud 1905, 1911, 1915).

Part 2: An Economic Problem: Challenges to the Pleasure Principle and a new Instinct Duality (Freud 1919b, 1920).

## **Part 1. An Economic Theory of Instinct Function: Pre-‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’.**

### Introduction

I will review and analyse three of Freud’s papers on instinct theory. In order of publication, these are:

- ‘Three Essays on Sexuality’ (1905).
- ‘Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning’ (1911).
- ‘Instincts and their Vicissitudes’ (1915).

I will then show how Freud applied his understanding of physiology to the psychic apparatus . I review Freud’s original texts and include the knowledge that Freud and his contemporaries had theorised, despite not yet being scientifically demonstrable. For example, I begin by explaining ‘cellular membrane action potential’ and the propagation of bioelectrical impulses along nerve axons. I show that a basic understanding of such physiological processes helps to bring clarity and understanding to Freud’s development of instinct theory. I will also comment on points that are directly applicable to aspects of my thesis.



## Physiology

### a) Nerve Cell Function

Science eventually confirmed what Freud and his colleagues had long understood: that neurones, or nerve cells, utilise energy to produce bioelectrical impulses. The nature of this biophysiological process works via the movement of charged particles or ions across the cell membrane and along the nerve cell axon thereby propagating a nerve impulse (Kalat 2015). Such impulses innervate other neurones and somatic components of the organism including the musculature when they synapse. This contact of one cell with another releases chemical messengers thereby providing 'communication' between cells. Although the exact nature of this was not known in Freud's time it was understood. Freud's economic theory of instinct function lies in these processes. I will argue that instinct structure and function is analogous to nerve cell structure and function.

### b) Instinct Structure

Freud thought of instincts as a series of components (or 'component instincts'), which, as maturation progressed, slowly merged into a coherent whole to form two great instinct groups. In Freud's 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (Freud 1915) he called these:

1. Ego instincts: the component instincts are to protect the survival of the self / ego.

2. Sex instincts: the components instincts are to protect the survival of the species.

This division was a working hypothesis, to be retained only if useful (Freud 1915, p.124). He went on to reinterpret the functional characteristics assigned to each group but maintained the idea of an instinctual duality . Crucially, Freud's third and final nomenclature, presented in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (Freud 1920), came with the formulation of the 'death instinct'. This would revolutionise Freud's view of masochism, or, as I argue, masochism revolutionised Freud's view of the instincts. I describe his later developments in Part 2.

It is argued that Strachey's mistranslation of Freud's word *Trieb* to instinct rather than drive, which is closer to what Freud intended, is at times, unhelpful. I am going to use an analogy to aid the understanding of instinct structure and function which is compatible with what Freud intended. In describing instinct structure, I find it helpful to think of the copper core of a domestic cable, made up of many fibres – think of each one of these fibres as a component that makes up an instinct. The exposed end of the cable shows the fibres firmly twisted together in order to be threaded into the terminal pin enabling access to the power source. In Freud's description of instinct structure, the terminus is the point of innervation for the flow of instinctual energy. This is where we see cell-to-cell 'synapse'. An instinct function is a flow of energy along a cable, a wire, a nerve axon. This analogy with household electricity fits Freud's idea of flows of charged particles carrying biophysical energy .

Retaining this analogy, Freud's ideas of the vicissitudes (or mutabilities) of the instincts can be more easily understood. Although the wires have been twisted together, individual copper strands may be loose, sticking out at angles, crooked or folded backwards, some broken and perhaps shortened. All the fibres may not have become fused into one cohesive cable through which energy can flow.

Some components, like those that form the sex instincts, are highly libidinalised – suffused with sexual energy. The libidinalisation of instinct components was central to Freud's psychoanalytic theory. He used it to explain much of both normal and problematic manifestations of instinct function, including masochism. I will return to this later when I describe Freud's idea of instinct fusion and defusion, particularly in relation to solving the 'problem' of masochism (Chapter 4).

So, Freud imagined instincts as flows of energy (or energised drives), that are susceptible to fluctuations, vicissitudes and mutabilities. Furthermore, they are governed by economic principles, and are responsible for 'perversions' such as masochism.

c) Two Governing Principles of Mental Functioning: The 'Pleasure' Principle and the 'Reality' Principle

In 1911, Freud wrote 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' in which he argued that the psyche is subject to two regulatory mechanisms: the 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle'. The pleasure principle oversees the early developing 'primary process' which strives to gain satisfaction or pleasure

(Freud 1911, p.219). As development progresses and the senses turn increasingly outwards, the reality principle develops. This is a secondary process and acts as a counterbalance to the demands of the pleasure principle; the reality principle can override the pleasure principle when necessary, thereby ensuring survival.

Taking an economic perspective, these mechanisms regulate the flow of psychic or biophysiological energy. Unpleasurable feelings are due to an increase in energy in response to incoming stimuli (e.g., hunger). The satisfaction of those stimuli, the meeting of a need (e.g. being fed), leads to a decrease in energy level. The consequent fall in energy is experienced as pleasure. This is the pleasure principle (Freud 1911, pp.223-224).

To the most part, the concept of the 'pleasure principle-reality principle' mechanism was 'fit for purpose'. It continued to be seen as a valid model and Freud continued to develop instinct theory on that basis (Strachey's footnote, p. 220). However, eventually Freud had to question this simplistic view of the psychic regulation of instincts, because, significantly for this thesis, it couldn't account for pleasure in pain. Although it wasn't the only phenomenon to challenge the dominance of the pleasure principle, masochism led Freud to a significant reworking of his instinct theory, particularly the instinct duality which he dealt with in 1920. However, it was not so much the instincts themselves, but the governing principles of psychic functioning, specifically the pleasure principle, that gave Freud a 'problem' with masochism. This he solved in 1924, as I will show in Chapter 4.

#### d) Instincts and Vicissitudes

I will now elaborate further upon how Freud utilised his anatomical knowledge of nerve structure, neuronal tracts and axonal fibres to create a model of instinct functioning in 1915.

Freud's instinct theory came to fruition in his metapsychology paper 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915). This paper, explaining the structure and function of instincts and the nature of their duality, is as detailed as it is difficult to unravel. I am going to provide an exposition of it as I feel that understanding the basic principles of neurophysiology will assist in understanding instinct theory. I will show how this insight also informs Freud's earlier work on sexuality, explains instinct 'perversion' (to which masochism had been consigned in 1905), and shows how Freud's subsequent theory developed and changed.

I will examine five aspects of Freud's hypothesis and show how each relates to instinct perversion in general and masochism specifically:

- d(i). Instinct Function
- d(ii). Erotogenic Zones
- d(iii). Instinct Libinalisation
- d(iv). Instinct Mutabilities
- d(v). Instinct Vicissitudes: Masochism

- 

#### d (i) Instinct Function

In 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915, pp.122-123), Freud described instinct functioning as requiring:

- *Drang* - or pressure. An amount of energy. Every instinct is a piece of activity, a demand for work.
- *Zeil* - a goal which is always to gain satisfaction or relief from anxiety (pleasure).
- *Objekt* - an object which the instinct acts upon, or through, in order to achieve satisfaction.
- *Quelle* - a source. The somatic (bodily) process providing the stimulus.

*Drang and Zeil:* To understand these, I find the term drive, from Freud's classical theory, helpful. This in that *Drang* suggests a demand for work, the drive toward an objective, and *Zeil* is the goal, a desired outcome. My interpretation is that whilst *Drang* is concerned with energy propagation, *Zeil* is the pleasure principle that governs that energy propagation.

*Objekt:* For Freud, the immature instinctual components were not initially assigned to an object. The object is the most variable component of instinct activity, as it could be internal - within one's own psyche or parts of one's own

body - or external such as the breast or later an object of mature sexual interest. What initial 'target' the instincts were aimed at was of less importance and was liable to change 'any number of times in the course of vicissitudes' (Freud 1915, p.123). What this model seems to lack is the idea that the object itself (whether internal or external) might be the source (Quelle) of stimulation. This is significantly different to object-relations theory where the direction towards an object is a relationship with a specific object.

My study suggests that for BDSMers, the Dominant-submissive relationship to and with the other is fundamental. I will argue that BDSM can be more successfully understood using an object-relations model than with an economic model; and furthermore, that the object has to fulfil a set of essential criteria. I will suggest that the use of the term 'object' may be better served by the term facilitator or facilitating object. I pursue this further in Chapter 5 when discussing object-relating in the maternal-infant relationship; and again, in Chapter 8, where I show the Dominant as a stereotypical figure.

*Quelle*: Freud's idea of Quelle - that stimulation is somatic - is somewhat confusing. This suggests that the instinct is stimulated by internal processes only. However, the human mind and body, as Freud recognised, are continually bombarded by external stimulation - some of it unpleasant. It is most likely that, in this context, Freud's definition of Quelle was alluding to erotogenic zones or the somatic sources of sexual arousal. In other words, external stimulation could 'activate' the erotogenic zones and so bring a sexual response.

#### d (ii) Erotogenic Zones

To Freud, infantile sexual life was essentially auto-erotic, the focus of sexual interest being the child's own 'pre-determined' body parts and bodily functions. These give rise to the instinct's sexual components (Freud 1905 pp.168, 183).

...what constitutes an erotogenic zone...is a part of the skin or mucous membrane in which stimuli of a certain sort evoke a feeling of pleasure possessing a particular quality... (Freud 1905 p.183).

And

It is to the effect that excitations of two kinds arise from the somatic organs, based upon differences of a chemical nature . One of these kinds of excitation we describe as being specifically sexual, and we speak of the organ concerned as the 'erotogenic zone' of the sexual component instinct arising from it. (Freud 1915, p.168).

According to Freud, infantile instincts continue in growth and development through a set series of erotogenic organisations. Fundamental to psychoanalytic theory was Freud's view of sexual development as a phased process, an epigenesis, of unfolding organisations linked to somatic structures (1905) . Initially, the pre-genital organisations of the sex instincts focus on feeding behaviours, the oral phase, which then progresses to a focus on bowel activities, the anal phase. This is followed by the phallic phase when children become



interested in genital and gender differences. There is then, unique to humans, a latency period in which a slow maturity unfolds. Individual instinct components are independent of each other until their final fusion into a coherent whole, bringing the sex instincts under the primacy of the genital organisation (Freud 1905, p.197). Such a phased development means that the earlier sources of infantile sexuality remain throughout life, and a previous satisfaction experienced in response to an erotogenic input is liable to persist.

The part played by the erotogenic zones is immediately obvious in the case of those perversions which assign a sexual significance to the oral and anal orifices... while in the case of those components of the sexual instinct which involve pain and cruelty, the same role is assumed by the skin - the skin, which in particular parts of the body has become differentiated into sense organs or modified... and is thus the erotogenic zone par excellence (Freud 1905, p.169).

Freud does not fully explain why he assigns the instincts for pain and cruelty to the skin (Freud 1905, p.169). Given that the skin is perceptive to both pleasure and unpleasure, he seems to suggest that this is because erotisation of the skin precedes the erotisation of the other zones. What he does make clear is that sexual instinct components arise from the erotogenic zones. And further, that oral and anal zones are in possession of the sexual instinct function which then 'moves' to the genital organisation when that developmental phase becomes established (Freud 1905, p.169). Prior to that, the pre-genital erotogenic zones are 'subordinate to' and 'substitutes for' the genital erotogenic zones.

I will explore this further when I present Freud's idea that perversion, specifically masochism, is a 'deviation in respect of the sexual aim' (Freud 1905, pp.149-160). Of significance here is that my data sets show genital-genital contact as being very uncommon in BDSM activities. This supports Freud's developmental theory that masochistic activities 'originate' in the pre-genital organisations.

Freud explains his initial view of sadism and masochism as part of his theory of component instinct fixation (Essay 1, 1905), although it underwent modification in 1920 when he reconsidered the genesis of masochism.

Freud's view of the skin as the 'erotogenic zone par excellence' is also supported by my research. He said the 'whole cutaneous surface' shows a special intensification and susceptibility to erotogenic stimuli (Essay II, 1905, p.201). I will show later (Chapter 3) that Freud and his daughter used this same view of the instincts to discuss the phenomenon of erotogenic beating phantasies (1919, 1923 respectively). Although Freud went on to differentiate between 'types' of masochism he always maintained that erotogenic masochism, arising from the erogenous zones, underlies all other forms of masochism ('feminine' and 'moral' masochism) (Freud 1924). My data analysis will show that the role of the skin in pleasure from pain (through caning, whipping, rhythmic flogging etc.) is a prominent if not mandatory feature of BDSM activities . Missing from Freud's views on the skin are object related views like that of Bick and the skin as a container (1968) and Anzieu's notion of the skin as a psychic envelope (1985). BDSM also shows the centrality of the skin in erotism as I have stated just above in the caning, paddling, whipping and so on. But I have also noted in the material gleaned from the Leather family (Ch 1) that object related views of the skin as a

containing experience like those of Bick and Anzieu can extend and augment Freud's view. I will expand upon this in chapter 4 when I show Freud's further discussion of the skin as a sense organ (1923) and in Chapter 6, my literature review and in my data presentation, Chapter 8.

#### d (iii) Sex Instincts; Instinct Libidinalisation

Freud saw the components of the sex instincts as numerous and arising from a great variety of somatic sources not least of which are the erotogenic zones.

Imagine again the copper component fibres of one of the domestic electricity cables, say the red one - the 'live wire'. In the early stages of development, component instincts are polymorphous, not yet fused into one group of either ego-instincts or sex-instincts. Only later when achieving synthesis (when all the relevant copper strands intertwine) do the sex-instincts enter the service of the reproductive system and become recognisable as sex-instincts (and can be threaded into the 'live-pin').

Prior to this final synthesis and their emergence as mature sex-instincts, it is helpful to refer to the immature sexual components as elements of the libido (individual copper strands). The sex-instinct components are present from the beginning and therefore, so is the libido (sexual components = libidinal components). This means that whatever instinctual interest the object, or the self, attracts, that interest will potentially be libidinalised. Freud reminds his readers that although he is only claiming these vicissitudes in relation to the sex-instincts, a portion of the libidinal instincts would always remain attached to the

ego instincts (Freud 1915 p.126) . This is the reason why the ego-instincts always have their own libidinal components and why the sex-instincts appear to participate in functions far removed from their original purposes, that is, they are subject to many vicissitudes (Freud 1915, p.126) .

In this way, Freud explained how something apparently obscure and seemingly unrelated to sexuality such as a fetish object, could become, and then remain, libidinalised. He maintained this view, especially in his final theory on moral masochism where he stated that ‘even the subject’s destruction of himself cannot take place without libidinal satisfaction’ (Freud 1924 p.170).

#### d (iv) Instinct Mutabilities

Having described the nature and structure of Freud’s view of instinct function, and libido theory, it can be appreciated that he related changes in erotogenic zoning and innervation to psychopathology. For instance, he suggested that psychoneurosis occurs as a consequence of an expansion in Quelle (the somatic source of a stimulus). Such an expansion creates new sexual aims (Freud 1905 p.169). Likewise, some unbound component instincts, not initially assigned to an object, could deviate from their intended course. (‘Instincts and their Vicissitudes’ 1915, pp.122-123). Components that are not yet integrated into a coherent group, nor directed at a given object, make the system highly plastic or, as Freud said, inherently ‘polymorphously perverse’. This early state provides the potential for things to go awry, deviating from what should have been the intended final goal. Only when fused do the instincts follow their preordained destination. In the case of the domestic copper flex, the normal destination of the red wire

components is the live pin. In the case of the sex instincts, the destination is genital maturity.

In the early stages of development, sometimes things do go wrong. Unintegrated components are open to mutabilities. Wires that shouldn't be in contact become so, and/or copper strands that should be intertwined are left out. Individual wires impinge upon one another. Each of these scenarios, perverting instinct structure and thus function, provide the opportunity for 'fixation' to arise, instinct components become 'stuck' (Freud 1915, p.122).

Fixation could be upon a (sometimes inappropriate) object, or to a traumatic point in development. It is as if a component of the developing instinct or a strand of the copper wire has become prematurely 'snagged' or stilted. Fixation, implying a resistance to detachment (Freud 1915, p.123), puts an end to any further mobility of that component. This directly relates to phenomena such as somatic erotisation and perversions such as masochism (Freud 1915, p.122).

#### d (v) Instinct Vicissitudes and Masochism

Having provided an exposition of instinct structure and function, I will now present something of Freud's earlier work on sexual deviation and perversion. For the purpose of my thesis the focus is on masochism.

In 1905, Freud published 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (S.E., VII, pp.135-243). In Essay I, 'The Sexual Abberations' (pp.135-172), Freud classified sexual perversion as either a deviation 'in relation to sexual object' (pp.136-149)

or a deviation 'of sexual aim' (pp.149-160). It is the deviation of the sexual aim which concerns BDSM.

Freud identified two aspects of 'deviation in respect of the sexual aim' thus:

A. Anatomical extension: sexual activities that 'anatomically extend' the body regions beyond those designed for copulation, such as:

- use of the mouth and anus as genitals,
  
- fetishism,
  
- overvaluation of the sexual object.

Or

B. Fixation of preliminary activities: lingering over activities normally preliminary to copulation, such as:

- touching and looking,
  
- sadism and masochism.

Of these, I will discuss 'sadism and masochism' (fixation of preliminary activities) which is my thesis topic, and I will discuss the 'overvaluation of the sexual object' (anatomical extension). Overvaluation is a feature of what Freud would later refer

to as feminine masochism (Freud 1924), and, as I have indicated and will further show, it is a characteristic feature of the Dominant-submissive relationship.

*Overvaluation of the sexual object*

Strachey's footnote to Essay 1 (p.158) tells us that the following statement appeared in the 1905 and 1910 texts but was subsequently omitted:

One at least of the roots of masochism can be inferred with equal certainty.

It arises from sexual overvaluation as a necessary psychological consequence of the choice of sexual object (Freud 1905, p.158).

In this quote, Freud was combining A (anatomical extension) and B (masochism). The quote appears to infer that the object is chosen (by the masochist) because it has the virtue of being overvalued. Whether Freud omitted this by intention or oversight, the theory lends itself both to Freud's later thesis on masochism, and to my own thesis, on BDSM.

As indicated above, the overvaluation of the sexual object is a characteristic feature of Dominant-submissive relationships, and my data sets provide numerous examples. The lauding of the Domme's beauty and powers can be taken to the point of object worship. An example in data set 1 (Pandora's Box), shows Mistress Raven seated in her throne-like chair smoking a cigarette. She uses the mouth of a male submissive as an ashtray. When asked why he participates in such activities, the submissive says (when granted permission to speak) it is because 'of the superiority of the female' (Appendix I, Chapter 2,

Scene 4). I suggest that such debasement may be adopted in order to overvalue the object in relation to the self-ego. Such behaviour could also be said to show anatomical extension, i.e., the use of the mouth as a means of introjecting part of the object. Such considerations form some of the content of my data interpretation (Chapter 8) and thesis discussion (Chapter 9).

In 1910, Freud added a footnote to Essay 1 remarking on the 'credulous' submission to the 'overvalued' authority of the object saying:

In this connection I cannot help recalling the credulous submissiveness shown by a hypnotized subject towards his hypnotist. This leads me to suspect that the essence of hypnosis lies in an unconscious fixation of the subject's libido to the figure of the hypnotist, through the medium of the masochistic components of the sexual instinct (my emphasis) (S.E., VII, p.150).

And then much later, in his discussion of 'Group Psychology' (1921 pp.69-134), Freud (quoting Le Bon 1895, p.34) notes that an individual immersed in group action finds himself in a magnetic state resembling fascination. Similarly, a hypnotised subject finds himself in the hands of the hypnotist wherein the conscious personality has entirely vanished; will and discernment are lost. 'All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotist' (Freud 1921, p.76). I draw attention to Freud's references to hypnotism because his observations find a parallel in the BDSM Dominant-submissive relationship.



Freud is assigning the masochistic libidinalised components of the sex-instincts to object overvaluation. My own H1 will correlate masochistic component instincts with BDSM's submissiveness, and furthermore, it will correlate BDSM submissiveness with the psyche-psyche transfer of ego-functions. This forms part of my critique and discussion of the economic/instinct model. I will argue that although submissiveness may not be akin to masochism as Freud understood it, BDSM shows many features that Freud attributed to erotogenic and feminine forms of masochism, (in Chapter 4, I discuss Freud's differentiation of three different forms of masochism in 1924). My thesis will show that masochism can be interpreted very differently according to the interpretive tools, but its features and its presentation remain the same.

The transfer of ego-functions between submissive and Dominant could be said to parallel the 'unconscious libidinal fixation' and 'state of fascination' the subject has in relation to his hypnotist. Freud's statement from 'Group Psychology' (above) suggests some form of ego depletion, and, if looked at from an object-relations perspective, one could see a parallel with projective identification (the splitting and projection of the ego's contents). Ultimately, my research speculates that a parallel can be found between Freud's component instinct functions and Bion's version of projective identification which I describe in Chapter 5. I also want to draw attention to a further comment that Freud made on 'overvaluation of the object':

It is only in the rarest instances that the psychological valuation that is set on the sexual object, as being the goal of the sexual instinct, stops short at its genitals. The appreciation extends to the whole body of the sexual object and tends to

involve every sensation derived from it. The same overvaluation spreads over into the psychological sphere: the subject becomes, as it were, intellectually infatuated (that is, his powers of judgement are weakened) by the mental achievements and perfections of the sexual object and he submits to the latter's judgements with credulity. Thus the credulity of love becomes an important, if not the most fundamental, source of authority. (Freud 1905, p.150. Freud's emphasis).

The structure of this opening sentence is confusing: what is it that stops short of the genitals, and what is it that occurs only in the rarest instances? Does Freud mean stopping short at the genitals or 'not' stopping short of the genitals, and what does that mean? This could be interpreted as if the whole object is appreciated just as much as the genitals would normally be, or, that the whole object is appreciated without any recourse to the genital organs. Whilst such a subtle distinction may be no more than a confusion in the translation, I think the distinction is important. The idea of overvaluation indicates that appreciation normally given to the genitals, upon achievement of the genital phase of maturity, is given to the whole object. The genitals have not yet become the objective of the final libidinal phase of development and instead there is overvaluation in the pre-genital phase.

My research shows that, in BDSM, appreciation of the object extends to the whole of the object, just as Freud appears to be saying. However, are the genitals part of that whole object? In most cases, genital-genital contact does not occur in BDSM as I have said, satisfaction is not gained this way. I have followed Freud's H1 that this is because BDSM is a pre-genital manifestation of sexuality. However, this

doesn't conclude that the genitals are either present or absent from the object; so there still remains the question, in BDSM are the genitals 'out of bounds' or are they undifferentiated? I speculate that Freud would argue the former; I on the other hand, would argue the latter. Whichever the case we both agree that the whole object is 'overvalued'. I will argue that overvaluation of the sexual object characterises the BDSM relationship, but my interpretation of the term overvaluation is different. Freud sees it in terms of Oedipal desire, whilst I see it in terms of the transfer, from submissive to Dominant, of those ego-functions concerning mastery and autonomy, in the projective identification associated with the container-contained process.

As mentioned above, in explaining 'deviations of the sexual aim', Freud included a 'lingering over' of those activities that would normally be preliminary to copulation. If such lingering doesn't progress to copulation, then Freud deemed this to be an instinct fixation (Freud 1905, p.150). Such 'fixations of preliminary sexual aims', was where Freud placed sadism and masochism.

#### *Sadism and Masochism: Instinct Vicissitudes and Oscillations*

I am not going to pay any more attention to sadism than is necessary given that my thesis topic is masochism. However, sadism cannot be ignored because Freud saw sadism and masochism as active and passive manifestations, 'a reversal' of the same sadistic component instincts (Freud 1905, p.157).

According to Freud, aggression of the sex instincts is considered 'normal', in that its purpose is to overcome and subjugate the sexual object for the purposes of reproduction (p.157).

Whilst sadism connotes an active or violent attitude towards the object, there are cases where:

...satisfaction is entirely conditional on the humiliation and maltreatment of the object. Strictly speaking it is only this that deserves to be called a perversion. (Freud 1905, p.158).

Humiliation appears to be a characteristic, though not mandatory, feature of BDSM. However, that which appears to be humiliating is something required by the submissive subject, rather than being something inflicted upon the subject. Similarly, the term masochism encompasses any passive attitude towards sex and the sexual object. Only extremes, when 'satisfaction is conditional upon suffering physical or mental pain at the hands of the sexual object' (Freud 1905 p.158), deserves to be called a perversion. Again, this is a feature of BDSM. If defined in these terms, sadism and masochism are the same thing: sadism by the object is invited by the self upon the self which is masochistic.

### *Sadism*

Sadism is a consequence of the aggressive components of the sex instincts becoming independent, or, perhaps more in keeping true to Freud's model of 1915, they have remained independent (Freud 1915, p.158). As I have shown

above, in 1915 Freud described normal instinct development as a process whereby all the component instincts merge to become one whole fused instinct. Those components that escape fusion remain independent and are liable to mutabilities such as fixation.

Freud described these corrupt component instincts as being 'exaggerated'. This seems to suggest a lack of influence, control or direction. The 'normal' binding of the sexual components under genital primacy confers influence, direction and control. However, if they are not bound, they can bring about influences that are independent of the main body of sex instincts. Freud describes these 'wild' components as 'usurping the leading position'. This again infers they are not 'aimed' at what should be their final goal (an appropriate sex object) but are still operating at the oral or anal-sadistic stages (Freud 1905, p.158).

I am now going to describe Freud's early theories and observations relating to masochism. However, it must be kept in mind, that the whole of instinct theory underwent a tumultuous change in 1920 profoundly altering Freud's views on masochism which I describe in Part 2.

### *Masochism*

Freud saw masochism as a perversion even further removed from the normal sexual impulses than sadism, though he was to change this in 1920. This is most likely because he saw masochism as a transformation of the sadistic components. That is, masochism can often be shown to be 'nothing more than an extension of sadism turned round upon the subject's own self': the self therefore becomes the

sex object, and the self becomes the object of interest for those same sadistic components (Freud 1905, p.158) . As described above, this sees sadism and masochism as two sides of the same coin. In BDSM, sadism and masochism are facilitated by a relationship with an object.

Freud's clinical observations suggested that 'extreme cases of masochistic perversion show that a great number of factors... combine to exaggerate and fixate the original passive sexual attitude' (Freud 1905, p.158). What he calls an 'original passive attitude' isn't clear, but perhaps the inference is that if a person already had masochistic tendencies then those tendencies could be compounded by factors such as the 'castration complex' and guilt. He does not say anything of guilt being associated with the Oedipus complex here, but I am going to assume that to be the most likely case. He did expand on the idea of Oedipal guilt later in his 1919 paper 'A Child is Being Beaten', and he elaborated upon it in the 'The Ego and the Id' with the introduction of the superego (1923). Furthermore, he wrote in more detail about unconscious guilt associated with the Oedipus complex when he differentiated between the genesis of differing types of masochism (1924). These later developments are the subject of Chapter 4 below.

### *Sadism and Masochism: Instinct Oscillation*

I want to briefly discuss what Freud said of the active-passive aspects of the sadistic sexual components. As I argued above, there is a direct application of this to BDSM, even though my interpretation differs somewhat from Freud's. Freud's paper on beating phantasies (1919a) indicates that he had clinical exposure to BDSM-type phantasies and/or activities. Whether this exposure

occurred before the 1905 'Essays on Sexuality' is unknown. Early exposure would have informed early theory and perhaps this is the reason why Freud, and Krafft-Ebing before him (1896), saw that both sadism and masochism tended to manifest in the same person (Freud 1905, pp.159-160):

The most remarkable feature of this perversion is that its active and passive forms are habitually found to occur together in the same individual. A person who feels pleasure in producing pain within sexual relationships is also capable of enjoying pain as pleasure in sexual relations. A sadist is always at the same time a masochist, although the active or the passive aspect of the perversion may be more strongly developed in him and may represent his predominant sexual activity (Freud 1905, p.159).

I am going to describe this active-passive vicissitude as an 'oscillation'. Like Freud's observations, my own observations show that many BDSM participants claim to 'switch' or 'to be a switch'. They are happy to pursue either the submissive or the Dominant roles with equal interest. It is also clear from my research that some BDSM participants began their 'BDSM life' taking one role and then changed their preference to the other. Some alter their role depending on the specific object - the 'who' they are playing with at a given time (Data Set 2, Chapter 4, subject Jerry). There appears to be some fluidity to BDSM sexuality, a fluidity that is dependent upon the relationship with the object. I suggest this fluidity corresponds to Freud's vicissitudes: sometimes the object is other, sometimes the object is self. This may well reflect what I describe as 'lability' in the structure of beating phantasies, something Freud found difficult to unravel as I shall show in Chapter 3.

My own thesis argues that there is another interpretation of sadism and masochism. I challenge the idea of sadism and masochism being 'opposites' in the Freudian sense, even though both views can be said to target an object even if the object is the self. I will also argue that there is indeed movement between two 'opposites' but that this is not movement of instinctual energy. There is oscillation, not of instinct vicissitudes, but of inter-psychic projection and introjection. Not instincts looking for satisfaction, but rather two interacting objects partaking in a fluid psyche-psyche communication.

Freud's notions of instincts directing their search for satisfaction at an external object, or turning the instinct around upon the self, mixes two concepts: instinct oscillation and object-relating. If it is true that satisfaction of the instinct can be equally assured by either an other object, or a self-object, then it can be argued that instinct theory facilitates object-relating. This is where classical psychoanalytic theory can be said to 'meet' object-relating theory. It can be argued that it is also where Freud 'stopped short', missing an early opportunity to consider object-relating. The two are clearly not incompatible.

As satisfactory as Freud found his instinct theory and as extensively thought out it was, as time passed, he became particularly unsure of one aspect of instinct function and that was masochism.

In 1924, Freud added two footnotes to the 1905 paper:



My opinion of masochism has to a large extent altered by later reflection based on certain hypotheses as to the structure of the apparatus of the mind and the classes of instincts operating in it. (S.E.,VII p.158).

And that further enquiry,

...has led me to assign a peculiar position, based on the origin of the instincts, to the pair of opposites constituted by sadism and masochism, and to place them outside the class of the remaining perversions. (S.E.,VII, p.159).

That is, despite all his hypotheses regarding instinct behaviour, despite his convincing, scientific and seemingly logical, economic model there was a sticking point: the pleasure principle. Masochism, as a consequence of instinct perversion, could be explained by developmental libidinalisation of the erogenous zones; as could 'pleasure from pain' to some extent. However, the economic properties of the governing principles of psychic function could not, and furthermore neither could the repetitious nature of unpleasurable experiences.

In Part 2 of this chapter, I will present Freud's later developments as he began to try to solve the economic problem created by the phenomenon of masochism. He not only changed his views on the governing principles of psychic functioning, but in the process he would redefine instinct nomenclature.

## **Part 2. An Economic Problem: Challenges to the Pleasure Principle**

### Introduction

I have described Freud's economic model and how he initially used it to 'account for' masochism, and I noted that in his on-going developments, this was to change. In 1911, Freud had postulated that the pleasure principle was balanced by the reality principle, meaning that any threats to survival would bring the self-preserving function of the ego-instincts into dominance. He acknowledged that this could not be an absolute because there are multitudinous occasions when individual instincts or instinct components are incompatible. Although Freud didn't consider this as having any far-reaching limitations of the pleasure principle (Freud 1920, pp.10-11), there were new challenges to the pleasure principle: forces or circumstances 'beyond the reach of' the pleasure principle. Or, as I argue, closer to what Freud meant and easier to understand, there is something that occurs before the development of the pleasure principle (Freud 1920, p.11). There is something very different at play and, as I show, this was recognition of the 'compulsion to repeat'. Freud was to put the basic tenets of psychic governance under new and intense scrutiny, and in the process, he formulated a new instinctual nomenclature based on the hypothesis of a primary death instinct.

In this chapter, I explain what Freud meant by 'beyond the pleasure principle' and the influences that led to death instinct theory. My exegesis will show that masochism was one of those influences, and that conversely, changes to masochism theory was one of the outcomes. I will discuss two papers: 'The

Uncanny' (1919b), published just prior to 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', (although both written the same year), and 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' itself (1920).

In 'The Uncanny', Freud began examining what he called the 'compulsion to repeat' by describing it as something similar to a déjà vu experience. He intended to show instances where a compulsion to repeat is at work, where it is easily demonstrable, and where it is something familiar to psychoanalysis. These instances included Oedipal enactments (with their associated disappointments), and abreactive motivations, both operating according to the pleasure principle. However, Freud acknowledged that not everything can be explained by the pleasure principle, and he particularly noted traumatic dreams. Freud touched on the masochistic tendencies of the ego in relation to 'war neurosis', and ultimately he made a case for something of a repetitious nature which acts without recourse to the pleasure principle, he would introduce this as the death instinct theory.

In my analysis of BDSM material, I will support Freud's view that there is a re-enactment of something infantile, and that it brings pleasure though it is painful. However, my thesis argues for a different mechanism at work: a containing experience rather than the vicissitudes of the death instinct.

#### Compulsion to Repeat (A) 'The Uncanny' (1919b)

In her introduction to 'The Uncanny', Alix Strachey remarked that, although the first part of the essay was not easy to translate due to linguistic difficulties, the

paper should be persevered with because it is 'full of interesting and important material' (A. Strachey 1919b, p.218) . I agree with Strachey, it is indeed a strange and disjointed paper, but it is important because it indicates something of Freud's thoughts at the time when 'A Child is Being Beaten' was published (1919) and 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' had already been completed. Something had made Freud dig out an old paper, revise it and publish it as 'The Uncanny'. That 'something' was the growing importance of the 'compulsion to repeat' .

I think Freud's main point in this paper was that the compulsion to repeat is not associated with something new. Whilst a new experience is likely to provoke either fear or curiosity, 'the uncanny leads back to what is known, something old and long familiar' (Freud 1919b, p.220).

...it is possible to recognise the dominance in the unconscious mind of a 'compulsion to repeat' proceeding from the instinctual impulses and probably inherent in the very nature of the instincts - a compulsion powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle, lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character, and still very clearly expressed in the impulses of small children, a compulsion, too, which is responsible for a part of the course taken by the analyses of neurotic patients. All these considerations prepare us for the discovery that whatever reminds us of this inner 'compulsion to repeat' is perceived as uncanny (Freud 1919b, p.238).

In other words, something ancient, with an aim and a function, precedes and operates over the pleasure principle. Whatever this something is, Freud attributes

it to a return of the repressed, a compulsion to repeat which 'proceeds from repressed infantile complexes', i.e., from the castration complex, womb-phantasies and so on (Freud 1919b p.248).

Whilst Freud briefly stated that the compulsion to repeat was evidenced in children's play, and in 'the analyses of neurotic patients' he didn't elaborate on these until 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'.

In 1920, Freud would bring in something monumental to the understanding of the compulsion to repeat: he was to refine the concept by giving it the attributes of an instinct (Strachey's introduction to 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', p.5). Crucially, by conferring instinctual properties on the compulsion to repeat, he was also conferring economic principles. These two steps, recognising the compulsion to repeat as a return of the repressed, and by conferring economic principles upon it, Freud had begun to determine the existence of the death instinct. That is, the compulsion to repeat is evidence of something other than the reality principle that challenges the pleasure principle.

I will now describe some of Freud's major discussion points evidencing the compulsion to repeat in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. This expands upon the already alluded to children's play and the transference phenomenon, and ultimately, it introduces the death instinct.

## Compulsion to Repeat (B) 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920)

Here, I present an exposition of 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud's journey to the death instinct, and its ramifications for psychoanalytic theory in relation to masochism. In 1920, as he reconfigured instinct theory and its nomenclature, Freud not only found part of the answer to the puzzle of masochism, but also new questions. He would take up those new questions in 1923 and 1924 as I show in Chapter 4.

As I stated above, Freud had acknowledged that the dominance of the pleasure principle over the psychic system was not an absolute:

... universal experience completely contradicts any such conclusion. The most that can be said, therefore is that there exists in the mind a strong tendency towards the pleasure principle... that tendency is opposed by certain other forces or circumstances, so that the final outcome cannot always be in harmony with the tendency towards pleasure. (Freud, 1920 pp. 9-10, Freud's emphasis).

Throughout 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud went to great lengths to present a wealth of scientific evidence (including embryology, cell biology and evolutionary theory) to support his observations of a compulsion to repeat. For the purposes of this thesis, I shall focus on evidence that was psychoanalytic in nature and where the 'compulsion to repeat' characteristic is observable: dream theory, children's play and transference phenomena.

### (a) War Neurosis and Dream Function

It was, in part, the human toll of the Great War and the phenomenon of 'war neurosis' that led Freud to believe there was something 'beyond the pleasure principle'. Psychoanalysts were noticing that victims of war neurosis (as well as survivors of other disasters) often suffer a type of repetitive and traumatic dream. Characteristically such dreams take the person back to the situation and he wakes up in a similar state of fear (Freud 1920, p.13).

Until then, Freud had explained that the function of dreams was to fulfil wishes (in phantasy), but here for the first time, he stated that dreams are not always a wish fulfilment (Freud 1920, p.32). Whilst dreams as wish fulfilment and dreams leading to anxiety could still be explained by Freud's original dream theory, he and his colleagues saw traumatic dreams as a 'serious exception' (Strachey's introduction, p.5). Psychoanalysis had reached a place where Freud's dream theory, the bedrock of psychoanalysis, had to be reassessed, and the function of dreams reconsidered. That is, dreams returning the traumatised person, time and again, to the instance of the trauma operate without any recourse to the pleasure principle. No complete explanation could be offered. The possibility of fixation to the trauma was dismissed because, in their waking life, sufferers do all they can not to think about their trauma. The only conclusion was that the function of dreams had been upset and 'diverted from its purposes' (Freud 1920, p.13). In 1921, Freud added to this sentence 'or we may be driven to reflect on the mysterious masochistic trends of the ego' (Freud's footnote, p.14). It isn't clear why he added this thought, although I would speculate that he was already

on the track of his new structural model of the mind: the advent of the superego, and the notion of a masochistic ego / sadistic superego dialogue (Freud 1923).

b) Children at play: The Cotton Reel Game.

Leaving 'the dark dismal subject of the traumatic neurosis' (Freud 1920 p.14), Freud went on to look at normal mental processes at work, such as that in children's play.

Children at play are seen to repeat, over and over again, things that they experience and witness. Significantly, this includes the repetition of unpleasurable experiences (Freud 1920, p.17). As adults know, children enjoy the constant repetition of a game or story; any change to the exact wording is quickly corrected by the child (Freud 1920, p.35). This trait typically disappears with maturity; for instance, adults rarely re-read a book unless a great deal of time has passed. Whilst acknowledging that play is an activity in its own right, the repetitious nature of children's play led Freud to assign to it certain developmental functions. For example, Freud described the example of a toddler playing the cotton-reel game – fort da (gone/there). In the game, the cotton-reel is thrown into the cot and then retrieved. Freud related the disappearance and return of the cotton-reel to the child's experience of his mother leaving and then returning. Her return and the retrieval of the cotton-reel were both greeted with the same joyous verbal responses.

As the first part of the game, that concerning 'absence or loss' of the maternal figure was often repeated more than the total game (Freud 1920, p.18), Freud



maintained that repetition always involved ‘some portion of infantile sexual life’ and was easily aligned with Oedipal residues. Such repetition in the guise of a game, unpleasurable though it is, means the child takes an active part (Freud 1920, p.16). Each repetition brings the increased self-mastery and autonomy that children strive for as they mature . In play, there is development at work. In the cotton-reel example, the aim of the game is to re-work an over-powering experience in order to master it. That is, there is an abreactive quality, providing Freud with:

... convincing proof, that, even under the dominance of the pleasure principle, there are ways and means enough of making what is in itself unpleasurable into a subject to be recollected and worked over in the mind. (Freud 1920, p.17).

The motivation for the repetitive game concerns the return of the maternal figure, its origins are Oedipal. The unpleasurable first act of the game (loss) is a vehicle to bring about the pleasurable second act of the game (return) (Freud 1920, p.15). Freud’s focal point was the repetitive nature of the game and whether the compulsion to repeat was made bearable only by the outcome in satisfaction. By seeing it as a re-enactment of infantile and instinctual pleasure, there is no contradiction to the economic model because the pleasure principle remains in ascendancy.

In Chapter 3, I will relate this repetitive behaviour to the beating phantasies described by Anna Freud (1923). The repetitious nature of highly structured beating phantasies shows an enactment of a specific relationship at a specific

stage of development. Whilst in the Freudian perspective this was the Oedipal relationship, in my thesis I consider it to be a containing relationship. In the Freudian view, games and beating phantasies replay Oedipal loss, anxiety and anger, ultimately facilitating growth. In my thesis, I also consider the issues of infant longing for the parental/maternal relationship, and the enactment of its characteristics – perhaps its failings. These, I argue, hold some form of abreactive quality which likewise facilitates growth. The enjoyment of dramatic theatre, wherein the unfolding tragedy brings a yield of pleasure, provides further evidence of the many ways of making what is apparently unpleasurable ‘into a subject to be recollected and worked over in the mind’ (Freud 1920, p.17). Although this occurs even under the dominance of the pleasure principle:

They are of no use for our purposes, since they presuppose the existence and dominance of the pleasure principle; they give no evidence of the operation of tendencies beyond the pleasure principle, that is, of tendencies more primitive than it and independent of it (Freud 1920, p.17. Freud’s emphasis).

With this, Freud set out his stall: Is there something else at work manifesting as a compulsion to repeat that is more ancient than the Oedipal narrative – something that operates normally as opposed to something disturbed? Is there something independent of the pleasure principle? To investigate further, Freud turned to the phenomenon of psychoanalytic transference.

### c) The Psychoanalytic Transference

In considering psychoanalytic transference, Freud explained that not all of what appears repetitious is amenable to clinical intervention, nor does it demonstrate adherence to the pleasure principle. The aim of psychoanalytic treatment is the discovery of concealed unconscious material by revealing resistances created by the ego. Initially, Freud saw the skill of the physician as being the ability to persuade the patient to abandon those resistances. However, it became clear, as psychoanalysis developed, that, at times, making conscious what had been repressed 'is not completely attainable by that method' (Freud 1920, p.18). This was simply because 'the patient cannot remember all of what is repressed' (Freud 1920, p.18). Rather than remembering what was in the past, the patient continues to repeat repressed material in the present.

These reproductions... always have as their subject some portion of infantile sexual life - of the Oedipus complex, that is, and its derivatives; and they are invariably acted out in the sphere of the transference... (Freud 1920, p.18).

Clearly Freud's thoughts about repetitive behaviours still lay with Oedipal influences operating under the pleasure principle (Freud 1920, p.20). The idea that resistances in the ego disallow repressed memories to surface does not negate the pleasure principle because there can be 'unpleasure for one system and simultaneous satisfaction for the other' (Freud 1920, p.20).

However, it is also clear that much of what is at work in the compulsion to repeat causes the ego unpleasure 'since it brings to light activities of repressed instinctual impulses' (Freud 1920, p.20).

Thus far, Freud had sought to show that the pain manifesting in the compulsion to repeat did not disprove his theory of the pleasure principle - as long as the underlying motives could be uncovered. In the case of children's play, for instance, where games appeared to give the child pain, Freud was able to uncover underlying economically-driven motives that actually yielded pleasure (Freud 1920, p.14). Transference phenomena had also shown that the ego, having repressed the unpleasant, is acting according to the pleasure principle. The phenomenon of traumatic dreams was not so easily explained but could be seen to show that the pleasure principle has been disturbed to the point of disfunction.

However, still to be explained was:

...a new and remarkable fact, namely that the compulsion to repeat also recalls from the past which include no possibility of pleasure, and which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed (Freud 1920, p.20).

Freud explained this as the disappointments brought about in 'the early efflorescence of infantile sexual life' (Freud 1920, p.20). Wishes of that time, he said, were doomed to extinction due to their incompatibility with reality and thus ended in 'the most distressing circumstances and to the accompaniment of the

most painful feelings' (Freud 1920, p.20). In other words, Oedipally-focused instincts leave behind a 'narcissistic scar' (Freud 1920, p.20). Remaining unresolved, these are unable to emerge as dreams or memories, but instead are repeated 'under the pressure of a compulsion' (Freud 1920, p.21).

Later in life, this leads to a continued sense of failure, which Freud expanded upon in 1924 and assigned to it a specific form of masochism: 'moral masochism'. As patients, Freud said, they may seek to end their treatment early, believing themselves scorned, they provoke the analyst to speak to them severely. In Chapter 6's literature review, I return to this last observation which I term 'baiting of the analyst' which can be seen to manifest in clinical reporting of some masochistic patients (Heimann 1955, Rosenfeld 1988, Joseph 1971). One of the impressions I gained from my initial study was that something like this appears in BDSM role play in which the submissive 'provokes' the Dominant into castigating him, the so-called 'bratty-sub', however there was no evidence of this in my later data from the documentaries.

d) Compulsion to Repeat: Unresolved.

Behaviour that seemingly seeks a 'perpetual recurrence of the same thing' can also be observed in some 'normal' people who exhibit an 'innate character', an 'essential trait', that finds expression in such repetition (Freud 1920, p.21).

Typically, such people always pick the wrong, but same type of, lover/spouse despite the unhappiness it brings. Similarly, friendships can follow a set pattern and end in similar disappointment/altercations (Freud 1920, p.22). The

compulsion to repeat in these cases 'differs in no way from the compulsion to repeat which we have found in neurotics' (Freud 1920, pp.21-22).

If we take into account observations such as these, based upon behaviour in the transference and upon life-histories of men and women, we shall find courage to assume that there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle' (Freud 1920, p.22).

And

But if a compulsion to repeat does operate in the mind, we should be glad to know something about it, to learn what function it corresponds to, under what conditions it can emerge and what its relation is to the pleasure principle - to which after all, we have hitherto ascribed dominance over the course of the processes of excitation in mental life (Freud 1920, p.23. Freud's italic).

Freud demonstrated the existence of a compulsion to repeat, and where possible he explained the motivational forces with recourse to the pleasure principle. However, there remained something else that could not be explained with such recourse - something that appears to be more primitive, more elementary, and even more instinctual than the pleasure principle. And crucially, something that acts independently of - and over-rides - the pleasure principle (Freud 1920, p.23): a compulsion to repeat that operates beyond the pleasure principle. Freud went on to introduce this mysterious force as the 'Death Instinct'.

### e) The Death Instinct

As Freud had suggested in 'The Uncanny', the compulsion to repeat, now endowed with 'a high degree of instinctual character' is not a path to something new, but a path to 'an old state of things' (Freud 1920, p.35). His basic assertion was that something cannot 'return' to something it has not 'come from'; a repetition cannot exist without a prior experience. And crucial to the death instinct hypothesis is Freud's reminder that 'inanimate things existed before living ones' (Freud 1920, p.38).

At this point we cannot escape a suspicion that we may have come upon the track of a universal attribute of instincts and perhaps of organic life in general which has not hitherto been clearly recognised or at least not explicitly stressed. It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life (Freud 1920, p.36. Freud's emphasis).

Freud's basic material principle is one of inertia and entropy - that to which the universe itself will one day return. If an urge to return to such an 'initial state' exists, then it can be said that 'the aim of all life is death' (Freud 1920, p.38). To Freud, this goal implied an active force which he called the death instinct. Until then, the instincts had been understood as forces of change and progress, but Freud went on to call this 'deceptive'. What constitutes 'life', he said, is just a circuitous return path to a state of inertia which has been disturbed. In other

words, life is a thorn in the side of inertia, a by-product of some external unwanted happenstance.

In this way the first instinct came into being; the instinct to return to the inanimate state... For a long time, perhaps, living substance was thus being constantly created afresh and easily dying, till decisive external influences altered in such a way as to oblige the still surviving substance to diverge ever more widely from its original course of life and to make ever more complicated détours before reaching its aim of death. These circuitous paths to death, faithfully kept to by the conservative instincts, would thus present us to-day with the picture of the phenomena of life. (Freud 1920, pp.38-39. Freud's emphasis).

However, as Freud acknowledged, in accepting this conservative nature of the instincts as a drive towards the past, there would not then be any drive towards the 'new'. And if this were so, there would be no pressure to change. And yet, it is clear that growth and development do in fact occur. In which case there must be some external pressure, some disturbing influence that results in the creation of life that is opposed to the normal state of entropy.

The attributes of life were at some time evoked in inanimate matter by the action of a force of whose nature we can form no conception (Freud 1920, p.38).

In the light of this, Freud was forced to consider what implications this reasoning had on the ego (or 'self-preservative') instincts:



The hypothesis of self-preservative instincts, such as we attribute to all living beings, stands in marked opposition to the idea that instinctual life as a whole serves to bring about death. Seen in this light, the theoretical importance of the instincts of self-assertion and of mastery greatly diminishes. They are component instincts whose function is to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death, and to ward off any possible ways of returning to inorganic existence other than those which are immanent in the organism itself. We have no longer to reckon with the organism's puzzling determination (so hard to fit into any context) to maintain its own existence in the face of every obstacle. What we are left with is the fact that the organism wishes to die only in its own fashion. Thus these guardians of life, too, were originally the myrmidons of death. (Freud 1920, p.39).

Having set all of this out, Freud then appeared to hesitate (Freud 1920, p.39).

The drive for survival (life) was a puzzle because he had to 'make it fit' the context of his new hypothesis (Freud 1920, p.39). The problem was the sex instincts: they did not fit his new model, so they had to 'appear under a very different aspect' (Freud 1920, p.39). So now, Freud the embryologist stepped forward to explain the biology of the germ cells, the sperm and ovum in that when germ cells coalesce, they begin to follow their own path (my italic). The function of the sex instincts, he deduced, must be to maintain the life of the organism carrying those germ cells and he concluded consequently that the sex-instincts are the 'true life instincts' operating in 'opposition' to the death instincts (Freud 1920, p.40).

And so, we have a new and final instinct nomenclature which accounts for life, survival and reproduction, but also encompassing entropy. Freud's instinct division had been between the ego-instincts (of self-preservation), and the sex-instincts (of species-preservation) but in the new theory, things changed: now the division is between life and death instincts. This division can be explained thus: some ego instincts are not libidinalised, and as a consequence, they have remained 'hidden' from psychoanalytic view, going back to my analogy of the household electrical cable, these now form the blue wire. These non-libidinalised components seek dissolution and these are the death instinct components. The libidinalised ego instincts, on the other hand, (now named Eros) hold 'all living things together' as a binding force (Freud 1920, p.50). Together, Eros and the sex instincts form the 'true' life instinct(s) (Freud 1920, p.50), or as my analogy would have it, the brown wire. However, the point Freud is trying to make is that:

The upshot of our enquiry so far has been the drawing of a sharp distinction between the 'ego-instincts' and the sexual instincts, and the view that the former exercise pressure towards death and the latter towards a prolongation of life...Moreover, it is actually only of the former group of instincts that we can predicate a conservative, or rather retrograde, character corresponding to a compulsion to repeat. (Freud 1920, p.44).

Thus, the non-libidinalised ego-instincts are the source of the death instincts; and also the source of a compulsion to repeat. However, if the ego-instincts are pressing towards death, how can they be responsible for the survival of the individual? This is possibly solved by Freud's idea that death must be sought by

its own preordained meandering path. Significantly, Freud noted here that the compulsion to repeat is assigned only to the death instinct components. He later came back to this, asking whether the sex/life instincts could not, after all, be assigned a compulsion to repeat when 'science has so little to tell us' (Freud 1920, p.57). His solution was ultimately found in the notion of life emerging in primordial time when the coming together of chemical components was successfully opposed by the process of dissimilation. Ever since, he said, those same chemical/biophysiological components have sought to reunite under the influence of the sex-instincts, a compulsion to assimilate (Freud 1920, 58). The inference is that the compulsion to repeat is a compulsion to disunite/dissimilate.

Freud may have appeared to be hesitant about the death instinct hypothesis, (Freud 1920, p.59) but he was committed to the idea. Whilst admitting that his conclusions are bound to be unsatisfactory in many respects 'even to ourselves', he argued that 'any expectation that biology would flatly contradict the recognition of death instincts has not been fulfilled' (Freud 1920, p.49). That is, as a defence, Freud applied the mechanism of a null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>). He presented all sorts of explanations of the compulsion to repeat - from embryology, cell biology to psychology - and as I have shown above, he finally accounted for the death instinct having remained hidden because its components are not libidinalised; that is, there is nothing in biological science to reject the death instinct hypothesis.

However, one question remained for Freud, and that question is crucial to my thesis: where does the death instinct hypothesis leave the psychoanalytic theory of masochism?

#### f) The Death Instinct and Masochism

With the new death instinct came a new question requiring a new economic explanation for the phenomenon of masochism:

Question: If the life instincts are now a conglomerate of the libidinalised components of the ego-instincts and the sex-instincts (self-survival and object seeking) how can masochism arise from this?

Answer: Make sadism (destruction) a component of the death instinct.

#### Masochism: A New Theory

The instinctual duality had been between the ego-instincts and the sex-instincts. With the new duality of life and death instincts, the ego instincts have been divided. The libidinalised components (Eros) form the life instincts. The hidden, non-libidinalised components of the ego instincts account for the death instincts.

Whilst acknowledging the ongoing 'obscurity that reigns...in the theory of the instincts' (Freud 1920, p.53), Freud attempted to find a satisfactory explanation to account for masochism. He had endowed the compulsion to repeat with

instinctual properties, and he had explained the compulsion to repeat as a manifestation of the drive of the death instinct towards an ancient stasis.

From the very first, sadistic instincts had been recognised as components of the sex instincts, and it was understood that such components could become independent and perverted, i.e., they could be diverted from what should have been their aim (Freud 1920, p.53). Masochism, on the other hand, was understood as sadistic components turned against the self, from object to ego. But with the new death instinct structure and its drive towards dissolution, masochism was no longer seen as a turning around, but a return to an earlier stage of developmental organisation, i.e., an instinct regression. The sadistic components have not been forced out of the ego by a narcissistic libidinal energy, but rather, there has been a return to an earlier phase of instinct organisation (Freud 1920, p.55). It is this that gave Freud the idea that there just might be a primary masochism after all, and this provided Freud with a potential economic solution to the puzzle of masochism.

Is it not plausible to suppose that this sadism was in fact a death instinct which, under the influence of the narcissistic libido, has been forced away from the ego, and has consequently only emerged in relation to the object? (Freud 1920, p.54).

That is, if sadism had been a death instinct from the beginning, this would account for a primary masochism, a drive towards dissolution. But, in normal circumstances, sadism is co-opted by the life instincts, turned from the self-object, and diverted out towards the sex object. In the initial phases of development, this manifests as a desire to destroy the object. Later, under genital

primacy, the goal of sadism is to subdue the object, as it enters the reproductive function (Freud 1920, p.54). So, whilst the death instinct accounts for masochism, crucially, the existence of masochism is evidence for the death instinct.

To end this chapter, I am going to give further attention to several points in relation to my own thesis.

### Further Economic Considerations

Besides death instinct component regression, there are other topics having a direct relationship to masochism and to my thesis on BDSM. Freud hadn't finished with masochism in 1920; he would continue to elaborate upon his idea of instinct regression and directly apply it to masochism theory (1923), and he would take forward the idea of a 'Nirvana' principle' in relation to the pleasure principle (1924). In my own work, I also explore the Nirvana principle; and I go on to address Freud's startling claims about human 'higher development'; and his apparent dismissal of the ego-instincts for mastery and self-autonomy which have implications for theories of BDSM.

#### Further Economic Considerations (a) Instinct Regression.

I have described instinct regression above in relation to masochism. This was a shift from the repression of instincts in Freud's work on beating phantasies (1919a) and from Anna Freud's sublimation of instincts in relation to beating phantasies (1923). I will show this in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I will present

Freud's expanded theory of instinct regression in relation to masochism as he worked towards solving the economic problem of masochism. There, Freud uses the theory of instinct regression to describe what I term a re-ignition of the Oedipus complex bringing about 'moral' masochism. Freud was able to do this by introducing a new structural model of the mind and a new theory of an ego-superego dialogue.

Further Economic Considerations (b) The Nirvana Principle.

In 1920, Freud said that:

... the dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli - 'a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle' (Freud 1920, p.56).

This view was couched in established scientific economic principles. In particular, Freud quoted Fechner's 'principle of stability' saying that it coincided in all essential points with the discoveries of psychoanalytic work (Freud 1920, pp.8-9):

... every psycho-physical motion rising above the threshold of consciousness is attended by pleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it approximates to complete stability, and is attended by unpleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it deviates from complete stability, while between the two limits... described as qualitative thresholds of

pleasure and unpleasure... (Gustav Fechner 1873, p.94; quoted in Freud 1920, pp.8-9).

Freud's own version of the stability principle, the 'constancy principle', was a reiteration of Fechner's view. What is of particular interest to my thesis is an idea from Freud's colleague Barbara Low who stated that:

...it is possible that deeper than the Pleasure-principle lies the Nirvana-principle... the desire of the new born creature to return to that stage of omnipotence, where there are no non-fulfilled desires, in which it existed in the mother's womb... Such a desire acts as a regressive tendency in humanity, giving rise to the conflict between the static and the dynamic... (Low 1920, p.73).

It is clear that Low's point about the static-dynamic conflict 'fits' Freud's economic view of the death instinct. Freud himself says of the Nirvana principle that:

The dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli (the Nirvana principle' to borrow a term from Barbara Low [1920, p.73]) – a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of that fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of death instincts (Freud 1920, pp. 55-56).



This is Freud's only reference to the term 'Nirvana' in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' and even then it is almost only in passing. It is clear he was equating the Nirvana principle to the pleasure principle 'for the moment'. What Low actually said was that the Nirvana principle lies 'deeper than the pleasure principle', which is what Freud said of the death instinct. Freud returned to the Nirvana principle in 1924 because, as I will show, he eventually saw that rather than being the same, the Nirvana principle does lie behind the pleasure principle. This enabled Freud to 'solve' the last vestiges of the economic problem of masochism as I shall show in Chapter 4. As Freud did in 1924, I will equate the Nirvana principle with the death instinct itself. But while he described the death instinct as silent and hidden, its existence only theoretically inferred, I shall argue that it can become explicitly manifest via BDSM activities. I relate the biophysical properties of the Nirvana principle to a specific trance-like pain-induced psychic state achieved through very intense BDSM 'scenes'. I have described this as the induced, altered state of mind BDSMers refer to as sub-space (Chapter 8). I have likened it to the Nirvana of Buddhism and the more Western experience described as a 'State of Grace'.

### Instincts of Mastery and Autonomy

The last point from 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' of relevance to my thesis is Freud's remark (quoted above), that the new theory of the death instinct had implications for the self-preservative (ego-) instincts (Freud 1920, p.39). He said that if it were true that 'instinctual life as a whole serves to bring about death', then 'the theoretical importance of the instincts of self-assertion and of mastery greatly diminishes' (my italics). Such instincts are just 'component instincts

whose function it is to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death'. This could be deemed as an attack by Freud on the belief in humans as arbiters of their own destiny, pre-empting what would surely be one of the greatest arguments against his new thinking.

I know of no certain example from the organic world that would contradict the characterisation I have thus proposed . There is unquestionably no universal instincts towards higher development observable in the animal or plant world, even though it is undeniable that development does in fact occur in that direction (Freud 1920, p.41).

Freud appears to be saying that, like his H1 on the creation of life, 'higher development' comes about as some sort of unintended collateral. Rather than by products of the desire for death, I argue that instincts like self-mastery and self-autonomy can be understood as specific ego-functions. The psyche-to-psyche relocation of these particular ego-functions manifest in the Dominant-submissive dynamic of the BDSM relationship. My data analysis shows that these ego-functions are projected from the submissive's ego and relocated in the Dominant's ego as the theory of projective identification describes. My thesis H1 argues that this enacts a form, perhaps an early form, of Bion's containing process.

### Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Summary

Life contains an inherent compulsion to return to an original inorganic state (Freud 1920, p.38). Whether it be the déjà vu of the uncanny, child's play,

dreams or something of a biochemical nature, the compulsion to repeat is a manifestation of a primitive state of things: the death instinct. The pleasure principle is not quite the 'God that must be obeyed' - this honour has shifted to the death instinct. The death instinct could explain the existence of masochism in economic terms, for now.

### Conclusion Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

I said in my general introduction that Freud's work on masochism followed two separate lines of enquiry, giving rise to two separate theoretical strands:

- The economic model of the instincts.
  
- The discovery of unconscious libidinalised beating phantasies

I suggested that the first strand concerns physiology while the second strand concerns subjective experience; or it could be said that one strand is quantitative whilst the other is qualitative; or that one strand is drive theory whilst the other is object-relating.

I have now presented in two parts the first strand: Freud's economic model of instinct function. Part One concerned his economic theory in work pre-dating 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' and Part Two addressed an economic problem within 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' itself. In the next chapter, I temporarily put aside Freud's economic theory to present the second strand: Freud's discovery of unconscious libidinalised beating phantasies. This shows a startling shift in which his study demonstrates a quasi-object-relating view of masochism. This

enquiry into beating phantasies is a crucial part of his thesis on masochism and also to my own thesis on BDSM, in which erotic beating phantasies are enacted. By the end of Chapter 3, I will have presented both strands of masochism theory, and in Chapter 4 I show how the two come together in Freud's new and final model of the mind (1923) and a new economic solution to the problem of masochism (1924).

**Chapter 3: Erotic Beating Phantasies: Freud's Psychoanalytic  
Perspective**

Introduction

In this chapter, I am going to put aside economic theory and present the second strand of Freud's masochism theory based on the discovery of unconscious libidinalised beating phantasies. I will also present one of Anna Freud's closely allied papers on the topic.

In my thesis so far, I have presented Freud's work on masochism in the following structure:

- How Freud saw masochism within his economic theory of the instincts (Chapter 2, Part 1).
- The problem that masochism created for instinct theory (Chapter 2, Part 2).

And,

- Freud's solutions to that problem (Chapter 4 to follow).

I have considered where Freud's work on beating phantasies would best 'sit'.

Does the existence of beating phantasies contribute to Freud's economic theory of the instincts? Does it present a problem for instinct theory and masochism? or does it offer a solution to masochism and instinct theory? I will argue that Freud's paper on unconscious beating phantasies straddles each of these, signalling a *change* to economic theory. Thus, it demonstrates a quasi-object-relating view of masochism, albeit one that relates solely to the Oedipus complex, albeit a view that Freud did not pursue.

I will restrict my exposition of the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective on beating phantasy to two original texts:

- 'A Child is Being Beaten' (Freud, S. 1919 S.E., XVII, pp.179-204). This was one of Freud's rare clinical papers (Jones 1955 Vol. II, p.344).

- 'The Relation of Beating-Phantasies to a Day-Dream' (Freud, A. 1923 pp.89-102). This was Anna Freud's 'membership' paper.

Both papers used essentially the same material from what appears to be the same clinical source. Where Strachey saw Freud's paper as a supplement to the first of his 'Three Essays on Sexuality' (Strachey's introduction 'A Child is Being Beaten' p.177), I regard Anna Freud's later paper on beating phantasy as a supplement to her father's earlier paper. Freud offered a detailed account of the structure of beating phantasies and the motives behind them, whilst Anna Freud elaborated on the 'super-structure' and sublimated content of a typical beating fantasy or daydream. I go on to reflect upon my own work, particularly in relation to Anna Freud's paper.

Given the similarity of content between the two papers, I argue that Anna Freud was not just *one* of the subjects but to the most part *the* subject of her father's paper<sup>2</sup>. Both papers consider the origin of erotic beating phantasies to be in the Oedipus complex, and both papers are gender-biased. To make it easier to follow the transformational phases in a beating phantasy, Freud concentrated his descriptions on female cases as they provided 'the greater part of my material' (Freud 1919a, p.184)<sup>3</sup>. On Anna Freud's part, she described the daydreams of one adolescent girl. Given the speculation about Anna Freud's analysis by her own father, there are too many questions about both papers to proceed without

---

<sup>2</sup> Anna Freud claimed that the material for her paper came from her own clinical practice (Young-Bruehl 1988, pp.103-104).

<sup>3</sup> Freud does discuss the structure of beating phantasies in boys, and he address the *feminine* attitude in male masochists (Freud 1919a, pp. 196-200).

some degree of caution. However, both are relevant to my thesis in the following ways: the existence of beating phantasies was recognised; they were masochistic; they were libidinalised; and there was some primitive structure to them. Both Sigmund and Anna Freud considered this structure to be underpinned by the Oedipus complex. I will also argue that there is a stereotypical, primitive structure to beating phantasies, but I will argue that the structure of beating phantasies is more relational; that the structure is grounded in the infant's primitive relation to the breast, and that a better framework for understanding these phantasies is by using an object-relations perspective, in particular the container-contained experience. I will show how Anna Freud's superstructure of a typical beating phantasy can be aligned with a typical BDSM scene. Importantly I will also be able to show in a later chapter (chapter 5), how Anna Freud's material can be re-interpreted to reflect a containing type of structure. That is, I will show again, how object-relations theory augments classical theory.

This chapter is in two parts:

- Part 1. Instinct Repression, Instinct Regression and the Oedipus Complex (Freud 1919a)
- Part 2. Instinct Sublimation and the Oedipus complex (Anna Freud 1923).

My aims are:

- To demonstrate Freud's interpretation of beating phantasies as originating, and being firmly rooted, in the primitive structure of the Oedipal situation.
- To present Anna Freud's exegesis of a typical libidinalised beating phantasy.
- To consider whether the Freuds' views of the genesis of beating phantasies is complete, and to argue for an alternative view of the genesis of beating phantasies.



**Part 1. Instinct Repression, Instinct Regression, and the Oedipus Complex:  
Freud's 'A Child is Being Beaten (1919a)**

Freud (1919a) began this paper, '*A Child is Being Beaten: A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions*', by stating his surprise at how often his (psychoneurotic) patients confess to having indulged in beating phantasies. Such phantasies, associated with shame and guilt, are generally admitted to reluctantly (Freud 1919a, p.179). However, they are also highly cathected with pleasure (Freud 1919a, p.180), and, importantly for my thesis, they appear to be ubiquitous. He states that:

Very probably there are still more frequent instances of it among the far greater number of people who have not been obliged to come to analysis by manifest illness (Freud 1919a, p.179).

If my H<sub>1</sub> is correct, that masochism is a manifestation of the container-contained experience, then these phantasies should be very ordinary, and ubiquitous - just as Freud suggests. Freud's detailed analysis of the evolution and content of beating phantasies showed them:

... to have a historical development which is by no means simple, and in the course of which they are changed in most respects more than once - as regards their relation to the author of the phantasy, and as regards their object, their content and their significance. (Freud 1919a, p.184).

That is, beating phantasies have developmental phases in which the identity of the child being beaten or the person beating the child is liable to mutability. Beating phantasies appear highly labile; for instance, the beater is either

indeterminate or, more characteristically, a father or father representative (Freud 1919a, p.185). Other details are confused, genders change, numbers of children change, the presence of the phantasiser is unclear and so on (Freud 1919a, p.186). In fact, Freud said that any constant relation between the gender of the phantasiser and the child being beaten in phantasy was never established (Freud 1919a, p.181). And further, it was difficult to ascertain or establish whether the pleasure attached to the phantasy was sadistic or masochistic (Freud 1919a, p.181). This is a discussion of a *relationship with an object* even though the relationship, the object and the subject, are all very difficult to determine. Part of my thesis argument is that, at several points in his understanding of masochism, Freud moved towards an object-relating view. That is particularly so here. I argue that the reason for the apparent confusion over subject and object in Freud's study is that beating phantasies reflect the maternal-infant container-contained experience rather than an Oedipal experience. That is, there is no 'place' for gender identity or object gender identity: there is an infant, and there is a maternal object. The maternal figure is strikingly absent from Freud's version of girls' beating phantasies as I show below. Although a maternal figure does appear in the boys' beating phantasies, this is only in the guise of an Oedipal object, as I will also show. Acknowledging the difficulty in determining the structure of the core phantasy, Freud sought to be as clear as possible saying that:

In my description I shall be careful to avoid being more schematic than is inevitable for the presentation of an average case. If then on further observation a greater complexity of circumstances should come to light, I shall nevertheless be sure of having before us a typical occurrence, and one, moreover, that is not of an uncommon kind (Freud 1919a, p.184).

For the purposes of my thesis, I summarise Freud's suggestion that there are 3 phases to beating phantasies, and I focus on what he considered to be their *meaning*.

The Structure of Beating Phantasies (in girls):

Phase 1: Oedipal Love

*Content* of the phantasy: Father is beating another (hated) child.

*Inference* of the phantasy: Father does not love that child.

***Meaning*** of the phantasy: **Father loves only me.**

(Freud 1919a, p.189).

This is an early developmental manifestation of the beating phantasy. In fact, it may not be so much a *phantasy*, but a rather vague *recollection* of events and desires (Freud 1919a, p.185). Information is scanty but some details emerge:

The child being beaten is never the one producing the phantasy, but is invariably another child, most often a brother or a sister... [T]he phantasy then is certainly *not masochistic*. It would be tempting to call it sadistic, but... the child producing the phantasy is never doing the beating, that being the (girls') father... (Freud 1919a, pp.184-185. My italic).

This phase of the phantasy belongs to 'a very early period of childhood' (Freud 1919a, p.184), 'a period of incestuous love' (Freud 1919a, p.189). Although Freud begins his discussion saying that it is only 'tempting' to call this phase sadistic, he does go on to determine that this phase is, in fact, sadistic (Freud 1919a, p.195).

Between the first and second phases comes a 'profound transformation' (Freud 1919a, p.185).

## Phase 2: Masochism

*Content* of the phantasy: I am being beaten by my father.

*Inference* of the phantasy: I am Guilty, I covet an incestuous object in my Father.

***Meaning*** of the phantasy: **I deserve punishment (masochism).**

(Freud 1919a, p.185).

The beater remains the girl's father, but now the child being beaten/punished is the child phantasiser herself. This is associated with a high degree of libidinal pleasure and deemed to be 'of unmistakably masochistic character' (Freud 1919a, p.185). Freud specifically said that, as far as he knew, a sense of guilt was invariably the factor that transformed sadism into masochism (Freud 1919a, p.189). As I have indicated above, and as I show later (chapter 4), Freud will go on to develop this particular hypothesis in relation to 'moral masochism' (Freud 1924). Freud considered this second phase to be the most momentous of all, 'even though in a certain sense it has never had a real existence' (Freud 1919a, p.185). The fact it was never remembered, and had never become conscious, is because 'it is a construction of analysis' (Freud 1919a, p.185). However, on that account 'it is no less a necessity', as it bears the central message of beating phantasies: 'I am guilty of an incestuous desire and I am being punished for it' (Freud 1919a, p.185).

## Phase 3: Libidinalisation

*Content* of the phantasy: A phantasy of 'looking on', observing the father or father substitute beating unknown others (plural), usually boys.

*Inference* of the phantasy: The others are substitutes for the child herself.

**Meaning** of the phantasy: The form may appear sadistic, but the *libidinal satisfaction is masochistic*.

(Freud 1919a, p.191).

Like Phase One, Phase Three can be consciously remembered. The child phantasiser is almost always a spectator, the beater is a father substitute. The accompanying sexual excitement present in Phase Two, is, in Phase Three, strong and unambiguous (Freud 1919a, p.186). It seems to be sadistic in that lots of other children are being beaten. However, taking the scenario further, Freud said, if the beater is a substitute then the other children are substitutes for the child herself; so what may appear sadistic in form, is in fact 'masochistic in content' (Freud 1919a, p.191).

Although Freud's schematic was based on girls' phantasies, he did go on to discuss beating phantasies in boys. There is some confusion in the structure of the boys' beating phantasies, in that the phasing does not exactly parallel that of the girl. Freud found no evidence for the first sadistic phase in boys, although, as he said, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist (Freud 1919a, p.198). There was an indication that in boys, the phase 'I am being beaten by my mother' is preceded by a phase 'I am being beaten by my father' (Freud 1919a, p.198).

Whilst Phase Two in the girls' phantasy structure is a construct of the analytic process (Freud 1919a, p.185), boys are often conscious of exciting (masturbatory) beating phantasies at the hands of the mother (Freud 1919a, p.189). There are some similarities, as one would expect; for example, the beater is initially the mother in Phase Two, and later she is substituted by mother-like figures. (Freud

1919a, pp.190, 196). Freud also said that unlike the girl, the boy does not transform his own gender (Freud 1919a, p.191).

A problem with the attempt to differentiate between the genders lies in the fact that only two of his cases were male, and his observations only applied to one of them (Freud 1919a, p.189). On this basis alone, I would treat much of Freud's observations on beating phantasies with caution. There is also the matter of Freud being the analyst of his own daughter, if indeed she was one of these cases as has long been speculated. To muddy the waters further, there remains some speculation (generally unspoken) over the sexuality of at least one of Freud's female patients (Young-Bruehl, 1988).

As I have said above, I argue that Freud's apparent confusion over subject and object lies in the fact that there are *two* objects and they remain the same: there is an infant, and there is a maternal object. My H<sub>1</sub> argues that beating phantasies reflect the maternal-infant, container-contained, experience as opposed to the history of Oedipal anxiety. And because Freud was applying that Oedipal history to what may have been very sparse material, he struggled to establish the structure of beating phantasies; my argument is that he was struggling because he was applying the wrong theory.

The Oedipus complex is in fact a three-object narrative of self, love-object and rival, and I have pointed out that Freud's approach to beating phantasies was quasi object-relating. However, even taking this into account, which he did, Freud continued his enquiry in terms of instinct theory.

Little light is thrown upon the genesis of masochism by our discussion of the beating phantasy. To begin with, this seems to be a confirmation of the view that masochism is not the manifestation of a primary instinct, but originates from sadism which has been turned round upon the self - that is to say, by means of regression from an object to the ego (Freud 1919a, pp.193-194).

As I have indicated, Freud went on to change his mind about the existence of a primary masochism when he presented the death instinct hypothesis (Freud 1920). For now, Freud's focus was on the influence of guilt attributable to instinct repression (Freud 1919a, p.194). In other words, he saw beating phantasies as a convergence of guilt and sexualised love (Freud 1919a, p.194).

We must remember that we are dealing with children in whom the sadistic component was able for constitutional reasons to develop prematurely and in isolation...It is precisely such children who find it particularly easy to hark back to the pregenital, sadistic-organisation in their sexual life (Freud 1919a, p.189).

In some children, the early genital organisation, before becoming established, is met with repression. The consequence is that 'every psychical representation of the incestuous love becomes unconscious' (Freud 1919a, p.189). We can see how this gives rise to Phase One of the girls' beating phantasy. However, Freud went on to say that there is a further implication. The newly burgeoning genital organisation itself undergoes 'a regressive debasement...to a lower level' (Freud 1919a, p.189). The genital phantasy 'my father loves me' becomes 'my father is beating me'. This means:

*It is not only the punishment for the forbidden genital relation, but also the regressive substitute for that relation, and from this latter source it derives*

its libidinal excitation which is from this time forward attached to it... Here for the first time we have the essence of masochism (Freud 1919a, p.189. Freud's emphasis).

In Chapter 4, I will return to the matter of instinct regression and masochism, as Freud did in 1924. When differentiating between three forms of masochism, Freud implicated instinct regression in the manifestation of 'moral masochism'. He hypothesised that this particular form of masochism arises as a consequence of instinct regression which I describe as the 'reignition' of Oedipal guilt.

Before moving on to Part Two of this chapter, I want to comment briefly on further aspects of Freud's paper that are important to my thesis:

- The role of sublimation.
- Regression to a pregenital phase.
- The *feminine* attitude in male masochists.

### The Role of Sublimation

Freud made little reference to instinct sublimation in his paper, but Anna Freud took up the subject in her paper on beating phantasies which I discuss below.

What is more important to my own thesis is Anna Freud's description of the super-structure of the actual phantasy. I will show how her outline of a typical masochistic daydream reflects a typical BDSM phantasy.

### Regression to a Pre-genital Phase

Freud's H<sub>1</sub> was that beating phantasies, at some stage, concern a return to a pre-genital phase. I have already commented upon the general lack of genital contact in BDSM, and I suggest that this is the same observation that Freud made;



although I cannot confirm that they were made on the same basis it would appear likely. This is an important correlation between Freud's discovery and my own thesis as I have already remarked, and upon which I will elaborate.

### The Feminine Attitude in Male Masochists

The idea of a feminine attitude in male masochists was important to Freud's development of masochism theory, and it probably represents one of the aspects of his theory where he is misunderstood and in my view unfairly pilloried. Freud saw the male masochists' submissive attitude towards his sexual object as the passivity equated with the feminine gender. Freud interpreted this in Oedipal terms – i.e., as a wish to copulate with the father. I elaborate more on this in Chapter 4, where I discuss Freud's theory of feminine masochism (1924), in his paper 'The Economic Problem of Masochism'. In this, I discuss feminine masochism in relation to the submissives' orientation and attitude towards the Domme. My thesis shows that 'submission' in BDSM does not imply femininity, or indeed passivity. However, in support of Freud it was also evident in my initial enquiries, that a common activity in BDSM is anal penetration of the male submissive by the female Domme (c/o strap-on phallus) as I shall comment upon later. In my review of his text, I have presented a view of Freud's beating phantasies, based on their meaning. I have shown that Freud's analysis of beating phantasies creates a tri-faceted model of:

- Oedipal Desire
- Masochism
- Libidinalisation

These three components of Freud's analysis of beating phantasies show a picture of Oedipal desires and their repression leading Freud to declare that:

***Here for the first time we have the essence of masochism*** (Freud 1919a, p.189).

Whilst Freud approached beating phantasies from one direction, that of an Oedipal narrative, it can be argued that my own approach is also from one direction: the perspective of the infant seeking a *containing* experience. My own thesis will offer an alternative tri-faceted model of:

- Libidinalisation
- Object-relating
- Containment

Together, these aspects manifest in masochism. And together they paint a very different picture of beating phantasies: one of an infantile need for maternal containment which provokes libidinalised masochistic desires, and enabling my thesis to declare that:

***Here for the first time, we have the essence of masochism.***

I am now going to move on to Part 2 of my chapter, where I will explore Anna Freud's 1923 paper on beating phantasies and show how her work relates to my own thesis. I said above that my reading of Anna Freud's paper suggests her material is from the same source as her father's and I have speculated that the source of the material was Anna Freud herself. Both papers are suffused with Oedipal theory; both papers conclude that beating phantasies originate in the Oedipal situation; and I have suggested that both papers ought to be read with some degree of caution in this respect. Nevertheless, her paper is pertinent to my

thesis. In my data analysis, I show that the structure of what Anna Freud calls 'nice stories' are paralleled in modern 'BDSM scene' enactments.

**Part 2. Instinct Sublimation and the Oedipus Complex :The Relation of Beating Phantasies to a Day-Dream' (Anna Freud 1923).**

Anna Freud's paper considers a series of daydreams, or 'nice stories', created by a 15 year-old girl, as a means of avoiding auto-erotic masturbation. Anna Freud maintained that conscious phantasies of adventure and romance allow for gratified excitement without the need for 'auto-erotic gratification' (Freud, A. 1923, p.89). In other words, the sexual instinct has been *sublimated*; that is, redirected towards a new *non-sexual* aim (Laplanche and Pontalis 1980, pp.431-432). Whilst sublimated activities appear to lack sexual connotations, it is assumed that they are *motivated* by sexual instincts. By displacing their aim without diminishing power or intensity, the sexual instincts can place extraordinary amounts of force at the disposal of other activities (Freud 1908, p.187). In Anna Freud's case-study, the girl redirected her genital masturbatory energies into creating dramatic, but still sexualised phantasies, in which she herself is the main character.

Although the content of individual story lines appeared to have nothing in common, it was comparatively easy to get a general survey of the players and to describe the characteristics of a cardinal story (Freud, A. 1923, pp.93, 97). She observed that, however elaborate and varied the daydreams, they always feature several striking points of resemblance. I will show in my data analysis that BDSM

scenes have a stereotypical structure, and this is similar to the 'nice story' narrative.

### Sublimated Beating Phantasies in Anna Freud's Case Material: An Overview.

The structure of a typical 'nice story', Medieval Knights, there are several elements:

The Protagonists:

- A powerful senior knight:
- A young Knight (male; the same age as the girl fantasiser).

The Plot:

- The young Knight is captured and imprisoned in the senior Knight's castle;
- The young Knight is subjected to torture and deprivation;
- The senior knight makes some form of reparation;
- Eventually freedom is regained by the young Knight and love for him is professed by the senior Knight.

... on examination of each scene it was only necessary to detach from the plot itself the manifold minor details which at first glance gave its appearance of individuality; in every instance the structure then laid bare was as follows: antagonism between a strong and a weak person; a misdeed - mostly unintentional - on the part of the weak one which puts him at the other's mercy; *the latter's menacing attitude giving rise to the gravest endurance of dread and anxiety*; and finally, as a pleasurable climax, the solution of the conflict i.e., pardon for the sinner, reconciliation,

and for a moment, complete harmony between the former antagonists. With a few variations the same structure held good also for every single scene out of the other 'nice stories' invented by the girl (Freud, A. 1923, p.96. My italics).

Variations of the story include: the (bad) Knight threatening to torture the young Knight but refraining at the last moment (often in the face of the young Knight's fortitude); or the young Knight nearly dying of imprisonment whereupon the senior Knight has him nursed back to health; or the young Knight suffering great hardship.

In this comparatively simple day-dream there are only two really important figures; all the others may be disregarded... One is the young prisoner, who is endowed with various noble and pleasing character-traits; the other is the Knight who is described as harsh and brutal (Freud, A. 1923, pp.94-95).

In each version, suffering, fear and fortitude led to a heightened pleasure when the reward was granted (Freud, A. 1923, p.95). The unintentional 'misdeed', the punishment by the stronger figure, and the final pardon suffused with love and forgiveness, all point towards the Oedipal story.

Anna Freud's 'Oedipal story' is one of infantile anxiety (the young Knight's apprehension and dread), relief and resolution of fears (reconciliation between young and senior Knight) and the return to a state of harmony suffused with love, comfort and security, with a pleasurable climax.

Unlike Freud's 'A Child is Being Beaten', fear and helplessness are clear in Anna Freud's material. Her interrogation of the phantasised story seems to be at a more profound level than the appearance of either erotic play-acting, or self-entertaining nice stories. I will argue that her description of fear and helplessness, and its eventual alleviation through an erotised, albeit phantasised object, is akin to the containing process of Bion's Containment model. Rather than punishment, guilt avoidance and a final pardon suffused with love and forgiveness, my thesis will argue that this is a story conversant with a need for containment. I will also show that it is a story conversant with BDSM fantasy and enactments. Whilst Anna Freud proffered instinct sublimation as a solution to infantile anxiety, Bion proffered a solution to anxiety that is mediated through object-relating. In Chapter 5, I will (re)interpret the general plot of Anna Freud's 'nice stories' with Bion's containment model to show that, as my thesis argues, an alternative interpretation can be found for beating fantasies. Rather than seeing masochism as an *Oedipal narrative*, (i.e., a relationship with an Oedipally-infused object), I will consider masochism as a narrative of *infant containment through a libidinalised object-relationship*.

In this chapter, I have shown the psychoanalytic recognition of unconscious beating fantasies, their ubiquity, their compulsive nature and, according to both Freud and his daughter's assertion, their genesis in Oedipal desire and the phantasised relationship with the Oedipal object. Both Freuds utilised *instinct mutabilities* to explain these fantasies: instinct repression and regression in the case of Sigmund Freud; instinct sublimation in the case of Anna Freud. I have argued that Freud's paper on beating fantasies owes much to an object-relating

viewpoint. I have argued that Freud's investigation into masochism followed two strands of enquiry: economic theory and a quasi-object-relations theory represented in this paper.

In my next chapter, I will show that Freud brought both aspects – economic instinct theory and object-relations theory – together. I argue that each of these two aspects manifest in a separate work, each developing the theory of masochism and each bringing a different solution. Firstly, I will argue that his solution to masochism in 'A Child is Being Beaten', which is instinct regression in relation to the Oedipus complex, manifests in the 'game changing' paper 'The Ego and the Id' (1923). In 'The Ego and the Id', a new structural model of the mind enabled Freud to elaborate on masochism theory with the introduction of the (punitive) superego. Together, the superego and instinct regression will be implicated in a particular form of masochism – moral masochism as I shall show (Chapter 4, Part 2). Of note is that Anna Freud's paper was published in the same year as Freud's 'The Ego and the Id' in which Freud introduced the superego. The presence of the superego is implicit in Anna Freud's paper though it is not identified as such. The superego, and the earlier idea of an ego-ideal, are crucial to Freud's continued attempts to solve the 'problem' of masochism.

Secondly, I will show that Freud continued to try and reconcile masochism with the pleasure principle. Masochism was still a puzzle until 1924 when Freud published his paper 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', there Freud offered a solution to masochism that finally satisfied him. To solve the economic problem of masochism, Freud returned to his revised instinct nomenclature and the governing principles of psychic functioning, specifically the Nirvana principle.





## Chapter 4: An Economic Solution to the Problem of Masochism

### Introduction

In this chapter, I show how Freud's two theoretical strands on masochism developed:

Part 1: the discovery of beating phantasies (1919a), in part led Freud to **a new structure of the mind** (1923).

Part 2: the new theory of the death instinct (1920), led Freud to **reconsider psychic governance**, specifically the pleasure principle (1924).

I will show how Freud combined these two strands to provide a final solution to the puzzle of masochism. In doing so, he restructured the model of the psyche and identified three forms of masochism: i) erotogenic masochism, ii) feminine masochism and iii) moral masochism (the two latter originating in the first). I do this through examining two of Freud's papers: 'The Ego and the Id' (1923b) and 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924).

I concluded Chapter 3 by considering the theoretical situating of unconscious beating phantasies in Freud's instinct model. In this chapter, I will debate the same questions by way of the superego formation (1923) and the theory of moral masochism (1924).

## **Part 1. An Economic Solution (1): A New Model of Psychic Agency. The Superego. 'The Ego & The Id' (1923).**

According to Strachey, 'The Ego and the Id' (1923) defined the final phase of Freud's work. It was 'the last of Freud's great theoretical works and such a momentous step that all of Freud's writings subsequent to it bears its unmistakable imprint' (Strachey's introduction p. 4). Freud himself said that this paper differs from 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in that it makes no new use of biology, it stands closer to psychoanalysis and is 'more a synthesis than a speculation' (Freud 1923, p.12). It is on this same account that I consider 'The Ego and the Id' to be more aligned with his work on unconscious beating phantasy than with economic theory. I make this more apparent as I show Freud associating unconscious guilt with the Oedipus complex to which he had assigned the genesis of beating phantasies. However, there are further economic considerations too, as Freud shifted focus from instinct *repression*, (at the fore in beating phantasies), to instinct *regression* (of the death instinct) as the force behind masochism. It is in this sense that Freud's paper offers 'a synthesis', as well as a new threefold 'structural' model of the mind. His new model was:

... based on something more than function, a division into portions to which it was possible to attribute a number of differentiating characteristics and methods of operating (Strachey's introduction, p.5).

There are three topics in 'The Ego and the Id' that have a direct application to my thesis, two Freud had already introduced:

1. The skin as a sense organ.
2. Fusion-defusion of the instincts.

And one, the topic of this paper - a new 'structural model' of the mind and introduction of:

3. A new psychic agency, the *super-ego*.

1. The Skin as a Sense Organ

The skin had already been labelled 'the erotogenic zone par excellence' (Freud 1905, p.189) but, in this paper, Freud extended the developmental function of the skin to play a key part in the development of the psyche itself. His idea was that the ego's ability to differentiate 'self' from 'not self' (i.e., others) begins with the delineation of one's own body (Strachey's introduction, pp.7-8). If the body 'and, above all, its surface' is where both internal and external perceptions arise then 'the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego' (Freud 1923, p.26). I suggest that the simple statement of 'I am bounded by my skin' captures Freud's meaning.

Now, I have mentioned the skin and object relations theories of its functions several times (Chapter 1, conversations with the Leather Family), specifically, the ideas of Esther Bick's notion of the skin as an ego-boundary (1964) and Didier Anzieu's idea of the skin-envelope (1989). This is where there is an opportunity, and the pertinence, for comparison and contrast. The two are not mutually exclusive but complimentary, one augmenting the other. Freud's view of the bodily ego experienced by the skin boundary is complimented and elaborated on by later object relations theory.

Anzieu finds a parallel between the functions of the skin and the ego, the skin-ego. Just as the skin supports the musculo-skeletal system it also maintains the psyche. Whilst acknowledging this as a specifically Freudian view (1989, p.98) Anzieu also relates this function of the skin, which encompasses the sense

organs, thereby providing a containing function. Anzieu specifically sees the correspondence with elements of Bion's container-contained model, specifically maternal reverie, projective identification and the exercise of alpha-function (Anzieu p.101).

Similarly, Esther Bick's earlier work on the earliest experiences of the skin led her to postulate that the skin provides an experience of ego-cohesiveness. An infant safely wrapped in blankets or held against his mother's body has an experience of his own existence, the parts of his forming ego are felt to be held together, later this becomes an experience of containment. An infant who does not have this experience of being held together has an experience of falling to pieces, an experience of annihilation of the ego as Klein described.

...in its most primitive form the parts of the personality are felt to have no binding force amongst themselves and must therefore be held together in a way that is experienced by them passively, by the skin functioning as a boundary (Bick, 1968, p.484).

And,

The stage of primal splitting and idealisation of self and object can now be seen to rest on this earlier process of containment of self and object by their respective skins (Bick, 1968, p.484).

Specifically, Bick saw the problem for the infant as being one of difficulty introjecting the good object which would form the core of the earliest ego.

Although this may not reflect the precise form of Bion's containing model it shows Bick's view of the skin as the vital precursor to that process.

In his work on the infant at risk, Briggs acknowledged Bick's notion of internalisation of a skin container (Briggs, p.47):

For Bick, the first function of the containing mother was to provide a 'psychic skin' for the infant. This was to be taken as concretely experienced, and the function of early contact with mother was the internalisation of the mother's containing function... (Briggs, p. 46).

I will come back to this idea of the skin as container in two ways later. In the literature review (chapter 6) I discuss a clinical paper by Betty Joseph who presents a case of rubber fetishism; and allied to this, in my thesis data presentation and discussion I will comment on the BDSM characteristic 'uniform' typically consisting of rubber, leather, latex, PVC and the like.

## 2. Instinct Fusion-Defusion

In Chapter 2, I showed that component instinct binding, or failure to bind, was a theoretical mechanism that Freud assigned to instinct function and dysfunction (Freud 1905, 1915, 1920). In 1923, Freud extended this economic argument making the process open to a greater array of potential vicissitudes:

... the *two classes of instincts* are fused, blended, and alloyed with each other... [and] that this takes place regularly and very extensively is an assumption indispensable to our conception. (Freud 1923, p.41. My emphasis).

And

Once we have admitted the idea of a fusion of the two classes of instincts with each other, the possibility of a - *more or less complete* - defusion of them forces itself upon us (Freud 1923, p.41. My emphasis).

To return to my analogy of instincts as a copper cable, two wires (instinct components) can become crossed, or melded together; but it is a reversible process - those liable to fusion can de-fuse, wires crossed can be uncrossed.

The sadistic component of the sexual instinct would be a classical example of a serviceable instinctual fusion; and the sadism which has made itself independent as a perversion would be typical of a defusion, though not of one carried to extremes. (Freud 1923, p.41).

The expansion of ideas around instinct fusion and defusion facilitated further speculation about instinct form and function. This increased Freud's arsenal of economic solutions to instinct mutabilities. For instance, instinct regression from the genital to the anal-sadistic phase might be accounted for by defusion of previously fused instinct components (Freud 1923, p.42). This presented Freud with the possibility of further understanding the ambivalence, 'so often unusually strong in the constitutional disposition to neurosis' (Freud 1923, p.42). He wondered whether ambivalence could be due to a defusion of component instincts, but decided the probable cause was an incomplete instinct fusion (Freud 1923, p.42).

I have considered whether this applies to my own idea of instinct oscillation (Chapter 2) in relation to the BDSM 'switch'. Some BDSMers enjoy both Dominant and submissive roles equally, they 'switch'. There appears to be some fluidity to role as well as gender in the BDSM world. Freud would most likely have ascribed such fluidity to instinct vicissitudes, in this case instinct fusion and defusion. However, a point crucial to my thesis is that BDSMers who do switch say that the role chosen at a given time depends more on 'who I am playing with' than the script of a particular scene (Jerry in 'Susan for Now' 2007).

The role adopted at a given time is dependent on the relationship with a given object, and that depends on the characteristics of the play partner, that is, the object. I argue that such an 'oscillation' in relation to the object is akin to Freud's vicissitudes of instinct fusion-defusion.

Freud would come to associate aspects of such instinct functioning with masochism - but not until 1924 which I present in Part 2. But here, in 'The Ego and the Id', masochism, in relation to economic properties, is conspicuous by its absence. As I have shown above, Freud suggested that the phenomenon of sadism provided the 'classic' example of instinct fusion-defusion. However, it is the *process* that is important: the process provides further mechanisms that can account for instinct development and for instinct mutabilities which include masochism. According to Freud, the *fusion* of erotic instinct components facilitates incremental growth and the advancement of developmental phases. Conversely the *defusion* of instinct components leads to the regression of the libido from the genital towards the sadistic-anal phase.

So, as instincts mature, they drive development forward, but if this process stalls or the fused component instincts 'fall apart' again, then development regresses. I have shown that, in relation to beating phantasies, Freud was concerned with instinct repression and Anna Freud with instinct sublimation (Chapter 3). However, it is the *regressive* behaviour of instincts that Freud goes on to develop in relation to masochism, stating that instinct regression will bring about a reactivation of the unconscious guilt once associated with the Oedipus Complex. Specifically, Freud will account for 'moral masochism' in terms of instinct regression through defusion. I discuss the economic aspects of this in greater detail

in Part 2, but here I show how this same unconscious guilt led Freud to reformulate his structure of the psyche. Crucially, Freud is going to introduce a new component to the structure of the mind - the superego. Essential to theories of masochism, the superego is punitive in character and varies in the degree of its sadism toward the ego. And it provides Freud with a further economic 'solution' to the puzzle of masochism.

### 3. The New Structural Model of the Psyche: A New Psychic Agency.

'The Ego and the Id' was a momentous shift in Freud's psychoanalytic theory. It was also fundamental to the development of masochism theory. In this paper, Freud saw the psyche as being divided into three functioning, and inter-functional, bodies: the 'id', the 'ego' and the 'super-ego', the latter replacing his previous idea of an ego-ideal (Strachey's introduction p.10). All three concepts had lengthy past histories 'albeit under different names', but Freud's new paper introduced 'a highly clarifying effect' (Strachey's introduction, p.7). Here, I give a brief outline of each concept indicating their applicability to my thesis, particularly in the idea of both a masochistic ego and a sadistic superego/persecutory parental imago.

#### a) The Id

The id is the most primitive part of the mind in developmental terms. It 'holds' our passions, primitive desires and drives (Freud 1923, p.25). Previously, Freud had used the term 'the system *Ucs*' (unconscious) for this part of the mind<sup>4</sup>. I

---

<sup>4</sup> The ego emerges or buds from this primitive structure as development unfolds. See Strachey's footnotes 1 & 2 (Freud 1923, p.7).



will explain how these psychic agencies, particularly the role of the superego played an essential part in Freud's development of the theory of masochism.

#### b) The Ego

The ego is that part of psychic functioning to which consciousness is attached. The concept is one of a psychic 'agency'; one that supervises all its own processes, which sleeps, which censors dreams, which forms the characteristics of the personality, and is from where repression and other defences proceed (Freud 1923, p.17). There is an initial formation of a prototype which then becomes 'a coherent organisation of mental processes' (Freud 1923, p.17). This repeats much of what Freud said about the fusion of instincts in relation to development of the sense of self. The emergence and growth of the ego from the id is driven by external perceptions (including the skin as described above). The ego represents *common sense* rather than the raw drives and passions of the id. As an essential aid to survival, part of the role of the ego is to displace the pleasure principle which 'reigns unrestrictedly in the id' and to replace it as and when necessary with the reality principle (Freud 1923, p.25). This process is not always successful. The function of the ego is a familiar aspect of all psychoanalytic developmental theories, and therefore of Bion's maternal-infant model of container-contained. The containing model describes the maternal ego as functioning on behalf of the early, immature infant ego. In doing this, the maternal ego drives the development of the infant ego. The view of what the ego is, and does, may not differ much between the classical and the object-relating view, but I suggest one difference lies in *who* is in the driving seat. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5, where I present Bion's object-relating view of psyche-to-psyche communication and the transfer of ego-functions between two minds.

The mechanisms of ego-function, and ego-function transfer, is crucial to my methodology, and data analysis (Chapters 7 and 8, respectively). I will show that certain ego-functions are 'given-up' by the submissive and 'taken-up' by the Domme, in the negotiated agreement of 'power exchange' (PE<sub>x</sub>).

### c) The Superego: A New Psychic Agency

The superego was an important concept, second only to the new division of the mind itself (Strachey's introduction p.10). Freud had assigned consciousness to the ego, but, in a momentous discovery, he saw that part of the ego is also *unconscious* 'in the proper sense of the word' (Freud 1923, p.19). That is, there is some agency which is split off from, but still lying within, the ego. This discrete psychic agency, the 'superego', charged with a self-critical faculty, has implications for theories on masochism. Part of its function is to determine the characteristics of the ego-ideal and apply self-censorship. In fact, in this new model, the 'super-ego' is an unconscious agency, behaving like something repressed and exerting very 'powerful effects' (Freud 1923, p.17). As for its genesis, the superego is derived from the child's earliest object-cathexes which are introjected by the ego from the id. At times this means the introjection of a harsh or even persecutory, guilt-inducing psychic entity, this is generally thought of as a parental imago. To attribute the origin of the superego to these early parental imagoes provides a 'permanent expression to the influence of the parents'; hence Freud's remark that the superego was 'heir to the Oedipus complex' (Freud 1923, p.35). As Strachey pointed out, the superego and its relation to censorship and guilt directly impacts on Freud's theory of masochism (Strachey's introduction, p.11). I will speculate about how characteristics such as those assigned to the superego may be assigned to the person of the BDSM

Domme. In some people, Freud envisioned an excessively strong superego raging against the ego with a merciless violence ‘as if it had taken possession of the whole of the sadism available...’ (Freud 1923, p.53). This he linked directly to the presence and workings of the death instinct, the implication being that the death instinct resides *within*, and hence emanates *out of*, a specific psychic location. This would not only bring together masochism, the new structure of the mind and the new structure of the instincts, but it also implies a relationship between them. The nature of this relationship was developed further in Freud’s paper on masochism which I now present.

## **Part 2a: An Economic Solution (1): New Models of Masochism: Genesis. ‘The Economic Problem of Masochism’ (1924)**

### Introduction

In this final part of my presentation on Freud’s theory of masochism, my aim is to show Freud’s final development and solutions to the existence and economic workings of masochistic phenomena. As the title of his paper suggests, Freud addresses the challenges that masochism brought to his economic model. This is because the pleasure principle could not be reconciled with the phenomenon of pleasure in pain. However, this is another ‘until now’ moment. I will show that whilst the title of this paper suggests *problems*, the paper is actually one of *solutions*.

Directly in the wake of ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (1920) and ‘The Ego and the Id’ (1923), Freud presented an extension of both his new instinct theory and

his new view of psychic agency. In creating a cohesive and convincing 'whole model' of psychic functioning, Freud synthesised and expanded his previous works, the expansion proving easier to grasp than the synthesis. I will show that, whilst Freud keeps masochism under the instinct/economic umbrella, he also set masochism firmly within the workings of his new psychic model. It is the merging of the two that proves difficult to reconcile. At the beginning of my thesis, and in Chapter 2, I argued that Freud's theory on masochism separated into two theoretical strands: economic theory and quasi-object-relating theory. In this Section, an exposition of 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', I will show how Freud came to merge the two aspects through the medium of masochism. Psychoanalysis had entered a 'new world' bringing new concepts and new tools enabling further exposition and new problem solving. The outcome of this chapter shows Freud's final solution(s) to i) the economic problem of masochism, and ii) the economic problem of the pleasure principle. I explain how my research provides an alternative, more cohesive and, I argue, more plausible explanation of masochism. My thesis seeks to show that addressing the problem of masochism with a different tool enables the creation of a new theory that expands economic theory about the origins of masochism. By creating a research or interpretive tool (Chapter 7) and applying it to my thesis data (Chapter 8), I will show how my explanation of masochism is indeed more plausible (Chapter 9).

Strachey's introduction to 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' called this an important work, with Freud's 'fullest account of the puzzling phenomenon of masochism' (Strachey in Freud, p.157). Strachey's recap provides a succinct reminder of Freud's 'masochism journey' up to now. When discussed in 'Three Essay on the Theory of Sexuality' (Freud 1905, p.128), then in 'Instincts and their

Vicissitudes' (Freud 1915, pp.193-194), and then (at greater length) in 'A Child is Being beaten' (Freud 1919a), Freud had dealt with masochism somewhat tentatively (Strachey in Freud, p.157). In each, masochism was considered to derive from a previous sadism, rather than as a primary masochism. However, after the introduction of the 'death instinct' in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', there was a suggestion that there *might* be such a thing as primary masochism' (Freud 1920, p.55), and in this later 1924 paper, the existence of a primary masochism is taken as certain (Strachey in Freud pp.157-158).

In Part 1 of this chapter, I showed how Freud developed three aspects of psychoanalytic theory important to my thesis: erotogenicity of the skin, instinct vicissitudes of fusion-defusion and now re-fusion, and thirdly, the super-ego and instinct regression. I am now going to show how Freud elaborated upon each of these and, in doing so, differentiated between three forms of masochism. Freud stated that:

Masochism comes under our observation in three forms: as a condition imposed on sexual excitation, as an expression of the feminine nature, and as a norm of behaviour. We may, accordingly, distinguish an erotogenic, a feminine and a moral masochism. The first, the erotogenic, masochism - pleasure in pain - lies at the bottom of the other two forms as well. (Freud 1924, p.161).

With regard to moral masochism this is somewhat misleading as it will prove to be pathological rather than a 'norm'. The norm will be ascribed to our 'normal' moral conscience. As I said in Part 1, moral masochism will prove to be a consequence of instinct regression giving rise to a particular ego-superego dialogue.

Freud began his own exegesis with *feminine masochism* because it proved to be the 'most accessible to our observation and least problematical' (Freud 1924, p.161).

### Feminine Masochism

Feminine masochism (in men) was something that Freud appeared to have more than a passing familiarity with, when he stated that there was no need to quote specific case material because of the surfeit of 'material at my command' (Freud 1924, p.161). He described this material as being:

... derived from masochistic - and therefore often impotent - subjects whose phantasies either terminate in an act of masturbation or represent a sexual satisfaction in themselves (Freud 1924, p.161)<sup>5</sup>.

Freud chose the term *feminine* based on *a potiori* evidence or the prevailing trend of his exposition. The principal contents - phantasies of penetration, castration, giving birth and so on - place the subject in a typically female/feminine role (Freud 1924, p.162). He noted that these phantasies 'tally completely' with the 'real-life performances of masochistic perverts', and could either be an end in themselves, or could serve to induce potency and lead to the sexual act (Freud 1924, pp.161-162).

In both cases... the manifest content is of being gagged, bound, painfully beaten, whipped, in some way maltreated, forced into unconditional obedience, dirtied and debased. It is far more rare for mutilations to be included in the content, and then only subject to strict limitations. The

---

<sup>5</sup> Strachey's footnote directs the reader to section VI of 'A Child is Being Beaten' (1919).

obvious interpretation, and one easily arrived at, is that the masochist wants to be treated like a small and helpless child, but, particularly, like a naughty child. (Freud 1924, p.162).

My study of BDSM supports Freud's observations, I have already stated that male submissives seek anal penetration by their Dominatrix; and as I have also already stated, the submissive 'misbehaves' so as to invite castigation. Freud also notes the rarity of 'mutilations' and even if these occur they are subject to strict limitations, again these are features of BDSM. What Freud meant by mutilations is unknown, but I will speculate given my insight into BDSM that these are activities that BDSMers regard as 'edge play'. As I described in my introduction, and as Freud is indicating here, all activities are clearly negotiated before 'play' starts.

Freud notes, the manifest content - whether of phantasy alone or in actual performance - is the same; the material is uniform. Anna Freud had made the case for beating phantasies having a general story line, and my BDSM data sets show the same formulaic construction. This uniformity, I argue, suggests the presence of a specific psychic 'organisation'. For Freud that organisation is Oedipal, a 'superimposed stratification of the infantile and the feminine' (Freud 1924, p.162). For my thesis, that organisation would be a superimposed stratification of infantile containment and the masochistic.

Crucially, Freud observed the common expression of a sense of guilt, manifesting in feminine masochistic phantasy:

... the subject assumes that he has committed some crime (the nature of which is indefinite) which is to be expiated by all these painful and

tormenting procedures. This looks like a superficial rationalisation of the masochistic subject-matter but behind it there lies a connection with infantile masturbation. (Freud 1924, p.162).

By ‘infantile masturbation’, I assume Freud was inferring the same Oedipal guilt that he so strongly implicated in his paper on beating phantasy; the same guilt that Anna Freud described in her paper on daydreams. This guilt and consequent seeking of maltreatment is significant to one of the conclusions I have made from my literature review (Chapter 6), which I have termed ‘baiting’ of the analyst. Heimann (1955), Joseph (1971), and Rosenfeld (1988), all report such behaviour in their case presentations on sado-masochistic patients and all implicate *moral* masochism which I describe below. Baiting and provoking the object so as to invite harsh treatment is a feature of BDSMer ‘submissive’ behaviour too. In BDSM a typical form is ‘I have been a bad boy you must correct me and spank me’. However, in BDSM, this lacks the manifest aggression and demeaning of the object of attention described by Heimann, Joseph and Rosenfeld. In the thesis literature review, I speculate upon whether the ‘baiting’ of the analyst as evidenced in clinical material is, in fact, the same as that which appears in BDSM. The stark difference appears to be in the attitude towards the object - aggressively antagonistic versus cheekily provocative – which raises the question of motivation.

Now, for Freud, guilt went on to be implicated in moral masochism which I describe below, but first he turns to the link between feminine masochism and primary erotogenic masochism, the pleasure in pain. Whilst earlier works focused on erotised *sadism*, Freud’s focus now turned to erotised *masochism* expanding upon instinct theory and the libidinal aspects of psychosexual development.



### *Erotogenic Masochism*

Psychoanalytic theory made erotogenicity an accompanying feature of all phases of development and growth.

Erotogenic masochism accompanies the libido through all its developmental phases and derives from them its changing psychical coatings. The fear of being eaten up by the totem animal (the father) originates from the primitive oral organisation; the wish to be beaten by the father comes from the sadistic-anal phase which follows it; castration, although it is later disavowed, enters into the content of masochistic phantasies as a precipitate of the phallic stage or organisation; and from the final genital organisation there arise, of course, the situation of being copulated with and of giving birth, which are characteristic of femaleness. The part played in masochism by the nates<sup>6</sup>, too, is easily understandable, apart from its obvious basis in reality. The nates are the part of the body which is given erotogenic preference in the sadistic-anal phase, like the breast in the oral phase and the penis in the genital phase (Freud 1924, pp.164-165).

Freud made it clear that erotogenic masochism occurs in the earliest phase of development. As development progresses, 'libidinal sympathetic excitation' due to pain and unpleasure, which is an infantile physiological mechanism, ceases to operate (Freud 1924, p.163). This view of psycho-sexual development provided 'the physiological foundation on which the psychical structure of erotogenic masochism would afterwards be erected' (Freud 1924, p.163). Although as

---

<sup>6</sup> The buttocks: caning, spanking, paddling of the buttocks and so on, are ubiquitous throughout BDSM activities.

development progresses this mechanism fades, the propensity for pleasure in pain will always remain (Freud 1924, p.162), but the impact on a given individual may vary depending on the individual's own sexual constitution.

### *Erotogenicity and the Death Instinct*

Whilst this accounts for the genesis of erotogenic masochism, still 'it sheds no light on the regular and close connections of masochism with its counterpart in instinctual life, sadism' (Freud 1924, p.163). For that, Freud needed the concept of the death instinct. To recap, the goal of the death instinct is to return the self to a state of inorganic stability (Freud 1920). The libido has the task of making the death instinct innocuous, which it does by binding and then diverting the largest portion of the death instinct components outwards, towards the outside world and its objects. This is the destructive instinct, the instinct of mastery, the will to power, this is sadism proper (Freud 1924, p.163). It is in that portion of the death instinct components (those that have remained bound within the ego) 'that we have to recognise the original, erotogenic masochism' (Freud 1924, pp.163-164).

After the main portion of it has been transposed outwards on to objects, there remains inside, as a residuum of it, the erotogenic masochism proper, which on the one hand has become a component of the libido and, on the other still has the self as its object (Freud 1924, p.164).

The inference is that, as Freud went on to say:

If one is prepared to accept a little inexactitude, it may be said that the death instinct which is operative within the organism - primal sadism - is identical with [erotogenic] masochism (Freud 1924, p.164).

Freud had described these economic principles of death instinct function previously (Freud 1920, p.50 and 1923, p.41), but in 1924 he turned his attention to how this mechanism occurs. How can the libido affect this ‘taming of the death instincts’ (Freud 1924, p.164)?

If the death instinct’s trajectory is inwards towards the ego, and if the libido can bind death instinct components in order to divert them outwards, this implies that death instinct components undergo defusion. It equally implies that the libidinal components involved have also undergone defusion in order to ‘accompany’ each portion of the death instinct<sup>7</sup>. Based on the idea of instinct fusion-defusion, it can be assumed that extensive amalgamation, in varying portions, of the two classes of instincts takes place. Pure life-instincts or pure death-instincts will not occur separately but rather exist only as mixtures in varying proportions. Importantly for masochism:

We shall not be surprised to hear that in certain circumstances the sadism, the instinct of destruction, which has been directed outwards, projected, can be once more introjected, turned inwards, and in this way regress to its earlier situation. If this happens, a secondary masochism is produced, which is added to the original masochism (Freud 1924, p.164).

This gives Freud the opportunity to expand on the idea of instinct defusion, which can account for the third form of masochism - moral masochism.

---

<sup>7</sup> Although Freud did not have a physiological explanation for instinct fusion-defusion or binding by the libido, I think a part analogy might be provided by electro-magnetism: Magnets attract and repel depending on their polarity. Imagine the life-instincts turning to face outwards, and, as they turn, they bind, snag or capture death instinct components. This is achieved by some form of ‘attraction’ which can, under some circumstance - normal or abnormal - be reversed.

## *Moral Masochism*

Freud regarded moral masochism to be in some ways ‘the most important form of masochism’ because it was ‘extreme and unmistakably pathological’ (Freud 1924, p.166). The need for punishment is associated with a ‘mostly unconscious sense’ of (Oedipal) guilt (Freud 1924, p.161). The two key points to moral masochism are: i) the ‘loosening’ of its connection with sexuality, ii) it is the *suffering* that is important rather than the *relationship* with a loved object (Freud 1924, p.165).

...moral masochism, is chiefly remarkable for having loosened its connection with what we recognise as sexuality. All other masochistic sufferings carry with them the condition that they shall emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command. This restriction has been dropped in moral masochism. The suffering itself is what matters; whether...decreed by someone who is loved or by someone who is indifferent is of no importance (Freud 1924, p.165).

Freud aligned this with the negative therapeutic reaction he had previously discussed (1919b, 1920), to which he had ascribed an unconscious sense of guilt. The satisfaction of that guilt is the ‘gain from illness’ (Freud 1924, p.166). If a substitute opportunity for suffering arises, an unhappy marriage, income loss, actual organic disease and so on, this easily replaces the initial scenario of illness. All that is required is that the degree of suffering is maintained, and that the need for punishment, for whatever reason, is satisfied. I will begin with Freud’s theory on the formation of normal moral conscience, which he goes on to differentiate from moral masochism, although:

We may be forgiven for having confused the two to begin with; for in both cases it is a question of a relationship between the ego and the superego (or

the powers that are equivalent to it), and in both cases what is involved is a need which is satisfied by punishment and suffering (Freud 1924, p.169).

Freud provided the moral conscience-moral masochism differential there. In both, there is an ego-superego relationship; and in both there is a need that requires satisfaction by suffering and punishment. However, a different emphasis is placed on the nature of that relationship. Essentially, in moral *conscience*, guilt is conscious with a sadistic superego; in moral *masochism* guilt is unconscious with a masochistic ego.

We are all aware of *conscious* guilt (our conscience), but unconscious guilt is, by definition, something we are not aware of. Whether conscious or unconscious, the source of the guilt is the same, the superego (Freud 1924, p.166).

#### *Moral Conscience: Sadism of the Superego*

Freud asserted that our sense of ethics comes from the first instinctual renunciation: the resolution of the Oedipus complex and formation of the superego (Freud 1924, p.170). The first object, the libidinalised parental imago, is formed in the id. The superego is formed when that object is introjected into the fabric of the ego forming a discrete entity. For introjection to occur, the parental imago is delibidinalised, that is, stripped of its libidinal components.

Delibidinalisation diverts the sexual aims, thus resolving the Oedipus complex. However, the associated guilt remains and becomes a characteristic of the superego (Freud 1924, p.167). Other features of the parental imago - its strengths, its severity, its punitive characteristics - are also retained, although these may not accurately reflect the characteristics of the actual parents. Our

sense of moral conscience, our sense of ethics, emerges as a function of these superego characteristics.

The superego exerts pressure on the ego, making the ego strive to reach its own ideal. For some, these demands are from a particularly harsh superego making the ego-ideal extremely difficult or even impossible to meet. This can create:

... an impression of being morally inhibited to an excessive degree, of being under the domination of an especially sensitive conscience, although they are not conscious of any of this ultra-morality. This is an unconscious extension of morality *due to heightened sadism of the super-ego* (Freud 1924, pp.168-169. My emphasis).

Either way, the result provides the individual with his sense of moral conscience (Freud 1924, p.168). *This is not moral masochism* (Freud 1924, p.169).

#### *Moral Masochism: Masochism of the Ego*

The theory of moral masochism enabled Freud to further speculate on the processes of instinct fusion-defusion, but with the emphasis on *instinct refusion*. If instinct delibidinalisation infers a process of component instinct defusion, then conversely, relibidinalisation infers a process of component instinct re-fusion. It is a re-fusion of libidinalised components that gives rise to moral masochism, and further, re-fusion is an instinct regression: regression from morality to the Oedipus complex (Freud 1924, p.169).

Moral masochism may have loosened its bonds with sexuality (Freud 1924, p.165), but, through component instinct refusion and relibidinalisation, morality becomes sexualised once more. What I have termed 'reignition' of unconscious

Oedipal guilt, increases the ego's own masochism and this manifests as the need for punishment at the hands of a parental power. *This is moral masochism* (Freud 1924, p.169).

...through moral masochism morality becomes sexualised once more, the Oedipus complex is revived (Freud 1924, p.169).

Whilst moral masochism provided Freud with a classical piece of evidence for the existence of instinct re-fusion (Freud 1924, p.170), it also presented danger to the sufferer. If death instincts, that have escaped being turned outwards as (sadistic) instincts of destruction, have been re-fused and in so become erotised, then even the subject's self-destruction is libidinalised (Freud 1924, p.170).

Having developed a new theory of psychic agency, and having identified three forms of masochism, and providing satisfactory accounts for their genesis, one economic problem of masochism remained: the economic problem of the pleasure principle.

**Part 2b. An Economic Solution (2): A New Model of Psychic Governance: The Nirvana principle. 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924)**

I have shown and explained Freud's developing and expanding ideas on instinct form and function. I have shown how instinct theory was enhanced and elaborated through Freud's extended consideration of masochism. I am going to show how Freud solved the last part of the masochism conundrum by a reconsideration of psychic governance, specifically a new view of the Nirvana principle and its influence over the pleasure principle.

From 1911, mental processes were understood to be governed by ‘a special case of Fechner’s tendency towards stability’ (Freud 1920, p.9). Freud preferred the term ‘principle of constancy’ (Freud 1920, p.56), whilst his colleague, Barbara Low, had proposed the term Nirvana Principle (Low 1920, p.73). According to these principles:

Every unpleasure ought thus to coincide with a heightening of, and every pleasure with a lowering of mental tension due to stimulus; the Nirvana principle (and the pleasure principle which is supposedly identical with it) would be entirely in the service of the death instincts, whose aim is to conduct the restlessness of life into the stability of the inorganic state (Freud 1924, pp.159-160).

Freud considered that, for the most part, the above still held true, but this was another ‘until now’ moment. Such a view cannot be correct because, as he knew but had not thus far acknowledged, some increases in tension are in fact *pleasurable*.

The state of sexual excitation is the most striking example of a pleasurable increase of stimulus of this sort, but it is certainly not the only one (Freud 1924, p.160). In those situations, there must be some other influence. Freud had accepted Low’s view of the Nirvana principle as equivalent to the pleasure principle in 1920, but by 1924 he could no longer accept it. The notion of a linear correlation between pleasure-unpleasure and decreases-increases in stimulus or tension was no longer viable. This presented an ‘economic problem’. Freud had considered a possible functional variation in physiological energy in ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ (Freud 1920, pp.8, 63), which he brought to some fruition here



in 1924. Rather than a quantitative differential being the whole story, perhaps something like the rhythm, or the temporal sequencing of impulses might also produce qualitative influences (Freud 1924, p.160). Freud's solution was a reassignment of the governing principles of psychic functioning, specifically by differentiating between the pleasure principle and the Nirvana principle.

... we must perceive that the Nirvana principle, belonging as it does to the death instinct, has undergone a modification in the living organism through which it has become the pleasure principle; and we shall hence forward avoid regarding the two principles as one. (Freud 1924, p.160).

Recognition that the two are not one enabled Freud to solve, not so much the economic problem of masochism, but rather as I argue, the economic problem of the pleasure principle. The point to focus on is the term 'modification' - something acts upon the death instinct, and for Freud, there is only one force powerful enough to do so: the libido (Freud 1924, p.160). If, as Freud believed, the *death* instincts have a propensity to return the self to an initial state of inertia, then the life-instincts must directly regulate the mechanisms of psychic functioning (Freud 1924, p.160).

In this way we obtain a small but interesting set of connections. The Nirvana principle expresses the trend of the death instinct; the pleasure principle represents the demand of the libido; and the modification of the latter principle, the reality principle, represents the influence of the external world (Freud 1924, p.160).

Freud went on,

None of these three principles is actually put out of action by another. As a rule they are able to tolerate one another, although conflicts are bound to arise occasionally from the fact of the differing aims that are set for each --

in one case a quantitative reduction of the load of stimulus [Pleasure Principle], in another a qualitative characteristic of the stimulus [Nirvana Principle], and, lastly (in the third case), a postponement of the discharge of the stimulus and a temporary acquiescence in the unpleasure due to tension [Reality Principle] (Freud 1924, p.161).

The pleasure principle remained open to modification by the reality principle, but the libido's modification of the Nirvana principle in qualitative terms means the Nirvana principle *becomes*, and so acts like, the pleasure principle. The response to a rise in tension was still assigned to the pleasure principle, but the change in quantity isn't the whole change: the Nirvana principle modifies the pleasure principle in *qualitative* terms. This means pleasure can then be 'experienced' in response to all sorts of incoming stimuli even if it is in the form of pain. What is important is that these mechanisms are involved in the pleasure-unpleasure series and therefore involved in the mechanisms that give rise to pleasure-in-pain. By differentiating between the Nirvana Principle and the pleasure principle, and by introducing a modification of one by the other, Freud had a solution to the economic problem of masochism and how pleasure can arise from pain.

I find Freud's reconstruction of the pleasure principle the most 'technically' difficult part of this work to grasp. It is hard to align these purely economic considerations with the new model of the psyche. However, it is here that 'synthesis' of instinct and mind can be shown.

The concept of instinct mutability had accompanied instinct theory throughout its development; the idea was implicit in the notion of binding and unbinding of libidinalised component instincts (Freud 1905, 1915). And in 1920, Freud

considered the death instinct to be libidinally bound within the ego, although a portion of the death instinct had the propensity for redirection outwards. To have part of itself redirected, and part remain behind, indicates that the components of the death instinct must have undergone some division: a defusion. The portion remaining within the ego, libidinally bound, indicates a *fusion* with those libidinal components.

The theory of moral masochism shows normal instinct defusion as a process of *delibidinalisation*. As this occurs upon introjection of the parental imago into the body of the ego, thereby forming the superego, it can be said that the physiological process of instinct defusion 'creates' an intrapsychic body. If re-libidinalisation occurs, a re-fusion of libidinal components, this directly modifies psychic experience. When Freud spoke of movement from one psychosexual phase to another -- instinct progression and regression -- these are the types of processes that occur. When Freud thought of the Nirvana principle modifying the pleasure principle by bringing about some qualitative change, I speculate that these are the sort of processes he would have envisaged.

That is, external or internal influences may cause biophysiological changes such as fusion-defusion, or re-fusion in the structure, and hence the operation, of some component instincts. The discrete psychic agencies -- the id, the ego and the superego -- are all energised by instinctual energy. As a consequence of stimulation, internal or external psychic function and psychic experiences of the mind are modified.

Before I end this Chapter I am going to make some comments on BDSM.

I support Freud's efforts to differentiate between types of masochism, my data provides evidence and offers illumination. As Freud observed, whilst castigation, pain and apparent suffering are invited in masochism, like in BDSM, the aim is not to invite *harm or destruction*. Unlike erotogenic and feminine forms of masochism, moral masochism, the rejection of a chance 'to get better', as Freud described in the negative therapeutic reaction, is not a feature of BDSM. I shall take this point up in my review of object-relations literature (Chapter 6) in which Heimann, Joseph and Rosenfeld all make reference to moral masochism as a feature of their clinical subjects, specifically the provocative behaviour I have already discussed. Provocation of the Domme by the submissive is an altogether different affair for whilst there is an apparent similarity, the two are not equivalent due to the crucial matter of the *object*. In moral masochism the harbinger of the suffering is arbitrary. It could be the loved object, it could be the analyst, but it is just as likely to be the subject's particular life circumstances, some anonymous power or form of authority. It is the *suffering* that is 'valuable to the masochistic trend' (Freud 1924, p.166), this is not the case in BDSM.

BDSM is an activity seeking a relationship with an object that has very specific features. The object (the Domme) is far from arbitrary, she is sought out to fulfil a specific role. In my thesis, I argue that there is a significant process at work in the BDSM relationship – it is the seeking of a containing type process with the aim of *alleviating* rather than *prolonging* pain.

In conclusion, in my initial enquiry led by communicating with a BDSM group, Bion's theory of a *containing* experience had emerged as an unexpected

motivational force behind masochistic pleasure (Chapter 1). I have reviewed Freud's 'classical' psychoanalytic view of the phenomenon of masochism (Chapters 2, 3 and 4), and shown that it was a puzzle he pursued because it would not conveniently 'fit' into his economic theory of psychic governance - specifically the pleasure principle. I have also shown that Freud considered using something of a quasi-object-relating approach to understand the phenomenon of beating phantasies by associating them with vicissitudes of the Oedipus complex. That an object relations approach may account for masochistic phenomena warrants further investigation. My thesis seeks to show that the British object-relations school of psychoanalysis may provide an alternative model to classical or economic theory because masochism may have its roots in an organisation more primitive than the Oedipus complex. This does not negate Freud's observations. This ends my exegesis of Freud's economically based concepts of instinct form and function with emphasis on the psychoanalytic understanding of masochism. I am now going to provide an exposition of the second of my thesis concepts, Bion's object-relations theory of containment.

## **Chapter 5: Bion's Object-Relating Theory of Container-Contained: The History and Development of the Concept.**

### Introduction

In this chapter, I am going to provide a detailed exposition of Bion's concept of 'containment' or, as he preferred to call it, 'container-contained' (♀♂)<sup>8</sup>. This is a model of *substantive* mind-to-mind interaction originating in maternal-infant psychic functioning and manifesting later in the analyst-analysand relationship. According to Bion, the goal of maternal psychic functioning is to help the infant in the processing of anxiety. The mother takes in – introjects – the infant's anxiety and does something very specific with it. She not only acts as a receptacle, a 'container' for the infant's anxious projections, but she modifies and ameliorates them with her own maternal functioning. This is an inherent maternal ability, and, all being well with that ability, she 'contains' the infant's anxiety and the infant becomes 'contained'. My enquiry argues that a form of this maternal role as container of anxiety is enacted by BDSM's 'Dominant' participant. Like the mother, the Domme facilitates the psychic processing, and ameliorates, that is 'contains', the experiential pain of the 'submissive' or masochistic participant. I argue, therefore, that aspects of the container-contained relationship are intrinsic to the BDSM interaction.

---

<sup>8</sup> Bion utilised the combined symbols of male-female to represent a 'linking' between two entities: mouth-nipple, penis-vagina, psyche-psyche, thought-thinker, one ego inside another; all hints of a common pattern based on Oedipal function to denote Container-contained.

In this chapter, I aim to:

- Provide a brief history of the concept of projective identification via the concepts of:
  - Unconscious phantasy.
  - Splitting of the ego (a schizoid mechanism).
  - 'Excessive' projective identification (PI<sup>e</sup>)
  
- Provide a detailed exposition of Bion's recognition of a *normal* form of projective identification, and the consequent development of Container-contained theory via the concepts of:
  - 'Normal' projective identification (PI<sup>n</sup>).
  - Projective identification as having a communicative function.
  - Splitting, including the debate over degrees of splitting.
  
- Explain why the debate over excessive and normal projective identification is crucial to my thesis.

This divides the chapter into two parts:

Part 1. A brief presentation of:

- a) Projection and Introjection: Classical concepts.
- b) Excessive Projective Identification: Klein's development (PI<sup>e</sup>).

Part 2. A detailed exegesis of:

- a) Normal Projective Identification: Bion's development (PI<sup>n</sup>).
- b) Container-Contained: Bion's model.

As in my exposition of Freud's work, I will confine my presentation mostly to the original works. I will add some latter-day commentary for the purposes of clarification and make further comments in relation to my thesis hypothesis.

## **Part 1. Object Relations Theory of Container-Contained: The History of the Concept**

### a) Projection and Introjection: Classical Concepts; Freud; Ferenczi; Abraham.

#### *Freud*

Freud first used the concept of projection in 1895, in correspondence with his friend and colleague Fleiss. Freud wrote, that the purpose of paranoia is to:

... fend off an idea that is incompatible with the ego, by projecting its substance into the external world... Whenever an internal change occurs, we have the choice of assuming either an internal or an external cause..[and] if something deters us from the internal derivation, we shall naturally seize upon the external one (Freud 1895, p.209. Draft H)<sup>9</sup>.

For Freud, projection was the failure to recognise what is and what is not part of oneself: 'what is me and what is not me'. The usual example given by Freud was jealousy, which he described as the projection outwards onto others of something that one does not wish to see in oneself (Freud 1922 [1921], p.226)<sup>10</sup>. Of that projection, Freud said:

---

<sup>9</sup> Extracts from the Fliess Papers (Freud 1895, p.211, see fig 4), published shortly after, linking the idea of projection to the state of paranoia (1896, pp.157-185).

<sup>10</sup> The ample footnotes in Freud's 1925 paper 'Negation' demonstrate a long history of attribution, the affirmation or dis-affirmation of whether something possesses a particular facet or feature (Strachey's introduction to S.E., Vol. XIX, p.234-236).



The attribute... may originally have been good or bad, useful or harmful. Expressed in the language of the oldest - the oral - instinctual impulses, the judgement is: 'I should like to eat this' or 'I should like to spit it out'; and put more generally: 'I should like to take this into myself and to keep that out'. That is to say: 'it shall be inside me' or 'it shall be outside me' (Freud 1925, p.237).

### *Ferenczi*

Freud's colleague, Sandor Ferenczi, in considering the enormity and the benefit of taking into oneself something (not yet *someone*) helpful, coined the term 'introjection'. Ferenczi made the distinction between excessive *introjection* by the neurotic personality (an *oral* impulse) and a corresponding excessive *projection*, an anal impulse, by the psychotic personality.

... whereas the paranoiac expels from his ego the impulses that have become unpleasant, the neurotic helps himself by taking into the ego as large as possible a part of the outside world, making it the object of unconscious fantasies... (Ferenczi 1909, p.47).

### *Abraham*

Ferenczi's idea of oral/anal processes, and cycles of incorporation/expulsion were taken up extensively by Freud's colleague Karl Abraham. Whilst Freud was interested in the *source* and the *aim* of an instinct, the object being more or less arbitrary, (as I discussed in Chapter 2), Abraham was very concerned with the fate of the object. His focus was on the subjective phantasies of the psychotic mind, wherein phantasies of objects moving in and out of the self were a very concrete experience. By breaking down Freud's 'developmental stages' into

subsets, Abraham could show associations between oral, anal and genital phases of libidinal development. He could also show that specific sadistic phases were characterised by their relationship to the object. By developing the idea of part-objects and splitting mechanisms, he suggested that *parts* of the object could be projected, and parts could be introjected (Abraham 1921, 1925).

In describing a manic-depressive sufferer, Abraham presented the case of a young man who phantasised biting off physical parts of his fiancé such as her ear lobe, and of biting off his father's fingers. In phantasy, he was literally biting off part of a whole body or part of a whole object (Abraham 1924, p.487). During depressive episodes, libido was withdrawn from the loved object and so the fiancé was rejected - hated not loved. Whilst I argue that this may be a comparable idea to Freud's notion of 'changes in direction of the libido', Abraham concerned himself with 'changes in attitude towards the object'. Rejection of the loved object, in some sense, means it is lost. It was the patient's subjective description of the loss of the object that interested Abraham. Abraham made a particular kind of link between the patient's relapses, and a certain kind of interaction with the object. Generally, Abraham equated introjection with oral, incorporative processes and projection with anal phantasies of expulsion and defaecation. He noted that, when the depression was most severe, the young man experienced a coinciding compulsion to contract his anal sphincter. The fear of loss, the feeling that the object was slipping away, manifested in a bodily experience as an attempt to hold on to the hated 'shitty' fiancé. She must be physically located within him, that is, introjected in the attempt to prevent expulsion and loss.

As we know, such a retention symbolises possession, and it has its prototype in the unconscious. Thus, the patient's transitory symptom stood

for a retention, in the physical sense, of the object which he was once more in danger of losing. (Abraham 1924, pp.442-443).

Freud had dealt with the loss of the object in the 1917 seminal paper 'Mourning & Melancholia', but here, Abraham linked the anxious attempts to restore the lost object with associated unconscious phantasies. Crucial was Abraham's emphasis on the *object* and the relationship with it. Whether projected or introjected, he stressed that there is a dialogue between the ego and the object. From this brief discussion, projection can be understood in terms of the capacity to phantasise, thereby attributing the character of an internal object to another (external) person. This could mean; the externalisation of internal conflict; the attribution to another of what actually belongs to oneself; a process of expulsion, say of an internal object; a process of introjection and reintroduction<sup>11</sup>. Abraham's work focussed on the importance of the object, and the processes of introjection and projection. This provided the foundation for Klein's development of a two-person, object-relating psychology. Freud, for the most part, was concerned with the projection and introjection of *impulses*, Abraham with the projection/introjection of *objects*; but Klein offered something different in the notion of *projecting parts of oneself, one's own ego* along with feelings, impulses and objects.

---

<sup>11</sup> I suggest there is a parallel here with Freud's view of instinct regression, such as that described in moral masochism which 'reignites' Oedipally associated unconscious guilt (Chapter 5, Part 2).

## b) Excessive Projective Identification: Klein's Development (PI<sup>(e)</sup>)<sup>12</sup>

From 1946, when Klein gave her classical description in 'Notes on some schizoid mechanisms', projective identification came to be recognised as a frequently encountered mechanism, the concept contributes to her enduring influence. Although both of her mentors, Ferenczi and Abraham, paid more attention to phantasy than to underlying instinctual mechanisms, Klein brought something specific and more sophisticated to the concept of projection. Splitting had been understood by Freud to be a 'falling apart' process, whereby the ego divides itself for reasons pertaining to the reality principle. But for Klein, splitting was a much more violent affair, occurring under the direction of the death instinct.

What Klein proposed was that, along with our unwanted (disowned) thoughts, feelings and desires, part of the *ego* itself is also projected. Part of one's own ego experience, and the ego-functions that created that experience, are 'split' off. That split off part of the self, with its ego-contents, are projected *into* another person. In other words, part of the self is relocated<sup>13</sup>.

Klein said:

... attacks on the mother's breast develop  
into attacks of a similar nature on her body... an extension of the breast...

---

<sup>12</sup> From here on I will use the following notation to differentiate between Klein's excessive projective identification as **PI<sup>(e)</sup>**, and Bion's normal projective identification as **PI<sup>(n)</sup>**.

<sup>13</sup> I find it helpful to visualise a parcel containing a gift (wanted-unwanted). The gift is equivalent to *the content* of the projection, the piece of 'experience'. The wrapper encompassing the gift is the accompanying piece of *split off ego*. It is the ego, the wrapper, that has actually 'created' the content-experience.

The phantasised onslaughts on the mother follow two main lines: one is the predominantly oral impulse to suck dry... rob the mother's body of its good contents... (introjection). The other line of attack derives from the anal and urethral impulses and implies expelling dangerous substances (excrements) out of the self and into the mother. Together with these harmful excrements, expelled in hatred, split-off parts of the ego are also projected onto mother. These excrements and bad parts of the self are meant not only to injure but also to control and to take possession of the object... mother comes to contain the bad part of the self, she is not felt to be... separate... but is felt to be *the* bad self (Klein 1946, p.8. Klein's emphasis).

And

Much of the hatred against parts of the self is now directed towards the mother. This leads to a particular form of identification which establishes 'the prototype of an aggressive object-relation'... I suggest for these processes the term 'projective identification' (Klein 1946, p.8)<sup>14</sup>.

These are primitive processes operating at a deep level. It is a violent affair; it is a psychotic event. The ego has attacked itself, and both ego and ego-contents are fragmented. Such can be the degree of *ego-impoverishment*, with so much of the 'self' projected elsewhere that the person may feel as though he has no whole mindedness; he has become either lost or imprisoned within the other.

---

<sup>14</sup> The psychoanalytic world takes 1946 as a given even though Klein added the specific term 'projective identification' to the republication of the 1946 paper in 1952.

Klein explained that describing such primitive processes is difficult because such phantasies would arise at a time prior to the infant being able to think in words (pre-symbolic). To use a term such as 'to project into another' seemed to be the only way she could think of to describe such unconscious processes (Klein 1946, p.8 footnote).

Neither Klein nor Kleinian writers have made it clear that what Klein terms *excessive* projections and projective identification are synonymous. It is taken as given that projective identification only occurs when projections are excessive. This implies that projective identification is a pathological projection. Klein could have made things a little easier to grasp if excessive projective identification had been termed *over*-projecting, or some such term that would have set it in relation to a standard. Bell took up a similar point in his discussion of projective identification when he suggested that the use of 'attribution' would have been less confusing than identification (Bell 2001, p.127). Bion also said something related to this matter when he pointed out that,

When Melanie Klein speaks of 'excessive' projective identification I think the term excessive should be understood to apply not to the frequency only of which projective identification is employed but to excess of belief in omnipotence (Bion 1962 [1961], p.114).

Projective identification is not easily understood. This is partly because its meaning has become expanded and, as a consequence, somewhat watered down. Typically, the concepts of projection and projective identification are often used interchangeably which adds confusion to an already complicated idea. As Hinshelwood describes it, *excessive* projective identification (PI<sup>(e)</sup>) has been denuded of its original Kleinian meaning as a manifestation of aggression and

self-attack (Hinshelwood 1991, p.181). Some notable writers even think that distinguishing between the two is unnecessary. Spillius, for example, said:

I do not think it useful to distinguish projection from projective identification. What Klein did... was to add depth and meaning to Freud's concept of projection by emphasising that one cannot project impulses without part of the ego (Spillius 1983, p.322).

I would suggest that Spillius gives us the crux of the matter: it is the idea of the ego splitting off parts of itself and being projected, along with its *ego-contents* and *ego-functions*, that is specific to Klein's theory. For Klein, projective identification was always excessive and always pathological. Bion's great leap forward was the recognition of differences in the *degree* of splitting; and that not all projective identification entails aggression, annihilation and obliteration.

In the second part of this chapter, I will show how Bion described his realisation that projective identification was not always pathological, but, had 'normal' functions that are communicative rather than evacuative. I go on to show how this realisation laid the foundations for Bion's own remarkable contribution to object-relations theory: the development of the container-contained model.

The debate about what is and what is not excessive projective identification is a debate crucial to my thesis methodology. To establish whether there is evidence to support my hypothesis, my data has to be analysed in accordance with Bion's *normal* projective identification PI<sup>(n)</sup>, rather than with Klein's PI<sup>(e)</sup> which has no part in Bion's containing model. In Chapter 7, I shall return to discuss the specific features of Klein's PI<sup>(e)</sup> where I formulate an operationalising process to augment Hinshelwood's 1991 definition (Hinshelwood 1991, p.179). My aim there

will be to differentiate between Klein's and Bion's versions of projective identification which supports my construction of a research device for data analysis.

## **Part 2. Object Relations Theory of Container-Contained: Development of the Concept.**

### Introduction

Bion is credited with the recognition that some forms of projective identification are not only *normal* but can be a clinically effective communicative tool. He recognised that patients use a form of projective identification to communicate. In one particular patient Bion realised that the patient was waiting for a specific type of response from the analyst (Bion), rather than seeing the analyst as being something to evacuate into. This discovery came at a time when there was an atmosphere of change within the field of psychoanalysis; specifically, understanding of the 'countertransference' was being challenged. Historically, countertransference, the experiential phenomenon wherein the analyst's own feelings are stirred up by the patient's projections, was regarded as something to be guarded against. But this view was being questioned because, by its very nature, the countertransference was always going to be 'specific' to the individual patient-analyst relationship (Heimann, 1950). As such it could be a very precise instrument for use within the analytic process.



The view of the countertransference changed from something to be avoided and controlled to a sophisticated tool central to psychoanalytic technique. It was within this climate that Bion recognised that there was something in projective identification that had also been overlooked. Like the countertransference, projective identification could be something positive and helpful. I am going to show Bion's contribution to Klein's legacy of projective identification through three of his closely published works. These three texts - 'Attacks on Linking' (1959), 'Theory of Thinking' (1961)<sup>15</sup> and 'Learning from Experience' (1962) culminate in the mature model of container-contained (which I describe below in Part 2b).

#### a) Bion's development of Normal PI<sup>(n)</sup>

##### Introduction

Before describing Bion's model of container-contained (♀♂), I am going to clarify how he eventually differentiated *excessive* projective identification (PI<sup>(e)</sup>) from *normal* projective identification (PI<sup>(n)</sup>). As I explained above, my proposed methodology depends on creating an operationalised model of ♀♂ and this model features only PI<sup>(n)</sup>. My hypothesis argues that it is the *normal* form of projective identification, specific to Bion's container-contained theory, that is active in the BDSM relationship.

---

<sup>15</sup> 1962 is usually given as the date of publication, but it was read to a symposium as 'The Psychoanalytic Study of Thinking' at the IPA in 1961. I have chosen to use the earlier date to establish the temporal flow of Bion's developing ideas.

*'Attacks on Linking' (Bion 1959)<sup>16</sup>.*

In 'Attacks on Linking' (1959), Bion's overall focus was on the link between the mind and the operative functions in the ego. In the section entitled 'Denial of Normal Degrees of Projective Identification', Bion wrote:

In her 'Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms' (p.7) Melanie Klein speaks of the importance of an excessive employment of splitting and projective identification in the production of a very disturbed personality. She also speaks of the 'introjection of the good object, first of all the mother's breast' as a 'precondition for normal development'. I shall suppose that there is a normal degree of projective identification, without defining the limits within which normality lies (Bion 1959, pp.102-103).

Bion's supposition of a *normal* form of PI came from his clinical work, for example:

The impression derives partly from a feature in a patient's analysis which was difficult to interpret because it did not appear to be sufficiently obtrusive at any moment for an interpretation... Throughout the analysis the patient resorted to projective identification with a persistence suggesting it was a mechanism of which he had never been able sufficiently to avail himself; the analysis afforded him an opportunity for the exercise of a mechanism of which he had been cheated... There were sessions which led me to suppose that the patient felt there was some object that denied him the use of projective identification (Bion 1959, p.103)

---

16 Initially published in the *IJP* Vol. 40, Parts 5-6 (1959). Quotes here from *Second Thoughts* (1967)

And

When the patient strove to rid himself of fears of death which were felt to be too powerful for his personality to contain he split off his fears and put them into me, the idea apparently being that if they were allowed to repose there long enough they would undergo modification by my psyche and could then be safely reintrojected...the patient had felt... that I evacuated them so quickly that the feelings were not modified, but had become more painful (Bion 1959, p.103).

The above quotes introduce what would become ♀♂ theory in Bion's 1962 'Learning from Experience'. The fact that the patient's communication needs to be sufficiently intrusive for the analyst 'to get hold of it' confers upon the recipient of normal projective identification an *active* role. The fact that the patient continues to try, despite continual failure, infers the need for a very particular response. Both the intrusiveness of the patient and the expectation of a certain response from the analyst confer upon PI<sup>(n)</sup> the attributes of an inherent infantile developmental structure. That the container-contained structure is a mechanism integral to the maternal-infant relationship is vital to my argument that a form of, or elements of, this infantile communicative mechanism manifest in the BDSM relationship. Just as the infant is seeking a specific type of response from the mother, the submissive seeks a specific response from the Domme; and nothing else will do. The Domme's role, like the evolutionary-determined role of the mother, appears to be 'set in stone'. My data analysis will show that the Dominant role is played out according to clear stereotypes. The Domme 'has to do this' and 'has to do that' otherwise she is not considered to be 'Domming' in the required way.

To go back to Bion, he observed that there was an increasing emotional intensity in the patient identified in the quote above. He related this to the patient's frustration over what seemed to be his (Bion's) refusal to accept the patient's projections; or, more specifically, the projected parts of the patient's own ego. Consequently, the patient 'strove to force them into me with increased desperation and violence' (Bion 1959 p.104). This is conversant with what I have shown of Klein's 'excessive projective identification'. Bion acknowledged that, out of context, the patient's increased desperation could appear to be an expression of primary aggression (Klein's version of the death instinct). Whilst this patient did express unprovoked aggression, crucially Bion interpreted it as a response to what the patient felt to be Bion's hostile defence.

The analytic situation built up in my mind a sense of witnessing an extremely early scene. I felt that the patient had witnessed in infancy a mother who dutifully responded to the infant's emotional displays. The dutiful response had in it the element of impatient 'I don't know what's the matter with the child'... In order to understand what the child wanted the mother should have treated the infant's cry as more than a demand for her presence. From the infant's point of view she should have taken into her, and thus experienced, the fear that the child was dying (Bion 1959, p.104). According to Bion, an adequately functioning mother takes the infant's fear of dying *into* herself so that she might alleviate that fear. A good-enough mother can tolerate this whilst maintaining a balanced view. An infant's cry is more than the wish for the mother's presence; it is the wish that she is able to 'take from him' his projected fear. An emotionally distant mother, although present and responsive in that she is 'there' in attendance, is not 'there' in terms of being accessible. Rather than being receptive to her infant's projections, she utilises a

'blocking' mechanism against him. I discuss more on the features of the maternal 'countenance' in chapter 7 when I present research concerning the infant at risk (Briggs 1997).

Bion felt that, as an infant, this patient:

... had to deal with a mother who could not tolerate experiencing such feelings and reacted either by denying them ingress, or alternatively by becoming a prey to the anxiety which resulted from introjection of the infant's feelings (Bion 1959, p.104).

A mother who either denies her infant such ingress, or who herself becomes prey to the child's anxiety, is not able to introject and modify (that is *contain*) her infant's dread. Bion felt that this was a central feature of his patient's early environment (Bion 1959, p.105), hence the patient's more and more forceful use of projective identification.

He strove to split it [the fear] off together with the part of the personality<sup>17</sup> in which it lay and project it into the mother (Bion 1959, p.104).

I have quoted extensively from Bion's paper because he was working towards something momentous. For Bion, this patient demonstrated an infant whose mother did not give allowances for his projections, thereby inviting excessive (intrusive) projective identification. This analysis suggested that projective identification could have different motives and aims, which provided Bion with the differentiation between  $PI^{(n)}$  and  $PI^{(e)}$ . That is, there is a specific demand being made by projective identification whether it is normal ( $PI^{(n)}$ ) or excessive ( $PI^{(e)}$ ). Rather than just expunge something, the infant's projective identification is

---

<sup>17</sup> Read as 'part of the ego'.

*communicative*. It is trying to 'say something' by non-verbal (pre-symbolic) means. That is projective identification could be thought of as having one of two alternative aims:<sup>18</sup>

*Evacuative* : This is characteristic of *excessive* PI and describes the Kleinian view of a need to *violently* evacuate a terrible state of mind. This is done (in phantasy) by forcibly projecting into and *breaching* the psyche of another (the lavatory mother) to access immediate relief for an intolerable state of mind.

*Communicative*: This is characteristic of *normal* PI. It aims to introduce a state of mind *into* another, in order to *communicate* that state of mind to the object. This is done in order that the other psyche, that of the object, can help *modify* that state of mind. The auxiliary/maternal mind has a function to perform.

It is the latter *communicative* aim that is crucial to my thesis because, as I argue, it is this form of projective identification (PI<sup>(n)</sup>) that is active in BDSM. The point Bion was making is that PI<sup>(n)</sup> is different from PI<sup>(e)</sup> in motive, violence and aggression. Implicit in the process is the role of another mind. Often an infant's feelings are too powerful for his own personality to cope with (contain), so he seeks another personality that *can* contain those feelings, or, to 'think' his thoughts. This was a step on the way to the model of container-contained and leads us to take a brief look at Bion's paper 'A Theory of Thinking'.

#### b) Bion's development of the Container-Contained Model.

---

<sup>18</sup> Arguably there is a third, emphasised by Rosenfeld, of 'denial of separateness' in relation to the Reality Principle.

'A Theory of Thinking' (1962 [1961])

Introduction

This preliminary paper, presented just prior to *Learning from Experience* (1962), formed something of an abstract to the later book. However, I want to emphasise this paper's further consideration of 'the mind of another' and its function. This could be seen to pre-empt Bion's differentiation between the motives of projective identification by one mind, and the provision of *alpha-function* by another mind, which he explores in *Learning from Experience*' The point I want to emphasise is his idea that 'thinking' is performed by one mind on behalf of another mind. Bion theorised that *thoughts* pre-date *thinking*. That is, because the infant's psyche is incapable of symbolic thought (it is pre-symbolic) the apparatus to think *with* must be located elsewhere (Bion 1962, p.110).

Before the infant psyche develops his own apparatus for thinking, the maternal mind performs thinking on *behalf of* the infant psyche. The infant projects his 'thoughts', which are in search of a thinker; the maternal mind then 'thinks' the infant's thoughts. That is, the infant's projections evoke the response 'thinking' in the mother.

My thesis argues that this is the situation sought through the BDSM interaction. The BDSM scenario is an enactment of pre-symbolic thinking. The submissive projects not his thoughts, but his troublesome primitive feelings or experiences into the mind of another, the Domme. It is her role to take in and 'think' his thoughts for him, she gives meaning to his thoughts by representing them and

acting them out in the form of pain or humiliation. It is this primitive state of mind, pre-symbolic, pre-ability to contain one's own unpleasant experiences and feelings that my thesis argues is the submissive's motivation in seeking out the D/s of BDSM. It is elements of this primitive form of the containing process that I aim to show in my thesis data. In chapter 7, I show how I identified elements of this interaction as they manifest within a two-person sadomasochistic mode of relating. I have described the submissive's projection of his worrying feelings into the Domme, and this is Bion's own model of the way in which the infant projects his own anxiety into the maternal mind. If the infant's projections are worrisome, then the infant's aim is to evoke 'worry' in the mother.

A well-balanced mother can accept these and respond therapeutically: that is to say in a manner that makes the infant feel it is receiving its frightened personality back again, but in a form that it can tolerate - the fears are manageable by the infant's personality (Bion 1962a, p.115).

This is a progression from what Bion had discussed in 'Attacks on Linking' regarding his patient who was denied normal projective identification (Bion 1959, p.103). In 'A theory of thinking', Bion expanded on the maternal role of supporting the development of the infant's apparatus for thinking, that is, for developing symbolic thought. Bion also introduced several terms which came to denote components of the containing model, including the concept of *alpha-function*, and the maternal capacity for *reverie*.

Bion identified the concept of alpha-function as part of a general theorem of psychic processing. The role of alpha-function is to convert 'sense-data' (pre-symbolic) into thinkable elements (alpha-elements) thereby providing the psyche with the material for thought. According to this theory, consciousness itself,



consciousness of self, and the ability to experience self, depends on the ability to perform alpha-function (Bion 1962, p.115).

The term alpha-function implies some conversion of meaning.

The infant personality by itself is unable to make use of the sense-data, but has to evacuate these elements into the mother, relying on her to do whatever has to be done to convert them into a form suitable for employment as alpha-elements by the infant (Bion 1962, p.116).

Crucially, the failure to establish, between infant and mother, a relationship in which normal projective identification is possible prevents the development of an alpha-function (Bion 1962a, p.115).

The infant mind requires an auxiliary mind, the mind of the mother, to do the process of 'thinking'. To be successful, the process relies on  $PI^{(m)}$ , and the maternal *capacity* for the conversion of the infant's communication. If the infant feels it is dying, the maternal mind processes this feeling, imbues it with meaning and returns it to the infant in a form the infant can deal with. However:

If the projection is not accepted by the mother, the infant feels that its feeling that it is dying is stripped of such meaning that it has. It therefore reintrojects, not a fear of dying made tolerable, but a nameless dread (Bion 1962a, p.116).

In the one remark Bion makes about 'reverie', he says,

The tasks that the breakdown in the mother's capacity for reverie<sup>19</sup> have left unfinished are imposed on the rudimentary consciousness (Bion 1962a, p.116).

Both alpha-function and reverie are components of the mature maternal-infant containing model which I will show next in the discussion of my final selected text on Bion's work. I will say no more about them here but show how their form and function is elaborated upon in the containment model of psyche-psyche communicating.

*Learning from Experience* (1962).

## Introduction

This book was written after 'A theory of thinking' and brought a deeper exposition of the way Bion saw *thinking* coming to pass. He had already formulated the communicative powers of  $PI^{(n)}$  and the alpha-function principles of thinking, and he had mentioned reverie as I have described above.

Now, Bion brought these together to form his mature model of a maternal-infant, object-relating theory of container-contained. Bion's use of mathematical notation became an important part of his explanations. As interesting as this is, it bears no direct relation to my thesis  $H_1$  which concerns the maternal-infant psyche-

---

<sup>19</sup> The term reverie appears in 'A Theory of Thinking' in this one quote seeming to come somewhat out of the blue with no explanation as to its meaning. I would speculate that Bion had mentioned and explained reverie in his presentation of 'A Theory of Thinking' to the scientific symposium in Edinburgh (1961) and/or that given the proximity of the publication dates (both 1962) assumed the meaning would be known or at least accessible. Bion had used the term in 'Cogitations' (September 1959) relating it to Freud's 'free-floating attention'.

psyche relationship. Of particular significance to my thesis, though, are his theories of i) the psyche-psyche interaction in the container-contained model, and ii) the psychic processing of pain through that interaction. In BDSM, I argue that this psychic processing, or something equivalent to it, is facilitated by the auxiliary mind of the BDSM Domme. I will provide a simplified example of Bion's explanation of psychic alpha-function, and then demonstrate that psychic alpha-function is the crux of my thesis argument.

As we know, and as Bion reiterated, at a given moment, any number of letters may come together in a specific order to form a word, sentence or ultimately an instruction<sup>20</sup>. Likewise, any number of mathematical symbols may come together to form a specific sum or equation that solves a problem or represents a theory. Factors such as x, y, z may have unknown values at one moment but can be invested with a value in the next (Bion 1962b, p.1). Similarly, a number of varying 'factors' may come together, in any number of ways to create a psychic function. The factors participating, infinitely variable, together in combination, form something of a stable structure: an alpha-function. Alpha-function is the 'counterpart of the mathematical variable' (Bion 1962b, p.3).

Bion's Container-contained model consists of three interrelated and interrelational psyche-psyche processes:

- Maternal alpha-function makes available to the infant's mind what would otherwise be unavailable.

---

<sup>20</sup> The analogy of the RNA and DNA molecule interaction being an obvious analogy.

- Maternal alpha-function transforms emotional experiences into alpha-elements.
- Before the infant can do this for himself, the maternal psyche does it for him; mother functions by way of proxy.

I have shown Bion's discovery of  $PI^{(n)}$  in 'Attacks on Linking'(1959) and will now show his expansion of alpha-function as discussed in 'A theory of thinking'. I will then go on to discuss maternal reverie. All three are intrinsic to the containing model and are of crucial importance to my thesis  $H_1$  and the methodology I have devised to investigate it (Chapter 7).

### *Alpha-function*

A person's (an infant's) sense impressions and associated emotional experiences are the raw data for *thinking*. Bion refers to this raw data as consisting of beta-elements ( $\beta-e$ ). Unprocessed  $\beta-e$  need psychic work (thinking) to make order, provide meaning and to create that which can be understood. He called this psychic work alpha-function ( $a-f$ ), and the processed elements created by  $a-f$ , he called alpha-elements ( $a-e$ ). So, alpha-elements are the end product of successful thinking; in other words, alpha-elements are thoughts and ideas (Bion 1962, p.6).

Alpha-function operates on the sense impressions, whatever they are, and the emotions, whatever they are, of which the patient is aware. Insofar as alpha-function is successful alpha-elements are produced (Bion 1962b, p.6).

I am interested in the emotions that manifest as unprocessed pain and/or guilt, or, as Bion calls them, beta-elements. In my hypothesis, the psychic work (alpha-function) is provided within the BDSM 'scene' as my data will show. I will argue that the physical pain 'provided' by the Domme is processed by the submissive

within the BDSM scenario. I will show that this process is facilitated through the skill and activities, and in relationship with, the Domme.

A concrete example of this process, given by Bion, is an infant's experience of hunger, discomfort or tummy pain which brings about feeding. The experience of pain, and the consequent action, gives rise to thought, thinking of 'the need for food'. As I have described above, in 'A theory of thinking' (Bion 1962b), Bion had said that thought exists before the apparatus for thinking. At this early stage, the apparatus for thinking is provided by the alpha-function of the maternal mind. In my thesis, I argue that, in a BDSM scenario, the submissive needs to experience containment of pain; this containment and the processing of pain is facilitated by the person of the Domme. The adult submissive *does* have to process the pain and does so consensually, but the pain is delivered via the Domme. I argue that alpha-function is a function of the BDSM 'scene' and therefore of the BDSM relationship. In my data analysis I will show the specific way in which the Domme provides pain and how much of her skill lies in the ability to provide appropriate levels of pain.

The more general statement of the theory is this ...To learn from experience alpha-function must operate on the awareness of the emotional experience; alpha-elements are produced from the impressions of the experience; these are ... made... available for... unconscious waking thinking (Bion 1962b, p.8).

However, what if there is no successful *a-f*, what if nothing brings about successful 'thinking'? Bion had discussed this in 'A theory of thinking' as the dutiful but distant mother; or the mother so full of the infant's projected anxiety that she could not help the baby process his fear. According to Bion's new model,

those pieces of raw data - the sense impressions and associated emotions ( $\beta$ - $e$ ) - cannot be processed and will remain unchanged.

In *Learning from Experience* (1962b), Bion explained that, for the psychotic mind, unprocessed  $\beta$ - $e$  are experienced as 'things in themselves' and, as such, cannot be used in thinking. Because these entities are amenable to projective processes, and they can be projected at or into the mother, they are easily evacuated. As such they can manifest as physical 'acting out' or psychic symptomatology (Bion 1962b, p.6).

This 'acting out', and the search for another mind to facilitate the modification of  $\beta$ - $e$  by  $\alpha$ - $f$ , clearly manifests in my data analysis. In Chapter 8, I will provide an example by describing the case of Michael P. in the documentary 'Pandora's Box', a man prone to bar-brawling. By instigating bar-brawling Michael rid himself of thoughts and feelings that he found very difficult to cope with. I shall describe his interaction with two Dominatrices who appear to facilitate Michael's ridding himself of such difficult thoughts and feelings - not by *evacuation* (as in brawling) but by a process of *modification* (through BDSM). This particular research subject provides startling material that can challenge, but as I will argue, will ultimately help support my H<sub>1</sub>. I will show that in Michael's case, it can be argued that he presents the features of PI<sup>(e)</sup> rather than PI<sup>(n)</sup>. I will explore this through data analysis, and I will emphasise the facilitation of *change* in Michael by the Domme in a psyche-psyche process, that is PI<sup>(n)</sup>, (Chapter 8). This is crucial to my thesis methodology and data analysis and, I argue, demonstrates that the container-contained process has occurred through the BDSM process. Successful processing of  $\beta$ - $e$  is the job of the mother's mind (her  $\alpha$ - $f$ ). In my thesis, I argue

that *a-f* is carried out during the BDSM scene, and through the BDSM relationship. In other words, the Domme is taking on the role of the maternal mind.

### *Reverie*

Leaving aside the physical channels of providing warmth and protection, Bion asked: when a mother loves her infant, what does she 'love with'? She 'loves with' what Bion termed 'maternal reverie' (Bion 1962b, pp.35-36), reverie occupies the space between the two processes of infant  $PI^n$  and maternal *a-f*. Reverie, Bion said, is the psychological source that supplies the infant's needs for love and understanding. Reflecting upon the type of receptor organ that reverie might be, Bion suggested a physiological metaphor: physical digestion. Bion asked his readers to consider an infant who is fed but not loved. Love, security and anxiety, in fact any psychic experience, also requires a process analogous to digestion (Bion 1962b, p.35). Reverie is the maternal capacity to offer a porous membrane for the reception of incoming projective identifications (good or bad) and the ability to break down, digest and process raw material elements into nutrition and sustenance. The content of reverie and the capacity for reverie are synonymous, in that maternal reverie is one of the factors of maternal alpha-function (Bion 1962b, p.36).

Continuing the metaphor, where maternal reverie is dysfunctional or absent, 'digestion' cannot occur. If an infant's frustration is intolerable then beta-elements can accumulate or undergo immediate evacuation before alpha-function can proceed. If *a-f* is not present because maternal reverie is limited or fails, then the infant's capacity to tolerate his frustration is sorely tested. However, if the

infant has been 'endowed with a marked capacity for toleration of frustration' his own mind may be capable of some autonomous PI<sup>(n)</sup>, and he can modify his own *β-elements* (Bion 1962b, p.37).

I am here supposing that projective identification is an early form of that which later is called a capacity for thinking (Bion 1962b, p.37).

Bion adds,

At the other extreme an infant markedly incapable of tolerating frustration cannot survive... even the experience of projective identification with a mother capable of reverie (Bion 1962b, p.37).

As I have described, it is the capacity for tolerating frustration that drives the formation of the apparatus for thinking. Bion directly applies this to Freud's 'Two principles of mental unctioing' (1911), a paper central to my previous chapters (Chapters 2 and 4) and the discussion on masochism. For Freud, the issue of tolerating frustration, was understood as part of the pleasure principle's relief of excessive stimulation. As I have shown, Freud revisited the pleasure principle precisely because of the existence of pleasure in pain. For Bion, there was an issue of pain also: the psychic pain of the infant. For Bion, amelioration of that pain is provided by an object - a specific object carrying out specific functions. It is instances such as this that help correlate, contrast and reconcile economic theory with object-relations theory, or, more to the point, reconcile Freud with Bion. Part of my thesis endeavours is to identify instances where the two theoretical stand points differ and where they can be reconciled and here is a case in point. In the same way I aim to make my own correlations between economic theory, the container-contained model and the masochistic experience of BDSM. As an example, later I will suggest correlating Freud's idea of the



Nirvana principle with the 'Oceanic' type experience described in BDSM terms as a 'subspace'(Chapter 8).

### Container-Contained

Finally, it is in relation to something Bion termed the 'K Link' that he first used the idea of a container (Bion 1962b, p.90). The K Link denotes a relationship characterised by knowledge and understanding. K is the 'link that is germane to learning by experience' (Bion 1962, p.47). K is essentially a function of two objects, though it can be considered as a function of one (Bion 1962b, p.90). In the K relationship, one object requiring containment is projected into the other (the container). Bion calls this process 'commensal'<sup>21</sup> meaning that both container and contained gain mutual benefit without harm to either. The mother derives benefit through mental growth and the infant gains the same (Bion 1962b, pp.90-91). In chapter 1, I referred to one of my impressions from interacting with the Leather Family as personal growth which I aligned with the BDSM experience of sensory deprivation and the erotogeneity of the skin. Bion says:

Melanie Klein has described an aspect of projective identification concerned with the modification of infantile fears; the infant projects a part of its psyche, namely it's bad feelings, into a good breast. Thence in due course they are removed and reintrojected. During their sojourn in the good breast they are felt to have been modified in such a way that the good object that is reintrojected has become tolerable to the infant's psyche. From the above

---

<sup>21</sup> I shall take up this term and its meaning in Part 1 of my methodology chapter (Chapter 8) where I discuss Stephen Briggs' research on the infant at risk (1997).

theory I shall abstract for use as a model the idea of a container into which an object is projected and the object projected into the container: [Both] container and contained are susceptible to conjunction and permeation by emotion. Thus conjoined or permeated or both they *change* in a manner usually described as growth (Bion 1962b, p.90. My emphasis).

The above quote encompasses all the facets of what Bion has described as the successful containing model. There is  $PI^{(n)}$  on the part of the infant into a good (containing) object; there is modification (*a-f*) of infantile fear by the good (containing) breast; there is reintroduction of fears (alpha-elements) made tolerable (contained). If we add to this the concept of K as the learning function of the container-contained experience (Bion 1962b, p.98), and understand that K depends on a *commensal* link between objects through all phases of growth and development (Bion 1962b, p.93), then we have all of what is needed to grasp Bion's model of containment. I will just mention his point that attacks on containing, as in attacks on linking, may result as a consequence of the infant's primary envy. This creates minus K (-K). Along with love (L) and hate (H), the desire to know and acquire knowledge (K) is vital to infant growth and development. It is through her 'reverie' that the mother establishes a K-Link with the infant. Development of the infant's capacity for K is dependent upon the mother's capacity for reverie. Minus K (-K) describes a situation in which the mother is unable to provide alpha-function, unable to establish reverie, and so cannot contain the infant's distress. To establish his own capacity for K, the infant internalises a caretaker who understands his needs and can take action effective enough to alleviate his distress.

In summary, Bion's theory was that:

- Maternal  $\alpha$ - $f$  makes available to the infant what would otherwise be unavailable and fit only for evacuation as  $\beta$ - $e$ .
- *Maternal  $\alpha$ - $f$*  transforms negative emotional experiences, that is  $\beta$ - $e$ , into  $\alpha$ - $e$ .
- Before the infant can do this for himself, the maternal psyche does it for him. With the mother's mind functioning as an auxiliary mind (K-link), the infant can internalise or introject  $\alpha$ - $e$  that have been transformed from  $\beta$ - $e$ .
- Four processes form Bion's model of ♀♂:

*Infant projection* (PI<sup>(n)</sup>).

*Maternal reverie*.

*Maternal  $\alpha$ -function*.

*Infant reintroduction* of modified projections.

### Discussion.

My aim in presenting this exegesis of Bion's container-contained model, is to consider whether *containment* is a better explanation for some forms of masochism than Freud's economic model. The difference of approach between the two schools - classical and object-relations - is evident. In the broadest sense, the language appears very different, yet one is built upon and embraces the other. Some proponents of these schools may be unable to appreciate this, but I argue that projects like my thesis on masochism can demonstrate it very well. There is little in classical psychoanalysis to relate to the object-relating model of container-contained and yet masochism can bring the two together. For instance, I am able to consider how and where Freud's observations and views on masochism manifest in BDSM, and I can show that Bion's containment model is useful for understanding masochism.

From Freud, I have shown that applying classical instinct theory to BDSM can account for i) the erotogeneity of the skin, ii) the erotic components associated with pain, iii) the overvaluation of the sexually endowed object, iv) the paucity of genital-genital activity, v) the presence of beating phantasies and their accompanying eroticism, and vi) that there is a definite psychic organisational structure to them. I will go on to show that BDSM can be understood equally in object-relations terms. I am going to end this chapter with an example.

In Chapter 3, I highlighted a quote from Anna Freud's paper on beating phantasies saying that I would argue that the components of Bion's model were 'present' in Anna Freud's super-structure of a typical beating phantasy. I am going to show this now by re-presenting Anna Freud's quote and offering an analysis of it in terms of Bion's model.

Presenting the general story line of an adolescent girl's erotic day-dreams, Anna Freud described the story's plot as including:

...[a] menacing attitude giving rise to the gravest apprehensions; a slow and sometimes very elaborate intensification almost to the limit of endurance of the dread and anxiety; and finally, as a pleasurable climax, the solution of the conflict i.e., *pardon for the sinner, reconciliation, and for a moment, complete harmony between the former antagonists.* (Freud, A. 1923, p.96. My emphasis).

Anna Freud described the phantasy as containing apprehensions emanating from something or someone menacing. There is a reconciliation which brings pleasure; then a return to a state of harmony and security with the once menacing (though

obviously libidinalised) object. I am arguing that the features and structure of Anna Freud's phantasised story are reminiscent of the features and the structure of Bion's Container-contained model and of the BDSM scenario.

In Anna Freud's structure, there is a menacing threatening object; Bion's infant has a nameless dread, a fear of dying, an intolerable thought. For Anna Freud, reconciliation occurs with the menacing yet libidinalised object; Bion saw the amelioration and removal of the infant's fear as happening via his alpha-functioning maternal object. In both cases, there is a modification of something threatening.

In Anna Freud's 'nice story', the bad Knight becomes the good, loving Knight. He is modified; and that modification involves the traversal of pain and torture. One could speculate that, in Kleinian language, there is some comparison here to the notion of the 'bad breast', the source of 'uncontained' danger. The bad breast, replaced by the good breast (the good, now containing object), brings comfort, security and assurance of everlasting love.

Anna Freud's day-dreamer is seduced by (or seduces) her torturing libidinalised erotic figure. Whilst covertly sexual, it is not consciously so. In Freud's economic terms, there is a *sublimation* of sexual desire; it is a *modification* of the sexual instincts. That modification makes what is intolerable (Oedipal desire) tolerable, and by doing so, obeys the pleasure principle. What is *painful* has been made *pleasurable*.

The two models economic and object-relating, represent two branches of divergent psychoanalytic theory. However, object-relations theory is built upon the foundations of Freud's classical theory and in my thesis, I aim to show instances indicative of a link between the two models - whether the link is recognised, or thus far unappreciated, justifies further enquiry. An important example that arises from my contrasting of Anna Freud's 'nice story' with an object-relating perspective is a question I will address in my thesis discussion (Chapter 9): Is maternal alpha-function a libidinalised experience for the infant? Bion provides no indication that it is, nor does he indicate that it isn't. It is questions like this, arising as a consequence of my research that may contribute to psychoanalytic knowledge, or at least suggest making further enquiry.

### Conclusion

I am going to conclude by reiterating that Anna Freud's erotic phantasies, Bion's clinical discoveries, and the Domination/submission facets of BDSM, all speak of a 'relationship with an object'. I argue that this is a maternal-infant relationship and will show that there is a correlative relationship between beating phantasy, the container-contained process and BDSM enactment.

I have now realised two of my thesis aims: I have described Freud's economic model of instincts with specific reference to his theories on masochism, and I have described Bion's object-relations model of container-contained. I have set out my aim to determine whether and to what extent the psychoanalytic understanding of masochism, as evidenced in BDSM, and containment theory can be thought of in relation to each other. My next research task is to enquire if and how the two concepts have been historically, theoretically and clinically

associated in the field of psychoanalysis. I am going to pursue this in the next chapter through a formal review of psychoanalytic literature.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Literature Review**

Introduction

In Chapter 1, my thesis introduction, I remarked on the difficulty in finding psychoanalytically based literature on BDSM. I gave an example of an edition of the IJP (2016) devoted to what psychoanalysis actually means by 'sexual and sexuality' (2016, vol 97 (3), editorial Birksted-Breen pp, 559- 560). Whilst not claiming to offer an appraisal of the then current state of thought on sexuality, by collecting seven recently submitted papers on the topic of sexuality the aim of the editorial board, was to provide 'a random snap-shot of a moment in time' in thinking about sexuality, including what is to be understood by 'perverse' (Birksted-Breen, 2016 p. 560). As I described, this set of papers is heavily weighted towards classical theory, to the most part re-examining of Freud's 1905 three essays on sexuality (Blass 2016, pp 591-613, Marion 2016, pp 641-664), or a revising Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex (Van Haute and Westrink, 2016 pp 563-589, Zepf et al, 2016 pp. 685-707). Of the 7 papers included, there is one mention of Bion and the notion of container-contained, this is Poupart's paper on the roots of psychic bisexuality. It is a small comment to dismiss the view that the characteristics of contained and container can be equated with the masculine or the feminine (p.715). BDSM was not a feature even in the one paper that addresses beating phantasies: Antinucci shows how features of Anna Freud's 1923 membership paper on beating phantasies manifest in a clinical case (Antinucci, 2016 pp 615-639). This paper considers nothing of the functions of masochism but rather focuses on erotised violence (sadism), and infantile survival fears (p.616) linked to maternal depressive illness (p. 618). However, there is material to be gleaned from Antinucci's paper that can be applied to my hypothesis of a link between sadomasochistic activities and aspects of a container-contained model and I will discuss this below (part 1).



In contrast to BDSM, a broader search for literature on 'perversion' is met with an avalanche of possibilities. Klein's focus on sadism means object relations literature is abundant, however the focus on sadism contributes massively to a paucity of literature on masochism, and BDSM is almost totally absent from that school of psychoanalytic literature.

Kleinian discussions on sadism tend to be associated with defences against the Depressive position. For instance, Morgan and Ruszczyński of the Portman clinic (London), have studied hatred and sadism towards the object (2007). Sadism and hatred towards the object bring concern, guilt and a wish to make reparation, which are all features of the Depressive position (Klein, 1935, 1940). Now, of masochism Morgan and Ruszczyński say that:

The sexualisation of aggression results in sadism or masochism. When there has been a narcissistic withdrawal, only the self is available to receive the aggression initially directed at the threatening object. When this aggression is sexualised, it leads to masochism (p.29).

This is from the object relations school of thinking, and yet it could easily be Freud's description of masochism too. The interesting point Morgan and Ruszczyński make is that primitive anxieties are defended against by sexualisation (p.29). So, there is some thought about sexualisation and masochism from both the classical and the object relations schools of thought. Morgan and Ruszczyński (2007, pp 1-2) say that sadomasochism, is a mode of relating associated with the withdrawal of intimacy, and this is a defence against fear of loss and abandonment. A mode of relating in which:

They allow contact with the other but in specifically controlled situations

dominated by violence, cruelty and pain.

The specific focus is on sadism, but the inference is that there is an associated masochism. The idea of specific and tight control 'dominated by violence, cruelty and pain', may appeal to the popular view to reflect some aspect of BDSM. It can easily be argued, that, unconsciously, at 'the deeper layers' this is what BDSM is about. However, as I have stated and as I reiterate, my thesis is going to show that neither the sadism nor the masochism of pathology 'fits' BDSM. I would suggest that the lack of an appreciation of this differentiation is largely why BDSM is 'missing' from the psychoanalytic literature. I have come to think that Freud's differentiation of different forms of masochism, as I described in Chapter 4, has largely fallen off the psychoanalytic radar and this has contributed to the lack of interest in BDSM. For Freud only one form of the three he differentiated could be deemed pathological and that is moral masochism. I am going to show in this Chapter that moral masochism does indeed make an appearance in the literature on masochism, but as I have already stated (Chapter 4) my data shows no evidence to support the presence of moral masochism in BDSM. Klein paid little attention to masochism, Bion paid even less, although he had much to say about destructiveness, ego self-destructiveness and the ego-destructive super-ego. Masochism appears to play no part in Bion's container-contained model. However, that does not mean that this model has no part to play in understanding masochism, as my hypothesis aims to show. I argue that there is an explicit link between these two concepts which has thus far remained unrecognised.

I have made it clear that psychoanalytic literature on BDSM has been difficult to find. However, I will show how careful reading, holding psychoanalytic concepts

in mind, enabled me to discover a small number of works where it could be argued that there is something of ‘a theoretical thread’ bringing the two concepts – masochism and the containing experience – together. Looking with a psychoanalytic eye, I will show that this ‘theoretical thread’ is one in which perversion and/or masochism can be seen as an active search for a positive modification of the ego. This is particularly true of the non-object-relating literature. I have found that these works naturally fall into two groups, both in temporal terms and in theoretical terms. I have thus divided the literature review into two parts:

Part 1: I present a précis of three comparatively recent papers that have been written from non-Kleinian perspectives: One from a classical (Freudian) perspective (Antinucci 2016); one from a Lacanian (Laplanche) perspective (Saketopoulou 2014); and one from a self-psychology (Kohut) perspective (Brothers 1997).

Part 2: I present a more detailed analysis of four papers from an object-relations perspective. My presentation of these is in temporal order. These are Paula Heimann (1955), Betty Joseph (1987), Herbert Rosenfeld (1988) and Nicola Abel-Hirsch (2006).

I will begin by briefly describing my initial search process, its outcomes and the eventual identification of pertinent literature.

#### Literature Search Process: PEPWeb.

An appropriate method to begin a review of psychoanalytic literature was with the psychoanalytic data-base PEPWeb. I began the process by determining relevant search parameters and criteria, the first being to restrict results to

sources appearing in the English language. After that, my search parameters were based on the concepts under investigation:

- Bion's British object-relations theory of container-contained.
- BDSM.

Searching was initially restricted to *The British Journal of Psychotherapy* (BJP); then I extended it to include the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (IJP); and further to 'All Journals' and 'All Sources'. Searches for 'container-contained' and 'containment' were restricted by date, from 1962 (when Bion presented the containing model) to the present year 2020. Because of the generic use in common language, the term 'containment' as a search criterion was quickly abandoned.

BDSM was used as a search criterion for articles dating from 1991, as this was the year the acronym first came into use. Because BDSM was so sparsely represented in the literature, both spellings of Beating Phantasies and Beating Fantasies were included. This decision proved somewhat problematic due to the extended psychoanalytic 'history' of both Freud's (1919) and Anna Freud's (1923) papers on the subject. Of the papers identified in Part One of the review, all three authors referenced those early Freud papers to some degree. Two of these make no reference to Klein's work, one makes direct reference to Bion's containment theory, but only in so far as to say that containment theory doesn't apply (Saketopoulou 2014, p.263).

I decided to begin by searching for BDSM as a lone criterion, this would ascertain how and in what context BDSM has been considered by psychoanalytic writers. I then considered Beating Phantasies/Fantasies as a lone criterion. I am going to

show some search examples including some examples of cross-referencing criteria. This will illustrate my search process, my search parameters and show how I identified literature applicable to my thesis.

PEPWeb search criteria and outcomes<sup>22</sup>: examples only.

***BDSM as a lone criterion***

- i. BDSM: *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (1991-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

- ii. BDSM: *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1991-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

- iii. BDSM. Abstract. All Journals (1991-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

I then broadened the criteria from 'Abstract' to 'Article' in 'All Journals', and then 'Article' to 'All Types'. This search proved more successful.

- i. BDSM: Articles. All Journals (1991-2020).

Outcome: 15 articles.

- ii. BDSM: All Types. All journals (1991-2020).

Outcome: 8 articles, 4 of which appear in (i) immediately above.

In total, BDSM appears in 19 articles. However, BDSM was the main topic of only one paper: 'The leather princess', Brothers, D. (1997).

I discovered that the journal most frequently presenting articles on BDSM was *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* (authors included Roth 2009, Escoffier 2011,

---

<sup>22</sup> Glossaries, indices and volumes in which criteria featured in different Chapters were discarded and not included in the search 'outcome'.

Saketopoulou 2014, Dean 2014, Khan 2017, Clark 2019). One of these, Avgi Saketopoulou, also contributed an article on sexual practices to the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* (2019). Although these articles included the term BDSM, they show a broad, eclectic, and to the most part superficial and transient consideration of BDSM. They covered a broad range of clinical issues, such as consent in the clinical situation (Clark 2019); issues of safety and danger for a patient involved in sadomasochism (Eldridge 2018) ; the analyst's war against feelings of helplessness, and the search for submission likened to that of a BDSM inclined patient (Hoffer and Buie, 2016); and the negotiation of sexual orientation in which BDSM is mentioned as an example of 'difference' (Roth 2009). Other themes included transsexual pornography (Escoffier 2011), female sexuality, nationalism and large group identity, (Gonzalez-Torres and Fernandez-Rivas, 2015) and the fetishism of contemporary music and the vehement targeting of black performers (Khan, 2017).

***Beating Phantasies as a lone criterion.***

- i. Beating Phantasies: *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (1962-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

- ii. Beating Phantasies: *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1962-2020).

Outcome: 8 Articles. No mention of Klein or Bion. None of these articles were considered relevant to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>.

- iii. Beating Phantasies: All Journals (1962-2020).

Outcome: 22 Articles. General absence of object-relations theory:

Two articles were considered relevant to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>:

- Antinucci (2016). 'Beating Phantasies: Mourned and Unmourned'. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97, pp.615-639.
- Joseph, B. (1971). A Clinical Contribution to the Analysis of a Perversion. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.51-66.

***Beating Fantasies as a lone criterion.***

- i. Beating fantasies: *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (1962:2020).  
Outcome: 4 Articles: No mention of Klein or Bion. None of these articles were considered relevant to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>.
- ii. Beating fantasies. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1962-2020).  
Outcome 22 Articles: One judged as relevant to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>:
  - Joseph, B. (1971). As identified above.

Following this, I began cross-referencing:

- i. Beating Phantasies cross referenced with Container-contained. All Sources (1962-2020).  
Outcome: Zero
- ii. Beating Phantasies cross referenced with Bion. All Sources (1962-2020).  
Outcome: 5 articles: One considered relevant to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>:
  - Saketopoulou, A. (2014). To Suffer Pleasure: The Shattering of the Ego as the Psychic Labor of Perverse Sexuality. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 15, pp. 254-268.

iii. Beating Phantasies cross-referenced with containment. All Sources (1962-2020)

Outcome: 2 results:

- Joseph, B. (1971). As listed above.

Joseph's use of the term containment in this paper was not made in relation to Bion's container-contained model. Nevertheless, the paper dealt with a case of perverse sexuality and was found to be applicable to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>. I discuss this paper in Part 2 of this Chapter.

- Bromberg, C.E. and Aron, L. (2019) Disguised Autobiography as Clinical Case Study. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 29, pp.695-710. This paper gives Anna Freud's 1923 paper on Beating Phantasies as an example, but it bears no relation to the thesis H<sub>1</sub>.

As I indicated above, 'containment' as a criterion was abandoned due to the word having a broader meaning outside the concept of 'container-contained'.

- i. BDSM cross referenced with container-contained. All sources (1991-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

- ii. Beating fantasies cross referenced with container-contained. International Journal of Psychoanalysis (1962-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

- iii. Beating fantasies cross referenced with container-contained. All Sources. Abstract. (1962-2020).

Outcome: Zero.

## **Part 1. Classical Psychoanalysis**



I have demonstrated the paucity of literature in the PEPWeb database and the general failure to find any papers showing 'object-related' connections between container-contained and masochism. Ultimately therefore, PEPWeb was abandoned for other sources which I will review in Part 2 of this Chapter (where I will also discuss the paper by Betty Joseph found using the PEPWeb). However, this literature search had identified a small sample of clinical psychoanalytic papers which were useful.

Through reviewing three papers - Brothers, (1997), Saketopoulou (2014) and Antinucci (2016) - I was able to identify an implicit thread that links aspects of the container-contained model and masochism. Antinucci takes a classical Freudian approach, Saketopoulou takes a Lacanian approach via Laplanche, whilst Brothers takes a Kohutian self-psychology approach. Although I will argue that each is relevant to my thesis H<sub>1</sub>, all three clearly fall outside what can be considered a British object-relations framework and have no inclusion of containment theory.

*Antinucci, G. (2016) 'Beating Phantasies: Mourned and Unmourned'.*

In this clinical paper, Antinucci discusses two examples of 'female' beating phantasy: Martha and Federica. Both of these women had a history of early abandonment, separation, and sibling incest (Antinucci 2016, pp.622-623). Both had mothers who suffered severe depressive illness, and both patients are described as experiencing 'intense separation anxiety' (Antinucci 2016, p.631). In both cases sado-masochistic phantasies are attributed to environmental vicissitudes and maternal psychopathology (Antinucci 2016, p.618). Antinucci sets out to show how one patient manages a better outcome than the other

through the state of her *ego* and its transformational capabilities. It is this ability of the ego to bring about a transformation through her beating phantasy that makes it relevant to my thesis H<sub>1</sub>.

The paper is Freudian in perspective: beating phantasies and the sibling incest initiated by both women are described in terms of primal scene re-enactment; and one patient (Martha) reports make-believe scenarios parallel to those in Anna Freud's 1923 paper (Antinucci 2016, p.625). There is no mention of object-relations theory and BDSM is not a feature of the paper or of the patients' lives. However, there are several significant points where I can show that the 'thread' of ego alpha-function emerges.

Antinucci begins by differentiating between *transitory* beating phantasies – those destined for repression and so considered 'normal'- and *fixed* beating phantasies that avoid repression. If phantasies avoid repression, they have the propensity for becoming 'fixed' and forming a pathological complex<sup>23</sup>. Antinucci sees the function of fixed beating phantasies as being to 'shore up a precarious sense of self threatened with psychic depletion and death' (Antinucci 2016, p.615). This seems a potentially catastrophic state akin to the paranoid-schizoid position described by Klein<sup>24</sup>. In this paper she takes a brief look at the state of the two patients' egos.

---

23 Sirois, F.G (2010). Notes on the Beating Phantasy. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91, pp.505-519. I initially considered this for inclusion in the review but, apart from stating a recognition of two forms of the phantasy based on the work of Novick and Novick (1972), the paper is a reanalysis of Freud's 1919 paper.

24Although Antinucci does not take a Kleinian perspective, she trained in Britain where she may have been exposed to, if not influenced by Klein. This may make her outlook more integrative or pluralist.

According to Antinucci, Martha, the patient whose outcome is better, 'may have used her sublimatory capacities to access healthier and more satisfying libidinal resources' (Antinucci 2016, p.636). Such resources provided her with the opportunity of 'filing away' the beating phantasies, either repressing them, or relegating them to a split-off part of the mind so that they cannot be reactivated or revisited (Antinucci 2016, p.636). Antinucci may have been influenced in some part by a Kleinian outlook which acknowledges splitting processes and the concept of relocating ego contents. That Martha can do this for herself suggests that, as a result of analysis and the provision of 'an auxiliary mind' (the analyst), Martha now has access to her own ego's transformational abilities. This is consistent with the alpha-function in the containment model.

Federica's ego, on the other hand, does not do so well. Her ego is deemed by Antinucci to be less nourished by 'alternative identifications with vital objects', and this has left her ego fundamentally less cohesive (Antinucci 2016, p.636). Put in Kleinian terms, Federica did not have those introjective processes that give rise to an internal arrangement of good objects. Antinucci finds it legitimate to ask whether a propensity to act out perverse core phantasies remains open when the work demanded of the psyche is too great and too much strain is put on the more sophisticated defence mechanisms (Antinucci 2016, p.636). The description of Federica's analytic journey, specifically the demands of mourning, showed how her beating phantasies could not be worked through (Antinucci 2016, p.636). Her ego could not develop ego-function well enough to overcome her fixed psychic organisation; her ego was stunted and fragile. According to Antinucci, whether beating phantasies become fixed or follow a 'normal' path to repression is

dependent on ego-function and *the ego's transformational abilities* (Antinucci 2016, p.618).

A further point of interest in this paper is Antinucci's remark that the libidinal charge of masturbatory pleasure 'becomes' the pleasure of storytelling, that is, a sublimation. In other words, 'narrative binds libidinal energy' (Antinucci 2016, p.617). This bears direct relation to Anna Freud's paper where 'nice stories' take the place of genital masturbation. The idea that the binding of energy can create a psychic narrative demonstrates how instinctual energy manifests as psychic function - such as thinking and imagination or indeed in the role play of BDSM. I will show in my data analysis in Chapter 8 how important a personal narrative is to the structure of each individual participant's preferred 'scene'. However, ultimately, I will also show how the 'narrative' does in fact, have a stereotypical structure.

In conclusion, there is a parallel between Bion's view of *alpha-function* and what Antinucci refers to as the 'transformational abilities' of the ego. In the container-contained model the aim of maternal ego alpha-function is to bring about 'modification' on behalf of the immature infant ego. Whether beating phantasies can be 'filed away' or 'remain open' depends on the ego having those transformational or alpha-function properties. My H<sub>1</sub> argues that people participating in BDSM can be considered in the same light as those people whose beating phantasies remain open; they continue to seek modification, specifically through the 'containment' process.

Saketopoulou, A. (2014) *'To Suffer Pleasure: The Shattering of the Ego as the Psychic Labor of Perverse Sexuality'*.

This paper is set within a Lacanian dialogue which takes 'a metapsychological detour to the work of the French analyst Jean Laplanche'. This is because Laplanche understood sexual sensibility (libido) to be intertwined with the self's (the ego's) constitution (Saketopoulou p. 260).

The paper does not directly address BDSM, but it does seek to 'advance an alternative exegesis of perverse sexuality' (Saketopoulou 2014, p.255. Abstract). This alternative permits an analyst to regard perversion 'not from within a state of alarm but with the capacity to recognize perversity's *generative potential*' (Saketopoulou 2014, p.255. My italic). That is, perversion has some *positive* function that can be utilised by the analyst and/or the patient as a tool for growth. This aspect of the paper makes it relevant to Antinucci's paper (above) and to my thesis.

Saketopoulou felt that Freud's theory of sadism and masochism being endemic to our sexual constitution had been neglected by many theories on perversion. According to Freud's developmental theory, 'the sexualisation of suffering is developmentally installed in sexuality's very ontology' (Saketopoulou, p.256). The persistent desexualisation of the caretaker-infant dyad leads to conceptual difficulties 'when specks of visceral eroticism surface in relationships of care' (Saketopoulou p.259).

Laplanche saw the infant relationship with the caretaker as being flooded with multiple communications. A vast and unremitting array of transmissions leak *out*

of the caretaker and *into* the infant; he called this ‘implantation’. The infant is propelled to translate these implants, and consequently the ego develops out of that translating process into ‘an apparatus that constructs meaning and binds enigma’<sup>25</sup> (Saketopoulou p.261). Laplanche’s idea was that excessive parental implantations, even, or especially when pleasurable, are experienced as a ‘painful shock’. By this, we can infer he meant a form of libidinal charge. As the pain-pleasure *mélange* is developmentally installed in sexuality’s very being, this accounts for why pleasure and suffering are frequently and fluidly encountered at the same time - albeit not always without conflict. If psychosexual life originates in the union of enjoyment with suffering, then masochistically-derived pleasure can be viewed as the upshot of a complex yet normative developmental process (Saketopoulou, p.261).

In this paper, Saketopoulou proposes an alternative exegesis of perverse sexuality, saying that in the perverse lies a psychically productive potential. Although conceptualized in psychoanalysis as a *demise* of the sexual function, perversity can often, she proposes, be sexuality’s *aspiration*.

Perverse sexual experiences that feed on shame, fear, pain, humiliation, and disgust, I propose, *aspire* to a shattering of the ego. This rupture allows early parental infusions from which *the self* is assembled to leap forward, becoming available for reconfiguration in novel and unexpected ways (Saketopoulou 2014, p.256).

She appears to be saying that perversion has a function which is to shatter the damaged ego. I will not dwell on Saketopoulou’s clinical case, but rather on the

---

25 For enigma-enigmatic, in this context, I suggest the term knowledge (discovered or hidden) would aid clarity.

way she shows perversion as a striving for the reintegration of a damaged ego. This shattering process, she says, would enable parental inputs - that should have led to the building of a stable ego - to have the chance to reconfigure in new, and hopefully better, ways.

Sexual perversion, she says, creates an overwhelming experience that pushes the subject through the homeostatic (stable) point which is meant to guarantee the ego's coherence. Rather than the homeostatic regulation attained through healthy attachment relationship, and mother-infant interactions, in perversion there is a vigorous pursuit of sensory experience. What is often read as *compulsiveness* in repeated enactments of perversion (Freud's notion of fixation, 1905) can instead be thought of as *aspiring* to an unravelling of the ego through transgression – thus pushing the limits of the ego (Saketopoulou 2014, p.263).

Perverse sexualities are, in my view, ideally suited for this bid for the ego's unravelling (Saketopoulou 2014, p.263).

Saketopoulou poses the question 'why might the self's unravelling be so concertedly sought out?' (Saketopoulou 2014, p.264). Her answer is that the ego's breakdown enables the setting free of those enigmatic implants that had escaped translation and meaning. As the ego unravels, condensed meanings that had shaped the unconscious, condensed meanings of sexuality at 'primal moments', can leap forward (Saketopoulou 2014, p.264).

*When the self unravels, enigmatic objects and affects freed through this process do not seek Bionian containment. Neither is the goal to approximate what originally escaped understanding in order to comprehend it better or to articulate it into language. Nor is a historically accurate representation*

of experience what these moments are about. (Saketopoulou 2014, p.264.

My emphasis).

Such ego dissolution offers possibilities for modification, not just of the psyche, but for the embodied experience. That is, ego unravelling can manifest in the pursuit of extreme sports, drug use or criminality (Saketopoulou 2014, p.264). By stipulating that this function is *not* one seeking Bionian containment, she acknowledges that some *might* consider it in those very terms. This is the reason why I chose this paper for my review. For Saketopoulou, ego dissolution, or unravelling, offers possibilities for ego modification. For Bion, the maternal containing process, the giving back of ego-contents (ameliorated beta-elements) and ego-function (or, to use Bion's term, alpha-function) provides ego modification. The difference appears to be one of *onus*; in other words, *whose* ego is doing the work of translation/retranslation, modification/remodification. In the Bionian model this is the work of maternal alpha-function.

It is this idea that links to the next paper I review by Brothers in which the term 'rescripting' is given to a similar idea of ego reconfiguration and reassembly.

In conclusion, rather than being (just) a problematic outcome of problematic experience (trauma, leading to compulsion to repeat, leading to masochism), Saketopoulou suggests that perversion can be understood as having a *restorative* function to repair a damaged or poorly formed ego. By the dissolution of the ego, new life can be breathed into it by a process of reassembly and reconfiguration. I argue that this reflects the container-contained processes of ego-function transfer, alpha-function and the modification of ego experience.



Brothers, D. (1997). Chapter 16: *The Leather Princess: Sadomasochism as the Rescripting of Trauma Scenarios*.

Given the almost total absence of psychoanalytic literature on BDSM, Brothers offers a rare paper, 'The Leather Princess', in which she discusses a clinical case that involves BDSM. 'The Leather Princess' offers a Kohutian 'self-psychology' perspective on BDSM (Brothers 1997, p.246). Brothers aims to challenge Freud's views on masochism and instead show Kohut's contributions and 'insights about sadomasochism' (Brothers 1997, p.245). There are no references to Kleinian theory.

Kohut's discoveries about self-object experience pointed the way toward a deeper, more experience-near, and clinically meaningful understanding of the relationship between sadomasochism and trauma (Brothers 1997, p.245).

Brothers elaborates upon Kohut's contribution before presenting her own 'fresh' perspective on certain sado-masochistic phenomena (Brothers 1997, pp.245-250). I have chosen this paper to review because Brothers' own perspective can be seen to reflect my hypothesis.

Helpfully for my thesis, Brothers briefly reviews several theories linking sado-masochism to trauma (Brothers 1997, p.246). She outlines Stoller's understanding that sado-masochism and 'other perversions' are fantasies that revive traumatic childhood experiences, especially those of 'victimisation' (Stoller 1975, 1979). Stoller's suggestion was that *revival* is 'in order that these humiliating experiences may be transformed into triumphant victories' (Brothers 1997, p. 246-247). Bach and Schwartz (1972) had interpreted

de Sade's sadistic and masochistic fantasies as functioning to 'stave off narcissistic decompensation'. From a Kohutian perspective, this or such decompensation was due to 'traumatic disappointment in those experienced as selfobjects'<sup>26</sup> (Brothers 1997, pp.246-247). Stolorow (1975), and Stolorow and Lachmann (1980) also concerned themselves with the narcissistic function of both masochism and sadism. The masochist searches for acute pain and 'a desperate exaggeration of experience'. This provides the masochist with 'a sense of being alive and real', and 'an experience of existing as a bounded entity' (Stolorow and Lachmann 1980, pp.32-33). Menaker (1953) said that although outcomes of traumatic deprivation may lead to feelings of self-hatred, self-devaluation, and worthlessness, these masochistic experiences may also serve as self-preservation 'insofar as they are a means of perpetuating whatever bond there is to the mother' (Menaker 1953, p.224). Like my own view, these authors are judging masochism as having specific *functions* rather than being the fall-out from, or the manifestation of, an ancient drive.

Freud's emphasis on female psychology, the masochistic trends of the ego and the compulsion to repeat as a manifestation of the death instinct, all meant that he 'increasingly downplayed [masochism's] roots in trauma' (Brothers 1997, p.246). As Brothers says, Freud's theory on the compulsion to repeat cannot be made without recourse to the death instinct.

Brothers' solution to the paradox of repetition of the unpleasant, or even traumatic, is different (Brothers 1997, p.252). Masochism (or sado-masochism),

---

<sup>26</sup> From here-on, I refer to this as 'self-object'.

she says, is not just a *reexperience* of trauma, but it is the effort to *recreate* trauma specifically with an 'effort to revise it'. Brothers refers to this as an effort 'to rescript the original trauma scenario' (Brothers 1997, p.252). That is, when traumatic scenarios are being repeated, it is not a compulsion to 'repeat history' but an attempt to 're-write history'. The aim of *rescripting* is to change something psychically traumatic into something less traumatic. Brothers' view is that her BDSM-active client sought to facilitate psychic change through her sado-masochistic relationships.

In conclusion, Brothers saw sado-masochistic perversion not as a re-experience of trauma but an attempt to re-write it. Sado-masochism, therefore, can be seen as the manifestation of an ego-mechanism aiming to instigate change by a process of revision.

### Discussion

These three papers have the same core idea which is that masochism is associated with problems concerning the strength and normal development of the ego, and that masochism is an outcome of poor ego function.

For Antinucci, the normally developing ego should sublimate normal beating phantasies meaning that masochism does not arise. If there has been poor development of the ego however, beating phantasies are not sublimated and consequently remain, becoming fixed and troublesome. The proposed differentiation between *transient* and *fixed* beating phantasies puts the masochism of BDSM into the realm of pathology. My thesis, supported by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM V), and the International Classification of

Diseases (ICD-10), will disagree with this, as I will show in my operationalisation of the container-contained model and my development of an assessment tool (Chapter 7). The point I want to take from Antinucci's paper is her view that the transformation of the beating phantasy is made by the *ego*; the ego has the transformational properties. In Bion's containment model this is also the case. In an infant's early days, it is the mother's ego that provides the transformational properties through her alpha-function whilst the infant's ego is developing its own alpha-function. Either way, it is *the ego that has transformational properties*.

Both Saketopoulou and Brothers, on the other hand, see masochism not so much as an outcome of disorder but a purposeful function to facilitate growth and development of a poor ego. That is, it is perversion/masochism itself, that brings about transformation in ego-function. As Saketopoulou suggests, perversion has the psychic potential to restore a damaged or poorly formed ego. Crucial is her view that masochism arrives long before any subsequent trauma. Saketopoulou is critical of the idea that the compulsion to repeat 'relies on the superimposition of the past onto the present', because that negates any intentionality on the part of perverse behaviour (Saketopoulou 2014, p.262). In her view, perversity *can* have an intention; it can be sexuality's aspiration. An aspiration to shatter the perverse, damaged ego, leaving the possibility of reconstruction and new interpretations. Therefore, *perversion has transformational properties*.

Like Brothers, Stoller thought that the purpose in reviving traumatic childhood experiences, was in order to transform them into 'triumphant victories' (Brothers 1997, pp.246-247). They both see masochism not just as a *re-experience* of trauma but as an effort to *recreate* trauma, specifically in an 'effort to revise it'.

Like Saketopoulou, Brothers views this as a *rewriting*. Brothers considers perversion as bringing about a shattering of the ego which enables re-cohesion. As the ego reforms anew, a rescripting of the 'personal story' occurs. So, perversion shatters the ego and the ego rescripts the story. *Perversion has transformational properties because it brings about transformation of the ego.*

These differing outlooks raise questions about where the locus of transformation is: is it in the ego or is it in the perversion, and which comes first? Can the two be differentiated? Are they intertwined as a process which then has the property of oscillation? And which, if either, fits my own H<sub>1</sub> or Bion's containment model better? I think that my H<sub>1</sub> – that masochism (the perversion) is a manifestation of a search for a containment of the ego's anxieties – straddles the two in the same way that Bion's model straddles the two. This is due to the two-person relationship in both Bion's model and in BDSM, and more specifically, in the *relocation* of ego function. I argue that, by applying Bion's model to BDSM, it can be seen that the perversion lies in *one ego* and transformation is facilitated by another '*auxiliary*' ego. That is, it is the perversion that forces one ego to seek the transformational properties of another, so it can be argued that the perversion facilitates the transformation. To apply this directly to Bion's model, *both the ego function and its contents* have been relocated to the object, precisely because, *the object has transformational properties.*

These ideas are all theoretical constructs and can be debated back and forth. The importance for my thesis lies in the recognition by these writers that masochism may not be the *problem*; and actually, it may be the answer.

## Conclusion.

I have shown the paucity of psychoanalytically based literature and what I have shown so far has been developed outside the object-relating school of psychoanalysis. As a source of literature linking or relating my two thesis concepts in any explicit way, the object-relating school has not proved to be any richer.

In Part 2 of this Chapter, I am going to present a review of the four papers from the object-relating school that show some application to my project. Rather than their shedding any light on my thesis, I will argue that my thesis sheds light upon the literature. Of note is that all four papers predate the papers from the non-object relating schools discussed above. As I indicated above, in the introduction to this Chapter, masochism was of little interest to Klein and of even less interest to Bion. That lack of interest appears to remain in the Kleinian school. My thesis will challenge this lack of interest in masochism and bring something new, and overlooked, for the object-relations school of psychoanalysis to consider.

## **Part 2. Kleinian Object-Relations Theory**

Introduction

I have shown the difficulty of finding appropriate literature from the British object-relations school of psychoanalysis. I will now show that by expanding my reading outside PEPWeb I was able to discover Kleinian-oriented literature on perversion and masochism. I have chosen four papers: Joseph, B. (1971 [1969]) identified in Part 1 (PEPWeb search), and three others that emerged from further searches: Paula Heimann (1955), Herbert Rosenfeld (1988) and Nicola Abel-Hirsch (2006).

Below are examples of further reading I have undertaken. I have highlighted in bold those papers that I will be presenting in this section of the literature review:

Paula Heimann:

Heimann, P. (1955). **A Combination of Defence Mechanisms in Paranoid States**. In: M. Klein, P. Heimann, R.E.Money-Kyrle (eds.) *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*. London: Tavistock, pp.240-265.

Betty Joseph: The following papers appear in:

E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.51-66.

‘An Aspect of the Repetition Compulsion’ (1959)

**‘A Clinical Contribution to the Analysis of a Perversion’ (1971 [1969])**

‘On Passivity and Aggression: their interrelationship’ (1989)

‘The Patient who is Difficult to Reach’ (1975)

‘Towards the Experiencing of Psychic Pain’ (1981)

‘Addiction to Near Death’ (1982)

Herbert Rosenfeld:

Rosenfeld, H.A. (1971). A clinical approach to the psychoanalytic theory of the life and death instincts: An investigation into the aggressive aspects of narcissism. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 52, pp.169-78.

Rosenfeld, H.A. (1988)<sup>27</sup>. **On Masochism: A theoretical and clinical approach**. In: Glick, R. A. and Meyers, D. I. (eds.) *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives*. Analytcs Press, pp.151-174.

Nicola Abel-Hirsch:

Abel-Hirsch, N. (2006). **The Perversion of Pain, Pleasure and Thought: on the Difference between “Suffering” an Experience and the “Construction” of a Thing to be used**. In: D. Nobus and L. Downing, eds., *Perversion: Psychoanalytic Perspectives/Perspectives on Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac, pp.99-107.

Three of these papers from the Kleinian school are based on clinical work. The florid manifestations shown in the material, as well as the authors' ability to present it, enables the non-clinician to recognise theoretical concepts and themes. As with the non-Kleinian papers presented in Part 1, my aim is to illuminate the presence of a 'theoretical thread' that connects to my thesis enquiry into aspects of BDSM and the containing experience.

### Object-Relating Literature

---

<sup>27</sup> Published posthumously 1988, Rosenfeld had died 1986.



Within the Kleinian-oriented literature, great assistance came from a fortuitous discovery by John Steiner. In his edited book 'Rosenfeld in Retrospect' (2008) Steiner included a footnote,

It is...interesting that very recently, wanting to write a paper on masochism...I came across a paper by Rosenfeld which has not been quoted by anybody, appears to be almost unknown and was published after his death in a book, *Masochism...*(John Steiner 2008, p.53).

The book he was referring to is an American publication called *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (Glick and Meyers eds 1988). As North American psychoanalysis tends not to be of the British object-relations school, I had omitted American literature from my PEPWeb search. However, as Rosenfeld's paper had only appeared in this one publication, I obtained the book (consisting of 11 essays on masochism), and I judged his essay to be relevant to my thesis H<sub>1</sub><sup>28</sup>. Noteworthy is that, at the end of his paper, Rosenfeld comments:

There are obviously still many processes related to the masochistic perversion that have to be studied in much greater detail. There are only very few books in the English literature to which I could draw attention (Rosenfeld 1988, p.173).

Similarly, at beginning of her paper, Betty Joseph comments:

In the literature on perversion, so far as I can ascertain, there is a great deal about the meaning of various perversions, the mechanisms involved and similar aspects, but a paucity of detailed clinical reporting. This lack is unfortunate, since my impression is

---

<sup>28</sup> In their introductory Chapter, Glick and Meyers add a footnote (1988, p.21) to say some accompanying notes promised by Rosenfeld had not been received prior to his death. These were to be on Klein's early introjective and projective processes for readers unfamiliar with the concepts.

that... one may deduce a great deal from these patients' symptoms, activities and history... One would expect that the main aspects of the perverse symptomatology will appear in the transference... this may not appear particularly difficult with more overt sadistic perversions, but can be very tricky with certain apparently unaggressive perverts and fetishists, particularly perhaps those whose material is very repetitive and whose behaviour appears somewhat passive (Joseph 1971, p.441).

I note that Kleinian writers like Betty Joseph tend to use the term 'passive' rather than masochistic, even when the latter term would seem to apply. Making the terms synonymous would impinge on literature searches specifically seeking the term 'masochism'.

Joseph's point is the lack of detailed *clinical* material, but there is more to the above quote than the lack of literature. She suggests that features of overt sadism/sadistic perversions are readily manifested in the transference and easily recognised by the analyst. However, if perversion, such as that of a fetishist, appears in a patient who is passive or unaggressive, then such transference manifestations do not necessarily arise easily. I am drawing attention to this because, as in my own thesis, Betty Joseph was suggesting that much may have been missed in the analysis of masochistic and BDSM-type behaviours. Betty Joseph's rubber fetishist provides a good example of what I argue are 'missed opportunities' which I shall illustrate shortly.

Betty Joseph's paper on perversion (1971 [1969]) reminded me of a rarely-referenced paper by the early Kleinian Paula Heimann (1955). Like Betty Joseph, Heimann discusses a male client who participated in BDSM activities. In another of Betty Joseph's papers 'Towards the Experiencing of Psychic Pain' (1981

[1976]), Joseph notes Bion's idea that he who cannot suffer pain cannot learn to suffer pleasure (Bion 1970, p.9). This stimulated further searching of the literature, and the consequent identification of my final paper by Abel-Hirsch (2006) which is a theoretical consideration of Bion's thoughts on the 'suffering of pleasure'. Together these four papers span a period of over fifty years, the earliest of which (Heimann) pre-dates Bion's publications on containment theory.

I will now present the four papers in temporal order, showing instances in the literature where I believe container-contained theory is implicitly linked to manifestations of masochism.

*Paula Heimann (1955) 'A Combination of Defence Mechanisms in Paranoid States'.*

In this paper, Heimann's focus was the introjective and splitting mechanisms of those who obtain sadistic pleasure out of what appears to be their own persecution and pain (Heimann 1955, p.246). She indicates that such patients are castigating, blaming, accusatory and often insulting to both analyst and the analysis. Typically, they say neither the treatment or the therapist are any good; they don't work; they make matters worse; they are as bad as their persecutor(s); psychoanalysis lays claim to a pseudo-professionality it is not entitled to and so on (Heimann 1955, p.243, 244).

Whilst they themselves are quite unaware of it, it is obvious that by thus reporting their painful experiences to me they find ample opportunity for criticising, mocking and attacking me... unconsciously they give themselves the pleasure of satisfying their sadistic impulses (Heimann 1955, p.244).

And

... the analyst is impressed by the fact that paranoid patients actually derive a good deal of sadistic gratification when they dwell on their misery and enumerate... their suffering (Heimann 1955, p.246).

Before I present Heimann's paper further, I want to say something of the above two quotes. There is a clear link between what Heimann says of her patient, and Freud's view of moral masochism as I have described (Chapter 4, Part 2). Both Freud's exposition of moral masochism and Heimann's general exposition of paranoid defence mechanisms describe the same set of behavioural features and patient belief systems. Yet Heimann makes no recourse to Freud's moral masochism, and Freud made no recourse to paranoia in his theory of moral masochism. This highlights my argument that there is a stark difference between the classical psychoanalytic view of masochism and the object-relations view of the same. For Freud this is the internalised parental imago, the superego, whereas for Heimann there is the paradigmatic paranoid-schizoid position of Kleinian psychic phantasy. I will return to this in my thesis discussion, but for now, I make the point that, in both views, there is a punitive internalised agent-object.

To return to Heimann's paper, she describes a man, delusional and severely paranoid, who had the propensity to visit and pay women to provide beatings and facilitate genital masturbation (Heimann 1955, p.247). Heimann's interest isn't so much in his BDSM-type activities but in how she can use his case to demonstrate certain ego defence mechanisms in a very pathological patient. Nevertheless, there are some noteworthy observations in relation to my thesis. For example, she comments:

The obvious passive-masochistic aspect of his beating experiences is misleading... Since the woman who beat him was employed and controlled by him, he could determine and regulate the amount of pain he wanted to experience... the dominating unconscious phantasies revealed in the analysis considerably reduced the masochistic quality of the beating episodes (Heimann 1955, p.247).

Heimann recognised that being in control was more than just about payment, and she recognised that there was more to being beaten than a wish to suffer pain (Heimann 1955, p.247). There are characteristic features associated with such cases, including the person's own persecutory experiences, their own purported innocence, their anguish and pain and a focus on the one(s) responsible for their suffering (Heimann 1955, p.242). Whilst this man's behaviour may have appeared *masochistic*, she determined that it was, in fact, *sadistic*. Whether engaged in being beaten or berating his analyst for being the cause of his pain and misery, his own identification was with the woman beater.

Such identification with the manifestly sadistic partner in masochist relations has long been recognised by psycho-analysis (Heimann 1955, p.247).

According to Heimann, the woman beater represented the patient himself whilst the object being beaten was an internalised object representing the patient's ruthless cruel dictatorial father (Heimann 1955, p.247). The aim of the beating, therefore, was an aggressive attack visiting punishment and humiliation upon that internalised object. She further described this as 'an exercise in exorcism', an attempt at thrusting out, the evacuation of a persecuting internal object, in this case the father (Heimann 1955, p.248). Such mechanisms are consistent with Kleinian theory; splitting, excessive projective identification and evacuative

processes are clearly at work. From this perspective, BDSM appears to be a mechanism for attacking a hated introjected and split-off object. Heimann equates her patient's BDSM activities with his general behaviour and attitude towards her and the analysis.

...when he moaned that he suffered at my hands and that my treatment was the cause of his pain and misery, he reproduced in the transference his beating experiences with the prostitutes (Heimann 1955, p.247).

That is, she is placing his BDSM type behaviours firmly within a framework of object-relating in paranoid delusion. BDSM, in this instance, provides an opportunity to sadistically attack not the self but the persecutor.

I would raise a question about Heimann's view of the relationship between the patient and the woman paid to administer his beatings. Heimann states:

A condition of his pleasure was the prostitute's frustration. She had to be subservient to his will - his instrument, not his partner. While she had to carry out the beating at his bidding and to give him pleasurable sensations by the accompanying genital orgasm, she was not to have any pleasure herself (Heimann 1955, p.248).

It is unclear if it is the man or the woman who performs the masturbation, or whether the masturbation accompanies the actual beating. As a prostitute provides a sexual service that gratifies sexual needs, it is unclear why Heimann suggests the paid sex worker might expect to obtain sexual pleasure herself. A prostitute is not a partner in this sense. In my data sets, the professional Dominatrix is also paid; she is employed to perform a duty dictated by the client. At no time is her body, however provocatively clad, involved in physical sexual activities, and neither are her genitals or breasts uncovered. In contrast, the

submissive is often naked and their genitals are often involved as objects of torture. This may not exclude sensuality, as masochism does infer pleasure in pain after all. Heimann's view is that the avoidance of sexual intercourse is an enactment of the primal scene and Oedipal phantasies.

...his mother should never have loved his father...she should loathe and punish the father's sexual advances. The father should feel the humiliation of being rejected and of being impotent... (Heimann 1955, p.248)<sup>29</sup>.

The comment about denying the woman gratification appears to be a feature of control and exclusion in his phantasy relationship with Oedipal imagoes, rather than a feature of the actual encounter with a paid sex worker. This would 'fit' an Oedipal model but not 'fit' a Domination-submission relationship. The two appear disparate but are not completely opposed as Heimann acknowledges that power actually lies with the patient. He is in control of the pain and similarly, in BDSM, the power lies with the submissive. From Heimann's clinical perspective, power is over the prostitute and the patient's hated internal objects. In BDSM, power is bestowed upon object by the subject. Heimann's patient sought to degrade (and deny) the female beater, whilst the BDSM submissive seeks to adore and serve his female beater. In Heimann's clinical case, according to her analysis, the sadist is in the subject (the patient); in BDSM the sadist is relocated from the subject to the object (the Mistress/Dominatrix). I think that part of this apparent disparity can be explained by Heimann's recognition that her patient is actually sadistic not masochistic. If we study his attitude towards the woman beater, he humiliates and treats her with disdain; she is there to 'do his bidding'. This

---

<sup>29</sup> Melanie Klein had placed the roots of the Oedipus complex in 'the infantile Depressive position (D-p) (Heimann 1955, p.241). I will return to this when I discuss Rosenfeld's paper on masochism and the D-p below.

orientation does not fit the Dominant BDSM 'profile', nor does it fit the submissive BDSM 'profile'. Given this, I question whether this is really a case of BDSM at all. As in Freud's view of moral masochism, Heimann's inference is that the identity of the beater/persecutor is arbitrary, it is only the punishment that is of importance.

In conclusion, this paper is important for my thesis because it is a rare Kleinian paper that appears to be offering something on masochism. It contains BDSM-type material, but rather than masochism, the paper actually concerns sadism and the Oedipus complex. The paper pre-dates Bion's containment model, but even so there seems little in the way of that model that I can apply to the material. The example may not be clear enough in itself; particularly on the issue of what is an internal object, what is a part of the self and what is located where. However, as I have concluded, Heimann's case may not be one of BDSM which would be why I cannot find evidence that 'fits' my H<sub>1</sub>.

*Betty Joseph (1971 [1969])<sup>30</sup> 'A Clinical Contribution to the Analysis of a Perversion'.*

Like Heimann, Betty Joseph had a male patient who paid for the provision of BDSM-type activities excluding genital interaction. Joseph's case also deals with severe pathology;<sup>31</sup> this time the patient is described as a highly narcissistic man. The patient, a 'rubber fetishist', had relationships that Joseph considered to be sadistic - though I would argue that they were masochistic. Joseph stated that

---

30 Presented to the British Psycho-Analytical Society Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1969. References are taken from its publication in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 52 (1971) pp.441-449.

31 Neither Heimann's nor Joseph's cases were described as psychotic.



her intention was not to discuss the *meaning* of the rubber fetish per sé, but to discuss the patient's specific difficulties (Joseph 1971, p.441). However, the potential meaning that Joseph *does* ascribe to the fetish is pertinent to my own project.

Of the patient, Joseph said:

It became clear that he was not going to depend on a woman or an analyst, but was introjecting their good feeding and interpretive qualities, while getting rid of his needs into them,... [he] needed no one, loved no one, had no reason to envy anyone... But, at the same time, he had to have people around him who could carry these split-off infantile parts, and he rarely at that stage could spend even one night in his flat alone, or he would panic (Joseph 1971, p.442).

Like Heimann's patient, this man exhibited features characteristic of PI<sup>(e)</sup>. The process of evacuating into others freed him of those aspects of himself he did not want; but this was far from successful. There was a point - when he was physically alone, with no one to evacuate into - when he could not contain his anxieties. Like Heimann's patient, he also seemed to treat the women he projected into impersonally.

Joseph describes this man's apparent passivity, which came in the form of prolonged highly repetitive silences during his sessions, as a 'quiet glee'. She felt his motivation for this was actually an attempt to stimulate her, the analyst, into beating and punishing him, just as he paid prostitutes to do (Joseph 1971, p 446). I reported above that Heimann had made the same assessment in regard to her patient (Heimann 1955, p.247). In her own patient, Betty Joseph saw 'a

constant regression into sadomasochistic behaviours or into passivity of a silently provocative type' (Joseph 1971, pp.446-447).

I think... there is no question about... the intense gratification that he is trying to gain if he can only feel that I am kicking him around... his behaviour in the session... aimed at rousing me in this way (Joseph 1971, p.448).

This *does* sound masochistic, and indeed Joseph did liken this to moral masochism as described by Freud in 1924 (Joseph 1971, p.449). I want to make the following observation: regressive-type behaviour is reported throughout Betty Joseph's broader literature on psychic equilibrium, and Herbert Rosenfeld also discusses it in his paper on masochism (presented below). I have already referred to this behaviour as 'baiting', as it seems designed to 'needle' and provoke aggression in the analyst. I have also said that something similar - though unaggressive - appears present in the BDSM relationship. I have described in Chapter 4 the submissive's 'bratty' behaviour designed to invite erotically endowed punishment from the Domme. Viewing baiting in these different terms - aggressive versus erotic - may shed light on its clinical significance, although the two may not in fact be equivalent. I have already argued in Chapter 4 that moral masochism does not appear to 'fit' the BDSM profile.

As I noted above, Joseph had stated that her aim was not to discuss the meaning of the rubber fetish (Joseph 1971, p.441). But, for the purposes of my thesis it is to that *meaning* that I now turn.

As a child, due to recurrent middle ear problems, there had been repeated hospital stays for Joseph's patient. Anxiety dreams had dated from that period,

‘in particular, [dreams] about being inside a globe and nearly falling through a hole in it’ (Joseph 1971, p.442). Despite making this observation and recording it in her paper, Joseph makes no interpretation as to the possible meaning of such dreams, bar relating them to the child’s anaesthetics (Joseph 1971, p 442).

To say there was a globe with a hole that he ‘nearly’ fell through suggests that he did not want to fall through that hole. An alternative and specific interpretation, in relation to this man, would be that the ‘globe’ may have been an early idea of what would become his safe, all-encompassing and containing rubber suit. The globe was a container that lacked integrity; it was incomplete; it was insecure; there was a hole that he could fall through. This was a dream in a child who, when adult, would go on to obtain an all-encompassing rubber suit.

Joseph’s other reference to the rubber suit was in relation to the patient’s regular and prolonged silences. Entering into a heavy silence was, she thought, akin to climbing into the rubber suit, ostensibly so that ‘he can withdraw from contact’ (Joseph 1971, p.446). From my own work, I would speculate there may be an alternative interpretation. I suggest that a rubber suit does not necessarily represent *withdrawal* from contact but rather, provides contact of a most intimate nature. Being contained physically provides an experience of being located within the mother’s body or her mind. Rubber clothing of an all-encompassing nature is common in BDSM, as are similar fabrics such as latex, PVC and leather. Whilst leather is in fact ‘skin’, other materials afford the same type of experience by way of evoking a warm, comforting, all-enclosing, highly sensual feeling of being tightly bound, held, and, as I would argue, ‘contained’. This directly relates to what I have already described (Chapter 4) of Freud’s view

of the erotogeneity of the skin, the skin as an early ego boundary experience, and both Bick and Anzieu's ideas of the skin experience as a self-containing experience.

In conclusion, there are features common to both Heimann's and Joseph's cases. There are features of erotism, introjection, evacuation (PI<sup>(e)</sup>), baiting of the analyst and failed containment. Both reported having had aggressive father figures. Both had problems making relationships with women; the mother was reported as kindly but probably not very warm. Female prostitutes were paid to carry out BDSM-type activities, such as being beaten and there was no genital contact within these activities (Joseph 1971, pp.441-442). Heimann infers the presence of moral masochistic features in her patient, whilst Joseph explicitly mentions Freud's moral masochism in relation to her case. In both cases, sadism and an apparent passivity were erotised, whilst Freud had specifically said that the most striking feature of moral masochism was that it had loosened its bonds with sexuality (Freud 1924).

Heimann's patient accused her of being the persecutor, a psychically walled-off dictatorial father figure. This suggests *the persecutor was an internal object*.

Betty Joseph's patient, on the other hand, tried to provoke his analyst to *become* the persecuting figure, thereby making *the persecutor into an external object* from whom he could withdraw.

*Herbert Rosenfeld 'On Masochism: A Theoretical and Clinical Approach' (1988)*

Herbert Rosenfeld, a Kleinian, specifically writing on masochism brings a very different, if not unique, approach to the topic. I shall show that this approach

could have indicated a potential link between masochism and containment theory decades ago. Specifically, Rosenfeld focuses on Klein's Depressive-position (D-p) stating that:

I must begin with an important aspect of normal development, which Melanie Klein called the 'Depressive position', that never functions normally and effectively in masochistic perversions and masochistic character disturbances (Rosenfeld 1988, p.166).

Is Rosenfeld suggesting here that some failure in the normal progression from the paranoid-schizoid-position (P-S-p) to the depressive-position (D-p) results in perverse masochism? Or is he suggesting that masochism impinges on the normal progression from P-S-p to the D-p? The suggestion that the type of masochism understood by Kleinians is due to lack of progression from the P-S-p towards the D-p doesn't appear anywhere else in the psychoanalytic literature. If such were true, would this make masochism equivalent to a fixation point - whether or not as described by Freud? Freud saw the origins of both feminine masochism and moral masochism in the Oedipus complex. It is a generally understood Kleinian tenet that developmental achievement of the D-p and the possibility of reparation occurs on resolving the Oedipus complex, (the reality principle), and the acknowledgement of guilt. Here Freud and object-relations theory 'meet'. Both infer that masochism indicates a lack of developmental progress, or anxiety associated with a particular developmental transition point. My thesis suggests something akin *and* something different to this. I also argue that the masochism of BDSM is a re-enactment of an infantile organisation. Whilst Oedipal resolution is a process carried out within the individual's psyche, the modification of an anxiety is, in my thesis, a function of a *real external* object. The mother's alpha-function drives the infant's psychic development. Rosenfeld

presents a unique view as I have stated above, nevertheless I can show that the allusive thread that I have been seeking in the psychoanalytic literature is present.

Rosenfeld's case material is from a male patient who he describes as 'very schizoid' (Rosenfeld 1988, p.152). The patient told Rosenfeld that he had heard of 'another analyst' who was much more aggressive than Rosenfeld. The 'other analyst' was keener to point out delinquencies and make more aggressive interpretations. The patient said that such an analyst would make the patient feel much safer than Rosenfeld did, and that Rosenfeld seemed weaker and less effective, 'albeit friendly' (Rosenfeld 1988, p.168). This reminds me of the BDSM submissives' desire for a 'disciplinarian' and shows a similarity to the 'baiting' phenomenon I have identified as a feature of Heimann's and Joseph's cases. Is it the case that this feature separates masochism of a *pathological* kind from the masochism of BDSM - the *containing* kind? I shall give this further consideration in the thesis data analysis. My initial reflections are on the similarity in both of these to what Feldman called 'nudging the analyst into a role' (Feldman 1997). Like Betty Joseph's patient, Rosenfeld's patient seems to use castigation to ensure a safety that I would align with 'containment'. If so, there are theoretical and clinical implications to this new understanding of masochism and the nature of the maternal-infant, psyche-psyche interaction.

Rosenfeld tells us that the patient held an idealised view of his mother who had died when he was around eight years old. Accepting the fact that she had not been perfect was difficult for this patient because 'idealisation has to reduce in order for good and bad to be tolerated together' (Rosenfeld 1988, p.169). Likewise,

the patient had difficulty accepting an analyst who was not ideal, he had an idealised view of some 'other' analyst who was deemed so much more effective.

For Rosenfeld's patient:

... when the good and bad things came close together, there was a great feeling of confusion. This was confusion not only about the past and present, but also about good and bad things... I pointed out that it was the confusion that always arises at the moment of coming close to the depressive situation which causes this painful and disturbing situation in the attempt to move forward. (1988, pp.169-170).

The movement towards the Depressive position for this patient invited:

... the danger that destructive feelings would enter at that moment and use this uncertainty to take all the good things he had achieved away from him and destroy everything. The emergence of these feelings would drive him again into a very fixed position which he would then have to cling to. He was afraid that in the end he would be driven back to masochism and suffering and feeling invaded by a destructive punishing force... (Rosenfeld p.170).

Rosenfeld's view of 'idealisation' presents a question: Does idealisation represent either a retreat from, or stalled development towards, the Depressive position? I am reminded again of Freud's idea of instinct regression to a former developmental phase when he discusses moral masochism (1924). I will be pursuing these thoughts later in my data analysis, particularly in regard to idealisation of the object, the Dominatrix in all her perfection.

I would point out that Rosenfeld was not specifically committed to the containment idea, but this is still a paper crucial to my thesis hypotheses. If

Klein's developmental theory of the transition from the Paranoid-Schizoid-position to the Depressive-position is implicated in masochistic phenomena, then also, by implication, this transition is involved in BDSM. If such views have merit, this could indicate that there are avenues for further research into Kleinian developmental theory other than those proposed by my own hypotheses concerning containment or masochism.

In conclusion, according to Rosenfeld, masochism is associated with a problematic achievement of the D-p. This seems to be a novel idea. Both the infant's traversal through the containing process, and the infant's traversal from the Paranoid-Schizoid-position to achievement of the Depressive-position are traversals of, and victories over, pain (as it is a journey through resolution of the Oedipus complex). The idea of pain that has to be traversed is one that Nicola Abel-Hirsch attempts to deal with in the last of the four papers I present here.

*Nicola Abel-Hirsch. 'The Perversion of pain, pleasure and thought: on the difference between 'suffering' an experience and the 'construction' of a thing to be used' (2006).*

There is no explicit consideration of Bion's Containment theory in this paper, but its presence is implicit in Abel-Hirsch's perspective on masochism. Her aim was to explore the nature of pain and pleasure with specific reference to the work of Bion and Joseph (Abel-Hirsch, 2006 p. 99). The focus is on Bion's differentiation between pain *suffered* and pain *felt*, where pain is perceived to originate, and how pain is *received* (Abel-Hirsch, p.100).



Simply, to *suffer* pain is to know that this is *my* pain, it is part of *me*, it comes from within me, it is an experience of self, it is a discovery of self. Such would be the experience of real grief and sorrow: it is *mine*. On the other hand, pain that holds no meaning of the self brings meaning of 'another', a torturer, someone is doing something horrible to me. Abel-Hirsch explores this differential by discussing masochism in relation to Betty Joseph's 'Addiction to Near Death' (1989 [1982]). She quotes Betty Joseph as saying:

...the analyst will sense that there is real misery and anxiety around and this will have to be sorted out and differentiated from the masochistic use and exploitation of misery (Joseph, 1989, p.128).<sup>32</sup>

That is, there is a difference between *real* misery, anxiety and pain suffered by the person and the *exploitation* of misery from which it must be differentiated (Abel-Hirsch p.101). Abel-Hirsch sees Joseph's meaning of masochism as a pain 'felt', as a pain *used* in a masochistic or sadistic manner (Abel-Hirsch p.101). I would argue that the word 'used' suggests an implement wielded as a weapon - a weapon of attack - in this case against the self. This is in contrast to a *facilitative* tool for change as is the case in pain *suffered* to enable (self) discovery. This view of pain as a facilitative tool clearly reflects my thesis H<sub>1</sub> hence this paper's application to my study.

What is of particular interest is Abel-Hirsch's approach to Bion's intended meaning of the term 'suffer', as opposed to 'feel'.

---

<sup>32</sup> *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change* for refs.

Bion wrote little directly on perversion.

However, his work introduces the possibility of distinguishing... what he describes as pain 'suffered' and a pain 'felt' (Abel-Hirsch p.99).

She quotes Bion:

The patient who will not suffer pain fails to 'suffer' pleasure (1970, p.9).

If, as she suggests, Bion's intended meaning was more in the sense of an older use of the term, then this changes how his ideas are read. Rather than to 'pass through' or *traverse* pain Abel-Hirsch suggests looking at the idea of suffering in a way more akin to its biblical meaning. She gives an example:

But Jesus said, 'suffer little children and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:14 King James, 1611).

To 'suffer little children to come unto me' means to 'allow something to be', to 'allow or bring change'<sup>33</sup>. The differentiation between pain suffered and pain felt directly applies to Bion's container-contained model although Abel-Hirsch does not make this link. Ultimately, Abel-Hirsch distinguishes between pain which is in contact with *reality* - and pain which results from a perverse psychic feeling. My question is whether the border between 'that suffered' and 'that felt' is key to containment and, in my thesis, key to BDSM. If masochism is the problematic *feeling* of pain, then BDSM provides the *suffering* and therefore processing of psychic pain.

My own hypothesis argues that pain *suffered*, is pain amenable to successful alpha-function and therefore containment. My research shows that both suffering, and the necessary alpha-function are 'achieved' through BDSM.

---

33 The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 3rd ed. 1988 [1983] Vol. II p.2180

## Conclusion

I have presented four different papers on masochism with four different foci:

- 
- Internal
- object relationship (Heimann)
- External object relationship (Joseph)
- Movement between Klein's P-S-p and the D-p (Rosenfeld)
- The experiencing and use of pain (feeling or suffering) (Abel-Hirsch)

Obviously, each paper is from the object-relations field, but they are very different. This could indicate a broad and enthusiastic engagement with masochism as a phenomenon. However, I argue that it indicates the opposite: masochism has not been well engaged with by the Kleinian school of psychoanalysis. A series of questions arises:

- Is masochism a manifestation of problems traversing the Oedipus complex?

Or,

- Is masochism a manifestation of problems traversing the move from the Paranoid-Schizoid-position to the Depressive-position?

- Is masochism a road through pain that cannot be travelled?

Or,

- Is masochism something intolerable that cannot be thought?

Or,

- Is it a borderline between successful resolution or traversal?

For each of these, there is an object-relating explanation for masochism.

## Discussion

Paula Heimann's patient was severely disturbed and his BDSM activities are seen in this light. The focus for Heimann was her patient's *internal object relationship* with a cruel, dominating parental figure, as opposed to a *containing* figure.

Although Kleinian in perspective and this paper uses object relations theory, Freud is still present in the moral masochism flavoured material, and in Heimann's recognition of the compulsion to repeat. Heimann's writing pre-dates Bion's containment publications but if my H<sub>1</sub> has merit, it should still be possible to see elements of the containment process in her paper if indeed they are there. Although there are features suggestive of PI<sup>(e)</sup>, there is little to see of containment theory in relation to masochism.

On the other hand, Betty Joseph's BDSM patient, also deemed to be pathologically disturbed, does provide material that can be interpreted as relating to 'containing' behaviour. As a Kleinian, Joseph also applies Freud's principles when she speaks of 'regression' to masochistic behaviours such as Freud had implied in 'moral masochism'. Joseph's patient also evidenced features of excessive projection identification, and also features suggestive of 'container seeking' behaviours - for example, the need for an all-encompassing rubber suit. Such behaviours were very evident in the material gleaned from the Leather Family which showed that being tightly wrapped or bound was an activity sought-out and enjoyed. My data also suggests that it is an almost mandatory component of BDSM scenarios.

Both Heimann's and Joseph's patients exhibited baiting behaviour towards their analyst. The significance of this is unknown but it will be a point for later consideration and discussion.

Herbert Rosenfeld's paper is very different, if not unique, in its consideration of masochism from an object-relating point of view. The potential influence that this apparently obscure paper may have had in terms of understanding or thinking about masochism cannot be known. Specifically, Rosenfeld considered masochism in relation to Klein's Depressive-position saying that in masochistic type disturbances, Klein's Depressive-position 'never functions normally'. This suggested to me that BDSM activities may represent a journey from a paranoid-schizoid type of position to something more like a Depressive position.

Rosenfeld's patient, also severely disturbed, appeared to exhibit the same baiting behaviours towards his analyst. We specifically hear him say that if only Rosenfeld were more 'aggressive', and more punitive, then he (the patient) would feel much 'safer'. A feeling of safety or the experience of safety was very much a feature of my initial impressions gleaned from the Leather Family, and in line with my hypothesis that masochism represents a search for containment.

Rosenfeld's apparently novel conclusion was to associate masochism with failed or stalled achievement of Klein's Depressive-position. This is an object-related developmental process directly applied to masochism.

Although Rosenfeld has presented the actions of the Depressive-position in relation to masochism, I suggest that these could be seen in the following terms: A move towards the Depressive-position would initiate a drive to *return to a point of fixation* (Freud's instinct theory of regression), associated with a drive *back*

*towards masochism* (Freud's death instinct and the compulsion to repeat ), bringing a feeling of being *invaded* (Klein's Paranoid-Schizoid-position), and *punished* (Freud's super-ego), punishment which in Heimann's and Joseph's cases as well as in BDSM, is erotised.

What I am saying is that Rosenfeld's clinical paper on masochism - set within an object-relations developmental framework - clearly shows three of Freud's hypotheses on masochism: i) as a fixation point, ii) as a need for punishment and iii) in idealisation of a maternal figure (or the imagined other analyst). Of note is that whilst his paper is also congruent with features characteristic of BDSM - specifically the need for punishment and the idealisation of the object - significantly, what is missing is *erotisation*.

Nicola Abel-Hirsch's paper is very different again, offering something new to masochism - not so much in terms of case material or of providing answers, but more in terms of raising questions about what Bion thought of *pain*. Her paper deals with Bionian semantics, discussing how he used the term 'suffering', and suggesting this may have been misunderstood. This is not my thesis. However, as I have shown above, I can apply Bion's model of containment to Abel-Hirsch's differentiation between pain that is 'suffered' and pain that is 'felt'. This, I would argue, reflects the difference between successful alpha-function and unmodified beta-elements.

My review of the literature became primarily a 'search for' literature. Once sourced, a few disparate papers, representative of seven decades of Kleinian thinking, show that there is something missing from the Kleinian and Freudian

view of masochism. My argument is that what is missing is an application of Bion's container-contained theory. Freud's ideas on masochism are evident in the Kleinian clinical material, but this appears to relate only to moral masochism. I will suggest later that this is not coincidental. Freud called moral masochism 'unmistakeably pathological' (Freud 1924). This begs the question: is moral masochism *absent* in the BDSMer psyche, and if so, what are the implications? This fundamental question potentially asks a series of further questions about psychoanalysis, its history, its conceptual structures, its belief systems and its clinical application and data interpretation.

My final comment is on the masochism-sadism differential which never seems to be quite delineated. Rosenfeld (1988) pointed out, as do others, that the term sado-masochism is preferred over masochism 'because sadism and masochism are so often intricately related' (Rosenfeld 1988, p.151). However, he immediately followed this with 'there are both masochistic and sadomasochistic processes' indicating that there is some differentiation to be made - at least at times. Both Heimann's and Joseph's paper had addressed this point saying that what appears masochistic may be disguising what is actually sadistic: is the self sadistically attacking an internal object as Heimann said; or is the external object provoked into a sadistic attack on the self as Joseph said.

### **Literature Review Outcome**

My analysis of the literature shows:

- There is an explicit absence of literature that applies the container-contained theory to an understanding of Masochism.

- There is an argument for the implicit presence of container-contained theory in relation to Masochism.

Both, the extreme lack of literature, and a potential theoretical thread, as ethereal as that may seem, supported the need for further enquiry. That is, new, novel and original work is required to generate new literature and new theory, to address an apparent gap in knowledge.

This gap in psychoanalytic knowledge is what my thesis seeks to address by bringing new insight to the phenomena of masochism. In the next Chapter, I show my methodological approach for assessing my data sets. By operationalising Bion's container-contained model, I was able to create an assessment device which I used to analyse my data, and consequently test my thesis H<sub>1</sub>.

### **CONCLUSION to THESIS SECTION 1.**

I have stated that this thesis is an empirical, as well as a conceptual study. In Section 1 of my thesis, I described my initial engagement with the subject of BDSM. From that I created a hypothesis that there is a correlational relationship between aspects of BDSM activities and components of a primitive containing process. I have defined the purposes of my study. I have defined the field of debate, I have presented detailed expositions of two psychoanalytic concepts, Freud's theorising on masochism and Bion's object relating model of container-contained. I have presented a detailed analysis of the available literature from which I have concluded that there is a gap in current knowledge.



I have demonstrated that although the two primary concepts - masochism and containment - have *not* been explicitly regarded in relation to each other, something of an *implicit* thread justifies further investigation.

I will now move on to Section 2 of my thesis, in which I research my H<sub>1</sub>. This section consists of three Chapters: Chapter 7 the methodology, Chapter 8 the data analysis and results, and Chapter 9, the thesis discussion and conclusions.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Methodology**

#### Introduction

There are two broad methods of reasoning in philosophy or logic: *inductive* and *deductive* processes. My initial enquiry utilised an *inductive* process which is described as a 'bottom up' approach, beginning with 'the specific' and moving towards the recognition of generalisations. I concluded that there may be a generalisation, that masochism and Bion's containing process could be correlated. This second part of the project is designed around a *deductive* process, that is, a 'top down' approach, beginning with my generalised

hypothesis, that there is a such a correlation. I am going to show how I designed a study seeking empirical evidence to determine whether masochism, as exemplified by BDSM activities, is a form of containment, albeit a *primitive* form of containment or an *appeal* for containment. The research design relies upon operationalisation of the container-contained model. I consider the operationalisation of theoretical concepts to be a principle, fundamental to the research process.

This chapter is divided into two parts:

**Part 1. Psychoanalytic Research: Operationalising Psychoanalytic Concepts.**

Aims:

- To define and illustrate the process of operationalisation.
- To show examples where psychoanalytic ideas have been operationalised for research purposes.
- To show examples where Bion's Container-contained model has been operationalised for the purposes of psychoanalytic research.
- To show the operationalisation of sado-masochism for subject selection.

**Part 2. Operationalisation of Bion's Container-contained model and formation of an Assessment Tool.**

Aims:

- A) To demonstrate the operationalisation of Bion's Container-contained model.
- B) To show the development and creation of an assessment tool for the analysis of this project's data.

### **Part 1: Psychoanalytic Research. Operationalising Psychoanalytic Concepts**

To undertake an empirical study, the phenomena under investigation must be clearly defined within the narrowest terms possible, and those terms must be amenable to observation. The process of defining is a form of 'abductive reasoning' often described as the 'duck test'<sup>34</sup>:

If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.

One concludes, from the object's characteristic features, that this thing is a duck – because it looks and acts like a duck. The determination of observable features, which can then be applied to other subjects to assess their 'duck-ness', is the process of *operationalisation*.

Simply put, the task of operationalisation is to *refine terminologies*. This includes classification, categorisation, inclusive and/or exclusive criteria, attribution to, or restriction to, a specific taxonomical<sup>35</sup> group and so forth. The task of the

---

<sup>34</sup> Claims as to the origin of the 'duck test' vary, but the example often given is that of Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer at United Auto Workers Labour meeting (1946), accusing union members of communism.

<sup>35</sup> Biological Taxonomy or Binomial Nomenclature in order of refinement: Domain, Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus. Species.

taxonomist is to identify shared features, or structural characteristics, in order to determine the allocation of a given life form to one genus or another. A process of *refinement* will identify separate species within that genus. A child struggles to differentiate between a horse and a cow until he or she learns by a process of refinement, by *operationalisation*, what is and what is not a cow. The outcome of this process is to create a stereotype – of horse and of cow – or what Piaget termed a *schema*. In medicine, a stereotype or a schema equates to a complex or a syndrome, that is, something that consists of a cluster of features or characteristics, this is the task of works such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and the International Classification of Disease (ICD). A differential diagnosis may rest upon one significant feature.

Upon publication of DSM (V) (2013) the director of the American National Institute of Mental Health, Thomas Insel, wrote:

The goal... as with previous editions, is to provide a common language for describing psychopathology. Whilst DSM has been described as a 'Bible' for the field, it is, at best, a dictionary, creating a set of labels and defining each (Insel 2013).

Some concepts are not as straightforward to categorise, for example those that are socially or culturally determined. Take, for example, judicial law. Do the observed features of a particular crime 'fit' the definition of murder, or do they 'fit' the definition of manslaughter, as written in law. Operationalisation classifies and defines what is murder and what is manslaughter. Clearly there are differences across cultures and societies, and these are not stable over time either. Some definitions change as ideas, values and views change. On the other hand, some differentiating features are set in stone in so far as a cow is always

going to possess the features of a mammal. However, as knowledge progresses and our ability to develop increasingly intricate investigative tools, even life forms can be reclassified<sup>36</sup>.

As I said above, the medical world makes a diagnosis of an illness based on observing signs and symptoms. Some disorders, even those unrelated, may share observable features. If the nature of the disorder is not readily recognisable, diagnosis may rely on a process of refinement or a differential feature. Both DSM and ICD set out observable criteria of thousands of different disorders in order to assist medical practitioners in making diagnoses. These criteria help create a *definition* of these disorders. I suggest this describes the concept of ‘operationalisation’. I want to draw attention to the term I used above ‘observable criteria’, because this is crucial to my thesis observations and data analysis. This will become clear in Chapter 8 when I apply an operationalised assessment device to my research data.

In his introduction to DSM (V), Insel<sup>71</sup> stated that the strength of DSM was in its ‘reliability’ - all clinicians using the same terms in the same way - however, its shortcomings are that of *validity*. The quality of validity confers authority, efficaciousness and applicability, based on well-founded, sound and to-the-point logic, ‘against which no argument or objection can be fairly brought’ (Insel 2013). Simply put, does the DSM ‘measure’ what it sets out to measure?

---

36 For example, the Giant Panda classification under Ursidae (bear) was challenged. It was proposed to be a member of the Racoon family based on ‘shared’ features. Later developments in molecular biology established that it is indeed a member of the Ursidae family (O’Brein et al 1985).

My own task in designing an operationalised tool is to create a device based solely and rigorously on Bion's own 'authoritative' model of the container-contained process.

Because of my methodological need to *define* masochism, I will return to both DSM and ICD in Part 2 below. This will also provide the opportunity to show that definitions of sado-masochism have changed over time. What were once deemed to be pathological features of masochism have now been differentiated and deemed to be non-pathological. This has been in no small part due to pressure from the BDSM community. In Part 2, I operationalise the concept of masochism in order to select my subjects. I will show how operationalising masochism provides an example of how pitfalls can still occur in the operationalisation process. Such pitfalls can undermine the validity of the research process and therefore the research outcomes. I will then go on to operationalise Bion's containment model for observational and analytic purposes. Before I show the operationalisation process in my own study, I will show how other researchers used the operationalisation process in psychoanalytically-framed enquiry.

I am going to present several short examples of empirical research where the researcher has operationalised psychoanalytic concepts. The goal of operationalisation in each example was to provide conceptual clarification. Of note is that each researcher utilised a different method of data collection. Hinshelwood (2008) used a detailed literature review in order to establish semantic clarification; Sanfuentes (2008) used clinical data, Steggles (2015) used an interview technique, whilst Staminova (2013), Mendes (2012) and Briggs (1997) used observational methods. I am going to begin with an example by

Hinshelwood that shows how the operationalisation process facilitated the clarification of *observable criteria*.

Operationalisation of Psychoanalytic Concepts: Examples from Psychoanalytic Research.

*Example 1. 'Repression and Splitting: Towards a method of conceptual comparison'. Hinshelwood, R.D. (2008).*

Hinshelwood's aim was to demonstrate a general method for the clarification of terminology. Presenting a comparison between two psychoanalytic concepts – the classical Freudian idea of 'repression' and the Kleinian object-relating idea of 'splitting' – Hinshelwood claimed that semantic rigour could show whether the differences in terms were really just that: semantic alternatives for similar clinical phenomenon, or, whether they were in fact, different concepts.

Hinshelwood (2008 p.504) described a two-step process:

1. A fair assessment *from the literature* of the two separate theoretical schools, specifically noting instances where both concepts appear to overlap in semantic terms.

Followed by:

2. Observable critical moments *from clinical material* which allowed a comparison between the two concepts.

The aim of the semantic analysis of the literature is to establish the core elements and to define the 'semantic territory' of each concept, including where they may overlap. As Hinshelwood points out, having a clear definition – and thus enabling a *specific* characterisation of a given mechanism – helps to avoid the 'erosion of meaning and usefulness' (2008 p. 510). Having reduced the theoretical margins,

or rather, having extracted theoretical definitions from a textual analysis, a search for observable evidence can commence.

Hinshelwood chose to utilise this process of operationalisation in order to create *predictive* identifiers (a deductive process), and thereby create a diagnostic tool for the clinical material. A prediction can be confirmed or unconfirmed - that is *predictions can be tested* - and the analyses of data, evidence and observations, whether theoretical or clinical, can determine whether the identifiers are present or absent.

Hinshelwood began the operationalisation of the terms 'Repression' and 'Splitting' with a detailed analysis of the literature (Step 1). This allowed him to extrapolate a set of *statements* which would identify and distinguish one term from the other. This would enable the comparison of characteristics within the clinical data (Step 2). These are the characteristics that he identified from the literature:

*Features of Repression (classical Freudian term)*

1. Repression gives rise to disguised or substitute representation.
2. Repression assigns qualities of either consciousness or unconsciousness to mental things, merely obliterating conscious conflict.
3. Repression is a defence of the more mature ego.
4. Repression is a defence against sexual conflicts.

*Features of Splitting (Kleinian object-relating term)*

5. Splitting significantly affects the structure of the ego and its functions, leaving a deficit.



6. Spitting creates a lack and a sense of a lack.
7. Splitting is a defence mechanism of an immature ego.
8. Splitting is a defence against aggression and fear about survival.

### *Conclusion*

Hinshelwood reduced the two phenomena to two alternative indicators, based on what would be, in practice, crucial characteristics:

9. Repression - a substitute representation.

10. Splittin  
g – a blank in ego-function.

This differentiation between the two terms meant that clinical material, the data body, could be assessed to determine whether the patient was experiencing repression or splitting.

Hinshelwood determined that the analyst could question whether there is evidence of an identifiable change: is there change, such as a deficit in the ego, which is likely to have been brought about by *splitting*? Or in contrast, is there evidence of a *restructuring* of the ego which could have been brought about by repression?

Hinshelwood established that there is a difference between the defence mechanisms of repression and splitting. Each term really does 'occupy differing semantic spaces', and this is observable with appropriate methodologies (Hinshelwood 2008, p.515).

*Example 2. 'Conceptualising our Interpersonal Impressions: Mental Representations and Internal Objects'. Steggle, G. (2015).*

Similar to Hinshelwood's aim of differentiating between two psychoanalytic concepts, Steggle sought to determine whether 'mental representations' were the same as 'internal objects'. For Steggle, if *internal objects* exist, their presence would be stimulated by, and when in, the presence of a close relationship; and there would be an interaction with an internal figure. In contrast, a *mental representation* would form in response to an interaction with a distant figure such as a celebrity. By ascertaining the nature of interviewee responses to the terms 'mother' or 'film star', the conceptualisations they stimulated could be extrapolated for comparative purposes (Steggle 2015, p.139). Like Hinshelwood, Steggle operationalised both concepts through a detailed *textual analysis* of psychoanalytic literature. By identifying the different criteria that defined the two concepts, Steggle was able to infer which psychic structures were present and operational within her data sets.

By comparing the theoretical conceptualisation of both mental representations and internal objects, Steggle concluded that mental representations and internal objects are different phenomena. They do both occur in everyday life and they can and do co-exist.

*Example 3. 'Regression and group psychotherapy: observing the effect of the group-as-a whole on the group members' thinking'. Sanfuentes, M. (2008).*

In this example, Sanfuentes aimed to research the topic of regression, specifically Bion's (1962) model of negative links (-K) and group psychotherapy.

Sanfuentes found that whilst Bion's texts give a theoretical, condensed description of -K, there is a lack of clinical evidence. And further, that there is little in the secondary literature that may help to 'portray concrete expressions of -K' (Sanfuentes 2008, p.184). Taking a careful look at what Bion *did* explain, Sanfuentes created a dialectical process between clinical and theoretical material to create his own categorisation of -K. The features of this categorisation, the operationalisation of -K, were as follows:

*1. The Capacity for Abstraction.*

Bion saw the flexible use of thinking as entailing the capability of moving from *concrete* statements to *generalised* statements, and vice versa. Through this process, *sense* data are abstracted and transformed into *alpha-elements*. As alpha-elements always retain some element of 'meaning', thoughts are thus prevented from becoming divorced from reality. The relationship to reality, he said, could be observed in the clinical setting: where K is apparent, this denotes an ability to abstract generalisations, and -K becomes apparent in the *inability* to abstract.

*2. Making a 'dynamic' situation 'static'.*

The dynamic and constructive efforts of the mind to grow and to gain new knowledge, can be transformed into a static status (-K) that impedes growth and development. In terms of group psychotherapy, Sanfuentes determined that such impairment (-K) could manifest in a clinical situation, such as when a group member attempted to divert the flow of a session. Such diversion attempts may manifest in a range of different ways, for example, quick responses, the change of focus of attention, an apparent pseudo-cooperation, repetitive redundant responses, attempts to

intellectualise, clinging to old knowledge and so on, which may bring the group discussion to stall.

*3. The incapacity to contain psychic elements (fragmented thought).*

Sanfuentes determined that -K has a destructive dynamic which is expressed in the fragmentation of discourse and demonstrates the difficulty in linking different ideas and concepts (typically psychotic states). Through clinical observations he showed that -K manifestations in speech may show words and sentences that lack connectives, a sense of broken, vague discourse and confusion.

Through identifying theoretical criteria as well as collecting clinical material, Sanfuentes was able to observe the manifestation of Bion's -K in the clinical setting of the group.

*Example 4. 'Envy in Learning; A Psychoanalytical Observational Study of a Group in Education'. Staminova, K. (2013).*

Like the previous examples, here the operationalisation of concepts is a process of clarification. The aim of Staminova's thesis was to discuss how envy impacted on learning in groups. However, an initial analysis of psychoanalytic literature revealed that the concepts of envy, jealousy, greed, and frustration were interrelated and not defined separately.

Further analysis of the literature, enabled Staminova to extract a set of identifying criteria for each concept from which two terms - envy and frustration - could be delineated as follows:

*Features of Envy:*

1. The self links with a good/desired/needed object.

2. An object that, broadly speaking, is perceived as one gratifying needs and promoting growth, learning, development (for example the mother/breast).
3. An envious attack wants to spoil that goodness (by undermining it).
4. The envious parts of the self are split off and projected outwards/into the object.

*How features of envy manifest:*

Aggressive attacks against the good object (e.g. teacher/mother) can be inferred by, for example, undermining or devaluing either the good/authoritative object or of the learning. This can be observed as blankness, lack of emotion, lack of energy or a show of indifference; lack of rivalry and competitiveness can manifest as poor engagement such as looking out of the window, thereby excluding oneself.

*Features of Frustration*

5. The object (for example, mother/breast/teacher) is experienced as obstructing needs or withholding the goodness (learning) for itself.
6. This provokes action against the object; aggressive attacks aim to destroy the object.
7. The ego is not split; rather the feeling of frustration is repressed.
8. The ego is therefore left intact and less damaged.

*How features of frustration manifest:*

Attacks against obstructive, bad objects which deny gratification are observed as jealousy (feeling excluded), rivalry, competitiveness, or the reluctance to

participate and unwillingness to engage. There may seem to be a desire to disengage, but, unlike envy, the emotion remains and anger, annoyance, rebellion, reluctance or refusal to participate emerge.

By this process of operationalisation, Staminova ascertained that it was possible to distinguish between two sources of aggressive attacks, each arising from different motivations. One form of attack stems from primary *envy*, while the other stems from a *frustrating* obstructing object.

*Example 5. 'Tasks, Emotions and Emotional Tasks: a study of the interconnection between Social Defence Systems and Containment in Organisations'. Mendes, T. (2012).*

This project by Mendes aimed to empirically verify whether the model of social defence systems and Bion's concept of containment could be two different vertices of the same observable phenomenon. In order to test this, Mendes had to begin by comparing, contrasting and so differentiating between the two models.

Mendes created criteria based on three papers: Betty Joseph's (1988) clinical description of projective identification, Bick's notion of 'patterns' (1964) and Rustin's (2002) discourse on Bick's method. From this comparison, Mendes went on to ascertain the nature of the data he would assign to each vertex:

- Social defence systems model was analysed via a *task* vertex – because anxiety is caused by the task (Isabel Menzies Lyth 1959).
- Bion's containment model was analysed via a vertex of *emotional maturity* – because containment brings about mastery over anxiety.

Again, like the previous examples, a set of criteria was identified for each vertex based on a review of the psychoanalytic literature, which then enabled the operationalisation of the concepts. I am going to show the first vertex only as an example of Mendes's operationalisation of social defence systems.

### *Operationalisation of Social Defence Systems.*

There are several descriptions of social defence mechanisms in the context of care institutions in the literature. Three main points were evident that could be both meaningful and observable: defence, task and anxiety. From these, Mendes operationalised three criteria:

#### *1. Defence.*

A fundamental characteristic of social defence systems is the avoidance of anxiety, guilt, doubt or uncertainty - these feelings can be avoided (defended against) at a collective level in maladaptive ways (Menzies-Lyth 1959). Inferences were provided by observations of staff at critical moments. One example shows the staff becoming obsessively controlling when disturbances occurred. Fears of attack gave rise to paranoid anxieties within the staff group, this increased control, especially of the patients, was a collective defence system.

#### *2. Impact on Task.*

Distortion of the task in hand is itself a defence against anxiety (Menzies-Lyth 1988). Such events were observed through actions like *transforming* the task, and *emotionally removing oneself* from the task through drifting away from the caring situation and performing chores, thus denuding the task of caring and emotional proximity.

#### *3. Anxiety.*

Anxiety in the behaviour of both staff and patients was inferred from the emotional experience of the *observer* (the countertransference).

As part of the operationalisation of social defence systems, Mendes stated that there was a clearly identifiable process taking place: anxiety (criterion 3) triggered 'activated defensive techniques' (criterion 1), which then triggered 'task distortion' (criterion 2), which sought to reduce anxiety (criterion 3).

*Example 6. 'Growth and Risk in Infancy'. Briggs (1997).*

Staminova and Mendes both specifically referenced Briggs' (1997) psychoanalytically-based research which considered Bion's containment theory. As in my own research, Briggs made a substantial attempt to operationalise the 'deeper theoretical structures' of Bion's container-contained model (Briggs 1997, p.40). My interest in his work was to see how he established whether the features and qualities of containment could be identified in suitable material. His hypothesis was that differences in maternal style and attitude, specifically maternal reverie (Bion 1967) could be correlated with poor infant development (Briggs 1997 p.2). Briggs' method of primary data collection came from weekly researcher observations using the technique of infant observation developed by Bick (1964). For each of five infants, approximately 80 observations were made from soon after birth to two years (Briggs 1997, pp. 2 and 35-39). Although Briggs' goal was to develop an assessment tool for 'accurately predicting' the 'infant at risk', I am leaving that aside. For the purposes of my own project, I am going to show that Briggs began the process of operationalising Bion's containment model by reference to the psychoanalytic literature. I am going to show that by operationalising components of Bion's model, Briggs made his own contribution to empirical methodology.



### *Briggs' Operationalisation of Bion's Container-contained Model*

Briggs set out to operationalise the psychoanalytic concepts key to his research by taking an in-depth look at the components of Bion's container-contained model (♀♂). From reviewing three of Bion's publications – *Learning from Experience* (1962), 'Attacks on Linking' (1959), and *Attention and Interpretation* (1970) – Briggs determined that the container-contained process consisted of four components:

- The 'commensal' or mutually interpenetrating system of ♀♂.
  - The maternal capacity for reverie and how she performs that function.
  - The infant's communication made by projective identification.
  - Infant internalisation-infant containment (as an outcome of 1, 2, & 3)
- (Briggs 1997, pp.42-47)

#### *1. The Commensal Relationship*

Bion had described the *commensal* containing relationship as one of mutual benefit to both parties, and as the emotional K-link between mother and infant (Bion 1967). Other *noncommensal* forms of containing relationship, which he said are either somewhat sterile (symbiotic) or have destructive potential, are far less successful. Briggs described noncommensality as 'lifeless compact communication' or a 'flattened state of being' with a potential for being 'explosive or forceful' (Briggs 1997, p.43). Commensality determines the quality of what Briggs saw as the 'fit' between the mother's reverie and the infant's projective identification. During the clinical research, observers monitored the *patterns* of relating between mother and infant - what Briggs termed 'timing rhythms'. For instance, did the mother and infant appear to be in tune with each other? Was emotional contact maintained? and so on. The data collected were categorised as

*containing, accommodating or conflictual*, thereby characterising the general quality of the link that could be observed (Briggs 1997, p.44).

## *2. Maternal Reverie*

Briggs' unique approach was to take Bion's single idea of the commensal relationship and, from observation and data analysis, subdivide it into three forms of reverie which he described as the mother's 'containing shape' (Briggs 1997, pp.44-45). The 'containing shape' of the mother's reverie is the shape of the demeanour - the emotional 'face' she presents to her infant (Briggs 1997, p.45). Briggs describes the maternal face as having three potential shapes: Concave, Flat or Convex (Briggs 1997, p.45). A concave shape is a reverie in which the mother identifies and mediates incoming emotion, this is like a parabolic dish 'listening' to incoming signals. A flat countenance, (deadpan, expressionless face), ignores the emotion; simply put, it flattens, or blocks affect. A convex shape is one which the maternal projective identification is added to and returned to the incoming infant's projections (like a convex mirror it reflects back and distorts), thus perverting meaning and conflicting with the emotional needs and state of the infant's mind<sup>37</sup>.

## *3. Infant Communication (Projective Identification)*

Briggs denoted the infant's communication as the infant's 'grip' on his object. The degree of 'grip' determines the success of the infant's projective identification.

---

<sup>37</sup> Bion described this as 'nameless dread' (1962).

If as Bion suggested it is assumed that the infant is attempting to communicate through projective identification the sensory modalities would be used as the vehicle for communications (Briggs 1997, p.46).

Briggs (p.46) drew on Bick's idea of the psychic skin as the first sensory modality in his operationalisation of Bion's containment.

For Bick, the first function of the containing mother was to provide a 'psychic skin' for the infant. This was to be taken as concretely experienced, and the function of early contact with mother was the internalisation of the mother's containing function, through the physical activities of the mother. The optimal [containing] object is the nipple in the mouth together with the holding and talking and familiar smelling mother (Bick, 1968, p.484).

Identifying observable criteria of the intensity of the 'hold' between the infant's mouth and the mother's nipple begins with skin-to skin contact, progressing to eye-eye contact, and then noting the reciprocity of maternal-infant vocalisations, the capacity for 'alert inactivity' and so on (Briggs 1997, p.46). Through observation of the infant's use of sensory modalities, and the ability to do so sequentially, meant that the observer could follow the emotional preoccupation of the infant, his mode of grip and his willingness to object-relate. Failed 'grip' could be observed in the infant's frantic search for an object - a light, a voice, a smell or some other sensual object (Bick 1968, p.484).

#### *4. Infant Internalisation - Infant Containment (as a function of 1, 2, & 3 above).*

Generally, evidence of a trusting, secure relationship with the maternal figure equates to good object internalisation; that is, the internalisation of 'an object which loves and protects the self, and is also loved and protected by a self' (Klein

1957, p. 188). Evidence of a suspicious, distressed or conflictual attitude to the maternal object suggests internalisation of a persecutory object. Briggs commented on the difficulty in operationalising or empirically testing the infant's internalisation of a container (Briggs 1997, p. 47). However, Briggs has determined that the success of internalisation is determined by the emotional qualities of the commensal relationship, the qualities of maternal reverie and the qualities of the infant's grip on people and things. Together these provide the basis for assessing how well the infant has internalised the container.

### *Conclusion*

As part of his operationalisation process, Briggs identified the maternal figure as having three potential 'faces', one of which 'concave', equates to reverie; it identifies and mediates incoming emotion. Reverie emerges as a function of the commensality of the maternal-infant containing relationship (Briggs 1997 p.45). It is possible, therefore, to operationalise components of Bion's container-contained model by collecting data from direct infant observations and consequently an assessment tool can be created that indicates the quality of that containing relationship.

### Methodology Part 1. Conclusions

I have shown that operationalisation of concepts - the definition and refinement of terms as well as the identification of observable criteria - has been a central component of the methodology of successful psychoanalytic research. By scholarly research, Hinshelwood defined and differentiated between two psychoanalytic concepts (splitting and repression), Steggle differentiated mental representations from internal objects, and Staminova differentiated envy from

frustration. The clinician Sanfuentes operationalised Bion's -K so that it could be observed in groups, and Mendes, also a clinician working with groups, operationalised social defence mechanisms which could then be clinically observed. Briggs operationalised Bion's containing model and created a research tool with which to interpret clinical data. As Hinshelwood said (2008, p.512), operationalisation defines or identifies predictors to assist in ensuring that clinical material is not only illustrative, but also 'decisive in answering research questions'.

These differing examples of psychoanalytic research help to show that:

- The operationalisation of psychoanalytic concepts is an established and applicable research device.
- The operationalisation of a concept must identify observable criteria suitable for testing hypotheses.
- Operationalisation is achieved by a detailed scrutiny and analysis of historical and current psychoanalytic literature.

In Part 2 of this chapter, I am going to show how I have operationalised the two concepts relevant to my research project: masochism and Bion's container-contained model. My task is to identify suitable criteria which lend themselves to observation within appropriate data.

## **Part 2: Operationalisation of Thesis Concepts.**

Introduction

My thesis is a study of correlation between two phenomena: sexualised masochism and Bion's container-contained model.

I am going to show the operationalisation of both concepts, using authoritative sources of reference. Both masochism and containment present potential methodological problems for operationalisation. I will illustrate how a lack of careful investigation or knowledge of the subject matter could invite confusion and inaccuracy, potentially undermining the research project.

In relation to masochism my aims are:

- To differentiate between the masochism associated with pathology and the masochism associated with BDSM.
- To provide an operationalised definition of the masochism associated with BDSM.

In relation to Bion's container-contained model my aims are:

- To provide a definition of Klein's excessive projective identification (PI<sup>(e)</sup>).
- To devise an 'assessment tool' by creating an operationalised model of container-contained based on Bion's form of 'normal' projective identification (PI<sup>(n)</sup>).

The outcome of the operationalisation process will help to identify the questions to be asked of the data, ultimately this will provide evidence to support my thesis hypothesis.

A. The Operationalisation and Differentiation of Masochism associated with BDSM and Sexual Masochism Disorder.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (V) (2013) and the International Classification of Diseases (10) (1990), both contribute to the operationalisation of pathological and nonpathological masochism. DSM (V) describes Sexual Masochism Disorder (Code 302.83) as sexual arousal in response to extreme pain, humiliation, bondage or torture with associated unrelenting fantasies urging beatings, binding and humiliation during sexual activities. To the most part, ICD (10) agrees, that Sexual Masochism (Code F65.51) constitutes recurring and intense sexual arousal in response to enduring extreme pain, suffering or humiliation<sup>38</sup>. However, *diagnostic criteria* in DSM and ICD require that the individual experiences distress, typically shame, guilt or anxiety, ‘resulting in significant impairment or distress in daily life’ whether this is relational, occupational or social functioning.

Both sources align the experiencing of negative ‘feelings’ with sexual masochism as a disorder<sup>39</sup>. Both sources specifically *exclude* these negative feelings in the ‘lesser’ masochism of BDSM which is considered ‘a marginalised subculture’ or ‘an alternative lifestyle’ (Stiles and Clark 2011). According to these sources, this single point, the presence or lack of a negative emotional impact, is what differentiates the two.

My initial study (Chapter 1) supports this view. The impressions gained from the three members of the ‘Leather Family’ and their extended coterie at no time

---

38 Self-inflicted injury *not associated with sexual arousal* is excluded. Both DSM and ICD consider asphyxiophilia separately, either as a separate inclusion (DSM), or specify sexual masochism ‘with or without asphyxiophilia’ (ICD). I am making a decision not to argue the case of asphyxiophilia at this time, although there is evidence of such ‘edge play’ in my data sets (Pandora’s Box Appendix 1).

39 However, it must be argued that, along with negativity, the masochism of sexual disorder must bring some form of satisfaction or release. I would align this particularly with Freud’s notion of moral masochism.

indicated any form of negative experience from BDSM activities. In fact, far from it, the most frequent views expressed were mutual love, pleasure and respect. The data from my extended research study also shows that the BDSM relationship creates all manner of positive feelings about the self. I will argue that sexualised masochism creates an experience of 'safety' and 'being understood', commensurate with feeling 'contained', thereby supporting my thesis H<sub>1</sub>.

To refer to pathological masochism as 'sexual masochism' implies that the masochism of BDSM is non-sexual, which, as seen in my data sets, is clearly incorrect. My thesis data sets clearly show that the masochism of BDSM is sexualised, but, significantly, it is not the sexuality of the genital phase. There is no intention by DSM or ICD to de-sexualise BDSM, but they offer no alternative label to distinguish between pathological masochism and nonpathological masochism other than that the former (pathological) is called Sexualised Masochism. This unintended distinction has fallen to DSM/ICD by default because of the need for *diagnostic criteria*. This provides an example of how the researcher's 'specific eye' formed from their knowledge and immersion in the concepts of their own field, using a 'specific psychoanalytic 'eye' can make all the difference to a research project. Looking at data without a specialist eye, without sufficient familiarity of the concepts under investigation, may not only hinder, but undermine a whole project.

This serves as a reminder that Freud distinguished between 'pathological' masochism and 'non-pathological' masochism in 1924, when he said that moral masochism was 'extreme and unmistakably pathological' (Freud 1924, p.166). To Freud's psychoanalytic eye, moral masochism relied on 'the need for



punishment', and he implicated it in the negative therapeutic reaction of those 'who 'struggle against recovery', or those who 'refuse to surrender their state of illness' (Freud 1924, p.166). This apparently self-injurious behaviour was not deemed to be part of 'erotogenic' masochism, or 'feminine' masochism. Similarly, both DSM and ICD mark self-injury and asphyxiophilia for separate consideration.

To further the process of operationalisation, I am going to consider two further contributions: the original formalised-definition of masochism (and sadism) set out by Krafft-Ebing (1886), which influenced Freud, and a 2014 article from the Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality.

*Krafft-Ebing. Sexualised Masochism.*

Krafft-Ebing, in his 1886 *Psychopathia Sexualis*, provided the first formal definition of masochism, describing it as 'a peculiar perversion of the sexual life' (Hartwich 1937). It is characterised by the over-mastery of sexual feelings and thoughts by desires of being completely subjected to the will of another<sup>40</sup> (Hartwich 1937, p.243). The desire to be debased, humiliated or even maltreated gives pleasure and 'the personage possessed by it thrives on phantasies wherein he portrays himself in situations of this sort; he often endeavours to attain their practical realisation' (Hartwich 1937, p.243). Rather than a horror of sex, Krafft-Ebing said there is, instead, a reliance on a 'different satisfaction from the

---

<sup>40</sup> Krafft-Ebing specified that this was at the hands of a member of the opposite sex, which I leave aside.

normal' (Hartwich p.243). This would appear to reflect the later acknowledgement by DSM and ICD of BDSM as a sexual predilection rather than a deviance.

*Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality (2014).*

Not associated with any medically-based diagnosis or disorder, Hébert and Weaver's thematic exposition of BDSM is current, detailed and succinct. They define BDSM as:

Sexual activity involving such practices as the use of physical restraints, the granting and relinquishing of control, and the infliction of pain. BDSM refers to a range of sexual preferences that generally relate to enjoyment of physical control, psychological control, and/or pain. It can be broken down into six overarching components: bondage and discipline, domination and submission, and sadism and masochism. Bondage and discipline consist of using physical or psychological restraints, domination and submission involve an exchange of power and control, and sadism and masochism refer to taking pleasure in others' or one's own pain or humiliation. Those who practice BDSM may identify with one or more, in any combination of these components. (Hébert and Weaver 2014).

From these sources, it seems that the characteristic that differentiates pathological masochism from the masochism of BDSM concerns *feelings*. DSM and ICD consider the masochistic disorder to be that which brings *destructive feelings* to the point of having a significant detrimental impact on a person's life. We could say this reflects Freud's recognition of moral masochism. Neither Freud, DSM or ICD indicate there to be any negativity associated with BDSM, but nor do they indicate any positivity either. Krafft-Ebing and Hébert and Weaver,

on the other hand, both emphasise the positive pleasure and enjoyment that can accompany masochistic activities.

That there is pleasure in pain and humiliation has been long acknowledged, but the nature of those feelings has not been investigated with a modern ‘psychoanalytic eye’. My data analysis shows that BDSM is not only characterised by a lack of *negative* feelings, but it is firmly characterised by *positive* feelings. It is the nature of those positive feelings that my thesis seeks to investigate, specifically from an object-relations perspective.

### **Operationalised Model of Masochism**

Having considered DSM, ICD, Krafft-Ebing, Freud, and Hébert and Weaver, I started the process of operationalisation. I began by identifying the features of masochism, specifically associated with BDSM in order to identify appropriate data sets and subjects for empirical study. From my review of the literature and the data obtained via the Leather Family, I identified masochism as a relational, consensual activity, which has the presence of any one or more of the following features:

1. The pleasurable enjoyment of bondage – physical/psychological restraints.
2. The pleasurable enjoyment of discipline - punishment/  
humiliation/debasement.
3. Commensurate with a relationship featuring *power exchange*.
4. Associated with the facilitating presence (real or phantased) of an erotised sadistic object.

For the purposes of my research, I am defining the sadism of the object not as the pleasure in *inflicting* pain, but as the pleasure in *providing* pain. This is the

dynamic central to the Dominant-submissive (D/s) relationship: the sadistic partner must provide pain, and/or humiliation, and, crucially, this must be done within an intense, emotional, and mutually satisfying, if not loving, interpersonal interaction. Sadism is not the focus of my research, nevertheless its presence is explicitly and implicitly bound to my thesis. I will discuss 'providing pain' and its role in the containing relationship in the data analysis (Chapter 8) and thesis conclusions (Chapter 9).

## Conclusion

I have argued that if a researcher intends to demonstrate the presence or absence of a variable, characteristic or feature, it has to be made observable. This begins and ends with that variable being as clearly defined and delineated as possible. I have demonstrated the operationalisation of masochism, and shown an example of how a pitfall may occur in the process – are you, in fact, operationalising the right thing to begin with? As far as the concept of masochism is concerned, this is crucial for my subject selection, my project is not researching pathological masochism. By selecting documentaries on the subject of BDSM, featuring those actively involved in the BDSM life-style, the subjects were self-selecting. Subjects gained pleasure, or relief, or some form of positivity, from engaging in masochistic activities when facilitated by an erotised, sadistic object (the Dominant). By exhibiting these characteristics, subjects fulfilled the criteria required for the purposes of my study.

I am now going to show how I operationalised Bion's model of container-contained for the purpose of creating an assessment tool for the analysis of my

data sets, and identifying evidence in support of my thesis  $H_1$ . The aims of this process were to:

- identify observable criteria
- enable identification and gathering of usable data
- identify critical moments of evidence in the data that infer the presence of the observable criteria.

### B: Operationalisation of Bion's Container-contained Model

I have shown in Part 1 above how two researchers, Briggs and Mendes, successfully operationalised models of containment to satisfy the methodological needs of their own empirical research projects. In Part 2 A, by describing the operationalisation of masochism, I have shown that research design must address and preclude any potential for confusion when establishing a set of identifiable criteria. Both inclusion and exclusion criteria have to be determined. I am now going to show how I operationalised Bion's containment model and note the potential for confusion between Bion's normal projective identification ( $PI^{(n)}$ ) and Klein's excessive projective identification ( $PI^{(e)}$ ).

A model of containment based solely and wholly on Bion's model of containment automatically provides exclusion criteria. Specifically, motivational features of Klein's  $PI^{(e)}$  are excluded i.e. is it *evacuative* into the 'lavatory mother' or is it *communicative*? The difference between the two is usually understood in terms of the degree of splitting. However, Bion's  $PI^{(n)}$  model is still a form of projective identification, meaning that some of the foundation features of Klein's  $PI^{(e)}$  should be present. The presence of some features common to both types of projective identification means that operationalisation, the identification of observable

characteristics, is preceded by the semantic definition of both forms of projective identification.

To show how I have operationalised Bion's containment model, being sure to base it on Bion's theory of  $PI^{(n)}$ , I am going to begin with a semantic definition of Klein's model of  $PI^{(e)}$ . This offers both an opportunity to elaborate further upon the operationalisation of psychoanalytic concepts in general, and establishes that my own operationalised model is true to Bion's model based on  $PI^{(n)}$

### *Operationalising Klein's $PI^{(e)}$ .*

I am going to present, from an authoritative literary source, a psychoanalytic definition of  $PI^{(e)}$  followed by an identification of its tenets and major themes. In his 1991 *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* (p. 179), Hinshelwood provides a short definition of Klein's thinking on projective identification thus:

Projective Identification was defined by Klein in 1946 as the prototype of the aggressive object-relationship, representing an anal attack on an object by means of forcing parts of the ego into it in order to take over its contents or to control it... It is a 'phantasy remote from consciousness'... a belief in certain aspects of the self being located elsewhere, with a consequent depletion and weakened sense of self and identity, to the extent of depersonalisation... (Hinshelwood, p. 179).

I said Hinshelwood provided a 'short' definition but look what it gives us:

- a) An anal attack.
- b) An attack upon an object.
- c) The use of force with respect to another.
- d) A bid for control over another.

- e) A deeply unconscious phantasy.
- f) A belief that one can relocate parts of oneself.
- g) A depleted ego.
- h) A weakened sense of self.

These can be amalgamated to reflect a number of superordinate themes clarifying and operationalising Klein's model of PI. There is, in unconscious phantasy:

- Aggression and attack against another (**Violence**).
- A depletion of the identity and weakening of the sense of self (**Self-Destruction/Ego-Depletion**).
- The belief that one can relocate part of one's ego (**Splitting**) into another psyche (Projective Identification), or at least elsewhere.
- Force against, and the striving for control over, another (**Omnipotence**) with forced occupation of another psychic space (**Intrusion**).

Segal (1973) also said of projective identification that it had 'manifold' aims including being:

- Directed towards the ideal object to avoid separation.
- Directed towards the bad object to gain control of that source of danger.

And that

- Part of the self may be projected with various aims:
  - i) Bad parts may be projected to get rid of them, or to attack/destroy the object.
  - ii) Good parts may be projected to avoid separation, or for safe-keeping from the badness inside the subject.
  - iii) To improve the object through a kind of primitive reparation.

Projective identification starts with the part-object – the breast – but persists, and very often intensifies when the mother is perceived as a whole object. The whole of her body is then entered by projective identification. For Bion the same process is perceived as one psyche entering another.

I have laboured the concept of projective identification because its introduction was vital to Klein's particular ethos of psychoanalysis and therefore vital to Bion's own psychoanalytic theory. In fact, it was Bion's own discoveries in regard to projective identification that directly led to 'containment' theory. The appreciation of Bion's 'normal' projective identification and its foundation in the theory of the containment model is essential to my endeavours to operationalise the concept of containment for methodological purposes. If my hypothesis is to be supported, the evacuative features of PI<sup>(e)</sup> should not be present in my data sets. I have previously indicated that I will be discussing this specific point in the data analysis (Chapter 8), when I discuss a specific subject, Michael P. of Pandora's Box.

Michael P. appears to contradict my hypothesis, but I will argue that this is not the case. I am now going to operationalise Bion's container-contained model, a process which will identify inclusion criteria, and by default will identify exclusion criteria - in this case, some of the characteristics of excessive projective identification.

### *The Process of Operationalising Container-contained*

I have provided a detailed exegesis of Bion's development of the container-contained model in Chapter 5. I have shown that his form of projective



identification is a *communicative* process rather than the evacuative process of Klein's projective identification. I am now going to operationalise Bion's container-contained model. For the purposes of the thesis methodology, I am going to refer to Bion's quote of 1959. This encompasses each discrete part of Bion's model and shows the model as a process between two minds.

When the patient *strove to rid himself of fears of death* which were felt to be *too powerful for his personality* to contain he *split off his fears* and *put them into me*, the idea apparently being that if they were *allowed to repose there long enough* they would *undergo modification by my psyche* and could then *be safely reintrojected* (Bion 1959. My emphases).

Like taking Hinshelwood's definition of PI<sup>(e)</sup>, I will now take Bion's own words from this quotation and identify the key characteristics that define Container-contained:

- 'Fears of death': Intolerable Thought
- 'Too powerful for his personality': Beta-Elements
- 'Strove to rid himself': Ego-Function
- 'Split off his fears': Splitting
- 'Put them into me': PI<sup>n</sup>
- 'Allowed to repose there long enough': Reverie
- 'Undergo modification by my psyche': Alpha-Function
- 'Then be safely reintrojected': Return of Ameliorated/Modified Alpha-elements

*Steps In The Maternal-Infant Containing Process.*

I am going to outline the process that takes place in the containment model. As part of each step, I identify key words (in bold) that I will later use in my assessment tool.

- Intolerable thoughts/experiences are split off. In 1962, this idea included splitting off an accompanying ego-function<sup>41</sup>. The experience that one is having, as well as the ego-function that has created the experience, are both part and parcel of 'I', of the 'self'. **INTOLERABLE EXPERIENCE**. The intolerable thought is a perception. For the infant, 'I am hungry' means he is *aware* of his feelings. but he doesn't have the thinking capacity to understand what they mean, this is pre-symbolic. This awareness is an ego-function which is then split off. **SPLITTING**.
- In order to rid the self of intolerable thoughts/experiences, these are put into - *projected into* - another mind along with the split-off ego-function<sup>42</sup>. This results in the loss of ego-function. **EGO DEPLETION**. Both ego-function and the experience (I, the self) are split off, attributed to another mind and felt and perceived to be within another, accomplished by projective identification. **PI<sup>(n)</sup>**.
- The projected thoughts repose within (sit within) another mind. **MATERNAL REVERIE**. The other mind – attentive and receptive - provides psychic and temporal space, focused on the subject.
- While within the other mind, there is a modification of the intolerable thought, which helps to give it meaning and proposed action. **ALPHA-FUNCTION**. There is a change, a modification within the maternal psychic

---

41 Ego-function is like an envelope of ego wrapped around or containing the experience that the ego-function has itself created.

42 In 1946, Klein explained this as 'nothing matters really' in a man who loses all his feelings. He loses the ego-function of being aware of his feelings, as that ego-function has been split off and consequently annihilated.

function, conversant with amelioration of that which had been deemed intolerable. **MODIFICATION.**

- The modified thought becomes safe enough to be ‘thought’. **ALPHA-ELEMENTS** are reintrojected, along with the accompanying ego-function, and so it is an ego-developing process. The introjection of a modifying object then becomes an internal object or part of the self. **RE-INTROJECTION.**
- There is a return of ego-function along with the now-modified intolerable experience. The mother’s modifying ego-function is added to the infant’s ego-function, and this serves to develop the infant’s ego. **CONTAINMENT and GROWTH.**

In both PI<sup>(e)</sup> and PI<sup>(n)</sup>, there is something intolerable that cannot be dealt with alone. Both forms of projective identification include splitting off part of the ego and ego-functions, resulting in ego depletion. As I said above, the consensus is that the difference between PI<sup>(e)</sup> and PI<sup>(n)</sup> lies in the degree of the violence of both the splitting and the projective identification. For Klein, there is an evacuation of the intolerable thought ‘out’ into an external space. It is violent, destructive and intrusive and brings about fragmentation of the ego. For Bion’s containment model, the process is the same, but the split-off part of the ego remains coherent. The process of *communicative* projective identification is perceived as one psyche entering another with an aim to safely manage and ameliorate the subject’s fear(s); a change is facilitated through the workings of another mind.

### **An Operationalised Model of Bion’s Containment Theory.**

- ‘Something’ intolerable is in one mind. **UNCONTAINABLE**
- It is ‘put inside’, projected into, communicated into, another ‘mind’ that will hold it. **A CONTAINER.**

- ‘Something’ is held within the container while it undergoes change, becomes ameliorated, undergoes **CONTAINMENT**.
- ‘Something’ has been **CHANGED** while being **CONTAINED**. ‘Something’ which can be returned to, or reintroduced by, the subject in a **CONTAINED** form. That ‘something’ can now be coped with or processed.

My task is to apply this model to my observational data sets. This will identify moments where each elements of the container-container model can be demonstrated, and the elements can be seen to be functioning as a ‘process’. My data sets should demonstrate that through BDSM activities, a process is happening - a positive change is occurring which is commensurate with the amelioration of painful experiences.

*Assessment Device: Establishing the Questions.*

My operationalisation of ‘masochism’, specific to BDSM, facilitates the following questions of the proposed study subjects:

- Do they ‘fit’ the operationalised model of masochism?
- Do they provide data that tests the hypothesis?
- Do they exhibit and experience positive feelings associated with BDSM activities?

My operationalisation of Container-contained facilitates the following questions:

Is there evidence of A, B, C and D as set out in the operationalised model above. Is there,

A: Evidence of an intolerable thought:

*What intolerable has been projected?*

B: Evidence of splitting and projection:

*What has been put elsewhere?*

C: Evidence of Relocation:

*Where has it been put?*

D: Evidence of Change:

*i) What has changed?*

*ii) How has the intolerable thought/experience been modified?*

*iii) What effect is observed in the subject and reported by the subject*

This set of questions forms an assessment device - a research tool - that encompasses all the components of the containing process. Below, I have included an augmentation of the research tool by arranging Bion's model in schematic form. This facilitated the organisation, recording and presentation of data, and is the subject of the next chapter, the thesis data analysis.

	<b>Containment Model Components</b>	<b>Containment Model Operationalised features</b>	<b>Example: Case Study Observations/ evidence</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Intolerable Experience:</b>  Something UNCONTAINED	Often unknown. Inferred from: i. objective observation. ii. subjective narrative: thoughts/feelings. iii Other	x: y: z:
<b>B</b>	Seeking Container/Containment	Splitting of the ego: i) Ego-depletion (loss of ego functions)	x: y: z:
		ii) Projection of ego-contents (experiences created by the ego)	x: y: z:
<b>C</b>	<b>Maternal Reverie</b>	• Ego-function introjection	x: y: z:
	<b>Provision of Container</b>	• Maternal object-relating	x: y: z:
<b>D</b>	<b>α-function Containing process</b>	Experience of change/ modification.  <b>CONTAINMENT</b>	x: y: z:

*Assessment Device: Table.*

Conclusions.

I have shown my method of operationalising Bion's containment model so it is suitable for my project. I have demonstrated how assessment criteria were identified for inclusion and exclusion by operationalising both Klein's excessive (evacuative) projective identification and Bion's normal (communicative) projective identification. I have established a set of questions that can test for the presence of each component of the containment model and show container-contained as a process. Presentation and analysis of the data will identify how and where each

component can be 'observed'. I have also designed a table to enhance data recording and as I will show, enable comparison between examples. In the next chapter, I will show my analysis of the research data thereby supporting my thesis hypothesis.

## **Chapter 8.**

### **Data Analysis**

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I will demonstrate support for my thesis  $H_1$  by presenting my data analysis and outcomes. Data interpretations are speculative. However, by applying the operationalised assessment tool to appropriate data, I can demonstrate the presence of some forms of the components of Bion's container-contained model, and that the *containing* process can be shown in BDSM.

My aims in this chapter are:

- **Subject Selection.** To show that the research subjects fulfil the needs of the research. This is explicitly shown in the data set formation.
- **Data sets.** To describe the features of the data sets, data collection method and data preparation.
- **Data presentation.** To describe how the thesis data will be presented.
- **Data analysis.** To demonstrate how the operationalised model of container-contained, the assessment device, was applied to the data.
- **Data Interpretation.** To demonstrate that the thesis  $H_1$  has been supported by rigorous research means.

#### Data Sets



There are three data sets:

- Data Set 1: This has been created from Nick Broomfield's TV documentary 'Fetishes'. This was filmed at 'Pandora's Box' an exclusive 'House of Domination' in Manhattan New York. The transcript is provided in Appendix 1.
- Data Set 2. This has been created from the documentary 'Susan for Now', a self-directed film by the Dominatrix Robin Franzi, AKA Susan. (The transcript is provided in Appendix 2).

These two data sets were created by making written transcripts for each documentary and together they constitute the thesis data.

- Data Set 3: This comprises brief examples of my impressions collected during the initial contact with the BDSM group 'The Leather Family'. This material is not included for re-analysis but I will comment on it occasionally in the data analysis results and the thesis discussion (Appendix 3).

My analysis focuses primarily on the verbal, emotional and physical responses of the submissive (the masochistic) subject. However, given that BDSM is based on a person-person relationship, my analysis is augmented by material provided by the Dominant participant - as clearly the experiences of the submissive and the Dominant cannot be separated. For example, Goddess Natasha of Pandora's Box shows how arousing an intense BDSM scene can be for the Domme, whilst proprietor Mistress Raven, comments on the emotional toll of years of Domming. There are times when things go wrong too, as Dom Jarret explains (Appendix 2, Chapter 5. Susan for Now). I will discuss these aspects of the BDSM relationship and reflect upon them in connection with my H<sub>1</sub>.

I am going to present detailed vignettes of BDSM scenes featuring submissive and Dominant participants from both documentaries, 'Fetishes'(Pandora's Box), and 'Susan for Now'. Vignettes consist of verbatim interactions, interviews and descriptive observations, supplemented by my own speculative impressions. To reiterate, this forms the thesis data. I will apply the operationalised assessment tool to the vignettes, as a way of ordering and structuring the material. I will then use selected examples to speculate whether the elements of the container-contained model are present.

By questioning the thesis data using the method I set out in Chapter 7, Part 2, I will show that the discrete components of the container-contained model can be identified within the research data. To recap, these are the questions I asked of the data, each one being linked to a specific part of the process of containment:

- Is there evidence of an intolerable experience or thought? (A).
- Is there evidence of splitting of the ego and projective identification? (B).
- Is there evidence of ego content transfer and introjection by an auxiliary mind? (C).
- Is there evidence that a positive modification of the intolerable experience has occurred suggesting a containing process? (D).

I have augmented my analysis by presenting some of the more detailed material in table form, using the table I included in Chapter 7. This enables me to compare subjects against the same criteria.

## **Data Presentation, Application of the Assessment Tool and Data**

### **Interpretation.**

*Example 1. Michael P. and Genocide. Pandora's Box.*

Appendix 1, Scene 23 (01:17:00-01:25:06).

Mistress Delilah - dressed in a leather suit, leather biker hat, gloves, high-heeled boots and holding a riding crop - stalks along a corridor. She demands 'where is he?'

Nick tells us that the client (Michael) reports having thoughts and fantasies about killing and genocide; and that Michael has come for 'total degradation'. Michael is naked on full view to the camera. When Mistress Delilah arrives, he falls quickly to his knees. In the next scene he is on all fours. Mistress Delilah is riding him side-saddle, and he is having his buttocks flogged as he walks on all fours. He is led by a collar and leash to the bathroom, specifically to the lavatory (toilet bowl). Mistress Catherine has joined the party.

Taking Michael into the bathroom, Mistress Delilah gently speaks to him,

'I know how much you love this. Look what's waiting for you, (she indicates the toilet bowl) a nice big bowl huh, it's really dirty. There have been people in and out of here all day today, it's full of stuff, did you look under the toilet rim?'

Michael lifts the toilet seat with his teeth. He licks inside the toilet seat. Mistress softly tells him to 'use that tongue, we'll get you to do the floor later'. She commands '*Lick!*'. Mistress Catherine asks him why he is shaking so much. He replies (his voice trembling), 'in anticipation, I can't believe how lucky I am'.

Mistress Delilah tells him she wants the toilet shining. Mistress Catherine puts her booted foot on the back of Michael's neck pushing his head further into the toilet bowl. Mistress Delilah flushes the toilet. Both ladies give jolly laughter. As the bowl fills Michael is told to 'keep his head in there'. The seat and lid are dropped onto Michael's head and both ladies laugh.

After a moment, it is deemed that Michael is ready for an interview and the ladies move away. However, he still has his head under the lid and seat and is vomiting down the pan. Nick and the camera man mouth and whisper to each other, unsure what to do. Nick looks uncomfortable. There are low voices and lots of perturbed facial expressions between film crew members. There is concern that there might be 'trouble with the sound' because his head is in the toilet and so on. Michael remains on his knees with his head down the pan. Nick eventually approaches Michael who still has his head in the toilet.

*Nick:* Michael, can I talk to you?

*Michael:* Yeah.

Nick lifts the lid and seat. Michael is heaving and vomiting.

*Nick:* ... so... what... what is it that... that you, you err... enjoy here particularly?

*Michael (with feeling):* ... doing what the Mistress makes me to do. I feel relieved.

*Nick:* ... in what way... what's...

*Michael:* I feel like as though I have done all that craziness out... you know, I mean I just, you know, it's like you have all these impulses to do like crazy things...

*Nick:* What kind of impulses?

*Michael:* ... you know like getting into brawls and stuff, and like, and you know... like, mass mayhem and war crimes... genocide, all the things that get inside your head, your head, like you know, like freaky thoughts go through my head all the time, thoughts... freaky thoughts, so when I get freaky I like, expunge that.

**Data Analysis: Application of the Assessment Tool.**

*A: Evidence of an Intolerable Thought: What intolerable thought has been projected?*

Michael unequivocally suffers thoughts of death, genocide and violence. It is not possible to infer what the genesis of those thoughts are, but it is clear he finds these thoughts overwhelming and uncontrollable. Michael's bodily filth is equivalent to psychic filth. Michael is full of excrement in concrete terms.

*B: Evidence of Splitting and Projection: What has been put elsewhere?*

Michael's Intolerable Thought(s) that made him go brawling, his sadism, his ego-functions of self-mastery, even his ego-functions of 'thinking' seem to have been split off and projected onto/into Mistress Delilah. In concrete terms, there is a bodily evacuation of his insides through his vomiting. His autonomous powers of self-mastery and decision-making have been surrendered to the will of another. In BDSM this is described as power exchange (PE<sub>x</sub>). In psychoanalysis this is described as the transfer of ego-functions. PE<sub>x</sub> by Michael results in his own ego-depletion.

*C: Evidence of Relocation: Where has it been put?*

Michael's split-off ego functions are now residing in the Mistress. Her ego shows the characteristics of what he has lost/surrendered: his self-power, authority and his sadism. Mistress is in control and Michael must do her bidding. As Michael vomits, Mistress Delilah and her colleague push Michael's head further down the toilet and flush the chain. The Mistresses are literally forcing the contents of Michael's insides (ego-contents) further down the pan and flushing them away. This is a process of enabled evacuation, equivalent, I argue, to the ejection of beta-elements.

*D: Evidence of Change:*

*i) What has changed?*

Change, albeit short-term, is evident when Michael says he 'has done all that craziness out'.

*ii) How has the intolerable been modified?*

Michael's projections have been processed and modified. His filth has been expelled and cleanly disposed of. He feels he has 'expunged' his intolerable psychic contents into the lavatory. Mistress Delilah has taken in Michael's pain, held it with her maternal reverie, and enabled modification by maternal alpha-function. Michael 'can't believe how lucky' he is.

*iii) What effect/change can be observed/reported?*

Michael's intolerable thoughts have been contained and a change has occurred. In his own words, Michael feels purged of what he finds impossible to contain. Michael's words and tone sound desperate and yet he manages to convey his gratitude at the end of what appears to be a gruelling experience. He sounds and looks exhausted. He indicates that, after BDSM scenes, he can modify his own aggressive behaviour, at least for a time. Of note is Nick Broomfield's comment that when the ladies said

they provide a valuable service he had been sceptical but 'after witnessing the toilet scene, I changed my mind' (Broomfield 01:21:00).

### Comments

At the beginning of this scene, Michael is crawling, carrying the Mistress on his back. He is acting like a beast of burden. I speculate that the burden is located within the Mistress, and through the BDSM enactment she facilitates an unburdening.

Whatever its genesis, I suggest that the source of Michael's intolerable thought may lie in guilt. He may be experiencing guilt about his sadistic attacks upon others, and/or attacks upon himself as he puts himself in harms-way. He has complex problems with aggression and violence against others, and his bar-room brawling is potentially lethal to both himself and others. This aspect of Michael's behaviour favours an interpretation of excessive projective identification (PI<sup>(e)</sup>), an evacuative process. Michael has literally ejected/projected his unwanted uncontrollable excrement, beta-elements, into a lavatory - a lavatory mother as Klein described. However, I am going to argue that by seeking out another - a very particular other - to help him evacuate his intolerable thoughts, Michael is utilising normal projective identification PI<sup>(n)</sup>. I argue that whilst the lavatory is a literal container, it occupies both a *physical* and a *psychical* space, between two Dominatrices. Mistress Delilah and Mistress Catherine stand closely on either side of that space, leading Michael to it, commanding that he open up that space and, at their behest, rid himself of his troubled filth: 'all the things that get inside your head'. The toilet is a metaphor for the readily open mind of the Dominatrix, her reverie. The attention of Mistress Delilah's softly-

voiced, maternally-inflected focus is on Michael and the provision of his needs. By telling him to ‘keep his head in there’, the time for purging his unwanted ‘shit’ is extended. Mistress Delilah is providing that extended time and space in the manner that Bion described maternal reverie and alpha-function. As Michael so clearly testifies, through this activity he can expunge his ‘freaky thoughts’ of genocide and murder. Rather than fighting and brawling, BDSM provides Michael with a path to rid himself of his unwanted contents via splitting of the ego and PI<sup>(n)</sup>. I would speculate that Michael oscillates between PI<sup>(e)</sup> and PI<sup>(n)</sup> according to how well he can hold onto himself, and when he feels he can’t cope anymore he seeks a containing experience with a facilitative object, and then, he ‘can’t believe how lucky’ he is. Whatever the motivation, he feels the need for punishment and humiliation at the hands of an object.

The following table provides a schematic ‘picture’ of the operationalised tool applied to Michael’s data.

*Table 1. Michael P and his BDSM scene*

	<b>Containment Model Components</b>	<b>Containment Model Operationalised Features</b>	<b>Example 1. Michael P. Pandora’s Box Observations/evidence</b>
A	<b>Intolerable Experience</b> Something Uncontainable	Inferred from: i) Objective observation ii) Subjective narrative, thoughts/feelings.	<b>Intolerable experience of Sadism:</b> Phantasies of genocide, mayhem and bar-room brawling, ‘ <i>all the things that get inside your head</i> ’.  Intolerable guilt ‘seeking punishment/ degradation/ humiliation
B	<b>Projective Identification</b> Subject Ego-depletion	Splitting of the ego: i) Absent ego-function(s), ii) Projection of ego-contents ( <i>Beta-elements</i> ).	<b>Masochism. Power/E<sub>x</sub>:</b> Surrender of autonomy manifests as an observable phenomenon in submission: ‘ <i>doing what the Mistress makes me to do</i> ’.



C	<b>Maternal Reverie</b>	Ego-function introjection Container	<b>Sadism. Power/Ex:</b> Acceptance of authority over another. Domination. Commanding direction, <i>'I know how much you love this, look what's waiting for you...it's full of stuff...did you look under the toilet rim...LICK.</i>  Providing Pain/Punishment/Humiliation to assuage anger/guilt
D	<b>Maternal A-function</b>  A process from Beta-elements to Alpha-elements	Modification  Change  Alpha-element reintroduction  <b>Containment</b>	<b>Modification</b> of Intolerable Thought(s) by: Maternal object-relating: Softly voiced acceptance, direction, encouragement and reassurance, controlling and cleaning. Libidinalisation/Erotisation of the Object/Object-relationship: Sexualised Domme, stereotypical dress code, hair, make-up. Erotisation of Pain: Shaking in anticipation of 'something' positive happening, <i>'I can't believe how lucky I am'</i> Beta-elements to Alpha-elements: <i>'I feel like I have done all that craziness out...all these impulses...when I get freaky, I like expunge that'</i> . Dirty toilet to clean toilet. Physically emptying/vomiting out his 'bad' internal contents. Gain of Alpha-elements: Modification of Sadism

### Conclusion

Elements of Bion's Containment model and Container-contained as a process are observable. Michael's intolerable thoughts of violence and genocide (A) are split off and projected outwards (B). Mistress Delilah provides a receptacle, a space and place for the process of maternal alpha-function (C). Her alpha-function enables transformation (containment) of Michael's projected 'pain' thus relieving him of his intolerable thoughts and feelings (D).

In the next illustrative example, the material is as rich as that of Michael P. I have analysed the data with the assessment tool and completed a separate table.

Again, I augment the analysis with further speculation, although that must be tempered by the limits of the film editing: it appears that significant parts were either not filmed or were edited out. Nevertheless, there are clues from which inference and speculations can be drawn.

*Example 2. Pubescent Girl (Pink Smock Man). Pandora's Box.*

Appendix 1, Chapter 8. Scene 19 (56:38-01:01:17).

Interviewed on camera, the male client says he was about 13 when he tried his mother's clothes on and found it arousing. He smiles. He had attempted to bring role play into his marriage, but it ended the relationship because his wife 'wanted a man'.

In the scene with Goddess Natasha, the client is dressed as a little girl in a pink, spotted smock and matching panties. He<sup>43</sup> is having his hair brushed vigorously into a pony-tail by Goddess Natasha. His head rests on her knees as she scrapes at his hair/scalp.

Lifting his smock, Goddess Natasha prods at his tummy asking 'is that your little tummy, what happens to big girl tummies?' He answers, 'I don't know Goddess'. The scene unfolds with Goddess Natasha standing behind the kneeling client stroking his breast tissue and suggesting that perhaps his breasts are starting to bud:

*Goddess Natasha* (crooning): you might be close to starting your periods.

*Client*: What's a period Goddess?

---

43 The client is referred to as 'he' in this transcript.

*Goddess Natasha:* (Looking close in the client's face): What's a period?

A period is something big girls get when they *bleeeed* and you have to wear a pad or a tampon to keep from bleeeeeding all over your clothes, and... it hurts a lot, and you have really bad cramps, and you eat a lot of junk food and you take a lot of Mydol... (the client starts to snigger)...and you scream at your boyfriend.

The client titters coyly.

*Goddess Natasha* (demands): Do you think it's funny? ... Do you think that's funny?

*Client:* I don't know. You were laughing Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha:* ... yeah... well I'm allowed to laugh, do you think that's funny?

*Client:* Only if you say so Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha:* ... well let's see how funny it is to have your period. But first of all you have to dress up like a *big* girl. You have to look like a *big* girl. You have to be a *big* girl. Sometimes being a *big* girl means beauty and sometimes beauty is painful ... huhhhhhhhh.

*Client:* Yes Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha:* Sometimes it's *painful* to put make up on when you don't want to put it on, sometimes it's *painful* when you don't want to style your hair, sometimes it *hurts* when someone combs your hair. (She scrapes the clients hair, her voice getting sharper)... and a knot gets *stuck*... in your hair. Sometimes it hurts to go to the beauty salon and look beautiful... sometimes it hurts to be beautiful... (Natasha increases the aggressive tone of her voice and increases the intensity of the hair brush strokes)...and that is what you are here for today huh? Huh?... Being a big girl means *pain*.

The client's head remains on Natasha's knees.

The scene cuts to the end of the session where the client is dressed in a pink, latex jacket and his face has been vividly made up. He is lying on his back. Natasha is unshackling his ankles which have been suspended. What has occurred in the interim is not included in the film.

*Nick:* How was your session, what was the most enjoyable, how do you feel emotionally?

*Client* (smiling languidly): ... err drained, relaxed, err at peace.

*Nick:* Do you find peace more this way than any other?

*Client:* ... in some ways yes... very much so.

### **Data Analysis: Application of the Assessment Tool.**

*A: Evidence of an Intolerable Thought: What intolerable thought has been projected?*

The most striking feature of this material is the total absence of adult masculine sexuality. The inference is that this man's intolerable thoughts are related to aspects of gender identity and mature sexuality.

*B: Evidence of Splitting and Projection: What has been put elsewhere?*

He has rid himself of both gender and sexual maturity by ego splitting. He has projected his identity by adopting the guise of a pubescent girl. It could be inferred that masculinity has been ejected and then annihilated hence its apparent absence. His adult powers of self-autonomy have been surrendered to another.

*C: Evidence of Relocation: Where has it been put?*

An appropriate receptive object has been chosen for relocating his projections. Autonomy has been transferred to another, receptive object. Goddess Natasha has accepted his projections and ego-functions. She has utilised them to enact a very specific narrative designed to reinforce a phantasised identity.

*D: Evidence of Change: What has changed? How has the intolerable been modified? What effect/change can be observed/reported?*

Through the enactment of a BDSM scene - specific to this client - there has been movement from sexual immaturity, through onset of sexual maturity, to full sexual maturity. The shifting personas begin and remains feminised, thus feminisation may provide his containing experience. At the end of the scene, in an adult voice, he reports feeling 'at peace'. To the observer he appears languid and deeply relaxed.

### Comments

The client begins his BDSM role play as a pubescent girl, just as he was pubescent at the time of dressing up in his mother's clothes. Something about that experience initiated a very powerful response - something intolerable, disturbing or at least profound in some way. Later, he has to return to that time in order to process, work through, or 'contain' the something that was so disturbing. Speculatively he is terrified of being a man; his marriage broke down, because his wife 'wanted a man'.

Further speculation suggests that the banished masculine traits are the source of the subject's intolerable thought (A). I argue that Goddess Natasha's emphasis on

the 'pain' of being 'a big girl' '*...and that is what you are here for today...being a big girl means pain*' indicates the purpose of the scenario. The focus on make-up, hair care and menstruation project a figure that is ultra-feminine. I would argue that masculinity, having been projected (B), has undergone some transformative process (D). If we see projective identification as the lodging of projections into the mind of another, we are reminded that the 'object' has reproductive maturity; she has breasts, she bleeds, she has pre-menstrual tension. The intolerable thought may lie in *not* being a big girl (A). Goddess Natasha takes in his projections, his need to be a big girl, by exaggerating her own femininity (C). Natasha is what he wants to be. Her reverie provides a conduit -with make-up, dressing-up and hair care – so that a temporary transformation is enabled (alpha-function). The transformation occurs along a pain-filled journey, facilitated by a highly libidinalised, sadistic object. Pain is a transformative conduit through which satisfaction can be achieved, '*this is what you are here for, to be a big girl*'. There is an enactment of female sexual 'awakening' (D).

At the end of the scene, the client reports feeling a deep sense of peace, and, observing the film, his face appears flushed and his languid repose is reminiscent of post-coitus.

Goddess Natasha has introjected her client's projected aggression. She has introjected his projected *ego-functions* of autonomy, mastery and mature sexuality. She has introjected troubling thoughts about female sexuality - whether his own or his mother's is a matter for speculation. The narrative ('scene') she provides is her *reverie*. Within the scene there is time and space for a

journey of sexual modification. This is such a profound emotional transformation that it takes the client to a place of peace.

Table 2. Table Pink Smock-man

	<b>Containment Model Components</b>	<b>Containment Model Operationalised features</b>	<b>Example 2. Pink Smock Man. Pandora's Box Observations/evidence</b>
A	<b>Intolerable Experience</b> Something Uncontainable	Inferred from: i) Objective observation ii) Subjective narrative: thoughts/feelings.	<b>Intolerable experience: male sexual maturity.</b> Alter-ego presentation: that of a pubescent girl. Failed marriage because wife ' <i>wanted a man</i> '.
B	<b>Projective Identification</b> Subject Ego-depletion	Splitting of the ego: i) Absent ego-function(s), ii) Projection of ego-contents ( <i>Beta-elements</i> )	<b>Masochism. Power/Ex:</b> Surrender of adult autonomy Surrender of mature male sexuality Inference – leaves behind an immature/depleted ego.
C	<b>Maternal Reverie</b>	Ego-function introjection Maternal Object-relating	<b>Sadism. Power/Ex:</b> Domination. authority. Powerful/aggressive sexuality 'Sweet and sour' vocal interaction, moves from soothing and encouraging, to chastisement, ' <i>do you think that's funny</i> '?
D	<b>Maternal A-function</b> A process from Beta-elements to Alpha-elements	<b>Modification</b> Change Amelioration Containment	<b>Modification</b> by: Facilitation of a painful journey: adult male to pubescent girl to sexualised female. Reports feeling deeply relaxed and ' <i>at peace</i> '. Libidinalisation/erotisation of the object/object-relationship o Erotisation of pain.

## Conclusion

The elements and process of Bion's containment model are observable. Pink smock man's intolerable thoughts in regard to gender and sexuality (A) are split off and projected outwards (B). Goddess Natasha provides a receptacle, a space for the process of maternal alpha-function (C). Her alpha-function enables transformation of her client's projected 'pain'. He can live through/experience his fears or forbidden desires bringing relief, satisfaction and a sense of peace (D).

*Example 3. Marie. Slaves. Pandora's Box.*

*Appendix 1, Chapter 8. Scene 17 (43:34-56:36)*

The next example features Marie, a self-styled 'professional submissive'. The film crew were allowed access to what appears to be a good deal of the scene. Marie engages with film crew and Dominatrices; the Dominatrices engage with Marie. Marie's testimony provides potential for gaining insight into the infantile experience of the containing process. It is also an opportunity to observe a female submissive who seeks female domination.

*Interview between Broomfield and Marie*

*Nick:* So why would you... errr...Marie, why would you pay to come to a place like this?

*Marie:* Well, I'm a professional submissive, and on a daily basis I fulfil male fantasies through role playing and different types of fetish fantasies as well; and actually *my* fantasy is to submit to a very powerful dominant woman. and since I'm not in a relationship right now that fulfils that sexual need... errrr.. I do on occasion pay for a session with a woman.

*Nick:* And how does a submissive work as opposed to a Dominatrix?

*Marie:* Well a submissive is ermmm... the difference between a Dominant and a submissive is a Dominant woman will dominate a submissive male client whereas I, as a female submissive, submit to a male Dominant client.

*Nick:* What kind of fantasies do they have?



*Marie:* oh, corporal punishment, sometimes I'm a school girl and I get spanked.

*Nick:* and would you call yourself professional masochist or just a masochist or...

*Marie:* I consider myself a masochist but I've used this asset... errrr... in order to pay my bills, and it's a wonderful way to make a living (she nods vigorously).

*Nick:* How did you first know you were a masochist... what...

*Marie:* Well, when I was... the first time I can remember being a masochist was ... ahhhm... I grew up in a very male dominated ... ah... household and I was constantly being punished... for... being, you know, out of line, and I remember getting sexual satisfaction out of it and this continued... errrm...

*Nick:* Who used to punish you at home?

*Marie:* My Father punished me as well as my step-brother. (43:47-46:05)

*Scene 17: Marie, Mistress Catherine and Mistress Delilah. (46:07-49:23)*

Marie wears a white, lacy short shift, white underwear, white stockings, white suspender belt.

Both Mistresses pull down the front of Marie's shift and each one squeezes one of Marie's nipples. Marie sucks in her breath sharply, her head lolls back and she owwws in pain and then ahhs in pleasure.

*Mistress Catherine:* Wipe that smile off your face.

*Mistress Delilah:* Try and control yourself.

Marie is bent over, receiving cane blows from Mistress Catherine. Marie cries out long and hard; she gasps and groans. The Mistresses discuss

which cane leaves nice stripes. Mistress Catherine decides one cane is a little too wobbly and she prefers one a little stiffer. Mistress Catherine canes Marie's buttocks. Marie lets out a long groan and at this point she 'safe-words' 'mercy, mercy Mistress... thank you Mistress'.

*Mistress Catherine:* Go and fix your make-up its smeared all over your face.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

Marie goes to the mirror, lifts her shift and inspects her cane-marked buttocks.

*Mistress Catherine:* Do you like the way that looks?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

*Mistress Catherine:* Did that rap hurt?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress... Did I take it good for you Mistress?

*Mistress Catherine:* You did a pretty good job, you can do better next time though.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

Marie continues looking at her bottom in the mirror.

*Mistress Catherine:* You like looking at it don't you?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress I do.

*Mistress Catherine:* You're very proud of it.

*Marie:* Yes.

Marie continues to inspect her cane-marked buttocks in the mirror.

Eventually, she stands shoulders slumped, her head hangs and she gives a long sigh. (48:47).

*Mistress Catherine:* What did I tell you to do?

*Marie:* You told me to fix my make-up.

*Mistress Catherine:* What have you been doing?

*Marie:* Looking at my bottom.

*Mistress Catherine:* C'mere.

She beckons Marie. Marie approaches and Mistress Catherine slaps Marie's face. Marie staggers and cries out 'I'm sorry Mistress'.

*Mistress Catherine:* Now go and do what I told you to do.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress. (49:23)

*Scene 18. Marie and Medical Play. (49:24-51:50).*

In the next scene, still featuring Mistress Catherine, Mistress Delilah and Marie, they are in the medical suite. Marie is roped to the 'operating table'. Her legs are akimbo, her vulva is exposed. Broomfield tells us the session 'became far more sensuous'. Mistress Delilah places clothes pegs on Marie's vulva. Her nipples are joined by a chain which Mistress Catherine lifts and pulls. Marie moans and gasps and scrunches her face. Marie tells Nick that:

'the thrill of worshipping a very beautiful woman - strong and powerful - that's my ultimate... fantasy... and the fact that she owns my body, plus I feel like nobody knows another woman's body like another woman, how to control it how to manipulate it... give it the sexual satisfaction... (to Mistress Catherine) is that right, Mistress?'

*Mistress Catherine:* You're doing pretty good so far.

*Marie:* Do you enjoy dominating me?

*Mistress Catherine:* Yes I do.

Mistress Catherine inserts hypodermic needles through Marie's breast tissue and right nipple. Broomfield's voiceover tells us that 'piercing is also a very popular fetish'.

Catherine lifts Marie's nipple by the hypodermic needle and Mistress Delilah remarks 'I think she was looking while you did it'. Mistress Catherine pierces Marie's left nipple. Marie moans and groans. Mistress Catherine strokes Marie's face and hair. Filming of the scene ends.

After the scene, Marie describes how she feels. She is standing naked, speaking to the camera. She says she feels 'absolutely euphoric' and 'I'm wiped out... I have no more energy left... stoned... it's one of the greatest highs I've had for about a month.'

### Analysis

What Marie's 'problem' is (her unconscious intolerable thought) (A), can only be inferred, but there are clues as to what that may be: The absence of a maternal figure from Marie's testimony is striking; the absent mother may be her underlying intolerable thought (A). Marie speaks of a male dominated household, of being punished by her father and stepbrother - punishment from which she gained sexual satisfaction (43:47-46:05). Whether or not some physical sexual relations occurred between Marie and her father/stepbrother is unknown.

However, incestuous desire on Marie's part (A), and perhaps its associated unconscious guilt can be inferred. During the scene, she has split off her mature ego-functions of autonomy and self-containment (B) and relocated them in the libidinalised adult female Mistresses (C). Thus, power, and mature female sexuality are projected out and relocated in the Mistress, whilst Marie herself retains a less powerful, less mature, ego (B). Mistress Catherine has the power to punish for disobedience (A-the intolerable thought/guilt). This scene appears to

be very painful which becomes thrilling and wonderful, culminating in an intense emotional satisfaction (D).

### Comments

A mother-figure is conspicuous by its absence in Marie's interview material (A). The maternal figure may not appear in the home, but she is very much present in the BDSM scene. The Mistress is a powerful libidinalised woman, whilst Marie's own feminine sexuality appears in the guise of something sweet, vulnerable and 'girlish', whose breasts and vulva are subjected to intrusion and pain. Mature female sexuality is split off, lost, (B) but is now residing in the Mistress (C).

In the family home, punishment for being 'out of line' gave Marie such satisfaction that she continued misbehaving in order to garner further punishment. Marie identifies the satisfaction as sexual. Speculation suggests that Oedipal influences, both desire and guilt are at play (A). Punishment focuses on her femininity, her face is slapped whilst she is ordered to fix her make-up, painful intrusive procedures are applied to her female body parts - her breasts and vulva (C).

Marie asks Catherine 'do you like dominating me Mistress', and, 'am I taking it good for you Mistress' which lends itself to such meanings as 'do you like punishing me Mistress', 'am I being a good girl for you Mistress' (C). Mistress Catherine, reportedly the most sadistic of the Mistresses at Pandora's Box, gives the impression of being somewhat cold and aloof, and yet she engages sensitively with Marie. She notes that Marie likes looking at the cane marks on her buttocks (D), Marie likes watching her breasts being pierced, she tells Marie that yes she

(Catherine) likes dominating Marie, and that Marie is doing well and could do better still

(C). Catherine briefly but gently strokes Marie's face and hair during the 'medical' scene (C).

Marie's scene and interview material provide rich examples of the transformative processing (D) of the operationalised model. By 'using' masochism as an 'asset' Marie gains financial security ('it's a wonderful way to make a living'). Pain facilitates the bill-paying she needs for her survival (D), as pain ultimately facilitates the infant's survival by way of the maternal containing process.

Marie appears captivated by her livid cane-marked buttocks; pain has been transformed into welts which she can safely examine (D). This is such a profound experience for Marie that her shoulders slump, her head hangs, and she gives what sounds to the listener like a deep sigh of relief and satisfaction (D) (48:47). When Mistress Catherine tells Marie to fix her messed up make-up, this is also a transformative process from the rigours of the caning to a short period of recovery (D) (49:23).

Marie reports to Nick that she feels 'absolutely euphoric...wiped out...having no energy left...stoned', to the point that she feels unable to talk. To the camera she does appear emotionally spent, on the verge of needing to sleep, and, like pink smock man, she is flushed and languid, reminiscent of post coital relaxation. This is a stark example of a profound change (D) wrought by the rigours of corporal punishment in the BDSM scene.

*Example 3. Table for Marie*

	<b>Containment Model Components</b>	<b>Containment Model Operationalised features</b>	<b>Example 3. Marie. Pandora's Box Observations/evidence</b>
A	<b>Intolerable Experience</b> Something Uncontainable	Inferred from: i) Objective observation ii) Subjective narrative: thoughts/feelings.	<b>Intolerable experience:</b> Oedipal desire/rivalry Family history- punishing male figures. Absence of maternal figure
B	<b>Projective Identification</b> Subject Ego-depletion	Splitting of the ego: i) Absent ego-function(s), ii) Projection of ego-contents ( <i>Beta-elements</i> )	<b>Masochism:</b> <b>P/e<sub>x</sub></b> - surrender of autonomy. Submission, ' <i>Mistress owns my body</i> '. Loss of mature female femininity/sexuality
C	<b>Maternal Reverie</b>	Ego-function introjection Maternal Object-relating	<b>Sadism:</b> P/e <sub>x</sub> - domination, control, punishment. Enhanced feminine adult sexuality/aggression/power Controlling pain delivery/intensity-limits ' <i>wipe that smile off your face</i> '. Praise and encouragement- ' <i>yes...you can do better next time</i> ', stroking hair and face
D	<b>Maternal A-function</b> A process from Beta-elements to Alpha-elements.	<b>Modification of x to y:</b> Change Amelioration Containment	<b>Modification:</b> Alleviation of guilt. Libidinalisation of punishing/oedipal object and object relationship. Modification by libidinalisation of pain and punishment, ' <i>did that rap hurt</i> '... ' <i>you like the way it looks don't you?</i> '... ' <i>you like looking at it don't you?</i> '. Euphoria, deep satisfaction, deep relaxation, 'I can't talk right now', feeling 'high'.

Reflections on Examples Michael P. Pink-smock-man and slave Marie

Before proceeding with further data analysis, I want to take time now to reflect on these three detailed-scenarios. I reiterate that much of the interpretation of data

is necessarily speculative, the aims being to identify data that illustrates the assessment tool's ability to explain the material and support the H<sub>1</sub>.

- Can an intolerable thought be identified?
- Is there evidence of the transfer of ego-functions between two parties in a relationship?
- Is there evidence of a positive modifying process and outcome?

In all three examples, one can observe the surrender of ego-functions (via the masochist's projective identification) which leads to ego depletion. Ego enhancement is observed in the power and authority of the Dominatrix. Change in the experience of pain is facilitated by the maternal presence and the maternal reverie of the Dominatrix. Pain traversal and modification of the painful experience by alpha-function is the work of the BDSM scene. That which was painful and intolerable is modified to become something that can be reintrojected and re-experienced. The BDSM scene safely enables modification of, often intense pain, to often intense pleasure. Pain modification is pain containment. BDSM is a containing experience.

In the case of Michael P. intolerable thoughts of violence and genocide (A) are split off and projected outwards (B). Mistress Delilah provides a receptacle, a space and place for the process of maternal alpha-function (C). Her alpha-function enables transformation (containment) of Michael's projected pain. He has been relieved of his intolerable thoughts and feelings. His 'freaky' thoughts have been expunged; his pain has been transformed through his BDSM scene (D).



In Pink-smock-man's case, intolerable thoughts are associated with his own gender and adult sexuality (A). By taking the identity of a pubescent girl, he has split off both his own gender and sexuality (B). An aggressive, ultra-feminine sexuality resides in the Goddess (C). Transformation from sexual immaturity to adult sexuality, from male to female, from girl to woman is facilitated through his BDSM scene (D). He is left profoundly relaxed and feels at peace.

In slave Marie's case, the something intolerable appears to be something forbidden: Oedipal desire, jealousy of the Oedipal mother and its associated guilt (A). She splits off her adult sexuality and projects them into the Mistresses. (B). Adult female sexuality is in the Mistresses (C). Punishment for the guilt facilitates a profound emotional change (D). Marie is left feeling 'wiped out' and euphoric by her BDSM scene. Such a response indicates that alpha-function is itself libidinalised as I suggested in the first example of Michael P. All of these changes are achieved via BDSM in the guise of an erotised object, a ubiquitous feature of the Domination/submission relationship. The journey is not necessarily pleasant, but the outcome brings containment of 'something', this is shown by a deep if not profound, and probably sexual, satisfaction.

### **Further Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

#### Introduction

Further data from the two documentaries *Pandora's Box* (Fetishes) and *Susan for Now* are shorter and less detailed than the first three examples. Nevertheless, they illuminate aspects of my operationalised tool. Data analysis follows the same

principles as those offered in part 1 in that I make psychoanalytically informed data interpretations.

The topics I discuss in this part are personal narratives as expression of: the intolerable thought (A), including narratives from Ayngel, robyn, Jew-boy and Plantation slave; instances 'when things go wrong' as an expression of 'failed' (B), examples include: Amazon wrestler, Goddess Natasha and Body piercer Jarret; the Domme experience as expression of (C); with narratives from Goddess Natasha, Dom Jarret and Mistress Catherine; and the effects of long term Domming (as expression of D) (Mistress Raven).

For each example, I will show how specific aspects apply to my thesis H<sub>1</sub> and how they relate to the components of the *containing* process. I am going to begin with what appears to be the stark reality of intractable physical pain, and BDSM-based strategies to gain a semblance of containment over it (D).

### BDSM Personal Narratives.

*Example 4. Ayngel: Needle Play with Dom Jarret. Susan for Now*  
(12:05 - 13.22)

Ayngel: Technical writer. Interviewed direct to camera.

*Ayngel*: He [Jarret] calls me his favourite pin cushion (smiles broadly) which is kinda sweet.

*Scene*: a view of Ayngel's back. A close up of Jarret's gloved hands inserting needles subcutaneously. The needles are arranged in a circle approximately 4 cm in diameter with the needles pointing inwards (known as a star-burst).

*Ayngel:* I love the star-bursts, I really do. They're so pretty. I've been told I have a slightly skewed sense of aesthetics but I think they're very pretty (laughs). And other people look at that and say what the hell did you do to yourself (laughs). (12:22)

*Scene change:* Ayngel has a star-burst inserted over each shoulder blade. Gloved hands (Jarret's) are attaching one end of a bungee strap to one star-burst. Ayngel is gasping and crying out. The spare end of the bungee strap is attached to the second star-burst. Ayngel gasps and cries out. Jarret 'twangs' the bungee strap (banjo plucking). (12:31)

*Ayngel:* (voice over) The sensation of having the bungee hooked underneath the needles... between the needles... and your skin, and then the pull to get the other hook through the other side and then the banjo plucking.

*Scene change:* The star bursts are in place over Ayngel's shoulder blades. Jarret is rapidly tapping them with a spatula. Ayngel ouches and gasps. Jarret talks to the camera whilst continuing what he is doing.

*Jarret:* They eventually... it stops hurting and starts to feel really good because she's no longer going to be feeling any discomfort or pain, it's just going to... going to be the dopamine and endorphins (12:59).

*Scene change:* Jarret removes the needles from the star-burst and, as he does so, he twists them. Ayngel gasps.

*Ayngel:* (Talking to the camera). People who I've talked to about this says 'does it hurt', well, yessss (laughs). That's... that's to a certain extent the point, but it hurts in a way that is quite pleasant. (12:27)

*Scene change:* Jarret is 'stippling' Ayngel's back with a needle, forming an ever-increasing spiral. The needle sites are bleeding. (12:31)

*Ayngel*: Stippling for artists is where you keep dotting ... it's dotting with whatever it is you're using... with a pin, to create your patterns to fill in shading or whatever. He decided to do that with a 20 gauge... 22 gauge. He just picked up a needle and started doing that. Some friends I have who don't understand how I could do it whilst I was in the pain I was in from the herniated disk that I had, what they didn't understand was that was... the pain from the needles was an escape from the non-consensual pain that my body was putting me through. Because it was pain that was under control, that I knew would stop. (13:22)

#### Data Analysis with the Operationalised device

*Evidence of an Intolerable Thought: (A).*

Ayngel reports experience of intractable physical pain 'from a herniated disc I had'.

*Evidence of Splitting and Projection: (B).*

Jarret takes up the initiative 'he just picked up a needle and started doing that'. The source of pain and the pain experience have been split off and projected into Dom Jarret.

*Evidence of Relocation: (C).*

Responsibility for the pain is 'taken-up' by Dom Jarret and 'appears' in him in the concrete form of hypodermic needles. The location of the pain has changed.

Jarret's acceptance of the role of pain provider means '*it stops hurting and starts to feel really good*'.

*Evidence of Change: (D).*

Ayngel's own bodily pain is transmuted into another bodily pain. Pain has shifted location from her spinal pain to her skin, or, it has shifted between the objects

that caused it. Jarret's 'administrations' change pain from something intolerable to something that is 'quite pleasant', '*because she's no longer going to be feeling any discomfort or pain*'. At the end of the scene, Ayngel's face appears flushed, her facial expression is relaxed, her demeanor appears languid.

### Data Interpretation

Although Ayngel is having physical pain inflicted upon her, the nature of the pain is different from the pain of her injury. Her intolerable thought, as she suggests, is the pain she suffers in reality (A). She splits off her pain (beta-elements) and autonomy (projective identification) and projects them into Jarret (B). Jarret introjects a projected version of Anygel's physical pain. He becomes the holder and arbiter of the pain manifesting as hypodermic needles (C). Jarret's skill with the needles, reintroduces the pain elements, beta-elements, where they transform to alpha-elements. Jarret controls pain delivery (alpha-function), pain is made 'pretty' (starbursts) and is consequently tolerable (D). When Jarret says the pain '*eventually stops hurting and starts to feel really good*', and Ayngel says the pain hurts in a way *that is quite pleasant*, they are describing a process of pain transformation, from something intolerable to something tolerable (D). I argue that Jarret himself represents the transformation from a bad object to a good object. Whilst pain is *provided* by Jarret, the intensity and the timing of the pain is a function of both personalities working together, the container-contained process.

Ayngel's assertion that what she finds intolerable is her physical pain, has to be accepted, because that is what she says it is. However, it could be argued that her case shows some parallel with Paula Heimann's case (1955), described in the literature review. Heimann determined that by having himself flogged by another person, her patient was actually having his hated internal object - his father - flogged. I can only infer, based upon the presenting evidence in my thesis data, what the nature of an intolerable thought is. Ayngel's own testimony tells us the 'intolerable' is physical pain. It is possible that an intolerable experience is disguising an intolerable thought. I am going to speculate, based on the penetrative function of the needles, that penetration may be Ayngel's unconscious intolerable thought, her fear. Subcutaneous penetration may be akin, in unconscious phantasy, to a penetration that cannot be thought about.

When Ayngel says of Jarret 'he calls me his favourite pin cushion which is kinda sweet', there is something playful, flirty and seductive in her voice and attitude. Her words and facial expression communicate eroticism towards Jarret: she is *his* favourite, inferring the possibility of erotism from him towards her too. I have argued that the container-contained process is erotised, and this example with Ayngel appears to show that her pain, and the object relationship are erotised. Whichever the case, physical or psychological, there is a transformative process, a *containing process*, facilitated by an erotised object. The story of physical injury, which may be true in and of itself, provides Ayngel with her own narrative through which to tell her story.

I am going to discuss the idea of personal narrative further in the next two examples in which I demonstrate that, in general, there is a common structure to

BDSM ‘scenes’. I have shown that Anna Freud’s ‘nice stories’ (Chapter 3) could be interpreted according to the container-contained model (Chapter 5). My argument is that BDSM scenes have a stereotypical structure.

In Pandora’s Box (Appendix 1), Broomfield introduced two sessions that ‘seemed to stem directly from social and political issues’ (01:10:00). Amongst their clientele are Jewish clients who want BDSM-style role-play facilitated by a Mistress in Nazi style uniform (Example 5) and there are Black clients who seek to role-play plantation slaves (Example 6 below).

I am going to present the material for both cases, and I am going to argue that what appears to be socio-political commentary is actually a manifestation of ‘personal narrative’. Like a child’s game, the details of the story may vary according to culture and individual life story, such as that of Ayngel above, but the game, the role play, the BDSM scene, all follow a stylised format. This is one of erotised power, located within an erotised object, which facilitates an erotised containing experience. As Anna Freud argued (1923) there is a ‘superstructure’ to erotic phantasies, and as I have argued (Chapter 5), that super-structure parallels Bion’s account of the containing process.

*Example 5: Nazi Role Play. Interview between Client and Mistress Beatrice.*

*Pandora’s Box. Scene 20. (01:12:10-01:15:07)<sup>44</sup>*

Mistress Beatrice interviews a Jewish male client prior to his encounter with a Dominatrix. The aim is to establish what he wants from the session. The client,

---

44 No film is shown of the client’s session.

reportedly a Doctor, is seated wearing a suit and tie. He wears a full rubber/leather head mask with a large horizontal zipper for the mouth, Mohican style appendages on the top of the hood resemble large bullets. Mistress Beatrice arrives to 'interview' him about his specific requirements, she shakes his hand.

*Mistress Beatrice:* I would like to talk to you about your session with Goddess Natasha... errr... I understand you are into errr... Nazi-kind of fantasies.

*Client:* Yes I am.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK. I would like to know more about your background, are you Jewish?

*Client:* I'm half Jewish.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, your Jewish parent...

*Client:* I'm American Jew, my mother was born here but... errr

*Mistress Beatrice:* Grand parents from Europe?.. The client nods.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Did you have any family that died in the camps?

*Client:* Yes.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Close family, Grand parents, distant family?

*Client (nods):* distant family.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, very good. If you be open with me and Goddess Natasha, it is very important that we understand which intensity is good for you... errr could you tell me more about your fantasies?

*Client:* errrr yes well I like to be verbally humiliated... a lot of humiliation.

*Mistress Beatrice:* To which intensity... is 'Jew Boy' enough or do you need something more intense like 'you rotten fucking Jew, you Jew-pig'?

*Client:* ... errr it can get... errr moderate to heavy (he nods). OK moderate to heavy.



*Mistress Beatrice:* OK... the setting, what kind of setting do you want? Do you want... errr basically 1940's Germany, do you want neo-Nazi setting, a concentration camp type of setting...?

*Client:* ... errr 1940's to neo-Nazi. I don't think concentration camp per se... I think too much... I think the whole idea that the Nazi's thought they were a superior race... that they wanted to persecute the Jews...

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, so Goddess Natasha, being part of a superior iron race, and you, being a low-life shrimp Jew.

*Client:* ... exactly.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Now I want to tell you something, this sort of session can get very intense... personally, I have done sessions like this when I had someone go completely into regression on me, so I'm going to give you a safe-word. If it gets verbally too intense, physically you will be OK. You say Red, the colour Red, the Goddess will stop immediately what she is doing... OK?

*Client:* OK. Thank you.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Alright, very good, so I will brief the Goddess about your kind of session and don't forget your safe-word.

*Client:* Thank you very much.

*Mistress Beatrice:* You are welcome, bye Dear. (01:15:07).

### Analysis.

The client, wanting to be nothing other than a low life Jew pig, is the guise through which something intolerable manifests (A). He is going to surrender his selfhood (ego), his autonomy (ego functions), even his humanity (masochism), by splitting and projective identification (B). The object he needs to project his anxieties into, has to fulfil specific criteria, and enact a specific 'sadistic' role. In

taking away his humanity and introjecting his ego-functions, his object has to have power, and power over him (C). It is clear, from his pre-scene interview, that the client determines the limits and so the *containing* features of the scene (D). Seeking these activities at Pandora's Box indicates his object must be erotised, a Dominatrix (D). Setting limits and boundaries dictates the structure of the Domme's enactment, the characteristics of reverie, and the features of the transformative process (D), in essence the containing process. By dictating his needs in detail he tells Mistress Beatrice what he wants from the experience and how to manage what he wants (D). He is clear about what is a step too far.

*Example 6. Plantation Slave. Pandora's Box. Scene 22 (01:15:08-1:16:47).*

Nick's voice-over says some black clients are into 'plantation' scenarios where they are humiliated as plantation slaves.

In this scene, a mature black man is on his knees, naked except for a thong, and metal collar and cuffs. The film begins mid-scene. On a throne-like chair, cross-legged is a Mistress attired in an outfit featuring a chain mail head dress. Her dress is long, chiffon like and slit to the hip. Her sandals are bare toed and high heeled.

*Mistress X* (quietly):... perhaps you will not be sold... perhaps you will be treated like the nigger you are, do you understand me?

*Client*: Yes, Mistress.

*Mistress X*: Now I want to see your form. I want to value you and put a price on you.

Mistress X enacts feeling the client's calves and thighs, remarking how strong they are and that 'he will do well'. On his knees, she asks him softly why he

thinks he will do well, he replies because he is 'a slave'. She tells him he will do well because 'nigger boys like you do well don't they?'

*Client:* Yes Mistress.

*Mistress X:* Now what are you?

*Client:* I'm your slave, Mistress.

*Mistress X:* Say I'm a nigger.

*Client:* I'm a nigger, Mistress.

*Mistress X:* Good.

The client crawls on all fours wearing a collar and lead held by his Mistress. She leads him to one of the dog kennels where he is shut in. Squatting down to the kennel door, Mistress X tells him this will be his mode of transportation from plantation to plantation.

*Mistress X:* You are property. Do you understand that? You are nothing more than property. (01:16:47).

### Analysis

Role-play as a plantation slave provides a scenario in which this man can be humiliated at the feet of a libidinalised dominating object. His autonomy is strikingly absent in that he does not even own his own body (B). The Dominatrix focuses totally on her client, she has introjected, taken into herself, ownership of his body and parts of his projected ego and his ego-functions (C). Due to the limitations of the film, nothing can be discerned of what he finds intolerable (A), but something needs putting in a kennel, perhaps something wild and uncontrollable. Likewise, nothing can be seen of the outcome(s) of the scene (D), but what can be observed is the erotisation of the scene and of the object.

## Reflections on Personal Narrative: Nazi-role play and Plantation slave.

I argue that as in the cases of the Jewish client above, for the black client, the humiliation, the stripping away of humanity, and the denial of basic human rights is a projective process. The role of the Dominatrix in each of these two cases is sadistic and demeaning. The Domme exhibits enhanced ego functions (C) by taking in what has been split off and projected – personal power and autonomy (B). The submissive has depleted his own ego by using a personal narrative. Being a ‘Jew-pig’ nothing, or a ‘nigger boy’ nothing, is representative of what is intolerable (A), a scenario where something painful can be modified (D) bringing a semblance of containment. It would be convenient to assume that the Jewish client’s intolerable thought (A) lies in being a persecuted Jew and the Black client’s intolerable thought (A) lies in being a persecuted slave. However, I am persuaded to wonder whether each scenario is a culturally determined narrative for whatever the unconscious intolerable thought actually is. The Jewish client chooses Nazism, the black man chooses plantation slave, not because these are intolerable in and of themselves, but because they are convenient narratives that the subject can identify with. Specific cultural heritage provides a narrative which acts as a vehicle for the elemental process of seeking containment. In the cases of the Jewish client and the black client, their own cultural inheritance provides a narrative of primal abuses of identity and personhood, leading to shame and humiliation.

Like a dream, like phantasies of captured medieval knights by a young Victorian lady, like intractable pain, they provide a scenario through which something unconscious is ‘worked through’. That is, manifest content versus latent content. I argued in Part 1 and above, that the intolerable thought can only be inferred

from the features of the scenario. What the intolerable experience is may be unidentifiable and remain unknown. What is important to my thesis is that each client chose a scene through which 'something intolerable' could be addressed in the guise of humiliation and sadism at the hands of a highly libidinalised dominating, object. Whilst these last two examples in particular (scenes 20 and 22 Pandora's Box) have limitations in the material they provide, the research tool can still be applied to the data for analytic purposes. Some features of the containing process can be observed and those that cannot be observed can still be inferred.

### The Dominant Experience

The focus of my thesis and my data analysis rests on the masochistic experience; however, like the container-contained relationship, BDSM is a two-party, reciprocal interaction. I am going to elaborate upon my analysis with further data interpretation by showing two examples of a BDSM-induced effect on the Dominant participant (C).

#### *The Dominant Experience (i) - The Gain.*

##### *Example 7. Goddess Natasha and Joseph. Pandora's Box (17:25-19:14)*

The cigar-smoking Goddess Natasha is reportedly the toughest Mistress. She is coming to the end of a scene and is dabbing her upper lip with a tissue (probably sweat). A man (Joseph, a marketing consultant) is sitting on a low bed with his head in his hands. Natasha says 'he is taking a rest... a well needed rest... doesn't he look destroyed right now?' From the fleeting film clip, he does look psychologically 'beaten'.

Nick asks Natasha how this makes her feel. She purrs with passion,

‘Very powerful, very powerful, yeah, makes me feel good. When I do this, I shake with adrenaline’.

She smiles at Nick. To the film observer Natasha does appear ‘shakey’, she also appears animated, even sparkling.

My thesis has argued that the submissive projects his ego contents and ego-functions into the person of the Dominatrix. This example shows evidence of introjection of the projected ego-functions by the Domme (C). The submissive’s masochism, his projective identification (B), and Natasha’s reciprocal introjection and sadism have enhanced her ego (C) making her feel ‘very powerful’.

*Example 8. Dom Jarret. Needle Play. Appendix 2, Chapter 5. (10:01-10:31).*

The Dom Jarret of ‘Susan for Now’, remarking on his experience as a Dom, also appears animated when he describes to Susan how the Domming experience makes him feel:

*Jarret: (alone on camera) I am controlling what’s going on, the pain and pleasure of the person I’m playing with... err...I get to be kind of... err for a moment almost like... err... a minor God if you will. I know that sounds kinda silly, but I get to be the one in charge of everything that they’re feeling and thinking about for a couple of minutes (10:31).*

Like Goddess Natasha, Jarret introjects his submissive’s projected ego-functions (B). Being in complete charge of all that another person is experiencing enhances Jarret’s own ego-functions (C). Introjection of the submissive’s projective identification makes Jarret feel like a God.

However, there are also times when things (intended B) don't go according to plan (failed B). These are also informative as they show the BDSM scene, and hence the containing process, breaking down. Two examples from the documentaries are: Pandora's Goddess Natasha as an Amazonian wrestler and her client, and Jarret, in 'Susan for Now' describing the sudden stalling of a needle play scene.

The Dominant Experience (ii) - When Things Go Wrong.

*Example 9. Wrestling Fetish. Pandora's Box. Appendix 1, Chapter 5 (36:35-39:55).*

*Broomfield (Voice-over):* Despite the care taken in client selection, mistakes still occur. (36:52)

*Scene 15. Amazonian wrestler. (37:00-39:55)*

Goddess Natasha is speaking to a man who likes wrestling Amazonian women. Natasha has spoken to the man's 'lovely wife, and she really enjoys wrestling with you, and you have a lot of fun'. Natasha starts to circle the client, telling him he is 'all piss and fire, all piss and fire'. They wrestle, but things get out of hand and Natasha bites the client several times. The client says he is 'cat fighting'.

*Natasha:* I don't give a shit if you are cat fighting',

*Client (angrily):* OK I am out of here, I'm not playing this game, I didn't come here for this, I came here to wrestle, not be abused.

The client puts his shirt on.

Natasha is upset and rails at Nick '... guys into wrestling are submissive, into Amazonian women...this guy is not submissive and turned into a big baby because I bit him, this is not a bar-room brawl, Nick, if you want to film me in a

bar-room brawl then we'll go and you can film me in a bar-room brawl but I am not getting into a fight with a man on the premises here that has nothing to do with a wrestling fetish. This guy was not submissive, and he was not into being over-powered by women. Did you see what he was doing to me? Thank you. With that, Natasha slams the door to her dressing room in Nick's face. (39:55).

This case may be complicated because of the 'presence' of the wife. The intolerable thought (A) may be hers; she is paying for her husband to work through something on her behalf (D). The intolerable thought may be something between husband and wife, or the client may only feel able to trust his significant other (C) with his projections (B).

*Example 10: Dom Jarret. Needle Play (09:52-10:01)*

Jarret also describes instances when the submissive partner puts an unexpected 'stop' on activities.

*Jarret:* It really puts a stop on the evening when we get going to play, and she and I are both getting hot and bothered and then I get everything set up for needles and I stick a needle in her and she... aargh, Fuck! Stop that! Fuck! Shit! and it's like (mimics air brake screeching and slaps fist into opposite palm), y'know it's air brakes on (laughs) (10:01).

What happens 'when things go wrong' may be a case of what 'doesn't happen'. If the mind of either party is not in a state of preparedness (B) and (C), then fear may emerge. In some way an intolerable thought (A) (fear) predominates. (A) is not processed to (D).



This may correspond to an infant's refusal to be comforted by anyone bar his significant other(s). Despite the immensity of his distress and terror, he feels no trust, there is no one able to take the fear (A) away. In the case of adult BDSMers, why start if it doesn't feel right?

When Jarret's needle play partner cannot cope with the pain from the needle insertion, Jarret experiences immediate deflation, disappointment and what sounds like rejection and discomfort (C). He describes this as the 'slamming on of air-brakes'. What Jarret is projecting, his reverie and offer of alpha-function gets 'slammed'. Mistress Natasha literally slams the door shut in the face of the film crew, and so the client.

Both examples are illuminating as they describe a failure of the aims of their shared activities. The 'normal' response to being wrestled to the floor and bitten, or by having the skin punctured by needles would be the way the clients reacted; but with a set of goals within BDSM activities, this is not expected to happen, and is equally unsettling to both parties.

Both cases may reflect something akin to a non-containing mother as described by Bion (a mother who projects her own anxiety towards and 'at' the infant), or what Briggs described as a convex-shaped interface between the mother and infant. The Dominant party, Natasha or Jarret, may appear confident, but something doesn't work for the submissive - the infant - who then becomes unsure or afraid.

The Dominant parties in both scenes were offering something that was refused, and/or the submissive parties were not participating in the projection of their ego-functions. In the wrestling scene with Goddess Natasha, the male client may well have become fearful. His intolerable thought could not be dispossessed and relocated into the object that was on offer. It could be argued that PI<sup>(n)</sup> was not functioning and PI<sup>(e)</sup> was dominating. Similarly, Jarret's needle play partner in 'Susan for Now' was not prepared for the pain to come. Both submissive players withdrew abruptly, maintaining possession of their own ego-function(s). The container could not assimilate the projections. Nothing was given, nothing was taken in, nothing was offered for modification.

### The Dominant Experience (iii) - The Cost.

I am going to show instances where in interviews with Nick Broomfield, the Dominatrix experience reveals something of the emotional cost of Domming – the overwhelming demands of (C). The most moving, and I argue the most informative, is a short excerpt of Broomfield in conversation with Mistress Raven however I am going to begin with Mistress Catherine.

*Example 11. Slaves: Mistress Catherine and her Female Slave, Jess. Appendix 1, Chapter 2 (12:10-14:48)*

Jess is one of the 'slaves' to Mistress Catherine interviewed by Nick. Mistress Catherine probably has about ten slaves in her harem.

Jess<sup>45</sup> is suspended by her wrists to ropes from which she swings. Mistress Catherine stands behind her, twisting Jess's nipples. Jess gasps with seeming pleasure and leans back against Mistress Catherine, sensuously nuzzling Catherine's face and neck like a cat. As Jess twists and swings on the ropes, she tells Nick that she sometimes sleeps at the foot of Mistress Catherine's bed, and that she can be summoned and dismissed at her Mistress' command.

Catherine tells Nick that she does not like her slaves living with her as it 'takes too much energy, I like my own space, so I can dismiss them when I want to dismiss them'.

*Example 12. Broomfield talking with Mistress Raven. (01:05:35-01:07:13).*

Broomfield finds Mistress Raven something of an enigma and he chases her down to her desk. She indicates that he must leave while she makes a phone call, but he ignores her. Mistress Raven no longer sees clients and Nick is curious as to why. She tells him she stopped doing it because she no longer enjoyed it. She reiterates to Nick that she has to make a phone call and he has to go. He persists, 'why did you stop'?

Eventually, Mistress Raven engages with Nick. She tells him she stopped about a year earlier and then decided to open Pandora's Box 'when I no longer enjoyed it, as they say... got burned out doing too much of it, being too involved with it'. She looks thoughtful. Nick asks what burned her out. She says she was 'too involved,

---

45 Jess reportedly published a book 'Meeting the Master'.

professionally, socially, personally everything in my life was inundated with it'.  
(01:06:24).

*Nick* (presses her): how can it burn you out?

*Mistress Raven*: ...because it's a very intense type of... (hesitates) ...  
activity ... mentally and physically intense and it definitely can burn you out.  
You just don't want to deal with it anymore, it's very draining... The people  
that you see have tremendous personal needs that they need to draw out of  
you, every bit of your energy in order to meet those needs... and it's like  
sucking it right out of you and it leaves you very, very exhausted and when  
you do it frequently and often... and involved with it in other aspects of your  
life you just don't want to deal with it anymore<sup>46</sup> (01:07:13).

### The Dominant Experience: Reflections

Mistress Catherine is clear about the personal cost: to have a live-in slave would be too demanding; it 'takes too much energy'. Mistress Raven's response appears to be more 'off the cuff', bringing an immediate and emotionally toned engagement with Broomfield's question. Years of highly emotional, extremely demanding, intimate person-to-person interaction has left her emotionally depleted. I argue that this can be understood in terms of her own ego becoming so overwhelmed that it finally proved exhausting and intolerable; too much of other people's anxieties (B) were projected at/into her. The intense emotional demands from others have been draining and she doesn't want to take (C) or indeed give of herself anymore. My thesis argues that Mistress Raven is describing the personal cost of years of providing (giving) a form of the maternal

---

<sup>46</sup> This is the only time during the film that shows Mistress Raven actually engaging seriously with the film crew.

*containing* experience (D) to the very needy; those who drain her own ego-resources, sucking the life out of her.

My thesis has argued that the BDSM relationship can bring ego-enhancement to the Dominant, and I have shown the positivity of this for Goddess Natasha and Dom Jarret. Mistress Raven, and to a lesser extent Mistress Catherine, also demonstrate that this is not an emotionally sterile experience, but they show it in a different way. Rather than enhancing the Domme's ego the Domme becomes drained by the emotional cost. The Dominant's role, the maternal role, is a side of the relationship that requires a lot of giving of the self. I have determined that (C) is a process of *taking*: taking in of another's projections. Yet, I have stated that the maternal role is one of *giving*. This may appear ambiguous, but in order to *take* the responsibility of another's emotional state - to take in their intolerable thoughts and feelings - she has to give of herself. The unquestioning non-judgmental acceptance of another's projective identification, requires openness, acceptance and a capacity for alpha-functioning which are all freely given by the Dominant. In Bion's model the maternal figure does this by making herself available, by offering her reverie. Mistress Raven also makes herself available by offering her Domination. Both maternal object and Dominatrix, facilitate the modification of something unpleasant in the mind of another. For the mother under pressure, this can be wearing to the point of exhaustion. Mistress Raven is describing that exhaustion in response to her prolonged service as a professional Dominatrix. The service is professional, but it is also interpersonal. I argue this supports my H<sub>1</sub> that BDSM is an enactment of a primitive form of the container-contained *relationship* as well as an enactment of a primitive containing process. One of the 'stranger' things about BDSM is the florid and explicit need for humiliation and degradation. The Domme is enlisted to facilitate or provide this

in a manner that the submissive can cope with. I am going to speculate that the apparent humiliation and degradation is a manifestation of 'an intolerable thought'. The Domme enacts that intolerable thought, providing the humiliation/degradation, within the client's specifications. This may infer that Domination is a form of reverie albeit a primitive form and/or that Domination is the primitive mind's experience of reverie. Speculatively, Domination infers something of the infant's primitive experience of the mother - the breast.

### Comments

I want to end the formal part of my data analysis where it started, with Michael P. expunging himself via a lavatory, (example 1 above). Broomfield had commented that whilst the ladies of Pandora's Box conveyed to him that they provided a valuable service, he had been sceptical, but 'after witnessing the toilet scene, I changed my mind' (Broomfield 01:21:00). On this note I am presenting part of Mistress Raven's conversation with Nick.

*Example 13. Broomfield in Conversation with Mistress Raven. (41:56-43:33).*

Disappointed not to film a scene with Mistress Raven - 'one of the most famous Mistresses on the East coast' - Nick pursues her in Pandora's Box. Mistress Raven does not see clients any longer unless she feels like 'doing something'. When she indicates (with humour) that she would do something with Nick, he replies 'but I don't like pain', at this, Mistress Raven rails at Nick:

'...after all these months, you still think it's only about pain. People should be aware that pain is not the only outlet here. It could be sensuous, psychological, any phantasy that you think of and it does not have to include pain... It's all therapy, it's very therapeutic... and just a transfer of

power and control and not every time is pain involved. However,... in your case, I'll make sure it is' (she laughs at Nick. 43:33).

My thesis suggests that there is more to BDSM and masochistic pain than has been understood in the psychoanalytic field thus far. Mistress Raven understands this, through her experience Mistress Raven knows that BDSM isn't just about physical pain but also about intense personal intimacy. Whatever the preferred outlet, her experience has provided her with the expert knowledge that BDSM is 'therapeutic'. In the colloquial sense of 'therapeutic' it makes people 'feel better'. My own H<sub>1</sub> also argues that BDSM can be 'helpful', and, more specifically, that it is a process that can provide a *containing* experience. Whilst Mistress Raven, through experience and expert knowledge, can assert that the essence of BDSM lies in the transfer of power and control, I have been able to provide evidence to support her views. For Mistress Raven, power exchange, from one person to another facilitates control, for psychoanalytic theory, projective identification from one person to another also facilitates control.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Discussion.**

The aims I set for my thesis were to discover:

- Whether psychoanalysis is of any explanatory value to BDSM

And

- Whether a relationship between a containing experience and the masochism of BDSM can be shown.

I am going to address the satisfaction of both of these aims through the following points:



1. The contribution of my work to the psychoanalytic understanding of BDSM, in particular, the use of container-contained theory to understand masochism within BDSM activities.
2. The success of my methodology and assessment device.
3. Further research suggestions in the light of the outcome of this thesis.  
I will also highlight those instances where contrast and comparison between Freud and object relations views are apparent. This shows how my thesis extends and augments Freud's observations whilst offering a different psychoanalytic perspective.

I will conclude by stating that my research has shown that: the BDSM scenario offers a way of providing a safe bounded place for what may be considered dangerous behaviour; that BDSM offers a less destructive way of dealing with difficult internal states; that the BDSM scenario is not the mature form of the containing process aimed at developing symbolisation, but shows features of a primitive, pre-symbolic, pre-genital, enactment of that process.

1. The Contribution of my Work to the Psychoanalytic Understanding of BDSM. Specifically, the use of the container-contained theory to understand masochism within BDSM activities.

I am going to structure this first part of my discussion - my contribution to the psychoanalytic understanding of BDSM and containment theory - around a few

of the more overt features of BDSM. I will both show and speculate upon how classical and object-related theories relate to those characteristic features.

### *Precocious Phantasy*

Freud noted the appearance of erotic titillation, around the time of puberty, provoked by a certain type of literature such as Uncle Tom's Cabin (Beecher-Stowe, 1852) which features the ill-treatment and whipping of slaves. Modern BDSMers report the same titillation with contemporary examples such as John Norman's 'Gor' books featuring an alien world of adventure and erotic slavery (Gor 1966-2019) or the Story of 'O' (Reage 1954). Some clients of Pandora's Box confirm Freud's theory of the genesis of masochism in placing the awakenings of erotic masochistic fantasies around the time of puberty. 'Pink-smock man' described trying on his mother's fur which he found arousing; John, a retired British banker, found that wearing a rubber bathing hat gave him erotic sensations; both of these men said this began around the age of puberty. Anna Freud's description of erotised 'nice stories' of an imprisoned heroic young Knight also appear to be the fantasies of a pubescent girl. Each of these cases may represent 'screen memories' because there is evidence that erotic fantasies begin well before this. Slave Jess (Mistress Catherine's slave at Pandora's Box) and my impressions from the Leather Family both suggest an earlier onset of erotic fantasies - around the age of four years old, before the latency period. My research leads me to speculate that the earlier onset is more likely. Freud's discovery of beating fantasies suggest the *genesis*, if not the practice, is earlier still, and importantly it also points to the pre-genital nature of BDSM. Karl Abraham, for instance, assigned the onset of sadism to the second half of the oral phase of development. Adult BDSM encounters, even between couples, rarely

features genital sex and as I have argued, this supports Freud's claim that the genesis of masochism lies in the pre-genital developmental organisations. My thesis has argued that masochism is an erotic phantasy of the containing experience and, it is not only early, but pre-symbolic, representing something that links back to the early maternal-infant relationship, and is therefore primitive in nature. BDSM is a physical enactment of that which has no words but only feelings.

### *Pleasure in Pain*

Physical pain is probably the feature most commonly associated with BDSM, and it does appear to be an almost essential feature of BDSM activities. My thesis looks at BDSM through Bion's model of container-contained, although it 'fits' somewhat imperfectly, there is nothing to say that containment of the intolerable has to be pleasurable. What it does have to do is provide enough modification to bring amelioration and provide some degree of satisfaction. Like Freud's observation of the cotton-reel game, the pleasure may come from the ending of pain, and this is supported by my study. I have argued that pain – that is, psychological pain, in the form of an intolerable thought or experience - is to be transformed and to do so it must be endured and traversed (most often times, physically). My impressions from the Leather Family suggest that failure to cope with pain within a BDSM scene, to use the 'safe-word' and either halt or scale back the pain, can bring feelings of disappointment in the self, and the fear of disappointing the loved and worshipped object, the one who gives and provides so much. The successful endurance of pain, on the other hand, brings feelings of pride, not just in the self, but pride in making the object happy by taking what is given. I argue that this could give an insight into the primitive mind of the infant

and the container-containing process: by the successful traversal of the intolerable, helped by mommy, mommy becomes pleased and so does baby - something akin to an experience of 'it's over now and I am OK'. This would suggest that the infant isn't just passively (as well as hopefully) waiting for the doors of maternal reverie to open and the magical alpha-function to occur, but suggests the infant actively participates in maternal alpha-function. She, the mother, may begin the process of modification, but perhaps alpha-elements are only partially modified, and the modifying process is completed, or furthered in the infant's own mind - more and more so, as his ego functions develop.

#### *A Sadistic (Facilitative) Object*

Typically, in a BDSM relationship, the Domme is understood to be sadistic and the submissive is masochistic. However, as I indicated in Chapter 8, I suggest that it is more complicated than that, and that the BDSM relationship is facilitative. I have said that the container-container model is a viable alternative explanation to account for masochism even though the containing model may not be a 'perfect fit'. By saying that the Domme is providing the pain *on behalf of* the submissive, the Domme can be seen in terms of the auxiliary mind of the maternal figure in the containing process. The infant delivers his pain into the 'safe hands' of his mother's auxiliary mind so that she can facilitate something on his behalf. She does his thinking and psychic processing for him.

In the adult BDSM scene, there are several ways of understanding this container-contained process in action. One way is to think of the adult submissive as having the capacity to take back alpha-elements that are still in a partially painful state, but it is a pain he can cope with, this is the aim of the maternal

mind in the containing process. As an adult he can prepare for the delivery of pain, and he withstands his pain but only within his own prescribed limits.

A second way of looking at it is that beta-elements are made manifest by the delivery of pain (for example through whipping, flogging, needle-play etc.) from the Domme: she delivers, he receives and by careful negotiation, skill and empathy, the two parties, the Domme and the submissive, carry out the task of alpha-function 'together'. Crucially, BDSM activities require another person willing to provide the pain, humiliation and castigations that are needed by the submissive. Pandora's Box provides an example of the pre-scene negotiation between a Domme and a submissive. A Jewish client discusses a Nazi style scenario with Mistress Beatrice which shows how a scene is negotiated. This demonstrates the reality that the client, the masochist, is very much in charge of the scene, its construction, its inclusions and exclusions. Pandora's clients are fee paying, they pay the Domme to provide a service that will meet their specific needs. Not every masochist wants *physical* pain, in the case of a black male client in Pandora's Box, he wanted to enact being a plantation slave, there was no evidence of whipping or physical beating in this man's scene. What he wanted was *humiliation*, which has its own type of psychic pain. My interpretation of this case is that this humiliation must come from a very particular, very able and, therefore, *safe* object. She must be the *maternal* object, who else can facilitate alpha-function? It is this facilitative function of the Domme that I believe to be the most striking finding I have made in my enquiry. Having said that, the ladies of Pandora's Box understand this very well. What my thesis has done is to recognise that a specific, psychoanalytic theoretical structure can explain how and why this facilitative relationship works, or, as the ladies say, and as Nick

Broomfield observed of Michael P., how and why the process is therapeutic, that is, it is helpful. I make no claims in regard to clinical therapy, my thesis only suggests there may be new ways of looking at concepts.

### *A Libidinalised Object*

Freud saw the masochist's object of desire as a *libidinalised* object of desire. The perfections of the object are such that everything she says is to be admired. Freud had spoken of this in 1905 as 'overvaluation of the object'. Overvaluation is described as a deviation of the sexual aim; that is, the aim of genital-genital congress goes awry, the aim is missing. As I have said above, masochism is a feature of the pregenital organisations (as is sadism). Freud would see overvaluation, and the pregenital organisation of *feminine* masochism, in Oedipal terms: the object is desired but unobtainable. Feminine masochism is therefore a feature of BDSM. The Dominatrix is highly libidinalised, her appearance is sexually alluring and provocative, yet there are no bare breasts, exposed genitals, bare legs or feet, she is 'clothed' top-to-bottom. There is a complete absence of genital sex between the submissive and the Domme despite the highly charged sexuality of the situation. This supports Freud's view of feminine masochism - the wish to copulate with the Oedipal object, despite knowing that it is an unobtainable object. However, I am going to speculate that the desire is for the *containing capacity* of the maternal object. This is an infantile desire. When we mature, that same desire for the breast, for the primary and pre-Oedipal object, becomes, or remains, sexualised.

### *Erotic Bondage*

One of the impressions I gained from my initial engagement with the Leather Family and from my observations of the two documentaries, was that tight bondage is profoundly erotic. Slave Jess said that she manipulated her childhood games so that she would be the one to be captured and tied up. Members of the Leather Family also manipulated their childhood games for the specific purpose of being tied up, locked up in a confining space or even buried. In Pandora's Box, there is a short footage of a man being tightly wrapped, neck to feet, in what appears to be a giant roll of cling film. I also suggested that the rubber suit of Betty Joseph's fetishist patient was a physical and metaphorical container (Joseph 1971, [1969]). Humans are unique amongst primates in that our skin is naked. From my research, I am inclined to think that rubber, latex, fur, leather or plastic, 'worn' as close and as tight as the skin itself, mimics the experience of the infant. The infant's body, and so his psyche, are bounded by his own skin and he experiences his mother's skin as she holds him to her breast. I speculate that when the infant is tightly wrapped, swaddled, he has an experience of a physically and emotionally, all encompassing *container* as Bick discussed. Like her vision of the infant's 'second skin' perhaps this is what BDSMers are trying to provide for themselves, a re-experience of this containing physical modality. In this way Bion's model of container-contained will 'fit' BDSM and so will Freud's account of the early foetal erogeneity of the skin.

### *An Erotically Suffused Scenario*

Freud does not refer to BDSM directly, but he does discuss, at length, unconscious beating phantasies and their formulaic structure. His daughter, Anna Freud, goes on to speak of *conscious* beating phantasies and she outlines the superstructure of what she calls 'nice stories'. I have argued that, regardless

of the specific details or apparent differences in narrative between one BDSM scenario and another, like Anna Freud's 'nice stories', the structure of a scenario remains stable. But it is in the nature of the *relationship* within that structure where I disagree with the Freudian interpretation. For the Freuds', beating phantasies were seen as the playing out of a phantasised relationship with an Oedipal object, (desire and guilt). However, I have shown that Anna Freud's super-structure of a typical 'nice story' can be interpreted using Bion's containment model – which is a relationship with another human being. My thesis argues that beating phantasies can be understood in the context of an object relationship that *predates*, and is therefore more primitive than, the Oedipus complex. BDSM is an enactment of the *first* relationship, it is an erotically suffused pre-symbolisation, pre-thinking scenario of the maternal-infant dyad. It is in the nature of the sado-masochistic relationship, I argue, where Freud failed most in his exposition of masochism, and where Bion's container-contained model can succeed.

### *Domination and submission: A Containing Relationship*

My study focuses on an interactive relationship based on a power exchange (PE<sub>x</sub>): power is surrendered by the submissive and invested in the person of the Domme. The sadomasochism, the delivery and acceptance of pain is enacted within that relationship. My thesis has shown that PE<sub>x</sub> reflects the maternal-infant container-contained interaction, specifically in the transfer of ego-functions facilitated by projective identification. There is nothing like this in Freudian theory on masochism because he does not talk about an interactive relationship. I would speculate that the guilt and the punitive activities of the superego might be Freud's psychic representation of Domination, and how he



portrays the desire to be castigated and ill-treated. It is counterintuitive to think of the loving mother as sadistic. It is counterintuitive to think of the baby as seeking pain and fear. However, there is nothing untoward in thinking of the mother as being 'in-charge' of the baby, for doing everything for him that he cannot do for himself. But we know that challenges have to be overcome in order for the ego (and reality principle) to grow and develop. A 'good enough' mother instinctively soothes her distressed baby without becoming overly distressed herself. As the baby develops, she makes him wait a little longer, then a little longer, to have his immediate needs attended to. Whilst maintaining the right level of reassurance, she allows his ego to take on more and more for himself. A similar type of behaviour on the part of the Domme is observed. There comes a point where she increases the speed and intensity of pain delivery and then appears to scale back. Although she continues providing pain, she also gives the submissive time to 'gather himself'. Alternatively, having judged that the submissive has taken about enough of what he can stand, she delivers a final very intense blow and then stops.

The literature review showed that there is some recognition in the psychoanalytic field, not only of the poorly developed ego in masochism but more to the point, that masochism is an endeavour by the ego to bring about growth and healing. The baby may not enjoy his pain, but he needs it; he needs to experience, he needs to travel, to endure and to surmount, and for that he needs a relationship - he needs a mother, 'thank-you Mistress'. Mistress provides what the baby needed but did not get. In BDSM it may be that the early infant has libidinalised the reality principle by libidinalising his pain, this would constitute a process of modification. What my thesis has shown us is that within BDSM activities

something of the container-contained process or the containing relationship is indeed libidinalised. And, I would speculate that, if libidinalisation occurs in any one discrete aspect of the containing process, it is likely to be in the process of maternal alpha-function because this is when the object is experienced as being loving and caring and *making the pain go away*.

## 2. Thesis Methodology: Success of The Assessment Device.

As I explained in the methodology chapter, Insel stated that the strength of DSM was that it enables all clinicians to use the same terms in the same way.

However, there is potential for challenging the validity of DSM as a 'tool' in whether the instrument is defining or measuring what it claims to be defining or measuring. I have shown an example of a potential pitfall in subject selection. Avoidance of such a catastrophic error lay in my recognition that the masochism of BDSM, recognised by DSM, is not the masochism of sexual masochism as defined by DSM. Failure to appreciate this would have negatively impacted on my literature review and on my subject selection thus undermining my whole thesis. It was essential to ensure the selection of 'proper' subjects, only those involved in BDSM. Now, with respect for own operationalised device, the tool I created is derived *only* from Bion's own clinical model. The assessment tool determines whether the components of the containing process can be observed in the thesis data. I have shown that all four 'parts' of Bion's container-contained model: anxiety or feelings of something intolerable, the concept of PI<sup>(n)</sup> including splitting of the ego and transfer of ego functions, maternal reverie, and maternal alpha function, can be observed in some form. Analysis of the data with the assessment

device has also shown the elements of the container-contained model functioning as a 'process'.

I have used the same device across cases and across separate and unrelated data sets. I have shown that the same features and the same process can be observed if this model is applied to data diligently and accurately, but most importantly I argue, 'looking with a psychoanalytic eye'. One of the questions to arise from my research is whether this model successfully lends itself to diverse research projects. If this were shown to be so, it would demonstrate the authenticity of my operationalised model, and its fitness for purpose. As for the limitations of my project, one of these is the limitations of my data sets. Pandora's Box provides commercial BDSM services, and 'Fetishes' was filmed as a documentary for entertainment purposes. The purpose of Robin Franzi, in 'Susan for Now' was to show something of the history of the BDSM scene in Seattle and to interview 'ordinary' BDSMers talking about their lifestyle. Franzi's film provided a more personal view of BDSM where mutual respect and 'care' amongst friends was far more evident. Neither documentary shows the intensity of the mutual love and passion, and the mission for mutual exploration of the self that was manifest in the initial interactions with the Leather Family, There may be other 'types' of BDSM that my thesis does not address.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Through novel, rigorous and systematic research methodology, my research has shown that the BDSM scenario: offers a way of providing a safe bounded place for what may be considered dangerous behaviour; that BDSM offers a less

destructive way of dealing with difficult internal states; that the BDSM scenario is not the mature form of the containing process aimed at developing symbolisation, but shows features of a primitive, pre-symbolic, pre-genital, enactment of that process.

### 3. Future work.

This research has been a rich and exciting project and at many times during the process, I have been drawn to ask further questions of the data and of the methodology. I find the object-relations model of the container-contained to be a profound reflection of a complex relationship that is clearly applicable to many scenarios (as shown in my literature review). I would be interested to see if my operationalised assessment tool of Bion's container-contained model has wider application, whether it could successfully lend itself to diverse projects, specifically any field of study where we find relationships between people. I have researched what appears to be a puzzling set of behaviours, one that Freud never really successfully understood, and by creating a 'neutral' tool, I have detected an unexpected, unrecognised, developmental dimension to that behaviour.

Another area of interest that this project triggered for me has a cross-cultural dimension: does BDSM exist throughout the human world, and if so does it play the same containing role? If Western culture dresses the Domme in black velvet, leather and lace, how does she appear in diverse cultures, how does the narrative of a given culture determine how the Domme manifests and what does that say about the maternal-infant relationship?

I feel that there is more to understand about the D/s relationship than the commercial world of BDSM can show. More study of BDSM life-stylers are likely to show subtleties that don't come across in my data. I suspect that within a marriage or established life-style relationship there is more to be found about the depth of the passion and love that has been hinted at in my study. I would like to know how the arousal in BDSM is experienced compared to 'vanilla' (plain/ordinary) sex. What happens to the D/s aspect of the relationship outside the dungeon? Does genital sex occupy a 'different space' in their lives? During my research, I gained the impression that anal penetration of the submissive by the Domme, with a so-called strap-on penis, is a common activity. This did not feature in the documentaries, but I suspect it may have been an element of the 'Pink-smock' man scene in Pandora's Box. The client went from pubescent girl, to a luridly made up feminised adult dressed in latex. If anal penetration is indeed a feature of BDSM, this is an element to investigate and debate: how would it fit into Freud's theory? My guess would be 'very nicely'.

A long-term study may show that, for some, BDSM remains a life-long fascination, an exciting, fulfilling and gratifying way to live life. This seemed to be evident in 'Susan for Now' where several couples lived their lives that way, at least sexually. However, it would be interesting to find out whether some people seek out BDSM, become immersed in it for a length of time and then 'move on'. In other words, BDSM provided 'help' at a time when they needed it and they stopped when they no longer required its ministrations.

The role of humiliation in BDSM remains something of a puzzle, in that I wonder what it is in the infant's experience that later manifests as this particular feeling. Humiliation brings its own pain as I have indicated above. In the case of the black client playing the plantation slave I said there was no evidence of corporal punishment, whipping and so on. Is humiliation then the representative of the intolerable thought. Can the adult sense of humiliation be a complex manifestation of envy towards the object?

My thesis has given an account that physical pain is representative of emotional pain although this dynamic isn't unknown. My account has argued that the role of pain in BDSM is to be transformed; physical pain is a metaphor for something difficult to cope with. Transformation enables *containment* of that pain, and as such it reflects a *primitive* mechanism. The transformation of pain may be of interest to physiology: how does it work, what are the biochemical changes, how might such biochemical changes relate to the breastfeeding baby? Can physiology support the theoretical and clinical findings of psychoanalysis as Freud always wished?

Reflecting upon the experiences of the infant and how these can manifest later in life through BDSM may provide some potential insights, into what it is that the infant 'feels'.

To conclude, I feel I have dipped my toes into the complex subject of masochism, presented a new way of looking at the role of BDSM which will hopefully provoke new speculation and opportunities for further research into the paradox of pleasure in pain.

## References

### *Books and Articles*

- Abel-Hirsch, N. (2006). The Perversion of Pain, Pleasure and Thought: on the Difference between “Suffering” an Experience and the “Construction” of a Thing to be used. In: D. Nobus and L. Downing, eds., *Perversion: Psychoanalytic Perspectives/Perspectives on Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac, pp.99-107.
- Abraham, K. (1921). Contributions to the Theory of the Anal Character. In: K. Abraham, (1973) *Selected Papers of Karl Abraham*. London: Hogarth, pp.370-392.

- Abraham, K. (1924). A short study of the development of the libido, viewed in the light of mental disorders. In: K. Abraham (1973) *Selected Papers of Karl Abraham*. London: Hogarth, pp.418- 501.
- Abraham, K. (1925) The Influence of Oral Erotism on Character Formation. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 6, pp.247-258.
- Antinucci, G. (2016). Beating phantasies: Mourned and Unmourned. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 97, pp.615-639.
- Anzieu, D. (1989). *The Skin Ego*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bell, D. (2001). Projective Identification. In: C. Bronstein, ed., *Kleinian Theory: A Contemporary Perspective*. London: Whurr, pp.125-147.
- Bick, E. (1964). Notes on Infant Observation in Psycho-analytic Training. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 45, pp.558-566.
- Bick, E. (1968). The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. 49, p.484.
- Bion, W.R. (1959). Attacks on Linking. In: *Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis*. New York: Jason Aronson, pp.93-109.
- Bion W.R. (1962). A Theory of Thinking. In: *Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis*. New York: Jason Aronson, pp.110-119.
- Bion, W.R. (1962). *Learning from Experience*. London: Heinemann.
- Bion W.R. (1970). *Attention and Interpretation*. London: Tavistock.
- Bion, W.R. (1967). *Second Thoughts*. London: Maresfield.



- Blass, R.B. (2016). Understanding Freud's conflicted view of the object-relatedness of sexuality and its implications for contemporary psychoanalysis: A re-examination of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 97 (3). pp. 563-589.
- Briggs, S. (1997). *Growth and Risk in Infancy*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Bromberg, C.E. and Aron, L. (2019) Disguised Autobiography as Clinical Case Study. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 29, pp. 695-710.
- Brothers, D. (1997). Chapter 16. The Leather Princess: Sadomasochism as the Rescripting of Trauma Scenarios. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 13, pp.245-268.
- Clark, G. (2019). Yes-Saying, No-Saying, and the Places In-Between: Seduction and the Psychoanalytic Exploration of Sexual Consent. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 20, pp. 274-284.
- Dean, T. (2014). Uses of Perversity: Commentary on Saketopoulou's "To Suffer Pleasure". *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 15, pp. 269-277.
- Eldridge, A. (2018). When Danger Is Safe: Down the Rabbit Hole with Liz. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 38, pp.596-604.
- Escoffier, J. (2011). Imagining the She/Male: Pornography and the Transsexualization of the Heterosexual Male. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 12, pp.268-281.
- Fechner, G.T. (1873). *Einige Ideen zur Schöpfungs-und Entwick-lungsgeschichte der Organismen*, Leipzig, Druck und Verlag von Breitkopf und Härtel.

English translation (1966) [1860] *Elements of Psychophysics*. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Feldman, M. (1997). Projective Identification: The Analyst's Involvement.

*International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 78, pp. 227-241.

Ferenczi, S. (1909). Introjection and Transference. In: *First Contributions to*

*Psycho-Analysis*. London: Hogarth, pp.30-79.

Freud, A. (1923). The Relation of Beating Fantasies to a Day-dream. *International*

*Journal of Psychoanalysis* 4: 89-102.

Freud, S. (1895) [1950]]. *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. *The Standard Edition*

*of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume I*. London:

Hogarth, pp.281-391.

Freud, S. (1905). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. *Standard Edition of*

*the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VII*. London:

Hogarth, pp.125-245.

Freud, S. (1908). 'Civilised' sexual morality and modern illness'. . *Standard*

*Edition of the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IX*.

London: Hogarth, pp.181-204.

Freud, S. (1911). Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning. *The*

*Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,*

*Volume XII*. London: Hogarth, pp.213-226.

Freud, S. (1913). *Totem and Taboo*. *The Standard Edition of the Complete*

*Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIII*. London: Hogarth, pp.1-

162.

- Freud, S. (1914). On Narcissism: An Introduction. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV*. London: Hogarth, pp.68-102.
- Freud, S. (1917). Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVI*: London: Hogarth.
- Freud, S. (1919a). A Child is Being Beaten: A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII*. London: Hogarth, pp.179-204.
- Freud, S. (1919b). The Uncanny. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII*: 217-252. London: Hogarth.
- Freud, S. (1920). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII*. London: Hogarth, pp.7-64.
- Freud, S. (1921). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII*. London: Hogarth, pp.67-143.
- Freud, S. (1923). *The Ego and the Id*. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XIX*. London: Hogarth, pp.12-66.

- Freud, S. (1924). The Economic Problem of Masochism. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XIX*. London: Hogarth, pp.155-170.
- Glick, R. A. and Meyers, D. I. (1988). (eds.) *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives*. Analytix Press.
- Gonzalez-Torres, M.A. and Fernández-Rivas, A. (2015). Female Sexuality, Nationalism and Large Group Identity. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75, pp.416-437.
- Hall, M. (1837) *Memoirs on the Nervous System*. London: Gilbert and Rivington
- Hartwich, A. (1959) *Krafft-Ebing's Aberrations of sexual life*. London, Staples Press, 1959.
- Heimann, P. (1955). A Combination of Defence Mechanisms in Paranoid States. In: M. Klein, P. Heimann, R.E. Money-Kyrle (eds.) *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*. London: Tavistock, pp.240-265.
- Heimann, P. (1950). On counter-transference. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 31, pp.81-84.
- Hébert, A. and Weaver, A. (2014). An examination of personality characteristics associated with BDSM orientations. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 23, pp.106-115.
- Hinshelwood, R.D. (1991). *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*. London: Free Association Books.

- Hinshelwood, R.D. (2008). Repression and Splitting: Towards a method of conceptual comparison. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 89, pp.503-521.
- Hodgkin, A.L. and Huxley, A.F. (1952). A quantitative description of membrane current and its application to conduction and excitation in nerve. *Journal of Physiology* 117, pp.500–544.
- Hoffer, A. and Buie, D.H. (2016). Helplessness and the Analyst's War against Feeling  
 it. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76, pp.1-17
- Insel, T. (2013). *Transforming Diagnosis*. [online] Available at:  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/directors/thomas-insel/blog/2013/transformingdiagnosis.shtml> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2017].
- Jones, E. (1955). *Sigmund Freud Life and Work, Volume Two: Years of Maturity 1901-1919*. London: Hogarth.
- Joseph, B. (1959). An Aspect of the Repetition Compulsion. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.16-33.
- Joseph, B. (1971). A Clinical Contribution to the Analysis of a Perversion. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.51-66.
- Joseph, B. (1975). The Patient who is Difficult to Reach. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.75-87.

- Joseph, B. (1981). Towards the Experiencing of Psychic Pain. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.88-97.
- Joseph, B. (1982). Addiction to Near Death. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.127-138
- Joseph, B. (1989). Defence mechanisms and phantasy in the psychoanalytical process. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.116-126
- Joseph, B. (1989). On Passivity and Aggression: their interrelationship. In: E. Bott Spillius and M. Feldman (eds.) (1989) *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change: Selected papers of Betty Joseph*. London: Tavistock, pp.67-74.
- Kalat, J. (2015). *Biological Psychology*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth.
- Khan, U. (2017). Fetishizing Music as Rape Culture. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 18, pp.19-30.
- Klein, M. (1946). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 27, pp.99-110; republished (1952) in M. Klein, P. Heimann, S. Isaacs and J. Riviere, (eds.) *Developments in Psycho-Analysis*: pp.292-320. London: Hogarth.
- Klein, M. (1957). *Envy and gratitude*. Reprinted in M. Klein (1988) *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946 – 1963*. London: Virago.

- Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.B. (1980) *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. London: Hogarth.
- Le Bon, G. (1895) *Psychologie des foules*. Paris: Alcan. English translation (1995) as *The Crowd*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Low, B. (1920). *Psycho-analysis A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*.  
Republished (2014) London: Routledge.
- Menaker, E. (1953). Masochism - A Defence Reaction of the Ego. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 22 pp. 205-220.
- Marion, P. (2016). Infantile Sexuality and Freud's legacy. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 97 (3). pp. 641-664.
- Mendes, T. (2012). *Tasks, Emotions and Emotional Tasks: A Study of the Interconnection between Social Defence Systems and Containment in Organisations*. (PhD thesis, University of Essex).
- Menzies-Lyth, I. (1959). The functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety. In: *Containing Anxiety in Institutions. Selected Essays*. London: Free Association Books, pp.43-85.
- Menzies-Lyth, I. (1988). *Containing Anxiety in Institutions. Selected Essays*. London: Free Association Books.
- Morgan, D. and Rusczyński, S. (eds.) (2007). *Lectures on Violence, Perversion and Delinquency: The Portman Papers*. London: Karnac.

Neidecken, D. (2016). The Primal Scene and Symbol Formation. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 97 (3). pp. 665-683.

Novick, J. and Novick, K.K. (1972). Beating Fantasies in Children. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, [53 pp.](#) 237-242.

O'Brien, S.J., Nash, W.G., Wildt, D.E., Bush, M.E. and Benveniste, R.E. (1985). A Molecular Solution to the Riddle of the Giant Panda's Phylogeny. *Nature*, pp. 317 and 140-144

Pavlov, I. (1897). *Lectures on the Work of the Principal Digestive Glands*. Published in Russia in 1897). Republished in English (1910) *The Work of the Digestive Glands / Lectures*, London : Charles Griffin & Company.

Poupart, F. (2016). Roots and Vicissitudes of Psychic Bisexuality. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 97 (3). pp. 709-736.

Rosenfeld, H.A. (1971). A clinical approach to the psychoanalytic theory of the life and death instincts: An investigation into the aggressive aspects of narcissism. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 52, pp.169-78.

Rosenfeld, H.A. (1988). On Masochism: A theoretical and clinical approach. In: Glick, R. A.

and Meyers, D. I. (eds.) *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives*. Analytics Press, pp.151-174.

Roth, D. (2009). (Imagining) Erotic Mutuality: Negotiating Difference in Sexual Orientation in an Analysis. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, [10](#), pp.173-184.



- Rustin, M. (2006). Infant Observation Research: What have we learned so far? *Infant Observation: Internal journal of Infant Observation and its Applications*, 9 (1), pp. 35-52.
- Saketopoulou, A. (2014). To Suffer Pleasure: The Shattering of the Ego as the Psychic Labor of Perverse Sexuality. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 15, pp.254-268.
- Saketopoulou, A. (2019) The Draw to Overwhelm: Consent, Risk and the Retranslation of Enigma. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 67: pp.133-167.
- Sanfuentes, M. (2008). *Regression and group psychotherapy: observing the effect of the group-as-a-whole on the group members' thinking*. (PhD thesis, University of Essex).
- Segal, H. (1973). *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth.
- Sirois, F.G (2010). Notes on the Beating Phantasy. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 91, pp.505-519.
- Smith, J. A. and Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J.A. Smith (ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage Publications, pp.51–80.
- Spillius, E. B. (1983). Some developments from the work of Melanie Klein. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 64, pp.321–332
- Staminova, K. (2013). *Envy in Learning; A psychoanalytical observational study of a group in Education*. (PhD thesis, University of Essex).

- Steggles, G. (2015). *Conceptualising our Interpersonal Impressions: Mental Representations and Internal Objects*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars.
- Steiner, J. (1993). *Psychic Retreats: Pathological Organizations in Psychotic, Neurotic and Borderline Patients*. London: Routledge.
- Stoller, R.J. (1975). *Perversion*. New York: Pantheon.
- Stoller, R.J. (1979). *Sexual Excitement*. New York: Pantheon.
- Stolorow, R.D. (1975). Narcissistic Function of Masochism (and Sadism). *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 56, pp.441-448.
- Stolorow, R. and Lachmann, F. (1980). *The Psychoanalytic Theory and Therapy of Developmental Arrests*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Stiles, B.L. and Clark, R.E. (2011) BDSM: A Subcultural Analysis of Sacrifices and Delights. *Deviant Behavior*, 32, pp.158-189,
- Thims, L. (2007). *Human Chemistry*. USA: Lulu.
- Young-Bruehl, E. (1988). *Anna Freud: A biography*. London: Macmillan.
- Zikmund, W.G. (2003). *Exploring Market Research*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University.
- Zepf, B. Ullrich, B. and Selle, D. (2016). Oedipus and the Oedipus Complex: A Revision. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*. 97 (3). pp. 685-707.

*DVD Documentaries*

*Fetishes (special edition)* (2005) DVD. Directed by Nick Broomfield. Metrodome Distribution Ltd. [Viewed 2012-2020].

*Susan for Now* (2007) DVD. Directed by Robin Franzi Independent [Viewed 2012-2020].

### *Legal Case*

The Spanner Case (1994) Regina v Brown UKHL AC 212 at 238.

## **Appendix 1: Data Set 1**

### **'Nick Broomfield's Fetishes' (H.B.O. 2005 Special Edition).**

#### **Transcript**

Nick Broomfield's introduction to his film 'Fetishes' centres on 'Pandora's Box' (Manhattan: New York) which calls itself 'a house of Domination and Dominatrices catering only for submissives'<sup>47</sup>. His aim was to introduce the BDSM world and what it means to the workers and their clients. The following is a transcript of the film and includes the researcher's descriptions and observations of characters, settings and activities.

#### ***Introduction. Mistresses and Domination (00:00-01:42)***

Speaking to the camera, Broomfield tells the audience that Pandora's Box is lavish, expensive and exclusive. The camera crew and Broomfield spent two months filming and interviewing both Dominatrices and their clients. He describes the clients as 'extremely powerful' people -the likes of Wall Street Analysts, Lawyers, Bankers and Brokers.

*Broomfield* (Voice-over): For a lot of people it's the centre of their lives and for people who have a lot of power and control... a lot of people who come to this place, Pandora's Box, are sort of Wall Street analysts and people who are extremely powerful, in control

---

47 The 'Janus report' of 1993 suggested that 14% of men and 11% of women had experience(s) with sadomasochism.

in all areas of their lives who wanted to give that control up and so, in many ways, I think it's a product of the world we live in. (01:38).

Mistress Raven, the founder and proprietress of Pandora's Box, is described as 'something of a legend in BDSM circles'. (01:42)

Researcher Observation: Mistress Raven's hair is raven black, her skin is very white, her eyes large dark pools; her teeth are perfect, her smile is wide and crimson lipped, and her age is indeterminate. As Broomfield's documentary unfolds, this appearance seems to be somewhat stereotypical for the Dominatrices working at Pandora's Box. All are mature women, they have long flowing black or chestnut hair, eyes are lined with Kohl, skin is pale, lips are shades of crimson, vermilion or scarlet. The clothing is also uniform (often literally so).

Fabrics and clothing are shiny, tactile, latex, leather, silk, satin, rubber, vinyl or plastic and, for the most part, black. An outfit tends to be alluring more than revealing. Typically, outfits are encompassing and figure hugging: tight skirts, long skirts or gowns with long side slits and so on. High-heeled shoes or high-heeled, laced-up boots seem mandatory. Outfits are scanty in form - a tight Basque leaving bare shoulders, breast cleavage and buttock cheeks on show. However, naked breasts, buttocks or genitals are not a feature.

**Chapter 1: 'Fetishes, Mistresses and Dominatrices'. (01:46-11:30).**

The film begins proper with Mistress Raven taking Nick and his crew for a limited tour of the premises, explaining that they will not be allowed access to some parts. There is a dungeon with mock guillotine, stocks and cages for clients that Mistress Raven deems 'naughty little birds'. There are kennels and pony traps for training purposes, and, she adds, 'all kinds of bondage for the transfer of power, all kinds of control and power, where you have not much to say'. Mistress Raven explains that mirrors are important 'so you can observe all this, while it is happening to you', and 'music is essential', (*Mozart* is playing. 'A well known fetishist of his time' says Broomfield in voice-over) as are dim lights to create a mood (03:00-04:15).

In contrast, Mistress Raven shows the crew a bright, white, stark, surrealist and well equipped medical centre. There is an operating table, traction equipment and glass cupboards with medical instruments on show. Mistress Raven explains that Doctor, Dentist and Nurse-type role play is popular. The medical room is meant to be 'visually intimidating', she croons. (04:18-04:50)

Broomfield (Nick) chats with Mistress Raven and a number of her colleagues (04:51). When he mistakenly calls Mistress Raven 'Betty', which one assumes is her real name, she and the other Mistresses present bridle. Broomfield apologises, referring to her once again as Mistress Raven. When Mistress Raven and some of her ladies ask Nick to

participate in a scene, he looks perplexed. Mistress Raven explains to Nick that he will be tied up, suggesting, in a chastising tone, 'and for you' there will be 'total restraint, perhaps'. She croons that 'the skin is very tactile'. The ladies touch Nick and stroke him, he looks perturbed whilst they titter. Given the chance with Nick, Mistress Raven says

I would go with the flow, I would slowly start teasing you, blindfold you. The skin is very sensual Nick, tactile sensations are tormenting, more so than the whip (05:18).

The French Dominatrix Mistress Beatrice adds

... tied and helpless, not knowing when the pain will stop, not knowing when it will come, what happens next. Learning to relax into the pain, wanting more, what you can and cannot do, how you feel... you find yourself, a lot of the time, what you can and cannot take. (06:20)

Mistress X (name unrevealed), a sultry, dusky younger woman fixes Nick with a stare. Her look is challenging, inviting and mischievous. She adds

... we can take you down with only a word (06:55)

Mistress Beatrice agrees:

you can break a grown man with nothing but a word, you don't need restraints... (06:57)

Mistress Raven agrees 'absolutely' (07:00)

Mistress Beatrice is seen answering the phone to a potential client. Business-like, she explains that there are 4 of 15 Mistresses present at all times. She states the charges and membership deals. (07:05-07:45).

*Scene 1: Shoe Fetish. (08:30-11:30)*

Mistress Delilah has a phone 'scene' with a client who has a shoe fetish. He is reportedly 'a high-powered lawyer'. He wants 'stinking smelly woman's sneaker's', his problem is how to get them legally. His fantasy is one of being a shoe (sneaker's) designer. He has devised and designed a business card and a 'story'. In his fantasy, he would go into the street and approach women (no mention of men) who he would ask to try his new shoe designs. All women would agree to swap their current shoes (smelly, dirty and holey) for his new design, Some invite him home. There is no indication of sexual contact being part of the fantasy. Every so many weeks, he visits the women to check the wear and tear on the new shoes. He smells them, and the more they smell the more satisfied he feels. He kisses the shoes, licks them, he says he 'really loves them'. Mistress Delilah listens, she chips into the conversation telling her client that she has a pair of shoes he can have - 'they are worn very thin at the bottom' and 'yes they are really, really smelly....they stink'. (11:30).



**Chapter 2: Slaves. (11:40-16:53).**

I adore you Mistress, I will lay at your feet, obedient and humble, submissive to your wishes. (Text on screen: attributed, Mark Anthony to Cleopatra 69-30 B.C).

*Scene 2: Mistress Catherine and her female slave Jess. (12:10-14:48)*

A beautiful, young woman (Jess) is non-fee-paying. Rather she performs services for Mistress Catherine as one of her 'slaves'. Mistress Catherine tells Nick she probably has about ten slaves in her harem. Jess is suspended by her wrists to ropes from which she swings. Mistress Catherine stands behind her, twisting Jess's nipples. Jess gasps with seeming pleasure and leans back against Mistress Catherine, sensuously nuzzling Catherine's face and neck like a cat. Mistress Catherine slaps Jess's buttocks hard. As Jess twists and swings on the ropes, she tells Nick that she sometimes sleeps at the foot of Mistress Catherine's bed, and that she can be summoned and dismissed at her Mistress' command. Catherine takes the clamps off Jess's nipples. Jess gasps with pain and then sighs with seeming pleasure and says 'thank-you Mistress'.

Catherine tells Nick that she does not like her slaves living with her as it 'takes too much energy, I like my own space, so I can dismiss them when I want to dismiss them'. She says she doesn't want to live all her time this way.

It is not shown in the film, but the impression is that there is a mirror behind the film crew through which both women are watching proceedings.

Nick asks Jess when she first knew she had a spanking fetish. She says that from the age of about 4 or 5 she had such fantasies when falling asleep. She likes restriction. As a child she would manipulate games so she got tied up<sup>48</sup>. Mistress Catherine adds 'she would like to sleep in a little box, she likes small places'.

Jess seems happy to be filmed and questioned, but there comes a point when she begins to resent the verbal intrusion. Several times, with a disoriented 'what?', she has to rouse herself from a deep, languorous pleasure in order to respond to Nick's questioning. Jess seems 'in tune', but not with Nick and his film crew (14:48).

### *Scene 3. Maid Joe.(14:55-15:40)*

Maid role play is popular in BDSM scenarios and Pandora has its own house slaves.

---

<sup>48</sup> This manipulation of childhood games to bring about 'bondage' is a phenomenon that arises time and time again amongst BDSM practitioners.

Slave Joe is dressed in a PVC maid's uniform vacuuming. He comes twice per week to indulge his phantasy by cleaning the ladies' leather garments and the equipment. He says:

I clean, do errands... help dress, do foot massage, body massage, not a full time job but a life time passion (15:40).

*Scene 4. Mistress Raven and her Human Ash-tray. (15:51-16:53)*

Mistress Raven is seated on a throne-like chair smoking a cigarette. Kneeling at her side is a man in a tight, black hood, he opens his mouth for her cigarette ash. Nick asks 'are you devoted to Mistress Raven'? The slave does not answer until Mistress Raven asks him what he enjoys, he replies 'the superiority of the female'. Mistress Raven joins in speaking directly to the slave:

*Mistress Raven:* right, that they are stronger, brighter, better, so it pleases you to be in their presence, make their world a better place to be.

*Slave:* you took the words right out of my mouth, mistress.

*Mistress Raven:* do you want to demonstrate that?

*Slave:* yes ma'am.

Mistress Raven looks at her cigarette end and says 'I have finished now'. She places the cigarette end in the slave's mouth; he chews it and appears to swallow it. Mistress Raven says that 'he is unusual'. (16:53).

**Chapter 3: Mistresses. (16:57-24:00)**

My Mistress, a splendid woman's body, is not for making love... it's too beautiful (Text on screen: attributed to Toulouse Lautrec).

*Scene 5. Goddess Natasha and Joseph. (17:25-19:14)*

The cigar-smoking Goddess Natasha is reportedly the toughest Mistress. She is coming to the end of a scene and is dabbing her upper lip with a tissue (probably sweat). A man (Joseph, a marketing consultant) is sitting on a low bed with his head in his hands. Natasha says 'he is taking a rest... a well needed rest... doesn't he look destroyed right now?' From the fleeting film clip, he does look psychologically 'beaten'.

Nick asks Natasha how this makes her feel. She purrs with passion,

Very powerful, very powerful, yeah, makes me feel good. When I do this, I shake with adrenaline.

She smiles at Nick and asks him to excuse her a moment whilst she turns her attention back to her (fee-paying) client who is now lying on the floor. She orders him 'I want you to lick the sweat out of my jacket while I talk to these Gentlemen'. The client commences. Nick asks Natasha 'what do you think it was in your personality personally?'

Oh personally I have been outgoing since a child, this comes so naturally to me. School reports always said 'she is too aggressive'.

Turning back to Joseph she demands to know what he (his fee-paying presence) is doing there. She demands 'have you licked the sweat off?

*Joseph (mumbling):* Yes Mistress

Natasha leans down, demanding that he 'speak up'. She twists his nipple and he cries out in response. Again Natasha demands that he speak up, barking that 'I still see sweat'. She cuffs him around the head. (19:14)

*Scene 6. Mistress Delilah and Sensuality.(19:15-21:36)*

Mistress Delilah trained as a classical ballet dancer at the American school of classical ballet. Her client is a civil engineer. He is suspended by ropes which are running between his thighs, around his neck and waist and around his genitals. There are clothes pegs on his roped up scrotum. As he is being lashed with a whip, he flinches and ouches. Mistress Delilah specialises in the more sensuous. She speaks gently 'c'mon , c'mon, stand straight'.

Nick asks her how she got into this and was she always interested in this sort of thing. She hesitates and says 'no' but she feels there was a certain dimension to her personality. She is taking the pegs off the clients nipples as she speaks. She continues:

...depending on what happened to them in their life, it can come out, y' know, and it finds expression in this world of fetishes and S and M.

Delilah turns to her client she croons 'oh look, he's really suffering, awww he's so sweet'. The camera on the client's hooded head reveals pegs on his tongue which Delilah removes, causing the client to cry out.

Delilah responds:

OK, OK be a good boy, Mistress will give you a hug later, maybe you can kiss her stockings, the seams and the back huh? Yeah relax.

She croons softly as her client hops and gasps.

Mistress Delilah tells Nick that she has a day time researcher job where she feels unchallenged. It can be very boring and sometimes being in a job that isn't challenging is a horrible thing - is one of 'the' tortures. As she takes another peg off the client's tongue he whimpers and she asks 'better'? He responds 'thank-you Mistress'. (21:36).

*Scene 7 Mistress Catherine and Bull whip.(21:40-24:00)*

Mistress Catherine is reportedly the most sadistic Mistress. Her speciality is the bull whip and she can whip a cigar out of a client's mouth at fifteen feet, according to Broomfield.

She now has a client hooded, naked, with his arms suspended by ropes. He is, apparently, a famous magazine publisher. 'We'll start off light till I get my aim down', she tells him, 'I like this whip'. She flicks the whip at the client's back. The lashes increase in intensity, and he gasps in pain with each lash. Eventually he has to 'safe-word'. In the next scene she is caning this same man's buttocks fast until he cries out 'Mercy Mistress' (safeword). She stops, leans down and inspects his buttocks.

Interviewing Mistress Catherine during this same session she tells Nick 'it is just kinda nice to be able to beat someone once in a while'.(23:05)

*Nick:* so you don't think this has affected your relationships outside?

With long flowing chestnut locks, white skin, bejewelled eye lashes and vermilion lips Mistress Catherine fixes Nick/the camera with a stare.

*Mistress Catherine:* ... yeah it has affected my relationships outside. I'm much more secure with myself and I make a much stronger stand on who I am, that's not negotiable. I wouldn't say it has affected...

She turns away from the camera and to the client 'did I say you could move on to the carpet?'

*Client:* No Mistress,

*Mistress Catherine:* Well get back off the carpet onto the linoleum.

The client complies. Returning her attention to Nick,

*Mistress Catherine:* What was I saying?

*Nick:* About how this has affected your relationships.

*Mistress Catherine:* It has in a way, it has not affected the sex for me, in more of a psychological way it has affected all my relationships with all people. (24:00)

#### **Chapter 4. Rubber Fetish. (24:01-30:55) Requests. (31:00-36:34)**

*Broomfield interview with Client 1. (24:01-25:32).*

A typical Pandora's client - a high earning Wall Street Broker who attends in his lunch hour – he has had his own all-encompassing rubber suit designed. Standing with his back to the camera, Nick asks him what is his particular fetish to which he replies 'I guess it would be called rubber fetishism, and that is combined with bondage'.

*Nick:* What sort of things do you like done to you?

*Client:* Being held immobile in rubber and also placed in servitude, y' know, anything where I am not in command of the situation.

*Nick:* ... and where do you think your imagination came from?

*Client:* I recall one instance where it may have had the roots of this and it was a pre-teen and adolescent game, if you will, between



boys and girls - in a forest and ....errr... in order to be hidden from the enemy in this game, I was encased, if you will, in plastic and buried in a shallow grave.

*Nick:* And what emotional feelings does that cause for you?

*Client:* I guess the slight sense of fear, obviously you have to trust the person you're with, but the sense of fear becomes erotic.

*Nick:* ... and this is something that... are you married?

*Client:* Yes I'm married...

*Nick:* ... and is this something you have been able to share with your wife?

*Client:* no it is not. (25:32).

*Scene 8. Mistress Anastasia and Breath Play. (25:35-28:59)*

In the 'scene' with Mistress Anastasia, the client, encased in his rubber suit, is suspended from the arms by ropes. Mistress Anastasia is tying ropes around his torso and his rubber-encased penis and scrotum. His air intake is via two short tubules leading from his rubber encased face/nose.<sup>49</sup> Through the rubber mask, his breath sounds. Mistress Anastasia puts the breathing tubes in her own mouth fleetingly. It is

---

<sup>49</sup> Breath play appears only in this one instance in Broomfield's film but it is a well known 'edge play' fetish practised in the BDSM scene. 'Edge play' denotes anything with a degree of real danger.

unclear if she blows but she may have done so gently. The face mask is unzipped and his mouth is taped over before the zip is closed once more. Anastasia tells him 'you are silent all this time, so no point in keeping your mouth open, huh? Don't worry, shhhh'. Her face is in very close proximity to what would be his face behind the mask. She squeezes both air tubes briefly (partial seconds) and laughs softly. She squeezes his nipples as he gasps. The ropes around his scrotum are weighted. She picks them up and drops them. Again he gasps and she talks to him quietly and soothingly 'oh did I drop them, I was trying to help you. You want to play on my terms, isn't this fun?' (28:59)

*Broomfield interview with Client 2. (29:02-30:57)*

The film moves on to meet John, a retired, British, somewhat cheeky, bemused and amusing bank manager who is quite happy to face the camera.

*Nick:* So what were the images in your life that first interested you...  
got you interested in this sort of thing?

*John:* At a very early stage, I was an only child and didn't have...  
errr too many friends to talk to or exchange experiences... and at  
that age one becomes a little bit noseey and errrr went looking  
around the house looking in boxes, cupboards and so on to see  
what was there. Having found an old fashioned ladies rubber

bathing/swimming cap, I put it on, covering my ears, it made something feel different'

Nick asks him if he can describe what 'different' means.

*John:* I think it makes one feel probably a bit stronger, errrr a bit ready to cope with things you wouldn't normally cope with.

Nick asks if he can remember what the hat/cap looked like

*John:* Gosh now you're asking me, a long time ago.

However, with little hesitation, he says pale blue with little feathers on it - 'rubber feathers' he adds, looking amused at Nick. (30:57)

*Scene 9. Pet-day.( 31:00-32:39)*

The next scene probably features John, but it isn't absolutely clear. The man is on all fours, naked, wearing a rubber helmet. He is being led by a collar and lead by Mistress Delilah who is wearing a starch-white, shiny nurse's cap and uniform. There are two other mistresses dressed the same way, one is Mistress Catherine. Delilah introduces her 'dog' to the other ladies as 'Cissy'. They all enthral as to how cute he is and ask him to 'wiggle that little ass for us', the 'cissy-dog' duly complies, 'wagging' his buttocks.

Later, there is a piece of vegetation (flower stalk) cello-taped between the (same) buttocks to resemble a tail. Mistress Delilah tells her colleagues that she will be taking her cissy-dog for some behaviour modification -

there are cane marks on his buttocks. Cissy-dog is asked to bark twice, he obliges and is asked to bark louder and wag faster. (32:39)

*Scene 10 Requests. (32:40-33:47)*

Mistress Delilah reads from a form that all clients have to fill out detailing their expectations, wishes and role play scenarios. It includes which type of clothing is preferred for the Mistresses to wear (leather, latex etc.), their pain threshold and so on. The particular form that Delilah is reading indicates sensory deprivation and verbal humiliation, but not too much pain - 'so I'll have to remember not to hurt him, what a pity' she smiles, 'and he's into blindfolds, how original', she titters, 'and he's willing to try French maid training so maybe we'll get him to serve us some tea later on'. (33:47)

*Scene 11. Cat Woman. (33:48-34:19)*

Mistress Beatrice is dressing as cat-woman, in a latex cat suit complete with cat eye mask. She miaows and smiles at the camera. She is going to 'do' mummification, and sensory deprivation. She talks to Nick about the services they provide and adds 'erotic strangulation' -indicating manual strangulation with her own hands around her throat. When Nick asks if she likes that, Beatrice answers 'yeah, we'll see how our little subject responds to that'. She miaows again and smiles. (34:19)

*Broomfield in Conversation with Mistress Catherine. (34:20-34:43)*

Mistress Catherine is fixing her lipstick in a mirror. Nick asks her who she is about to see and she whispers,

*Catherine:* someone I don't like very much.

*Nick:* Someone you don't like?

*Catherine:* No.

*Nick:* Why not?

*Catherine:* I just find him kinda sleazy.

*Nick:* what's he into?

*Catherine:* I don't care.

She looks at Nick via the mirror reflection and chuckles. (34:43)

*Scene 11. Cat Woman continued (34:44-35:20)*

Beatrice, in the cat suit, is directing her client - a man with arms tied behind his back, naked except for his underpants - to pull her latex glove off her fingers with his teeth. As he moves from finger to finger at her direction, she miaows and tells her client he is a 'good boy'.

*Scene 12. Corsetry and Mummification. (35:27-35:41)*

In the medical room, Beatrice is wrapping a client up tightly in plastic, using large rolls of plastic film. His hands are tied to his sides and he is wearing a corset. The process is called corset training or in some instances, perhaps without the corset, mummification.

*Scene 13. Public Humiliation. (35:42-36:05)*

A male client is strung up by his arms. He is swinging on the end of a rope/chain whilst being caned and having his buttocks slapped by two Mistresses. (36:05)

*Scene 14. Dog training. (36:06-36:34)*

*Broomfield* (Voice-over): Dog training sessions are very popular.

In the next scene, a 'dog' is in a kennel; his penis and scrotum are tied with ropes. The client/dog is being ordered to move his penis to the left and to the right which he has to do purely by using his muscle control (no hands). When he gets it wrong, moving to the right instead of the left, his penis gets slapped with a riding crop. Mistress chides him 'You don't even have control over your most basic functions do you?' (36:34).

***Chapter 5. Wrestling Fetish. (36:35-39:55).***

*Broomfield* (Voice-over): Despite the care taken in client selection, mistakes still occur. (36:52)

*Scene 15. Amazonian wrestler. (37:00-39:55)*

Goddess Natasha is speaking to a man who likes wrestling Amazonian women. Natasha has spoken to the man's 'lovely wife, and she really enjoys wrestling with you and you have a lot of fun'. Natasha starts to

circle the client, telling him he is 'all piss and fire, all piss and fire'. They wrestle, but things get out of hand and Natasha bites the client several times. The client says he is 'cat fighting'.

*Natasha:* I don't give a shit if you are cat fighting',

*Client (angrily):* OK I am out of here, I'm not playing this game, I didn't come here for this, I came here to wrestle, not be abused.

The client puts his shirt on.

Natasha is upset and rails at Nick

... guys into wrestling are submissive, into Amazonian women. This guy is not submissive and turned into a big baby because I bit him. This is not a bar-room brawl, Nick, if you want to film me in bar-room brawl then we'll go and you can film me in a bar-room brawl but I am not getting into a fight with a man on the premises here that has nothing to do with a wrestling fetish. This guy was not submissive and he was not into being overpowered by women. Did you see what he was doing to me? Thank you.

With that, Natasha slams the door to her dressing room in Nick's face.

(39:55).

***Chapter 6. Corporal Punishment. (40:05-43:33)***

I remember smiling idly at him (the torturer) for a delicious warmth, probably sexual, was swelling through me. (Text on Screen. Attributed to T.E. Lawrence (1926) Seven Pillars of Wisdom Chapter LXXX)

Tom, an investment banker, has been refining the same corporal punishment scene for thirty years. He sits in underpants with his back to the camera. (40:12)

*Broomfield Interview with Client 3.*

*Tom:* ... ever  
since I've been a child, I'd never been disciplined, so I don't understand why the urge is with me and it's very real, it's as real as the world I walked in from tonight which is the business world, and then I walk out of this world back into the real world again...

*Nick:* are you married?

*Tom:* married with a family.

*Nick:* why is it so important?

*Tom:* it's like the internal clock in your body, it's almost like it's a drive... it's a drive that has to be satisfied... and it's an insatiable drive. It's insatiable, like the fantasies are insatiable, you never fulfil the same fantasy, or you think you got the best one and you do it and two weeks later you think of something better so its



almost like an insatiable drive, that's the way I would sum it up.

(41:09)

*Scene 16. Tom's lines.*

Mistress Delilah is sitting on a school desk. Tom is writing in chalk on the blackboard. Delilah is smacking his buttocks with a crop. He gasps and she tells him to 'keep writing don't stop'. Tom's 'lines' are: 'I must be nice to the manager'.

*Delilah: Very good.*

She smacks his buttocks again with the crop.

*Delilah: Good, put the chalk down, that's enough. C'mon, sit at your little school desk. (41:10)*

Nick asks Mistress Delilah what her interest in the work is. She replies 'for the psychology and just for the fun, it's like going to a movie'.

Mistress Delilah invites Nick and the crew to her home to discuss her concerns about appearing in the film. She is afraid that people won't 'understand' what S and M is really about and may make misplaced judgements. (41:53).

*Broomfield talking with Mistress Raven 1. (41:56-43:33).*

Disappointed not to film a scene with Mistress Raven - 'one of the most famous Mistresses on the East coast' - Nick pursues her. Mistress Raven does not see clients any longer unless she feels like 'doing something'.

When she indicates (with humour) that she would do something with Nick, he replies 'but I don't like pain'. At this Mistress Raven rails at Nick,

...after all these months, you still think it's only about pain. People should be aware that pain is not the only outlet here. It could be sensuous, psychological, any phantasy that you think of and it does not have to include pain... It's all therapy, its very therapeutic... and just a transfer of power and control and not every time is pain involved. However ... in your case, I'll make sure it is' (she laughs at Nick). (43:33).

### ***Chapter 7 Masochism. (43:34-56:36)***

Pleasure does not exist without pain. Pain and pleasure are the same emotion. (Text on screen. Attributed to Marquis de Sade).

Marie is a female, professional submissive, perhaps thirty-something, short blonde hair, slim, youthful looks.

*Nick:* So why would you... errr... Marie, why would you pay to come to a place like this?

*Marie:* Well I'm a professional submissive, and on a daily basis I fulfil male fantasies through role playing and different types of fetish fantasies as well; and actually *my* fantasy is to submit to a

very powerful dominant woman and since I'm not in a relationship right now that fulfils that sexual need... errrr.. I do on occasion pay for a session with a woman.

*Nick:* And how does a submissive work as opposed to a Dominatrix?

*Marie:* Well a submissive is ermmm... the difference between a Dominant and a submissive is a Dominant woman will dominate a submissive male client whereas I, as a female submissive, submit to a male Dominant client.

*Nick:* What kind of fantasies do they have?

*Marie:* oh, corporal punishment sometimes. I'm a school girl and I get spanked.

*Nick:* ... and would you call yourself professional masochist or just a masochist or...

*Marie:* I consider myself a masochist but I've used this asset... errrr... in order to pay my bills, and it's a wonderful way to make a living. (She nods vigorously).

*Nick:* How did you first know you were a masochist... what...

*Marie:* Well, when I was... the first time I can remember being a masochist was ... ahhhm... I grew up in a very male dominated ... ah... household and I was constantly being punished... for... being, you know, out of line, and I remember getting sexual satisfaction out of it and this continued... errrm...

*Nick:* Who used to punish you at home?

*Marie:* My Father punished me as well as my step-brother. (43:47-46:05)

*Scene 17: Marie, Mistress Catherine and Mistress Delilah. (46:07-49:23)*

Marie wears a white, lacy short shift, white underwear, white stockings, white suspender belt.

Both Mistresses pull down the front of Marie's shift and each one squeezes one of Marie's nipples. Marie sucks in her breath sharply, her head lolls back and she owwws in pain and then ahhs in pleasure.

*Mistress Catherine:* Wipe that smile off your face.

*Mistress Delilah:* Try and control yourself.

Marie is bent over, receiving cane blows from Mistress Catherine. Marie cries out long and hard; she gasps and groans. The Mistresses discuss which cane leaves nice stripes. Mistress Catherine decides one cane is a little too wobbly and she prefers one a little stiffer. Mistress Catherine canes Marie's buttocks. Marie lets out a long groan and at this point she 'safe-words' 'mercy, mercy Mistress... thank you Mistress'.

*Mistress Catherine:* Go and fix your make-up its smeared all over your face.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

Marie goes to the mirror, lifts her shift and inspects her cane-marked buttocks.

*Mistress Catherine:* Do you like the way that looks?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

*Mistress Catherine:* did that rap hurt?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress... Did I take it good for you Mistress?

*Mistress Catherine:* You did a pretty good job, you can do better next time though.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress.

Marie continues looking at her bottom in the mirror.

*Mistress Catherine:* You like looking at it don't you?

*Marie:* Yes Mistress I do.

*Mistress Catherine:* You're very proud of it.

*Marie:* Yes

Marie continues to inspect her cane-marked buttocks in the mirror. Eventually, she stands shoulders slumped, her head hangs and she gives a sigh. (48:47).

*Mistress Catherine:* What did I tell you to do?

*Marie:* You told me to fix my make-up.

*Mistress Catherine:* What have you been doing?

*Marie:* Looking at my bottom.

*Mistress Catherine:* C'mere.

She beckons Marie. Marie approaches and Mistress Catherine slaps Marie's face. Marie staggers and cries out 'I'm sorry Mistress'.

*Mistress Catherine:* Now go and do what I told you to do.

*Marie:* Yes Mistress. (49:23)

*Scene 18. Marie and Medical Play. (49:24-51:50).*

In the next scene, still featuring Mistress Catherine, Mistress Delilah and Marie, they are in the medical suite. Marie is roped to the 'operating table'. Her legs are akimbo, her vulva is exposed. Broomfield tells us the session 'became far more sensuous'. Mistress Delilah places clothes pegs on Marie's vulva. Her nipples are joined by a chain which Mistress Catherine lifts and pulls. Marie moans and gasps and scrunches her face. Marie tells Nick that:

the thrill of worshipping a very beautiful woman - strong and powerful - that's my ultimate... fantasy... and the fact that she owns my body, plus I feel like nobody knows another woman's body like another woman, how to control it how to manipulate it...

give it the sexual satisfaction... (to Mistress Catherine) is that right, Mistress?

*Mistress Catherine:* You're doing pretty good so far.

*Marie:* Do you enjoy dominating me?

*Mistress Catherine:* yes I do.

Mistress Catherine inserts hypodermic needles through Marie's breast tissue and right nipple. Broomfield's voiceover tells us that 'piercing is also a very popular fetish'. M. Catherine lifts Marie's nipple by the hypodermic needle and Mistress Delilah remarks 'I think she was looking while you did it'. Mistress Catherine pierces Marie's left nipple. Marie moans and groans. Mistress Catherine strokes Marie's face and hair. Filming of the scene ends.

After the scene, Marie describes how she feels. She is standing naked, speaking to the camera. She says she feels 'absolutely euphoric' and 'I'm wiped out... I have no more energy left... stoned... it's one of the greatest highs I've had for about a month.'

Off camera, Mistress Delilah remarks 'in about a month, c'mon'. Marie does look 'stoned'. She appears deeply relaxed, spent. Marie laughs and smiles at the camera 'I feel wonderful... it was a pure out-of-body experience, I feel stoned right now, I can't really talk'. She appears unable to verbally engage well, on the verge of a deep sleep.

*Mistress Catherine at home. (51:55-55:28).*

The crew visit Mistress Catherine at home. She is dressed as a school girl. She shows the crew into her apartment where there is a large surrealist painting of two women engaged in a BDSM scene leaning against the wall. Nick asks what the painting is of. She tells him it was painted by her ex-husband and is a picture of her 'in a situation'. Nick wonders if her activities as a Dominatrix had changed her perception of men.

*Nick:* Does it effect your ability to have a relationship?

*Mistress Catherine (fixing Nick with an unmoving look):* No.

*Nick (quickly adding):* with a man.

*Mistress Catherine:* Not at all. I can have a very healthy normal relationship with a man.

*Nick:* But you've had a lot more relationships - probably successful relationships - with women rather than men.

*Mistress Catherine:* I wouldn't say more successful, no, they are different and... I... errrm... it's very different and it also... the woman I was with... it was very different because I was married at the time so the dynamics of the relationship with a woman can only go so far.

*Nick:* How?

*Mistress Catherine (shrugging):* because I was married.



*Nick:* But in the time of your marriage, were you generally more attracted to women rather than to men?

*Mistress Catherine:* yes... I had numerous affairs with women... well I had a man, so why go looking for another man, you know? I was attracted to women at that point... I... I mean a lot of the Dominatrices or Mistresses seem to be more attracted to women than to men... errrm, I think that Dominatrices tend to be bisexual... yeah, where that line is crossed and how bisexual they are it depends... on the person... some that I know are completely gay... So it just completely depends on the person, it doesn't generalise like that, it doesn't work.

Nick asks why she is dressed the way she is, as a school girl. She replies that she 'thought it would be kind of amusing, something different to the leather and latex'.

*Nick:* Weren't you supposed to see a client?

*Mistress Catherine:* ... Today... yeah, I might have worn this but probably not. Yeah, but he cancelled.

*Nick:* What does he like you to be?

*Mistress Catherine:* He likes kinda a little Lolita type, and have that person manipulate him into giving them money and... blackmailing him in a way.

*Nick:* So he gives you money, he likes being abused... for money?

*Mistress Catherine:* Hmm hmm, but he didn't get his money in from Hong Kong, so he can't afford to be blackmailed today.

She smiles. Nick asks her about the charges she makes.

*Nick:* So if you ask one of your clients or slaves for money do they generally give it to you?

*Mistress Catherine:* Yeah... errr... my good clients would, yes. (55:28)

*Back at Pandora's Box. (55:30-56:36)*

In the reception area, Mistress Raven arrives dressed as a gaucho with her small dog, Bijou. Bijou's cuteness and success as a guard dog are discussed. Bijou snuggles into Mistress Raven's neck and shoulder.

*Nick:* I can see you are a very good mother.

*Mistress Raven:* I'm a wonderful mother, very nurturing.

At that moment, Mistress Raven realises that infantilism is missing from the list of services they provide. Turning off-camera (to the 'receptionist' Lara), she says that this should be added to the list of fetishes to be catered for.

Nick tries to repeat the word infantilism. Mistress Raven obliges by nodding and slowly repeating 'in-fant-il-ism'. Nick asks what that is exactly. Mistress Raven tuts at him and asks him '... what does it sound

like?... People who are basically into that whole baby nurturing... mommy-baby syndrome... Bottles'. Nick must look puzzled or perhaps sceptical off-camera as she adds 'going into the crib, we've discussed that before-memory – who want to go back to the womb or early, early years of their childhood and want to be mommy'd.(56:36).

### ***Chapter 8 Infantilism. 56:38 -01:01:17***

The next scene is on infantilism and features Goddess Natasha. Interviewed on camera, the male client says he was about 13 when he tried his mother's clothes on and found it arousing. He smiles. He had attempted to bring role play into his marriage, but it ended the relationship because his wife 'wanted a man'.

#### *Scene 19. Pubescent 'girl'.*

In the scene with Goddess Natasha, the client is dressed as a little girl in a pink, spotted smock and matching panties. He<sup>50</sup> is having his hair brushed vigorously into a pony tail by Goddess Natasha. His head rests on her knees as she scrapes at his hair/scalp.

Lifting his smock, Goddess Natasha prods at his tummy asking 'is that your little tummy, what happens to big girl tummies?' He answers, 'I

---

<sup>50</sup> The client is referred to as 'he' in this transcript.

don't know Goddess'. The scene unfolds with Goddess Natasha standing behind the kneeling client stroking his breast tissue suggesting that perhaps his breasts are starting to bud:

*Goddess Natasha* (crooning): you might be close to starting your periods.

*Client*: What's a period Goddess?

*Goddess Natasha*: (Looking close in the client's face): What's a period? A period is something big girls get when they *bleeed* and you have to wear a pad or a tampon to keep from bleeding all over your clothes, and... it hurts a lot, and you have really bad cramps, and you eat a lot of junk food and you take a lot of Mydol... (the client starts to snigger)..and you scream at your boyfriend.

The client titters coyly.

*Goddess Natasha* (demands): do you think it's funny? ... Do you think that's funny?

*Client*: I don't know. You were laughing Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha*: ... yeah... well I'm allowed to laugh, do you think that's funny? *Client*: Only if you say so Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha*: ... well let's see how funny it is to have your period. But first of all you have to dress up like a *big* girl. You have to look like a big girl. You have to be a big girl. Sometimes

being a big girl means beauty and sometimes beauty is painful ...  
huhhhhhhhh.

*Client:* Yes Goddess.

*Goddess Natasha:* Sometimes it's *painful* to put make up on when you don't want to put it on, sometimes it's *painful* when you don't want to style your hair, sometimes it *hurts* when someone combs your hair. (She scrapes the clients hair, her voice getting sharper)... and a knot gets *stuck*... in your hair. Sometimes it hurts to go to the beauty salon and look beautiful... sometimes it hurts to be beautiful... (Natasha increases the aggressive tone of her voice and increases the intensity of the hair brush strokes)... and that is what you are here for today huh? Huh?... Being a big girl means *pain*

The client's head remains on Natasha's knees.

The scene cuts to the end of the session where the client is dressed in a pink, latex jacket and his face has been vividly made up. He is lying on his back. Natasha is unshackling his ankles which have been suspended. It is not included in the film what has happened in the interrim.

*Nick:* ... how was your session, what was the most enjoyable, how do you feel emotionally?

*Client* (smiling languidly): ... err drained, relaxed, err at peace.

*Nick:* Do you find peace more this way than any other?

*Client:* ... in some ways yes... very much so.

This client seems as deeply relaxed and languid as Marie (the professional submissive).

*Goddess Natasha at home. (01:01:27-01:03:10)*

Nick and the crew visit Natasha in her apartment. She lives alone, with two giant iguanas, Spike and Solar. Spike is her favourite, he sleeps in her bed. Nick asks what her boyfriends think of Spike sleeping in her bed, she smiles at Nick, 'well, it takes a man with a lot of balls to sleep in my bed'. Her smile is wide and vermilion, her eyes dance. 'That's how I judge men: if they are willing to sleep in my bedroom, then they are worth my time'. Spike bites the camera man and he and Nick leave hastily.

*The crew and Natasha, back at Pandora's Box. (01:03:18-01:05:27)*

Goddess Natasha is dipping crisps into a jar of dip. Nick asks about her upbringing. She describes a strict, religious upbringing, a fundamentalist Christian church school 'which is a lot different from Catholic school'. She knows that from speaking with friends and co-workers.

Girls could not wear pants (trousers), there was no rock and roll music allowed; no reading outside the bible or books that supported it ; no drinking, no dancing, boys had to have hair cut short as long hair implies homosexuality....it was very oppressive.

However, she says to Nick that it 'didn't hurt' her. Nick asks at what point she couldn't stand it. She explains there came a time when she was about 19, when she asked herself what this all meant for her, what did it say to her as a woman.

Here I am, a grown woman, and this does nothing for me, but repress me. A woman, I'm a weaker creature according to the fundamental Pentecostal belief. I'm a weaker vessel and I didn't believe that crap.

Broomfield asks if that was why she got into S and M. Natasha thinks for a few seconds and answers... 'yeah I think that's why... erm... I think this is an expression of me as a matriarch, me trying to express myself as a superior woman'.(01:05:27)

*Broomfield talking with Mistress Raven 2. (01:05:35-01:07:13).*

Broomfield finds Mistress Raven still something of an enigma and he chases her down to her desk. She indicates that he must leave while she makes a phone call, but he ignores her. Mistress Raven no longer sees clients and Nick is curious as to why. She tells him she stopped doing it

because she no longer enjoyed it. She reiterates to Nick that she has to make a phone call and he has to go. He persists, 'why did you stop'?

Eventually, Mistress Raven engages with Nick. She tells him she stopped about a year earlier and then decided to open Pandora's Box 'when I no longer enjoyed it, as they say... got burned out doing too much of it, being too involved with it'. She looks thoughtful. Nick asks what burned her out. She says she was 'too involved, professionally, socially, personally everything in my life was inundated with it'. (01:06:24).

*Nick* (presses her): how can it burn you out?

*Mistress Raven*: ...because it's a very intense type of... (hesitates) ... activity ... mentally and physically intense and it definitely can burn you out. You just don't want to deal with it any more, it's very draining... The people that you see have tremendous personal needs that they need to draw out of you, every bit of your energy in order to meet those needs... and it's like sucking it right out of you and it leaves you very, very exhausted and when you do it frequently and often... and involved with it in other aspects of your life you just don't want to deal with it any more.<sup>89</sup>  
(01:07:13)

*Broomfield in conversation with Mistress Beatrice and Goddess Natasha.*  
(01:07:1501:09:59).



Nick ascertains that relationships for the Mistresses have a high casualty rate - neither Mistress Beatrice or Goddess Natasha have current relationships. Beatrice says her love life 'is a mess' and Natasha hasn't had a date for nearly six months. Natasha's view is that men are afraid of her. The camera shows both ladies seated, presumably during a lull in activities, they are 'on-line' looking for men.

Natasha thinks intimate relationships are a big problem for a Dominatrix:

... when you tell men what you do for a living, they get scared - they think you are going to come after them... (she grins)... It's just ignorance because they don't know, (wistfully)... they just don't know... I love men, I think that's confusing for people... how can you love men and beat men up or whatever. I don't see it as beating men up but the opposite is true. I like men. If you don't like men, you will never survive in this business. If you don't like men, you will not last five minutes because sometimes you see the worst sides of them (scoffs). So you better like (men?) a lot if you're gonna work in this industry. (01:09:30).

Mistress Beatrice chimes in, there is something maternal about being... very often in session you have to have a maternal quality... Nurturing you know... caring. It's very tough if you are someone... if you don't, men can be tough, I think... and errr I definitely do like men a lot. (01:09:50)

Nick asks Beatrice if she has a man at present. Beatrice looking wistful replies 'right now... do you want to make me cry? (She laughs) My love life is a mess right now, no I have no one. (01:09:59).

***Chapter 9. Socio-political Fetishes. (01:10:00-01:25:06).***

Nick presents sessions 'that seemed to stem directly from social and political issues'.

*Scene 20*

Mistress Catherine is in conversation on the phone with a client. This session deals with what Nick refers to as 'the dilemma of a white police officer who worked a black area'. The client discusses his phantasy.

*Mistress Catherine:* ... when you were doing this, did you feel the same way about it... like you do right now about it?

*Client:* Yeah... like I would go home... I'll give you an example... I would fight with a like 20-year old black man... I would beat the hell out of a black guy, I'd cuff him, put him in the car, put him in a cell... I'd go in, take off my gun and put it in a locker so he couldn't say 'if you didn't have your gun, I'd kick your ass mother-fucker, punk mother-fucker'.

*Mistress Catherine:* ... so, are you excited about this ?

*Client:* No. If I went home after... and at times when I went overboard, a little heavy handed (? in reality), I'd go home and I'd fantasise about apologising to this guy and making up for it by being his slave... and errr I've had many instances where I've had to deal with a black man where I would go home after... and delayed... and tried to rationalise in my mind... to go to sleep, I'd end up 'getting off' and think about being their slave... and...

The client now wants a fantasy role-play by phone with Mistress Catherine but she refuses.

*Mistress Catherine:* Maybe later on, I should go now (laughs). I'll see you later OK?

*Client (pleading):* Mistress, please...

*Mistress Catherine:* Don't be stupid, I just said 'no', don't beg me. I'll talk to you later. What do you say?

*Client:* Thank-you Mistress.

*Mistress Catherine:* That's right, good-bye.

Her client is reluctant to let her go, asking if they can 'do something later'. Mistress Catherine agrees, saying she will be home around midnight. (01:12:03).

*Scene 20. Interview between Client and Mistress. Beatrice. Nazi role play. (01:12:1001:15:07)*

The film focuses on the medical room and its range of medical implements. Nick's voice over says that most fetishes are the erotisation of one's worst fear and nightmares, reflecting the worst thing that an individual can imagine happening. For instance, several Jewish clients were 'into' concentration camp scenarios and wanted to be dominated by a Mistress dressed in Nazi uniform.

One Jewish client, reportedly a Doctor, is filmed seated wearing a suit and tie and full rubber/leather head mask. There is a large horizontal zipper for the mouth and Mohicanstyle appendages on the top of the hood resembling large bullets). Mistress Beatrice arrives to discuss his specific requirements with him. She shakes his hand.

*Mistress Beatrice:* I would like to talk to you about your session with Goddess Natasha... errr... I understand you are into errr... Nazi-kind of fantasies.

*Client:* Yes I am.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK. I would like to know more about your background, are you Jewish?

*Client:* I'm half Jewish.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, your Jewish parent...

*Client:* I'm American Jew, my mother was born here but... errr

*Mistress Beatrice:* Grand parents from Europe?

He nods.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Did you have any family that died in the camps?

*Client:* Yes.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Close family, grand parents, distant family?

*Client (nods):* distant family.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, very good. If you be open with me and

Mistress Natasha, it is very important that we understand which intensity is good for you... errr could you tell me more about your fantasies?

*Client:* errrr yes well I like to be verbally humiliated... a lot of humiliation.

*Mistress Beatrice:* To which intensity... is 'Jew Boy' enough or do you need something more intense like 'you rotten fucking Jew, you Jew-pig'?

*Client:* ... errr it can get... errr moderate to heavy (he nods). OK moderate to heavy.

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK... the setting, what kind of setting do you want? Do you want errr basically 1940's Germany, do you want neo-Nazi setting, a concentration camp type of setting...

*Client:* ... errr 1940's to neo-Nazi. I don't think concentration camp per se... I think too much... I think the whole idea that the Nazi's thought they were a superior race... that they wanted to persecute the Jews...

*Mistress Beatrice:* OK, so Goddess Natasha, being part of a superior iron race, and you, being a low-life shrimp Jew.

*Client:* ... exactly.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Now I want to tell you something, this sort of session can get very intense... Personally, I have done sessions like this when I had someone go completely into regression on me, so I'm going to give you a safe-word. If it gets verbally too intense, physically you will be OK. You say Red, the colour Red, the Goddess will stop immediately what she is doing... OK?

*Client:* OK. Thank you.

*Mistress Beatrice:* Alright, very good, so I will brief the Goddess about your kind of session and don't forget your safe-word.

*Client:* Thank you very much.

*Mistress Beatrice:* You are welcome, bye Dear. (01:15:07).

*Scene 22 Plantation Slave. (01:15:08-1:16:47).*

Nick's voice-over says some black clients are into plantation scenarios where they are humiliated as plantation slaves.

In this scene, a mature black man is on his knees, naked except for a thong, and metal collar and cuffs. The film begins mid-scene. On a throne-like chair, cross-legged is a Mistress attired in an outfit featuring

a chain mail head dress. Her dress is long, chiffon like and slit to the hip. Her sandals are bare toed and high heeled.

*Mistress X* (quietly):... perhaps you will not be sold... perhaps you will be treated like the nigger you are, do you understand me?

*Client*: Yes, Mistress.

*Mistress X*: Now I want to see your form. I want to value you and put a price on you.

Mistress X enacts feeling the client's calves and thighs, remarking how strong they are and that 'he will do well'. On his knees, she asks him softly why he thinks he will do well, he replies because he is 'a slave'. She tells him he will do well because 'nigger boys like you do well don't they?'

*Client*: Yes Mistress.

*Mistress X*: Now what are you?

*Client*: I'm your slave, Mistress.

*Mistress X*: Say I'm a nigger.

*Client*: I'm a nigger, Mistress.

*Mistress X*: Good.

The client crawls on all fours wearing a collar and lead held by his Mistress. She leads him to one of the dog kennels where he is shut in.

Squatting down to the kennel door, Mistress X tells him this will be his mode of transportation from plantation to plantation.

*Mistress X:* You are property. Do you understand that? You are nothing more than property. (01:16:47).

Broomfield reports that just when he thought he had 'seen everything' at Pandora's Box, he witnessed the following scene.

*Scene 23. Michael (P) and Genocide. (01:17:00-01:25:06)*

Mistress Delilah - dressed in a leather suit, leather biker hat, gloves, high-heeled boots and holding a riding crop - stalks along a corridor. She demands 'where is he?'

Nick tells us that the client (Michael) reports having thoughts and fantasies about killing and genocide; and that Michael has come for 'total degradation'. Michael is naked on full view to the camera. When Mistress Delilah arrives, he falls quickly to his knees. In the next scene he is on all fours. Mistress Delilah is riding him side-saddle, and he is having his buttocks flogged as he walks on all fours. He is led by a collar and leash to the bathroom, specifically to the lavatory (toilet bowl). Mistress Catherine has joined the party.

Taking Michael into the bathroom, Mistress Delilah gently speaks to him,

I know how much you love this. Look what's waiting for you, (she indicates the toilet bowl) a nice big bowl huh, it's really dirty. There



have been people in and out of here all day today, it's full of stuff, did you look under the toilet rim?

Michael lifts the toilet seat with his teeth. He licks inside the toilet seat. Mistress softly tells him to 'use that tongue, we'll get you to do the floor later'. She commands '*Lick!*'. Mistress Catherine asks him why he is shaking so much. He replies (his voice trembling), 'in anticipation, I can't believe how lucky I am'. Mistress Delilah tells him she wants the toilet shining. Mistress Catherine puts her booted foot on the back of Michael's neck pushing his head further into the toilet bowl. Mistress Delilah flushes the toilet. Both ladies give jolly laughter. As the bowl fills Michael is told to 'keep his head in there'. The seat and lid are dropped onto Michael's head and both ladies laugh.

After a moment, it is deemed that Michael is ready for an interview and the ladies move away. However, he still has his head under the lid and seat and is vomiting down the pan. Nick and the camera man mouth and whisper to each other, unsure what to do. Nick looks uncomfortable. There are low voices and lots of perturbed facial expressions between film crew members. There is concern that there might be 'trouble with the sound' because his head is in the toilet and so on. Michael remains on his knees with his head down the pan. Nick eventually approaches Michael who still has his head in the toilet.

*Nick:* Michael, can I talk to you?

*Michael:* Yeah.

Nick lifts the lid and seat. Michael is heaving and vomiting.

*Nick:*

... so... what... what is it that... that you, you err... enjoy here particularly?

*Michael* (with feeling): ... doing what the Mistress makes me to do. I feel relieved *Nick:* ... in what way... what's...

*Michael:* I feel like as though I have done all that craziness out... you know, I mean

I just, you know, it's like you have all these impulses to do like crazy things... *Nick:* What kind of impulses?

*Michael:* ... you know like getting into brawls and stuff, and like, and you know... like mass mayhem and war crimes... genocide, all the things that get inside your head, your head, like you know, like freaky thoughts go through my head all the time, thoughts... freaky thoughts, so when I get freaky I like, expunge that.

(01:20:44).

Broomfield will end his commentary on the film by saying that the ladies had told him they provided a valuable service to which he had been sceptical. Following what will become the last session in his film, he says 'after witnessing the toilet scene I changed my mind'. (01:21:00)

The film ends light-heartedly when Mistress Raven and several other Mistresses endeavour to corner Nick, threatening to tie him up and punish him. Nick looks suitably chagrined and somewhat concerned, as he endeavours to escape whilst the sound and camera crew look on. (01:25:57).

## **Appendix 2: Data Set 2**

### **‘Susan for Now’. Robin Franzi (2007). Transcript**

**(Copyright 2005. Independent, unscripted documentary film. 54 minutes approx.)**

All interviews are to ‘Susan’ who is off camera. All BDSM scenes and interviews were filmed by Susan and her production/film crew.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Playing Doctor

Chapter 3 First Craigslist Encounters

Chapter 4 Invitation to a Private Dungeon

Chapter 5 Needle Play

Chapter 6 Seattle’s BDSM History

Chapter 7 BDSM and the Law

Chapter 8 Flogging 101

Chapter 9 Fire, Electricity and Sparks

Chapter 10 Psyche Ward and Depo-provera

Chapter 11 Social Stigma

Chapter 12 First Experiences

Chapter 13 Susan as Dominatrix

Chapter 14 Safe, Sane, Consensual vs RACK

Chapter 15 BDSM Bloopers

Chapter 16 Conclusion

***Chapter 1. Introduction (00:42-01:12)***

The film begins with a voice-over by Robin Franzi:

*Robin:* It began pretty much like everyone else's story - with a husband, followed by a baby, then a divorce, grad school, lacrosse practice, overtime, long commutes, and suddenly you're sexless with a seemingly overflowing life. A girl named Susan wrote a book about being celibate for 1001 days. My stint with celibacy

got into [incomprehensible] ten years. I had become 'Susan for Now'. As I pondered my new found freedom, all I know is the thought of some guy sitting on my couch with a [incomprehensible] in his hand made me nauseous. I had some catching up to do. The casual encounter section of the website 'Craigslist' provided the perfect forum not only to find sex online with perfect strangers, but also to advertise for a particular fantasy, like playing Doctor.(01:12).

## ***Chapter 2. Playing Doctor (01:13-03:02)***

Paul: ex-priest, sex counsellor, identity hidden:

*Paul*: My recollection was it was regarding medical examination and this seemed intriguing to you (Susan), and I'm sure it's not just intriguing to you, but it's been my research, it is something very intriguing to many people especially women.

An advert is shown from Craigslist:

You have a fantasy about a medical exam... m4w-49

You have this feeling about undertaking a medical examination...  
 Legs up and open, not in control, having to experience intrusion  
 but finding it exciting... sheet draped over your legs, only sensing  
 what is happening. Because you are in this situation, you

surrender to the feelings, knowing the Doctor understands... Care to go there? Now?

*Paul.* By going the route you did, by going onto the internet and talking specifically about your fantasies, you wanted to play, not so much with the person you're meeting with, as much as playing with your own feelings, and you felt that this is probably a safe venue. I don't have to meet somebody, develop a relationship and then sit them down one day and say 'you know what, I would like to play Doctor' and then, after all this goes on, he says 'my God, this is not part of my scene' and off he goes. And I think it's because we live in a puritanical society that causes our sexuality to be repressive. And for some reason or other, it doesn't fit the typical model, then people just avoid it and call it bad or wrong or perverted or something, they really have it upside down I believe. (03:00).

A still image appears of a woman holding a child's hand, a man by her side, their backs to the camera, all gazing at a large, ethereal looking crucifix.

*Paul.* I had a religious affiliation for several years that involved celibacy, but I'm cut from a different bolt of cloth, and I believe that people's fantasies are an expression of their total psychosexual make-up, and everybody has a different psychosexual finger print. Usually it's developed by genetics, by

early childhood experiences, and usually experiences that are happening around the time that they're emerging into puberty.

(03:02)

Joseph: Mechanic, (identity hidden), talks to Susan:

*Joseph:* One of my all time favourite types of play is medical play, and err y'know, I love playing Doctor and y'know, I like being the patient too. We [he and Susan] met at [the spot?] and we started talking about medical fetishes and you had a consultation with me and err it's been really interesting. (03:29)

Scene: A medical examination room, couch, boxes of sterile gloves, various medical looking sprays. The impression is that he is talking about an encounter with Susan in which Susan was 'the patient'.

### ***Chapter 3. First Craigslist Encounters. (03:30-6:09)***

Maury: a real-estate agent, on view, talking to Susan.

*Maury:* You're really fun to dance with and we had a great time after that.

Susan, from the background, gives an encouraging verbal prod ('hmm hmm') and says:

*Susan:* And... it got a little strange.

*Maury:* Well, it was confusion. I'm thinking I'm pretty out there on the vanguard compared to virtually everybody I know. But as I said, you make me look like I'm not. I mean this feeling of shame... are real for me but I didn't know what it was... I just don't... I don't know, like, going out again. Somewhere in there must have been something like 'what if somebody sees us', like, not that they would know about your exploration, or who you were or anything, but I know, err, something got in the way for me. (04:19)

The impression is that Susan and Maury had at least one encounter which he enjoyed. His overwhelming concern is that someone would find out about Susan's predilections, or perhaps recognise her if they went out again. On view to the camera he looks uncomfortable.

Brian: Spoken Word Artist. On view talking to Susan.

Brian appears somewhat sheepish throughout his interview, smiling, laughing nervously.

*Brian:* I'm a [incomprehensible] seeking man, casual encounters, just kinda for kicks. I'm not a big computer person really, not spending a lot of time, so play around here and there. To tell you the truth you're the only person I've met off of there, so I've not



really met someone after there... so kinda just a coincidence. Hanging out, seeing them doing in the dungeon, it kind of opened my eyes to everything, like really, I didn't know there was sex clubs in Seattle and sex dungeons. I mean I'm a pretty open person... y'know, trying something at least once knowing it's not gonna harm me, but err I'm having a good time, I'm enjoying it y'know. And I went back and took it to my generation of friends, my group that I hang out with and they're looking at me like I'm crazy, and here I'm having a blast (laughs shyly).

*Susan:* (off camera): how'd that feel to you, is that something you'd be interested in on any level?

*Brian:* In a way, first I felt kinda like, a little uncomfortable cos y'know (laughing) there's some pretty amusing stuff; but, like I said, I've got a pretty open mind, but err, I wanted to laugh and I didn't want to be rude y'know. What I mean y'know, I mean you get this guy crawling round like a dog on the floor, wearing women's clothing with a ball in his mouth and I would never be interested in that stuff y'know. I watch it y'know, be amused by it y'know, I'm just not that kind of person. (6:09).

The impression is that Brian is a (younger) contact that Susan made on Craigslist. It appears she took him to a dungeon after which she is interviewing his reactions to the experience.

**Chapter 4. Invitation to a private dungeon (06:10-08:40)**

Jerry: construction worker, dungeon owner, on view, talking to Susan.

*Susan* (voice-over): I received an e-mail invitation to go to 1-20 (One Twenty), a private dungeon. Heh, I didn't know if it was two bad guys in a warehouse waiting to do me over or if it was legit. I asked Brian to be my bodyguard. (06:23)

*Jerry* (voice over): 1-20 is a dungeon play-space in the industrial area of Seattle. It's a kinda play-space I have created for other ( X-I, bi-sexual) men... and practice our fetish. We do a lot of photo work and play parties and some kinds of social evenings. (06:42)

View of the dungeon. There is a large black 'catherine-wheel' fixed to a wall. Jerry guides and explains to the camera.

*Jerry*: This is another object I picked up alongside a road. We call it the wheel of misfortune. (He smiles). It matches the red one over there (points off camera). I tried to put it in together as a spool but it was just too large. We've yet to use this door (behind the wheel) however thinking about doing it, (opens the door) we can have someone behind the door... set him outside, anybody wanna try? (07:19)

Scene changes back to interview.

*Jerry:* Been doing parties off and on for 2 years, and for me basically it's been the study of human nature: the Dominant men and Dominant women and the submissives and trying to understand where most of them are coming from... or why (shrugs). (07:34)

Full screen photograph of Jerry facing the camera: The right hand side of his body is dressed as a bride, white veil, white basque, white lingerie, and white hose. The left hand side of his body is dressed as a male. (08:35-08:37)

*Jerry:* (to camera). I get back the word switch and kind of phrase it, I've used since I've been in construction and [incomprehensible] electrical that I can kinda call myself a 3-way switch. That errr... I say a top or err bottom, err being bi-sexual or straight, err being a masculine-looking guy and not being afraid at sometimes to put on some lingerie and there's the 3-way switches. Being bi-sexual, Oh let's say possibly for 20 years and being around so many Dominant men I really don't like men any more, and not looking or want to have sex with guys for the time being, so it's my choice. But then again with anything else it's really not a choice or preference, it's if the right person comes along no matter what, who he or she may be, something is going to happen. (08:40)

**Chapter 5. Needle Play (08:41-13:22)** Jarret: Psychology Student, body piercer.

Princess: Anthropology Student.

Scene: Princess (Jarret's play partner) is lying on her stomach on a table. She is naked bar red stockings and is moaning softly. Jarret is stooped over her, stroking and kissing her back.

*Jarret*: Wearing sterile gloves is preparing hypodermic needles. I can do like some sick really sadistic things with needles, for me a lot of fun.

Scene change: Princess is lying on her back. Jarret swabs her breast with (what he says is) surgical spirit. The camera shows a curved row of hypodermic needles inserted subcutaneously through the breast tissue. Princess moans, winces, ouches, whispers to Jarret he is 'a fucking bastard and so so bad'. Jarret sprays surgical spirit over the needle sites.

Scene change: Jarret and Princess interview.

*Jarret and Princess* on camera. It puts a stop on the evening when we get going to play, and she and I are both getting hot and bothered and then I get everything set up for needles and I stick a needle in her and she... aargh, Fuck! Stop that! Fuck! Shit! and it's like (mimics air brake screeching and slaps fist into opposite palm) y'know it's air breaks on (laughs). (10:01)

*Jarret:* (alone on camera) I am controlling what's going on, the pain and pleasure of the person I'm playing with... err I get to be kind of... err for a moment almost like... err... a minor God if you will. I know that sounds kinda silly, but I get to be the one in charge of everything that they're feeling and thinking about for a couple of minutes. (10:31)

*Princess:* (alone on camera) In the life style everything is done to the submissive. They're the ones getting beaten, they're the one's being teased, they're the ones being played with... everything goes on to their end (big smile) and I think that's why I get the better end of the bargain. (10:45) Jarret and Princess interviewed together.

*Princess:* It's way easy to find people to have sex with on line, Jarret nods in agreement.

*Jarret:* Almost daily... almost daily... we'll get hit with a random stranger... Pops up in the instant messenger with 'Hi who are you'... Age, sex, location, whatever they say, sometimes it's straight guys in Florida looking to hook up with her (points over to Princess) or it's couples in the area who are viable interests to us. So, it's better exposure but sometimes the exposure isn't good Princess nods.

*Princess:* There's a lot of creepy people. (11:20)

Ayngel: Technical writer. Interviewed direct to camera.

*Ayngel:* He [Jarret] calls me his favourite pin cushion (smiles broadly) which is kinda sweet.

Scene: a view of Ayngel's back. A close up of Jarret's gloved hands inserting needles subcutaneously. The needles are arranged in a circle approximately 4 cm in diameter with the needles pointing inwards (known as a star burst).

*Ayngel:* I love the star bursts, I really do. They're so pretty. I've been told I have a slightly skewed sense of aesthetics but I think they're very pretty (laughs). And other people look at that and say what the hell did you do to yourself (laughs). (12:22)

Scene change: Ayngel has a star burst inserted over each shoulder blade. Gloved hands (Jarret's) are attaching one end of a bungee strap to one star burst. Ayngel is gasping and crying out. The spare end of the bungee strap is attached to the second star burst. Ayngel gasps and cries out. Jarret 'twangs' the bungee strap (banjo plucking). (12:31)

*Ayngel:* (voice over) The sensation of having the bungee hooked underneath the needles... between the needles... and your skin, and then the pull to get the other hook through the other side and then the banjo plucking.

Scene change: The star bursts are in place over Ayngel's shoulder blades. Jarret is rapidly tapping them with a spatula. Ayngel ouches and gasps. Jarret talks to the camera whilst continuing what he is doing.

*Jarret:* They eventually... it stops hurting and starts to feel really good because she's no longer going to be feeling any discomfort or pain, its just going to... going to be the dopamine and endorphins.(12:59).

*Scene change:* Jarret removes the needles from the star burst and, as he does so, he twists them. Ayngel gasps.

*Ayngel:* (Talking to the camera) People who I've talked to about this says 'does it hurt', well, yessss (laughs). That's... that's to a certain extent the point, but it hurts in a way that is quite pleasant. (12:27)

*Scene change:* Jarret is 'stippling' Ayngel's back with a needle, forming an ever increasing spiral. The needle sites are bleeding. (12:31)

*Ayngel:* Stippling for artists is where you keep dotting ... it's dotting with whatever it is you're using... with a pin, to create your patterns to fill in shading or whatever. He decided to do that with a 20 gauge... 22 gauge. He just picked up a needle and started doing that. Some friends I have who don't understand how I could do it whilst I was in the pain I was in from the herniated disk that I had, what they didn't understand was that was... the pain from the needles was an escape from the non-consensual pain that my body was putting me through. Because it was pain that was under control, that I knew would stop. (13:22).

**Chapter 6. Seattle's BDSM history. (13:23-15:46)**

Athena: Director of sex positive community centre, activist.

*Athena*: (Interviewed to the camera) Seattle - maybe because it rains all the time - is so sexy and there are so many sexual things that happen in Seattle. Oh umm, back in the mid-70s, a place called New Horizon was started up in Linwood and that is... became the premier swing club in the country. It's got pools and hot tubs and it's really, really, really sexy and about the late 80s... Oh how long... maybe the mid-80s, the National Leather Association was started in Seattle. In about 1989 or so, the very first kinky couples party was put on by the National Association at New Horizon. We were creating a sex positive culture without knowing we are creating sex positive culture.

Camera shows what must be the play space: benches, racks, beds, erotic photographs on red painted walls.

And... err... we lost access to the space in the early 90s and there was this void in the community and a friend and I decided to open up a restaurant called 'Beyond the Edge Café' and a group of people who remembered (?wet spot) who remembered my cafe... used to come to my cafe all the time, got together and were gonna start an S&m club. Well (?Supranelle) said 'nah let's do something bigger than that, let's do something that's more encompassing, let's start a community centre for the sex positive culture'. And so



the sex positive community centre was formed right there in this living room. (14:38)

*Scene change:* A library.

The Pacific North West Library for sex positive culture... Our library has over 1600 volumes and everything from um really esoteric errr tantric type sexuality errr to pulp fiction from the 70s. We have amazing research books, we have a whole set of sexuality books in German that are just phenomenal. They're from around the turn of the century, they're mostly donated by our members and err we're... we're open for people to come and look for research, and our members can check them out, but we're also opening our library for people who want to research sexuality. (15:19)

*Scene change:* An 'activity space'.

*Scene change:* Switches back to Athena.

*Athena:* I think we're at the beginning of a sexual renaissance. I really think we are going to see that. I think there might be some backlash. It depends who ends up president but I really think that errr the Genie's out of the bag-bottle. We're not going to see sex put back in the closet and I think the biggest trend is I do believe that in my life time we will see gay marriage legalised umm

and I think that will open the door for other kinds of conscious relationships (15:46).

**Chapter 7. BDSM and the Law. (15:47-17:54)** *robyn*: Criminal Attorney.

*robyn*: (Face to camera interview). There's an organisation called the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom and back in 1998 I was introduced to the organisation and asked if I'd be... if I wanted to do presentations on behalf of what was then called the Law Enforcement Outreach Programmes, because they were looking for people with legal backgrounds to give these presentations, which basically focused on various aspects of how law interacted with the S-m [incomprehensible] fetish communities... umm the NCF, if you go to the website one of their more valuable resources is they have what they call the KAP site, which is K.A.P. stands for Kink Aware Professionals, which lists, on a state-by-state basis, Doctors and Lawyers and Therapists, Chiropractors, different professionals who are kink aware and kink friendly... So I think that's a valuable resource because a lot of people are afraid to tell their Doctors or their Lawyers... umm that they're kinky... And especially when you're dealing with law if you have like a child custody battle you're going to want a lawyer who's aware of what it is that you do and isn't gonna think y'know like

you're some deviant and not be comfortable with 'em... So that's a valuable service they provide. Another thing they do is called incident response... and I guess I was talking earlier that the incidents have come down quite a bit when it comes to groups and events. For a while every S/m event that was being held was being targeted by conservative religious groups who'd start letter-writing campaigns to the hotels and local politicians and the local police to inform them of these 'horrible' people who were coming to their town... well... now that gay marriage is more important it's kinda shifted focus for these people... But one of the things that we do is that we go up to, and speak to, the law enforcement and the politicians and the hotels and explain what it is we are doing and why what they're doing isn't horrible (17:53).

### ***Chapter 8. Flogging 101. (17:55-20:07)***

Artic Tundra: Home maker

Miracle Max: IT Professional

Tundra and Max speaking to the camera:

*Tundra:* (to Max) I didn't know you were bisexual until err after we entered the scene.

*Max:* ... very casually bisexual

*Tundra:* (nodding)... casually bisexual, I'm more blatant (laughs)

*Max:* (to Susan who is off camera) I'm just not sure if you're familiar with the Kinsey scale?

*Susan:* (off camera) No.

*Max:* You're not? The Kinsey scale is 0-6 (nought to six) where zero is... umm... hetero and 6 is gay. I'm around a 1<sup>1/2</sup> to 2.

*Max:* on the Kinsey scale, I'm not very...

*Tundra:* I'm more dead centre, I've known I'm bi-sexual since I was about 8 years old.

*BDSM Scene.* Max and Tundra are 'playing'. Tundra is cuffed to a frame, wearing a blind-fold and knee-length boots, but otherwise is naked. Max wears a black T-shirt, a skirt (?Kilt) and knee-length boots. Max plays two floggers, one in each hand, over Tundra's bare back and buttocks. Softly caressing her skin. At times not touching with the floggers, he intermittently gives a sharp slap. Tundra then groans. The same scenario follows with a whip in each hand, caressing Tundra with both whips; light whipping interspersed with occasional sharp slaps. Max holds a cup of water to Tundra's lips. She drinks deeply. Max kisses Tundra deeply.

Max and Tundra voice over:

*Max:* ... coming up on our 21<sup>st</sup>...

*Tundra:* Yeah coming up on our 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary. We got married when we were young.

*Max:* ... stick together...

*Tundra:* ... yeah kinda grown up together...

Susan (Off camera) says something indecipherable

*Tundra:* Yeah.

*Max:* and all this polyamorous... for quite a number of years of our marriage we... y'know... tried to live the... err Christian... y'know... monogamous...

*Tundra:* Business-like...

*Max:* Business-like life style.

*Tundra:* Yeah

*Max:* and it never really, it never really felt right. (20:07)

### ***Chapter 9. Fire, electricity and sparks. (20:08-21:3)***

Bondage Teddy: Graphic artist, fetish show producer.

Faye: Female submissive play partner, a masseuse.

Bondage Teddy speaks to the camera. He's wearing black fetish wear, blue dread locks, face painted to the most part blue. He says 'I am the Bondage Teddy.'

BDSM scene: Bondage Teddy's partner, Faye, is hand-cuffed behind her back, naked other than a skirt rolled up around her waist. Teddy holds a large ornamental knife to her throat and down between her breasts, softly caressing her skin with the knife. She moans.

Scene change: Faye is facing the wall. Bondage Teddy appears to apply a liquid/fluid/gel to her back and, using a fire-brand, sets light to it, quickly extinguishing it with his hand. Faye moans, gasps and flinches.

*Bondage Teddy:* (voice over) I do a lot of stuff on line, teaching classes. In the last couple of months, started doing phone Domming through web cameras. I don't get anything out of it per se. I definitely enjoy real time, like doing actual physical contact with my submissive.

*Faye:* (to camera) I just really like to... y'know, to receive beatings essentially... and get lit on fire, dancing sparks and that stuff. Basically getting naked, getting spanked in public... towing the line... what's right and wrong I suppose, what's naughty and nice. (21:31)

### **Chapter 10. Psyche Ward and Depo-provera (21:32-23:23).**

Male interviewee, ID hidden, name not provided.

I was going to a small private college in Alaska and like I said I had all these things, y'know, being Irish Roman Catholic and wanting to live the life-style and y'know experiment with the life-style and at the same time it still nagged me... So I confided in the minister at college y'know. Gee I wanted to tie girls up and err have sex with them and [undecipherable] them and inspect them and all this kinda stuff and she goes on red alert... and... err... it's... err... She notifies the school and I actually ended up on a locked ward in a psyche facility for two weeks because I... err... was in the psyche facility thinking that I was so bad... this monster that, that was ... umm... umm, just this monster. I [undecipherable] went on to some Depo-provera therapy...

Still image of an inserted hypodermic and phial of Depo-provera

... the more vicious term is chemical castration... and y'know I ended up here in a programme for sexual deviants in Seattle and thrown into group therapy with men who molested children and I'd say 'wait a minute here, I enjoy S & M, yet I'm a deviant? No! there's something wrong here'. (23:23)

### ***Chapter 11 Social Stigma (23:24-26:04)***

Jarret. (to camera) My parents' values say that these are not OK things to do, a lot of other values that I'm aware of say that... emm you do not have sex like this, you do not have sex with boys, you do not have...

umm... you do not spank other people and have sex with them, and other ideas... umm and at the same time I'm thinking to myself 'but I like it, it's fun' (gleeful smile) (23:47).

John: Jazz Musician: (to camera) For centuries and in many societies for as long as civilisation has even been around, these kind of sexual acts have been around too (laughing). Umm, y'know, the Roman Empire... err... Egypt... Boy these were the masters of this kind of sexual play. I mean, it really kinda originated way back in history. It was more open and more accepted in those days but now we've become such a... umm... closed society. (24:18)

Princess: (to Susan - off camera) There are plenty of things that we do that it feels wrong to do and to enjoy... umm... it... like humiliation play... like 'wow, how sick are you'? To do something that is just so blatantly unenjoyable on the outside... umm... it's something that I've worked on umm... I don't judge other people for doing them because I do them myself and enjoy them... umm, but it is kinda hard to get around that... that... y'know 'wow this is a really sick activity-idea' because there's so much social conditioning that you don't hit people, you don't get hit, you don't enjoy it. (25:08).

Jarret: (to Susan - off camera) This side of my life I keep strictly away from my child and from my family. I don't think they have any need to know about this and so I do take some extra precautions round that. (25:24).



Ayngel: (to Susan - off camera) I, I, think there comes a time when you realise that yes this is part of your life and this is a part of who you are, but you don't need to broadcast it to everybody. And you get to know people and it's not necessarily that there is a stigma against it, it's just something that they 'don't get'. They're not necessarily unsupportive or unaccepting they just don't understand and it's not something... I can never make analogies... but, they can never quite make that final step into y'know... 'Oh I get it now'. (26:04)

Slave#1: IT professional.

To Susan off camera. Wearing a full head-face hood and mask.

*Slave #1*: It's not illegal, I guess, between consenting adults, I guess, but it is taboo... err... and I am just... I guess I'm kinda regarded as eccentric [undecipherable] without people regarding me err sexually abhorrent as well... and so it's just easier for me not to have to deal with the strange looks or the odd questions that I'd get, particularly if the family found out about it, or people at work, straight people that I have to deal with. I don't think I'd necessarily lose my job over it or like, that wouldn't help on the margins... but it would just be an unnecessary discomfort for me. I think another important point though is that this is... umm, 'a part' of my life, I'm not a life-style submissive or anything like that, it's just an itch I need to scratch now and then... umm, but I don't want it to define me as y'know, 'BDSM player'. (27:20).

Bondage Teddy and Faye.

*Faye:* (to Susan off camera) Y'know, I've actually found that the people outside of the community are little bit more judgemental, a bit more scary than the people actually in it. I mean (turns to Tedddy and indicates him) I mean he looks... we look... and people look a little bit rough around the edges. (27:34)

Athena: Sex Positive Centre: Seattle.

*Athena:* (to Susan off camera) When we first started we were a little bit hesitant to put our name out, other than through some of the internet channels and through word of mouth... 'cos we were... really weren't really sure how we were going to be accepted by society at large... umm (laughs). What's really happened is that they couldn't care less. We've had incidences where we had to call the cops, once because we had a burglary, y'know we were closed and someone started to burglerise so we called the cops... and one cop had never heard of us and the other cops said 'Oh yeah, I heard about you, my wife said something about you guys'. (28:29)

We are talking more and more about ourselves to the public. To the press, people have been writing more and more about us in the paper. We just started doing the Seattle erotic art festival. We've done that 2 years, it's really put us on the map, artists from all over the world are participating in that and so we are becoming less and less underground and more and more...

actually more mainstream... which is kinda weird (laughs).

(28:30)

Bondage Teddy and Faye.

*Faye:* (to camera) Don't judge a book by its cover (looks at teddy). He looks scary (both laugh). In a lot of ways, I think fetish and S-M scenes have gotten a kinda bad rap (Teddy echoes).

*Bondage Teddy:* A bad rap and kinda [undecipherable] judgement thing, because of a lot of misconceptions a lot of people have with it (laughs). Like, for me as an example, people think that I'm a habitual drug user (Faye laughs) and I'm... a psychotic Satan worshipper where in fact I like (laughs)... I've never done drugs, I don't do drugs, the most I've ever done is smoke pot a couple of times in high school because all of my friends wanted me to. (29:27).

Victoria: Title holder 'Miss Leather Seattle'.

*Victoria:* (To Susan off camera) I think that sometimes if you're not involved I guess in the life-style and aren't curious enough to read about it, sometimes people just have misconceptions... and... ummm... I had a conversation with someone who... umm... was kinda shocked and appalled and made comments like 'maybe something bad happened to you when you were a kid' and I was like 'what!' Well, that's the same thing sometimes people who aren't gay or lesbian think about us, they

think maybe something happened to us, and I was bringing out the really obvious things and she couldn't really see the irony (giggles) and so there are prejudices.

Right after I got the title I was fired from the job that I had... umm interestingly enough in a lesbian bar. But after I got the title, I was called a couple of days after on the phone and a voice mail message was left for me saying that there was a conflict of interests and they were relieving me of my duties... and did not have to come in to work and to come and pick up my pay cheque.  
(30:33)

### ***Chapter 12. First Experiences (30:34-36:32)***

*Jarret:* (To Susan off camera) A woman who's a little bit older than me, when I was 15... err... I thought I was catching her, but didn't realise she was catching me. But what ended up happening, before I knew it I was losing my virginity and getting tied up and... and umm I was... I was being humiliated. I was being beaten, I was having all these things done to me that I later learned were really part of an S&m scene type activity... and I didn't know this at the time. I thought I was getting err y'know 'this is what sex is about' is what I thought. But I really didn't want to be on the other side of it... umm... she did... she did... started training me, formalising what was going on and it wasn't long before I knew what and

why things were happening... umm... and eventually I was able to reverse the role, and ever since then I've been dominant (31:46).

*Princess:* ... simply put, porn.

*Susan:* OK

*Princess:* Really into porn as a kid. I had a relationship that I was able to experiment... umm that's when I think I really got serious about it... did a lot of reading. I decided what kind of direction I wanted to go with things. I had trouble finding people I could play with like that afterwards.

*Susan:* Yes

*Princess:* Just in the past years or so I've gotten really deeply into it but on the other hand... umm, when I first started out, I was Dominating my partner and now I'm being submissive... umm, but I think it would just start with... it started for me with... finding the things I was aroused by and finding out that that was what it was. (32:46)

*Bondage Teddy:* I actually originally got into S&m through a girl that I had dated umm... earlier when I first moved to Seattle. And I'd kinda been into it in a sort... it was an experience that I did on my own as a teenager and then me and my girl friend at the time just both started exploring into things. I mean we'd heard about it and we'd go to a shop and see restraints and things and get them, try things out and it kind of progressed from there... umm. I started out as a sub and she was my Domme then, we didn't really know that much of anything. We didn't

really read any books, we were pretty much having fun. And from there our relationship ended and I had a couple of normal relationships and it never really quite felt like something I wanted to do. (34:02).

*Slave# 1:* I think it started with my earliest sexual fantasies about... various recollections of spankings I received as a younger child... Also I always got excited y'know... there was a scene, a school yard scene where a girl was beating up a boy and (laughing) I can still remember it... I must have been 10 or 11, something like that. Even before I was sexually mature y'know, it kind of imprinted itself on my memory... umm. Never did anything about that, err... obviously I wasn't sexually active at that age especially in those days and when I was a little bit older, I was involved in the printing and distribution of BDSM stories. And the illustrated stories... that was part of my job in the printing business and they weren't particularly good (laughing). Kind of hackneyed stuff, but I got into a fever of excitement just handling them (laughing). But nothing ever came of that until many years later I had a partner... actually married them when I was 30... umm it was a sexual relationship and somewhere along the line we started playing. I don't even remember how it got started but that was my first actual experience of playing. We weren't in the scene per se, we didn't know anything about dungeons or clubs or the whole subculture, we were just doing it on our own... err and that was it for a long time after. (35:50)

*robyn:* When I started actively pursuing S&M in the community versus private interactions with individuals, I came in as a bottom, or originally

came in as a submissive until I realised I didn't have a submissive bone in my body. However I like getting beat. So basically I would start bottoming, and every weekend I'd go and get y'know beat severely and when I use the term 'beat', I'm not talking about black eyes and bruised neck, I'm talking about heavy flogging and paddling and whippings which I allowed, and it was my stress release. I'd go into law school and be the calmest person there. (36:31)

### ***Chapter 13 'Susan For Now' (36:32: 42:46)***

Susan, her submissives and her friend Charles (transportation worker, dungeon owner).

*Susan:* (Voice over) It has been two years now since 'Susan for Now' was spawned. Here I am with my first submissive, my assistant and my own play scene. If anyone had told me a couple of years ago that I'd be doing this, I wouldn't believe them. Never-say-never. (37:22)

*BDSM Scene(s):* Susan's assistant (Charles) helps to prepare the submissives by placing them in stocks, fastening chains around necks and so on. One submissive is hooded, hands tied behind back, naked except for underwear. John the Jazz musician (introduced above) is also naked and wears a blind fold, his hands tied behind his back and a

chain around his neck. Charles secures both men in suspended stocks.  
(38:34)

*Susan:* (Voice over). After having the privilege to watch, study, interview and learn, I was ready to join the fray. At this point I was lacking a female Dominatrix in the film and it felt unbalanced. John looked at me one day and said 'we could do this now'. After two years of experimenting and researching not only with the film but with both of these men, I realised he was right. With a scene this complex however, with two men bound, I needed an assistant for safety reasons. Since this was a private dungeon, Charles as the owner of the dungeon agreed to assist. (37:22).

*BDSM Scene(s)*. Susan flogging and intermittently caressing the buttocks of her second submissive. Susan with John in the stocks; Susan is slapping John's buttocks with a cane. (38:34)

*John:* (to camera) When I went down to Charles's dungeon and he had this suspended stockade... and always imagined a woman in one, but as soon as I saw it something really clicked in me and the next thing I knew, I knew I had to get in there (laughs). Y'know I just had to be in that stockade and try it out and see what it was like. (38:58)

*Scene:* John in the stocks; Susan is running a chain flogger gently down his spine. John stretches his back with seeming pleasure (like a cat). Susan runs a large knife along John's back. (39:37).



*John:* I was still getting to know you (Susan) so there was a little fear of  
‘can I trust  
this person with knives on me?’ (laughing) and the next time we  
tried it, the scene was a little different. We did it in the dark  
which made it really erotic y’know and then I realised ‘wait a  
minute, there’s something here to these knives’ and I had to  
explore a little bit more (40:02)

Scene: Susan with second submissive, flogging his bare buttocks,  
caressing his back and thighs. Charles is flogging John’s back. The  
scene switches and Susan is flogging John’s back. (40:22).

*John:* (to camera) I’ve seen umm scenes in which... gave the feeling of  
being a slave on a plantation and slaves are being humiliated by a white  
person of some sort... and... y’know as a minority (African-American) I  
was really disturbed by this but then I started to realise that these  
people aren’t concerned about any of these things, they were acting out a  
fantasy. The idea of me being in a chain and a stockade and being  
flogged by a white man y’know, as a scene, was pretty hot and erotic.  
(41:01)

Scene: The second submissive sits, lifts his hood. Charles holds a cup to  
his mouth and the submissive drinks. (41:10)

Scene: Susan is pictured with both submissives on their knees. (41:29)

*Charles:* (Talking about his 'after-care role) For one, I wanted to make sure he was stable (in relation to helping the submissive drink), and wanted to make sure he was comfortable and I went and got him something to drink. It's part of the 'aftercare' and it really doesn't matter, especially in this particular scene, it really didn't matter who did the aftercare as long as aftercare is done. As long as he knew he was being taken care of, he was being watched. (41:53)

*John:* (on camera) And when I met you, I felt that you were the vehicle to help me explore a lot of this, you were just like what I was looking for at the time. (42:02)

*Slave #1:* When we started playing it was a big psychological leap for me to actually go from fantasising about it and actually doing it. I remember when your reply came in the mail, I said 'Oh my God here it is now and it's actually going to happen'... y'know at least get to the point of meeting such a person. (42:24)

*John:* (on camera) It was like a door was open for me and umm for the first time I felt 'now I can explore my true sexuality' (laughing). (42:33)

*Slave #1:* I just felt comfortable with you right way and umm y'know I had the sense that y'know I wasn't going to end up y'know, parts of me in your refrigerator or anything like that. (42:46)

**Chapter 14. Safe Sane Consensual versus RACK (42:47-47:02)**

*Jarret:* The ideal-type situation, where bondage Domination and sadomasochism people say that it should be safe, sane and consensual, or you should have safety measures in place, we should umm... we should make sure everybody's going to be OK about this and with this. It's not going to be doing anything too out of the ordinary or too crazy if you will... and mostly that it has to be consensual. (43:16)

Jarret & Princess together.

*Jarret:* In the right mood, her and I can do all sorts of crazy things but at the same time, I can't just walk up to her and start slapping her or anything crazy like that. (43:29)

*Jarret:* (to camera) Now with RACK, Risk Aware Consensual Kink, that's umm... that's your edge play... That's your things that are a little bit more on the edge of safe-not safe, that's your things...When I play with my partner who I'm very comfortable playing with... I've been playing with her for a long time... umm I know that I don't have to negotiate every little thing to the minor details because her and I have played to the point that I know what her limits are... and that's a little more Risk Aware Consensual. (44:09)

*robyn:* For myself and because I come out of, y'know, I've a legal thought process, I'm not as fond of the acronym RACK, which stands for Risk Aware Consensual Kink... err... the primary reason is if you're telling people 'yes I believe in Risk Aware Consensual Kink' the legal standard, if

there is a problem, is now gonna be 'reckless' rather than 'negligent'... because you're acknowledging that the risk was there and you did it anyway which is basically the definition of reckless. With safe, sane, consensual, I think that's a little closer to what we need... although... nothing is absolutely safe, and 'sane' is very subjective (laughing). But consensual that's the big one... umm... informed consent that's very important. (45:03)

*Jarret:* With edge play, like blade play, blood play, umm age play, humiliation play, water sports, some people even like scat, these are on the edge, these are more towards the fringes, fire plays another good one, these are things that... umm... definitely require some mentoring and learning, teaching before someone jumps right into doing them, they're things that are potentially dangerous if you don't know what you are doing (45:35).

*Faye:* Aside from any of the complex stuff, there's one simple thing that I think, that I think is 'the' absolute... important thing and that is to practice honesty, not only with other people but with yourself, y'know if, if, if... y'know be, be honest with what you want and be honest with how far you're willing to go and be honest about how much experience you've got, be honest about everything, be honest, be, be transparent. (46:02).

*Charles:* Sane depends on where you're going, if you're taking someone into a deep mindset you definitely don't... you're not playing in a safe zone, you're not playing in a sane zone... Consensual yes... but that's with years of play. (46:21)

*Jarret:* My boundaries are: no kids, no scat, no animals. No people who cannot consent for themselves, and that's more broad, we're talking about people who've been drinking, or if they're loaded on drugs, or if they're mentally impaired, things like that. (46:44)

*Slave #1:* Well, I didn't really know what my boundaries were. I, I, probably took more of a beating than I thought I would originally, but umm (shrugs) but not dramatically. (47:02)

### ***Chapter 15. BDSM Bloopers (47:03-50:57)***

*Artic Tundra:* I recognise that feeling: 'I'm going to faint'. I better undo at least one key before I faint and hurt myself, which I did. On the way down, I smashed my head, my elbow hit the wall and umm it took him (Max) apparently half hour before he realised it wasn't part of what we were doing (Tundra and Max burst into amused laughter)... and then it took him almost half hour to get me out because the chain got stuck in the lock so he was just trying to [undecipherable]... finally, so finally... when he stood up and he looked over and saw me on the floor I was just 'coming to', and I'm like 'Oh my God, I'm so sorry, I don't know what happened'... and he's going 'that wasn't part of the scene' in this meek little voice (both laughing), and I'm saying 'I think I've hurt myself', and I turned and I had, I guess. Blood running down my forehead and he

completely snapped from subspace into reality and he ripped off the rest of the gear, ran downstairs and got the first aid kit. And it was just a little tiny nick but y'know your head always bleeds, right, and he... and I'd never gotten him into subspace before... that's the way it had to go, and I was so bummed, I was so bummed. (48:18)

*Bondage Teddy:* In the process, I've had a few accidents. The very first one that I can remember is where I had the brilliant idea to strap the metal plate to a sheet of leather. But in order to do that, I had actually bolted it with metal bolts and didn't remember that the metal bolts on the backside of the leather were coming into contact with my skin and it was tied to my leg. I'm grinding away on the plate... it gets very hot and the heat conducts through the bolts to the other side and started burning my leg (chuckles) and I had to frantically, with one hand, remember to turn off the angle grinder before I put it down and then with the other hand, like frantically trying to untie this thing before it burns through my leg completely (both giggling). (49:18)

*Aynge:* 'Dont do this at home' is a really good caveat. Because Jarret is a professional piercer I know what this feels like. I know a lot. I did a lot of research before I got into needle play. I looked into, OK what are the things you can do to make this as safe as possible... It is, by the strictest definition, an edgy thing, you are breaking the skin, you are introducing the possibility of infection, you are running the risk no matter how careful you are, of accident. The person who's got the needles,

accidentally poking themselves after they've poked you, or poking you after they've accidentally poked themselves it... it's... one of those things, it has its risks. (50:02)

*Miracle Max* (with Artic Tundra): We had done a scene and I said I wished you had'na done that, I wasn't getting into that but I hadn't said anything. And it was 2 days later that it occurred to me 'Oh...I could have used a safe-word' (laughs). And I know a lot more about safer sex now than I did before I got into the community (50:23).

*robyn*: Safer, saner. The things that people do to be safe is: you take classes, you go to work, shops and you study the anatomy, and you study the body and physiology. It's umm important to learn what you're possibly going to affect. So safe, sane and consensual is a little closer to my way of thinking than RACK for sure... umm but then again y'know, safe sane, consensual, 1 out of 3 ain't bad. (50:57).

### ***Chapter 16 Conclusion (50:58:51:17)***

*Susan*: (Robin Franzi) (Voice-over) I think what I've concluded so far is that it's about the concept of pleasure and pain. It's about finding the things that bring joy into your world and embracing them, so that may heal the pain from those who didn't. (51:54)

Slide/Still. (Attributed to C.G. Jung (1875-1961).

Your vision will become clear only, when you look into your heart.

Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.

End film (51:17).

Theme Tune. Patricia Barber singer/songwriter. From the Album  
'Modern Cool' (1998)

Love, put off your faces Death,  
for day is over,  
not even the darkness will out-march you forever,  
and I perceive several smoothly gesturing stars clever to persuade even  
silence,  
wonder opens a gate,  
the prisoner dawn embraces some few most rare, day being come,  
Love, put on your faces.



### **Appendix 3. Data Set 3**

#### **Impressions from a BDSM group: The Leather Family**

This data set was created by a thematic analysis of the opinions, views and experiences of a UK BDSM group. The group consisted of Goddess Isis (pseudonym), her one Dominant wife, their shared submissive wife, and their extended coterie. An informal process of extended face-face consultations (3), and telephone conversations (multiple), with group members was undertaken. Following each interaction short notes were made from memory on subject responses, preoccupations and researcher impressions. From concise descriptive phrases general themes emerged.

#### **BDSM Activities: The Experience.**

##### **1. Paraphrasing and summarising conversational ideas.**

Examples:

- Domination and submission (D/s) is essential.
- D/s is mandatory.
- Unconditional obedience.
- Loves S-M but D/s still the most important.
- D/s is intrinsic to the BDSM relationship.
- D/s makes me feel owned.

- Submission makes me feel worthy, wanted, of having purpose.
- Submission makes me feel cherished.
- Submitting to one person makes me feel safe.
- Surrendering from a position of strength.
- Sensory deprivation makes me feel disconnected from the outside.
- Submission makes me feel I can 'just be me'.
- Feel I can float.
- Deep relaxation induces 'subspace' (some euphoric type state). Giving up control is relaxing.
- Giving up control means no guilt (forced orgasm).
- Forced sex whilst being restrained and powerless.
- Bondage and corporal punishment is intensely arousing.
- Bondage and an intense beating, make me feel 'captured in stillness'.
- There is an intense desire to be powerless.
- Feel I have no problem's, all is simple, I feel contained.
- Feel pleasing to another by enduring (pain).
- Trusting, caring, loss of shyness.

- Wanting to please another by pushing oneself.
- Feels empowered by 'taking it'.
- Safe-wording feels like failure.
- Tight bondage makes me feel secure, helpless but safe, contained.
- Being bound makes me feel turned on.
- Bondage gives me a feeling of anticipation and fear, 'have to try it'.
- Scared but in a safe way, in no real danger.
- Watching another being bound can be experienced vicariously.
- Pain outweighed by feelings of self-control.
- Feels stupored, 20 feet tall invincible, free.
- How much are you willing to suffer for me, feels important, powerful.
- Giving pain gives an erection.
- Experiencing the submissive's surrender is erotic.
- Giving pain brings the desire to protect and nurture.
- When able to give such pleasure, feels confident, in control of the self and the world.
- When flogging feels highly concentrated, focused, and affectionate.
- Being treated as a pet, ignored but an occasional pat, being talked about as if not there, feels owned and cared for.

- Taking pain for the other then lying helpless in her arms.
- Edge play, opening up the skin makes me feel a veil is drawn back, even if I don't slice the skin.
- Edge play with knives I see my partner at their most vulnerable.
- Guiding someone to an act of submission, I feel huge, libido goes through the roof.
- Another's willing submission makes me feel in control.
- Obeying my whims and desires places trust in me.
- The fear and excitement of the submissive is arousing.
- Dominating makes me feel complete powerful and loving.
- Dominating makes me feel proud, to receive a gift of submission, to take someone on a journey.
- Consensual slavery makes me feel stronger, fulfilled, proud of their endurance.
- The trust in taking them to their limits, the adventure, and the trust and comforting in the after-care.
- I like the vulnerability of the submissive, the giving up of secrets.

**2. The construction of concise descriptive phrases (focus on the material from submissive participants).**

Examples:

- D/s is intrinsic/mandatory.
- Feeling invincible, free, powerful.

Bondage is containing.

Feeling worthy, cherished, loved.

Feels scared but safe.

- Feels apprehensive, expectation of what is going to happen.
- Total trust in the other.
- Feels pride in endurance of pain.
- Feels adventurous, feels fortitude, pushed to the limits.
- Undergoes some form of emotional (?physical) transformative process.
- Sharing Endurance leads to liberation.
- Pain is erotic and sexually arousing.

### **3. Construction of Emergent themes.**

Examples

- Power/Powerful/ Lack of power.

- Loved/Cherished/Wanted/Needed.
- Trust/Confidence/Vulnerability/Safety.
- Control/Controlled/Lack of Control is arousing.
- Alive/Victorious/Adventurous/Strong/Brave.
- Special/Valued/Validated/Dehumanised.
- Free of Guilt.
- Sexual Arousal/Erotism.
- Deep relaxation/Floating/Subspace.

#### **4. Clustering of Themes.**

Examples:

- Validation (alive)/Free (of guilt).
- Protector and Protected.
- Loved/Safe (secure).
- Power (exchange)/Control/Surrender of self/Adventure.
- Desire to please/Endurance (masochism).
- Desire to care/facilitate.

#### **5. Superordinate theme(s).**

- **CONTAINMENT.**