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# GENETIC PSYCHOLOGY MONOGRAPHS

Child Behavior, Animal Behavior,  
and Comparative Psychology

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PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF SELF-MUTILATION . . . 1

BY CASIMIR DABROWSKI

MASCULINE TEMPERAMENT AND SECONDARY SEX  
CHARACTERISTICS: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP  
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BY HOWARD GILKINSON

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PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES OF SELF-MUTILATION\*

*Translated from the Polish by William Thau, M.D.*

CASIMIR DABROWSKI, M.D., PH.D.\*\*

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\*\*Polish Research Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation at Harvard in 1934-35.

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## PREFACE

The fear and suffering which dog the footsteps of man are not always thrust upon him by the external conditions of his life. He himself may, to a certain extent, be the author of these disturbing experiences. Nervous and mental patients present in striking form such experiences and offer opportunity for their intensive study. Thus the conditions which underlie morbid fears have been partly disclosed, and we see how they are dependent upon a complicated play of forces in the depths of the personality. The dynamic elements which are revealed by the study of nervous patients are not peculiar to them. They are the constituents of human nature in general, but in the normal they are concealed by the conventional surface.

In the present monograph the author takes up the problem of pain or suffering in so far as it is self-imposed, due not to external factors but to subtle underlying forces which play an important rôle in the destiny of the individual. In psychiatric literature there are already many case reports in which the rôle of self-inflicted pain has been carefully studied. The need for punishment is a factor which is now freely drawn on for the explanation of many forms of nervous and mental disorders.

Dr. Dabrowski does not take up for intensive analysis individual cases where self-punishment, or automutilation, seems to play a rôle. His task is rather to give a general review of the field and to show the various settings in which this symptom may occur. His study covers a wide field. He makes a survey of the nervous disorders of children and of adults; he discusses men who have revealed themselves in literature, as well as those who have undergone an analysis in the consulting room.

To the general reader this monograph will be an interesting work of orientation, while the specialist will be particularly interested in the presentation of this topic by a Polish colleague.

C. MACFIE CAMPBELL.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this work we shall investigate the problem of mental and physical self-mutilation.<sup>1</sup> We do not presume, however, to settle this question; our aim is only to approach and to study at close range the symptoms of this form of behavior. Once familiarized with the symptoms in general by means of a sketchy description and differentiation, we shall try to define the physical, mental, and social causes of their development, and to state their connection with the psychophysical constitution and with certain pathological conditions. Finally, we shall make a few suggestions of a prophylactic, therapeutic, and educational nature.

The source of the majority of self-mutilating symptoms is the wish to suffer. The "necessity" for suffering, which at first glance may seem paradoxical, is deeply embedded in the human soul, and is more common than it appears to the normal mind. Certain religious orders based on the value of suffering, besides on other principles, have expanded throughout the whole world. There is no doubt but that there exists a more or less normal necessity for suffering following the feeling of guilt, or the possession of certain defects, suffering which is considered a redemption, or a way of moral perfection. We shall call attention chiefly to that seeking for suffering and those symptoms of self-mutilation which may be considered pathological. We shall use the following criteria, not claiming, however, very strict differentiation, in determining the pathological or non-pathological nature of the symptoms: (1) intensity of symptoms, i.e., force with which they appear; (2) duration of the symptoms; (3) their intensity in relation to the intensity of the factors by which they are caused. Besides considering the active infliction of pain, we shall call attention to the symptoms of passive submission to suffering, and the symptoms of the provocation of suffering. Moreover, we shall endeavor to throw light on the connection between the apparently opposite tendencies of self-mutilation and infliction of pain on others, a connection which in certain cases will prove to have a common source.

In this way the meaning of the term "self-mutilation" will be-

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<sup>1</sup>This study concerns only auto-mutilation in psychoneurosis, psychopathy, and cases taken from observation of daily life considered normal.

come much broader than the meaning usually attributed to it. I mutilate myself; I submit to self-tormenting; I torture others—these often spring from the same source, from a necessity of experiencing suffering, a necessity manifesting and gratifying itself in various ways.

In respect to the "phenomenon" of self-mutilation we distinguish between the inflicting of physical suffering and psychic self-torture. The "sphere" of physical self-mutilation is accessible to external observation; the psychic self-torture, above all, to introspection.

These are two sides of the same phenomenon, appearing in one or the other sphere depending on the mental make-up of the given individual, his age, education, or form of disorder. Most frequently the self-mutilation appears in a typical case under both forms, with predominance of one or the other. In the majority of cases, we are inclined to accept the identity of sources of self-mutilation in both spheres in the same individual. For instance, psychomotor hyperexcitability may be the cause of the initiation and development of nail-biting, wounding the nail-fold, scratching of the head; on the other hand, hyperexcitability resulting in tactless awkward behavior may lead to self-accusation and psychic self-mutilation. Penitent self-mutilation may appear in the form of self-flagellation, in exposing oneself to physical discomfort; in the psychic sphere, it may take the form of accepting morally humiliating obligations. Disorders of superficial sensitivity in more or less localized areas frequently cause pinching and scratching of these areas. Trouble which is of indistinct, changeable localization or of deep sensitivity may cause states of strong psychic tension, difficult to release. This difficulty increases the tension and makes it worse. If of long duration it may result in a suicidal tendency and may lead to suicide. Infantilism, underdevelopment of sexual organs, and homosexuality may be the basis of physical self-mutilation (scratching the nipples, mutilating the sex organs) as well as of self-hatred or self-humiliation. Strictly sexual masochism appears also frequently in both spheres. The cases cited present the similarity or identity of sources and mechanisms in both types of self-mutilation. There are, however, a number of cases in which the connection between these two spheres is not very clear.



## 2. SELF-MUTILATION IN STATES OF PSYCHOMOTOR HYPEREXCITABILITY

Localized irritations of different types cause the desire to touch the areas in which they arise. We notice this urge in ourselves—touching an aching tooth or a healing wound. This desire has to a certain extent a protective character. It is frequently hard to check this urge in a very intensive irritation. (In smallpox the hands of the patient are bound to prevent scratching the scabs.) In many cases the consciousness of disfiguration cannot avert the scratching and touching of the irritated areas. A common type of irritation, a frequent starting-point of self-mutilation, is pimples on the head, face, and back. We observed a few cases of children and adults whose trouble began with scratching the skin of their backs in the area where the pimples were present. Another type of self-irritation is illustrated by the case of 17-year-old *M* who systematically scratched his left elbow; it was proved on examination that this spot, an area of four to six cm., was strongly anaesthetic, and that this was the irritating agent. In another case, exhibiting nail-biting with mutilation of the nail-fold, it came out that the patient had partial thermo-anaesthesia and hypalgesia of these areas. Moreover, since childhood, he had shown marked endurance to physical pain, and had permitted extraction of teeth without flinching. We also observed a few cases of nail-biting with bad tearing of the nail-fold and of the skin on the inside of the fingers in individuals who had had chorea or symptoms of pseudo-athetosis in childhood. In others, we found hypersensibility of the skin to formalin or methyl alcohol, in and around the areas which were being scratched.

We frequently deal with local external self-mutilation corresponding in a greater or lesser degree to the spot, for instance, irritation of the right groin in inflammation of the appendix, scratching of the skin in the region of diseased joints, and mutilation of the abdominal walls by digging or scratching with the nails, in intestinal tuberculosis. In the case of 18-year-old *S* with intestinal tuberculosis, we were concerned with the scratching by the patient of various areas of the abdominal walls. In a state of great excitation he screamed, begging for a knife in order to cut through the abdominal wall to reach the irritating spot.

In case this irritation, which may be the starting-point of self-

mutilation, is difficult or impossible to discover, we must be careful not to infer that such an underlying cause does not exist. The fact that this underlying cause frequently is discovered after the self-mutilation has begun points to the necessity for caution. We observed, for instance, a tendency to scratch the skin of the left groin and scrotum a few months before the appearance of a varicocele. In other cases, we found allergic eczema of the hands after some time had elapsed since the beginning of automutilation of this region.

In cases where the self-mutilating process cannot find a point of outlet, we very frequently find a variability in the localization of self-mutilation until the finding of a more adequate area, either because of the protracted cessation of the self-mutilating activities in any given area for purely accidental reasons or because of the existence of some more or less vague, little-known pathological agent (for instance, disorders of deep sensibility). Two cases of self-mutilation reported by Janet throw light on the mechanism in question.

The first case concerned a 10-year-old boy, whose hands and whole body were covered with wounds and scabs. The father of the boy seemed to be normal, the mother very nervous. The child was normal and healthy till his fifth year. At that time the patient had measles and whooping cough in succession, after which he began to scratch a few blisters which appeared on his forehead, especially before falling asleep and after awakening. He began gradually to scratch other blisters which appeared on his body and finally every spot on his body (blemishes, warts, black and blue spots).

Janet asked the question presenting itself first of all in such a case: "does the child feel pain?" It was brought out that the sensation was normal. In answer to the question concerning why he did this, the patient said, "I don't know, but I just have to do it" (42). Janet asks whether we are not dealing here with delight of experiencing pain (the question so intriguing to psychologists), and he answers that this behavior should be interpreted as the expression of a tendency which developed into an irrepressible habit in the child's mind, weakened by disease, and which could not be held back even by the coexistence of pain. This process is similar to smoking or drinking which many addicts cannot suppress despite the consciousness of the threatening danger.

We think Janet is right on many points. Nevertheless, the

psychic process taking place in the former case is basically, different, despite many similarities, from the process occurring in the habitual smokers. In the latter case, the realization of the habitual tendency is not connected with pain or feeling of discomfort at the moment of gratification, but only with the consciousness of untoward results later on. Janet justly places the case of the 10-year-old boy in the class of tics, obsessions, and delirium, which, in its initial phase, may have been occasioned by weakness of the mental powers during the illness and perhaps to some extent by the toxic agents caused by the diseases.

Another case reported by the same author concerned the patient *Pb* who was continually pulling out the eyelashes from both lids. The family had a tendency toward obsessions and especially toward tics. *Pb* was a neurasthenic; any emotion provoked various gastrointestinal disturbances which passed quickly. Beautiful eyelashes were an outstanding feature of most members of this family, and the girls of the family paid much attention to them. Janet assumes, it seems to us, rightly, that in *Pb*, inclined by nature to obsessions, the above factors and some accidental itching around the eyes could produce the realization of the tendency (42).

In neurotic conditions, especially in young people, we encounter an excess of such impulses, either in the form of hyperkinesis in general, or tics, with which may be combined disturbances of inhibition. In nervous individuals the sphere of impulsive and sub-conscious life is more strongly developed than in individuals of more resistant nervous constitution. Therefore the cortical control appears weaker and of shorter duration, or is out of proportion to the exciting agent, in consequence of which either an excessive inhibition (anxiety state) or a weakness of inhibition may appear at any given moment. The preoccupation with any emotion causes a diminution of the repression of impulses and the impulses increase (scratching the head, biting the nails, hyperkinesis while studying or reading). Meige and Feindel (55) in their work on tics present the mechanism in the following way: "Any prolonged concentration of the attention on a particular act or a particular idea presupposes a concomitant weakening of inhibitory power over other acts and ideas, which then become corrupt and inopportune, are incapable of further repression, and blossom into tics."

A disturbance of inhibition often appears in nervous individuals.

Therefore we encounter the phenomenon of the psychomotor release—an excessive activity of one group of tendencies and inhibition of others. In such a state, a purely accidental excitation may become the starting-point for the release of great tension. Frequently a state of strong tension becomes released by the beginning of self-mutilation in an accidentally localized area without other stimulation; then the self-mutilating activities systematize and transform themselves into compulsions (for example, biting and wounding of the lips). We observe the above symptoms in nervous individuals who are characterized by a certain lack of synthesis of psychophysiological activities. The emotional state deepens this lack of synthesis in accordance with Janet's (43) view that: "The emotion has a dissolving action on the mind and diminishes its synthesis." Neurotic individuals, who often have a great analytical capacity, fail more or less to synthesize, and are inclined to disintegration of behavior.

If we pass from higher to lower functions, the psychomotor activities of these individuals are also marked by a certain disintegration, a certain lack of coordination of the motor sphere with mental processes. Let us consider the mental work of a neurotic. While pre-occupied with an emotionally colored problem or while performing an unpleasant duty, which also produces an emotional state, some psychomotor functions are not coordinated with mental processes but acquire a certain independence which may, among other symptoms, be revealed in nail-biting, laceration of the nail-fold, scratching of head and throat, pulling out the hair, biting the lips, etc., or touching nearby objects and semiautomatic writing of the same word over and over. It is known that overexcitable individuals with diminished repression, with a tendency to psychic disintegration (Schizoid types of Kretschmer; tetanoid types of Jaensch) have great difficulty in coordinating the main action of lower motor functions, which difficulty may, in coexistence with some irritating agent, appear as a process of self-mutilation. Moreover, the motor hyperexcitability, combining itself with disturbance of inhibition, causes the necessity for release which, in types described above, is often realized by finding on one's own body exciting areas which may serve as starting-points for self-mutilation. The finding of some bases for the unchecked impulses, and their fixation to an underlying process brings a psychic relief. This is one of the ways of releasing the accumulated psychic energy, as is its release in the

form of onanism in anxiety states or of sexual relations in other emotional states. The mechanism described above is the basis for the development of many tics, to which group should be added many self-mutilating processes. This is proved by the frequent development of a particular self-mutilation following the intensification of certain tics; self-mutilation of fingers (wounding, biting) following onychophagia, or wounding the head and laceration of healing wounds growing out of a head-scratching tic.

These disturbances of inhibition and assumedly the lack of harmony in the coordination of the cortical centers and the autonomic nervous system can explain partly the appearance of self-mutilation in the hypnagogic state, on awakening, during a long stay in bed (convalescence), in emotional states, or while solving some problem. In children and adolescents the urge for activity is stronger than in adults. It is known that forced suppression of motoractivity because of disease, travel, or sleeplessness disorganizes the control of actions and facilitates the appearance of hyperkinesis as well as self-mutilation.

The faculty for bearing pain in self-mutilation must probably be interpreted as some physical or psychic hypalgesia. We have already called attention to the former; the latter should be explained as a state of psychic tension produced by mental, emotional, or impulsive obsession (compulsion), and finally by auto-suggestion causing a weakening of the pain sense during self-mutilation. The explanation of this state is analogous to the interpretation of the diminished feeling of pain during fighting or during a state of great nervousness.

In this section we have discussed, in the first place, the rôle of the exciting agents in the origin and the development of self-mutilating tendencies. The examples cited above show that these tendencies are the result, on one hand, of various somatic irritations, and, on the other hand, of psychic overexcitability and tendencies to obsession. Either of these may be a predisposing and a determining factor, depending on the type, strength, and duration of its action. A strong exciting agent may be simultaneously a predisposing and a determining factor of the self-mutilating process (itching, hyperesthesia), and it may be its exclusive cause. On the other hand, the exciting agent often has only a supplementary accidental effect, and the deciding agent may be the tendency toward obsession or psychomotor overexcitability in ordinarily introverted types.

### 3. SELF-MUTILATION IN ACUTE PSYCHONEUROTIC CONDITIONS

In overexcitable individuals showing a lack of mental equilibrium, a sudden unpleasant excitation often causes an emotional shock. This facile appearance of shock is combined with a tendency toward nervous outburst. In introverted, schizoid individuals, we often encounter self-mutilation as one of the most convenient means of liberating oneself from an unbearable tension. Self-mutilation may act, in this condition, by means of the most easily borne physical pain or suicidal attempt, as a compensatory substitute for psychic pain or shame.

In individuals with little emotional flexibility, some great disappointment may undermine their faith and ideals, with consequent loss not only of the object of feeling but also of the faith in the value of even the strongest personal sentiments. This loss destroys previous mental harmony, sometimes to the point of self-vengeance, thus ending the unbearable pressure created by conditions of life. This mechanism is illustrated by the case of 18-year-old Miss *M*, a nervous idealist, very intelligent and highly sentimental, quick tempered and overexcitable. *M* showed in childhood a moderate tendency to hyperkinesis, nail-biting, scratching of the nail-fold, and a tendency to excessive enthusiasm and periodic depression. No hereditary stigmata were found. *M* fell in love with one of her acquaintances and decided to marry. Some time later, it turned out that the chosen one had deceived her. Within a few hours after learning this, she gave herself to the least acceptable and even physically repulsive of her suitors, after which she committed suicide. We deal here with an emotional shock caused by a sudden disappointment. The realization of one's own conflicting tendencies toward the object of one's emotions and toward one's ego produces as a reaction in young, impulsive, introverted girls a state of depression and doubt concerning the value of the deeper emotions, together with a focusing of vengeance on one's own self. An individual with a plastic mentality and the ability of adaptation to new conditions can bear such a disappointment, but types of lower plasticity, self-centered, introverted, are ordinarily unable to attain equilibrium. Depending on the faculty of decision or on the activity, they end by suicide or submit passively to life, finding release of the

strong psychic tension in forms of self-mutilation most accessible to passive and very sensitive types. Exposing oneself to laughter and to physical and psychic mistreatment (for instance, self-accusation, humiliating oneself by lowering his social position, playing a part of the one "whom they slap in the face") are means of self-vengeance for mistakes, in a form of protest characteristic for such personalities. A strong emotional shock to such individuals destroys their adaptation to the realities of life and very frequently leads to one of two possible ways of meeting these situations: suicide or annihilation of pain by self-mutilation.

We also encountered self-mutilation as a form of compensation for moral pain and shame in a 17-year-old girl of schizothymic constitution who attempted suicide after disappointment in love, and began systematically to wound the lower abdominal regions when her suicide was frustrated. She did not allow the wounds to heal and continued this self-mutilation for several months until she fell in love, this time successfully, with another man. We deal here with the necessity for the liberation of accumulated psychic tensions in the easiest form for the given individual. The release is not entirely automatic, but to some extent conscious. We have also observed cases of self-mutilation as one of the means of getting rid of an unbearable state of psychic tension caused by great vasomotor effort. The anxious state, feeling of strangeness of one's body (extremities), and feeling of dying away were causally related to pinching, in order to bring back the state of activity, to increase by this means its weakened functions. A similar mechanism was found to exist in one of Janet's (44) young patients who, letting drops of boiling water fall on his palm, said, "Only this can bring me back the feeling of myself." We have also noticed a similar mechanism in individuals with symptoms of acute depression. In these cases it was, as we emphasized above, for the anxious, introverted, or passive types, the easiest way of release from an unpleasant state of psychic overexcitability.

The form of release of the psychomotor tension in states of acute anxiety may be very unclear to the individual himself and for this reason after the fact of self-mutilation he seeks to explain and justify his behavior. This explanation is very often not based on the real facts. Such a mechanism was probably at work in the case of the 12-year-old S who exhibited a systematic pulling out of the

eyebrows. *S* was of a passive type, in poor contact with his surroundings, of inferior ability, and suffered a feeling of inferiority. The patient's excitability, vomiting of unknown origin, fatigue, drowsiness with difficulty in falling asleep, and feeling of dying away may arouse the question of a disorder of visceral sensitivity. Passivity and slow mental activity could, under aggression of schoolmates, constant noise and unrest at home, and weariness (he went both to common and Hebrew schools), give rise to anxiety over the school situation with tics and persecutory ideas. We assume that pulling out of the eyebrows "in order not to be recognized," as the patient said, by hostile schoolmates was an accidentally found outlet for the necessary release of the tension of the above-mentioned state in which the patient's personality was the predisposing factor and the environment the determining one.

We also find self-mutilation as a symptom of an acute state of anxiety in the case of 13-year-old *L* who exhibited biting of the nails and tongue in a marked degree. *L* was uneasy, showed hypermotility, was rather physically underdeveloped and undernourished. There was a slight left ptosis, hypertrophy of the lymphatic glands, moderate dermatographism, and increased tendon reflexes. Otherwise the neurological and medical examination was negative. In the hospital, he screamed frequently, bit his hands, did not want to eat, was obstinately repeating that he wanted to go home, that he wanted to die and would die if he were not sent home. He said he hated school because "the teachers beat the children." In school he felt badly for being the oldest and tallest in his class, having had to repeat one year because of failure in French. He sometimes dreamed of the children being beaten in the school. Asked why he bit his hand, he said that by doing so he wounded his classmates. He wanted to study at home "all day and all night," but he did not want to go to school. He said that if he were forced to go to school he would go to the cellar and kill himself with a knife, and that "there are lots of penknives at home." During his stay in the hospital he attempted suicide by asphyxia, then broke the window and tried to kill himself with the pieces of glass.

No hereditary stigma was found, and at birth the delivery by forceps was without ill effect to the patient. He did not feel well in school and was several times transferred from one school to another. Once, while playing, he was unintentionally the cause of



a fractured skull of a schoolmate whom he liked. He took this much to heart and refused to go to school. He had fever without meningeal symptoms for a few days, after which he began to bite his hands and to press his eyes.

The inferiority complex combined with nervousness, anxiety, and uneasiness among strangers were here the predisposing factors. The emotional shock caused by the accident in school gave rise to the acute state of nervous anxiety. The mechanism of the self-mutilating process (scratching and biting of the hands, screaming, and suicidal attempts) may be interpreted, on the one hand, as a characteristic form of the anxious passive individual's release of the tension and, on the other hand, as a way of avoiding unpleasant school experiences. The application of self-mutilation was based on observations that it was a successful means of getting the desired results.

On the basis of neuropathy there arise and develop very often unmotivated phobias which result in the manifestation of absurd ideas. This is illustrated by the case of 18-year-old S who, prompted by the fear of future military service, begged the physician to cut off his hand; when the latter refused, he went with the same request to a chiropractor who extracted 12 healthy teeth at one sitting. To this class belong the self-mutilations of compensation-neurotics who sometimes mutilate themselves badly in order to obtain compensation despite the possibility of finding adequate work. It may be assumed that the mechanism of these processes is similar to the mechanism of compulsions. The mental restlessness, increased by autosuggestion, takes the road indicated by the goal and in this way the accumulated tension is liberated. The necessity for obtaining compensation may be explained here by the state of the patient's increasing feelings of uncertainty and of the need of care, the source of which lies in past acute states of anxiety (experiences on the battle front or industrial accidents). The weakening reality feeling, together with the state of anxiety, facilitates the development of obsessions.

#### 4. SELF-MUTILATION IN STATES OF NEUROPATHIC DRAMATIZATION AND HYSTERIA

In children and adolescents we often deal with a tendency to dramatization in order to satisfy desires "to get one's point." This tendency is based, on the one hand, on mental overexcitability and, on the other hand, a lack of an even and rational educational influence by the parents. Contradictions in forbidding and ordering, revocation of given commands, and excessive and unreasonable anxiety concerning the child cause a pathological transformation of the egocentric spirit in the child which directs it toward tyranny in regard to the parents. The observation of weak points of the parents' behavior is the basis for the building up by the child of an entire group of methods for attaining his desires. We are using the term "dramatization" for the description of these tendencies as a group and the term "neuropathic dramatization" in cases showing neuropathic peculiarities.

If the child, under these conditions, realizes that the source of its mother's greatest concern and unrest is the child's health, looks, or contentment, he will, in order to reach his goal, take advantage of his mother's weakness by simulated or by actual damage to his health and by exposing himself to some discomfort and unpleasantness. The case of the 12-year-old *M*, an only child, a tyrant to his mother, who in order to provoke her to worry about himself got her powder box and powdered and painted his eyes so as to "look sick," illustrates this point. Another case concerned a child of nine years, who was nervous, suggestible, and capricious. Irrational rearing, conflicting orders, and denials caused a strong development of stubbornness in this child, who, being well aware of his mother's weakness, namely her great sensitiveness to the opinions of others, used to throw himself on the street during a walk, to scream or to feign convulsions in order to terrorize his mother for refusing his requests and to assure himself of future indulgence. While walking with his mother at a summer resort, in the absence of onlookers, he applied his method in the changed surroundings. He would run ahead several feet and throw himself down in order to give the mother a chance to observe him longer. As she approached him (on the physician's advice, she did not hurry immediately to help him) the attack would suddenly cease and the boy

would get up and again run ahead of the mother to find a suitable place for the repetition of his act. A similar but more refined mechanism is illustrated by the eight-year-old *W*, a son of cultured but neuropathic parents and an only child. The very exclusive mutual affection with the mother, her excessive fear for the child's health, and the lack of proper understanding of the necessity for the child's social development (relationship with schoolmates, common sports, etc.) were the bases of the development of the child's pathological egocentrism and dramatization. The boy forced his mother to come for him (the school in a small town is only about 200 yards away). When the mother did not come, he used to throw himself on the ground and bite his hands or scratch his face. When the father punished him by standing him in a corner, the lad obeyed, but did not leave the corner later, after the time of punishment had elapsed. He stood there for over an hour and thereby forced the father to apologize and give up punishment. Watching his parents' worried looks through the keyhole and windows intensified his state of pathological egocentrism.

Sometimes the neuropathic dramatization may take a dangerous course, as in the case of the 14-year-old *M*, who, when his desires were not acceded to, provoked nose bleeding. Once, the loss of blood reached about one pint and caused fainting. The underlying causes were the boy's nervousness and faulty upbringing. The determining factor was the observation of the impressions which a small accidental nose bleeding made on his parents.

We have emphasized here the fundamental importance of faulty methods of upbringing in the origin and development of pathological dramatization. It is not always the principal factor—sometimes it is only the determining one. This may be illustrated by the case of 14-year-old *A*, who showed overexcitability, suggestibility, hysteric stigmata, and attacks. Despite these symptoms, *A* was cooperative, active, a good pupil and companion. *A* resented very strongly that she was left at home during vacation when her parents went to various health resorts with her older, sickly sister. Observation of the effects on her parents of her fainting, which happened accidentally when she gulped a drink of strong soda water, resulted in stimulation of fainting spells. After a pseudo-attack, *A* usually ordered the maid not to tell the parents, being sure that she would

do just the contrary. We are dealing here with neuropathic dramatization of a hysterical personality. The high level of her acting was based on her innate tendencies to dramatization. In boarding-schools, we have observed many cases of self-mutilation by tickling the palate to provoke vomiting, letting blood from the nose or exposure to cold. The motives behind these cases were the desire to play truant from school or to shirk work of some sort, attracting attention, and provoking affection. With minor exceptions these cases concerned neuropathic individuals, who expressed in a way most characteristic of their psychological types (introverted, passive types) this need of arousing interest in themselves, or of freeing themselves from unpleasant situations.

In young people of introverted, anxious, and overexcitable natures, bound by affection or feeling of love, we find characteristic tendencies of self-mutilation to "spite" the beloved person. This is a punishment of the dear one by causing harm to oneself, and is quite characteristic of women or of men with some feminine psychic traits. This mechanism is illustrated by the case of *M*, sick with pneumonia, who in the course of a heated discussion with her fiancé declared that, on any further argument from him, she would go out barefooted in the snow. In reply to this the fiancé remarked that one more unpleasant word from her would make him stab his hand with his penknife. Self-mutilation is for such individuals the simplest means for release of the tension and also for a more or less conscious attainment of certain ends.

Posing, eccentricity, and tendencies to dramatization in such a personality are illustrated in a passage from the diary of *L*:

The conditions of my life were not as I may have desired; when I experienced hardship caused by relatives whom I loved and by whom I wanted to be loved, I took it out on myself. This occurred especially when I endured even a just punishment by my mother, who loved us dearly, but who was very strict. I always punished my mother with my air of misery. I refused food, feigning illness; I complained very much and pitied myself at such moments. In quarrels with my husband, when I felt that I was not quite in the right, when every sharp word on his part irritated me and brought me to a helpless anger, I would decide to revenge myself in a similar fashion and would cause myself to endure pain, hunger, and

cold. I once ran out of the house in a light summer blouse, in order to catch cold and "to die," but the first chill made me wish strongly that my husband would come out and take me back speedily before I caught cold. I enjoyed speaking of death, imagining myself on the hearse and picturing him weeping and whispering tender words over my dead body . . . . .

Self-mutilation in connection with definite hysterical dramatization is illustrated by the case of 17-year-old *S* who had been admitted three times to a psychopathic hospital for observation. During her first stay at the hospital, she exhibited symptoms of amnesia, complaining of not knowing her own name. During her second hospital residence she repeatedly subjected herself to trauma, refusing to eat, making tube-feedings necessary, and then battling the nurses so violently that it required force to handle her. Orientation and memory were good except for continued protestation of amnesia for the events preceding her first admission. She tended to project on to the physician. Possibly stimulated by contact with a schizophrenic patient, she developed pseudo-hallucinations. She showed a tendency to exaggeration and dramatization. She called constantly for the doctor and nurses and was capricious. She repeatedly tore the dressings from a surgical wound, contaminating it. She did not want to go home and threatened to do self-injury if sent home. A constant tendency to flirtation and confabulation was observed. (She made repeated suicidal attempts without justified cause and frequently ruminated on suicide. She once stated that she wanted to commit suicide for fear of pregnancy.) Physically she was well-developed and of good carriage, but her gestures and movements were exaggerated. Hair was normally distributed, with little hair on the legs. The right pupil was somewhat wider than the left. Menses were normal. Neurological and medical examinations were negative. Intelligence was higher than average. Both parents were considered "unstable" and very sensitive, suggesting a possible hereditary factor. At the age of two the patient had convulsions, together with an ear abscess. Until the age of seven she was brought up by strangers. Her 15-year-old brother was drowned when she was seven. At home, she frequently showed outbursts of anger and jealousy in relation to one of her younger sisters for whom the father had

a strong affection, yielding to all her desires. She got along badly in school, was irritable, and liked to play truant. She once purposely wounded her hand in order to obtain a physician's certificate of sickness to excuse herself from school. She showed a tendency towards running away and vagrancy. She repeatedly presented herself at various hospitals with the symptoms of an acute abdomen, operation in some instances was frustrated by her lack of funds, and in other, by the surgeons' refusal to operate. She succeeded in achieving two laparotomies: on one occasion a chronic appendix was removed, and on the last, a cyst of Morgagni was removed and the uterus was suspended. She attempted suicide on several occasions, and it is of interest that the attempts followed immediately upon a frustration in bringing on an operative attack. On her last admission, the patient told a story of having taken morphine at home (supplied by a friend who was a nurse) for the appeasement of pain and dissatisfaction. Under a thin disguise of anxiety she shows marked satisfaction in the picture of herself as a morphine addict, as a more colorful personality. She shopped from one clinic to another, being examined and receiving different diagnoses. After a quarrel at home she refused to leave her bed. Her father brought her food, thereby giving her great pleasure. During a friend's visit she suddenly jumped out of a window without any plausible reason. We see here, as the basis for self-mutilation, a pathological need of arousing the interest of others in herself, typical of hysteria, and a state of unrest probably in connection with disturbances of deep sensibility. These factors, together with a degree of suggestibility, predisposed the patient to self-mutilation.

Disorders of deep sensibility, characterized by changeable and indistinct localization, can be the basis of the changeable localization of self-mutilation. Unrest combined with these disorders, the growing tension, difficulties in finding a way of release, for instance, lack of a new idea for self-mutilation, and difficulties in arousing the interest of others in oneself apparently caused suicidal attempts as a means of freeing herself from the tension.<sup>2</sup> The use of self-

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<sup>2</sup>This mechanism corresponds to the mechanisms observed by Janet, Ribot, and others, according to whom co-anaesthetic disorders sometimes cause an unbearable self-consciousness with great tension. The patient's ignorance of the cause and the lack of known symptoms result in states of excitement more frequently than do known, common factors.

mutilation for the realization of one's desires and for the attainment of desired ends depends on the case of utilization of the accessible means. In hysterical individuals of a normal intelligence level, observation of the outcome of their tendencies to self-mutilation, of a probably non-purposive nature, results in the repeated conscious use of the same mechanism to reach a desired end.

## 5. SELF-MUTILATION IN RELATION TO A FEELING OF INFERIORITY, GUILT, OR THE NEED TO BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Nervous individuals who are approaching maturity may sometimes show self-mutilation in connection with a feeling of inferiority and with transitory periodic depressions. The state of depression and feeling of inferiority very often gives place to a state of periodic euphoria, self-praise, or exaggerated feeling of one's usefulness. In youths dissatisfied with themselves, we observe, in similar states of depression, emphasis of their worst traits and a feeling of a lack of attractiveness, with a craving for affection and sympathy. Nervous youths, especially during the period of adolescence, begin to day dream of their sickness and death.

According to Adler, day-dreaming about one's own death, sickness, humiliations, and sometimes the realization of these dreams develops itself on the basis of a feeling of inferiority, and is a compensation for this feeling, in order to arouse pain and pity in the parents so as to be kept deeply in mind by them (2). No doubt this is a common, but not all-explanatory mechanism. Mental overexcitability, anxiety, inability to adapt oneself to new surroundings, and especially poor sociability and difficulty in one's relationship with others may be the bases of self-criticism and self-reproach. Individuals with such peculiarities reproach themselves for their inadequate behavior in play and in work; they discover a series of faults in their conduct and in adverse and grave situations: they always foresee the worst possibilities and have no faith in themselves. Some real inadequacy of behavior in a given situation, together with the feeling of inferiority and the need to assert oneself, is the cause of continuous reproaches as well as of overexcitability, depression, and "eating oneself up" with worry.

In such individuals we meet, on the one hand, with anxiety, embarrassment in new surroundings, and observation of one's own behavior with a consequent sense of uneasiness and awkwardness of movement; on the other hand, we meet with an extremely subtle conscience, with the tendency to analyze oneself, with a sense of one's peculiarity, and a feeling of distinctiveness. Introverted types, retiring individuals, natural only in a familiar group, are usually



marked by a greater subtleness of thought and feeling, a tendency to contemplation, and to finding interests in uncommon problems. These are some of the factors causing self-consciousness and the discovery of many traits of one's own superiority.

Stepping down to a lower level in fellowship and social life, and realizing that this group is represented chiefly by individuals of low moral and social values, causes a feeling of inferiority and sensitiveness, and a tendency to explosiveness. This state often leads one to inappropriate actions and to self-derision in consequence of which there arises self-reproach, a feeling of shame, and self-mutilation. Besides the part played by the child's psychophysical constitution, a great part in the initiation and development of the above-mentioned emotional states is played by inadequate methods in educating the child. The infliction of inappropriate punishments (beating), lack or irrationality of the educational system and fear of the teacher, results in excitability, inadequacy of self-control, anxiety, and consequently self-mutilation. An abandoned, disliked, and neglected child, who is a poor mixer and not aggressive, releases this increasing, and at the same time repressed, tension by self-mutilation. This is taking vengeance on society by causing others to suffer his self-mutilation. Self-mutilation of "the injured and humiliated" (Dostoyefsky) arises under such circumstances.

We shall pass now to a large chapter of self-mutilation in connection with the feeling of guilt and the need for purification by punishment. In emotionally overexcitable, inadequately reacting individuals, harm to someone often results from excessive sensitiveness, lack of control, misunderstood reproaches, or misjudged relationships. Anxiety, and a difficulty in making decisions, does not allow him to admit the guilt and to explain the misunderstanding. Therefore, self-mutilation (and atonement for sins) becomes the easiest way of purification to free oneself from the strong mental tension.

Children and adolescents often engage in self-pricking with pins, biting of the fingers and lips to bleeding, kneeling on peas, sleeping on a hard bed. Weak, anxious, and sensitive children show excessive affection for the mother. We find that during the pre-adolescent period such children rapidly develop an attitude of great overconfidence, as a form of revolt and protest against the

former dependance and submission. Such youths become, subconsciously to a great extent, annoying and even cruel to their parents. (This is especially so in the relationship between these sons and their mothers.) The realization, after regaining their equilibrium, that they have done some harm to the parent, especially when the death of the parent makes reconciliation impossible, produces a feeling of guilt and a need for punishment which is frequently effected in the form of self-mutilation (living through past experiences, meditation, self-accusation, and physical self-mutilation). Under such circumstances, a suicidal tendency or attempt at suicide may arise, as an expression of the impossibility of gratification of the need.

At the bottom of the feeling of guilt, need of punishment, or self-mutilation, we frequently find disorders in the development of sex-interest and instincts. Inadequate development of the sex life in children and adolescents may result from innate factors and also from the harmful influence of the surroundings (watching the scenes of parents' sexual life, and the suppression of experiences connected with this; the teaching that all sex-interest is sinful; the punishment for masturbation; improper influence of servants; disappointment in the first love affair or sexual experience). If introverted, anxious, neurasthenic infantile types of personality, inclined to exaggerated self-analysis and lacking proper guidance, are exposed to such situations, there appears a feeling of guilt and a conflict between sexual tendencies and this guilt associated with the need for penitence. Self-mutilation is often a result of such a conflict.

Faulty educational methods as the basic factor in the abnormal development of a child's sexual instincts is illustrated by the case of 13-year-old *L*, the son of a woman who was fond of gay social life and flirtations. *L* showed from childhood self-mutilating tendencies; from his twelfth year he whipped himself. "Fight with flesh" contained within it "fight with woman." *L* avoided the society of women and, despite the reproaches at home which made him suffer humiliation, he could not help turning away when meeting women, even those who were the closest friends of the family. The influence of his mother, sexually overexcitable, flirtatious, and continually seeking amusement, was one of the causal factors. The mother,

not knowing the workings of her son's mind, ignored his becoming aware of her habits and did not notice the arousal of his pathological affection for herself (jealousy, need of fondling). She minimized the importance of her son's nervous outbursts, when, beautifully dressed, she was about to go to a dance. The feeling of sexual desire towards his mother, and its association with the tendency toward masturbation, were the bases of the development of a feeling of guilt and need for punishment, together with a fear of women.

Among neurasthenics, self-accusation and self-mutilation may be the result of a strong mental tension and depression combined with a feeling of impotency and inferiority. This mechanism is illustrated by the case of 18-year-old *S* who was a pleasant, cooperative boy of high intelligence. Once he slashed both his wrists with a penknife; several times, in states of excitement, he lifted heavy stones. In these instances he wanted to punish himself for masturbation and to free himself from the unpleasant state of mental overexcitability. A feeling of inferiority, combined with masturbation, shyness in relations with girls (when in their company, the thought persisted that he would not be able to have relations with them), together with acne of the face, played a part in the development of self-mutilating and suicidal tendencies. The following points throw light on the source of this condition. In his family, his mother was fonder of his better-looking brother, of whom the patient was jealous. He was not brought up to be an active member of the community; he took no part in plays, amusements, or school activities. He was highly emotional, which he probably inherited from his parents. This condition was intensified by masturbation which the patient considered from the beginning sinful and punishable (he grew up among people holding such convictions). These factors produced states of strong mental tension of an anxious character which were released by self-mutilation.

The rôle of sexual disorders as the basis for self-mutilation is again illustrated by the case of 17-year-old *M*, mentally of a dysplastic type (Kretschmer). *M* was extremely pious and inclined to convert her less devout friends. At her request, her tutors gave her permission to form a religious circle. She was troubled when she failed to influence her chums; she then stopped eating meat. At night, when she noticed that everybody was asleep, she would take

her poorly stuffed mattress to the classroom, put it on two benches and spend the night lying flat on her back. She repeatedly put wooden boards on her mattress and slept on them. The patient explained this behavior by saying that she had to prepare herself to take the veil. On persuasion, she stopped this mode of sleeping but began to pour salt into her tea and coffee. She often maintained that she understood personalities and that she could size them up at first sight. She was jealous when greater affection was shown to her younger brothers and sisters. She showed timidity in conversation with the opposite sex and considered dancing a crime. She showed unhealthy sexual tendencies toward girls and she became irritable and fretful when they moved away from her. She considered books on normal love-relations sinful. In preparing her work in the required course in literature, she at first avoided the amorous passages, but, when her curiosity was aroused, she became overexcited (very large pupils, blushing, trembling hands, uneasy movements, repeated unnatural wild laughter). After a certain time, she experienced pangs of conscience and an aversion to life; she considered herself a criminal, and the authors of the books foolish and dishonest. We deal here with a hysterical person with homosexual tendencies, sexual overexcitability, and a feeling of inferiority, and probably mental deficiency.

In the case of *L* we found a relatively weaker neuropathic basis. *L* entered the convent at the age of seven and, under influence of the convent atmosphere and religious reading, began to imitate saints by whipping herself. She locked herself in the bathroom before going to bed, and having entirely undressed herself whipped herself with a cord till she bled. She did it with the conviction that blood-letting had a purifying power. *L* whipped herself for several years until, on growing older, she realized that using self-mutilation brought on a state of sexual excitement and gratification. She admitted that the cause of her self-mutilation was "hunger for affection." (*L* was brought up away from her parents; as she states, she never was loved.) *L* repeatedly used self-mutilation to attract attention. It must be assumed that the need for arousing others' interest in her was also caused by the lack of parental love and care.

Twenty-year-old *S* of asthenic, introverted type was excited by the stories of the penitence of saints and felt the need for suffering

as a purgative to escape hell and to merit redemption. To that end, without betraying herself, she began self-mutilation by placing sharp and hard objects in her bed at night and by binding herself tightly with cords. The more she felt the pressure, the greater was her joy. In the passage from her autobiography concerning this period, she writes:

This was not enough to calm me; if my reason and the influence of the surroundings had not prevented me, I would have lain on red-hot coals, I would have submitted myself to slashing with a sharp knife and to all kinds of tortures I could imagine. It seemed to me that if my wishes came true I would have felt happy. I remained in such an emotional state for several nights in succession, and felt no need of sleep, yet in the day time I felt well.

After several years *S* stopped these practices and gave as a reason for stopping that she had a distinct, strong, and tempting sexual experience during their performance. "If not for this and the immediate surroundings, I should have tortured myself, no doubt, in a different way, for I found in it pleasure and satisfaction."

We have mentioned several times the rôle played by a state of anxiety in the arousal of the feeling of guilt and the need of punishment. Improper influence of the surroundings may provoke the appearance of groundless feelings of sin in suggestible children. Eight-year-old *M* pricked her hands and heels with a hat-pin. She beat her chest with all her strength and when asked by her older chums why she did it, she answered: "I must do so, because I often tell lies, I am afraid of Hell, and my mother says, 'one can repent in this world'." This child invented for herself various punishments as a means of purification for her imaginary sins. As early as her fifteenth year she started purifying herself by starvation. From the etiological standpoint the neuropathic heredity and the influence of the nervous mother, a religious fanatic, may have played a great part.

The last-described cases belong to ascetic self-mutilation, and they were put in this chapter because of the characteristic rôle of inferiority, guilt, and need of purgation, in the development of their self-mutilating tendencies, and, on the other hand, because of the lack of definitely systematized self-mutilation.

In individuals without physical, mental, or social ground for

the formation of inferiority feelings, but of introverted and passive makeup, we frequently observed self-mutilation as an expression of the need of distinguishing themselves, by showing unusual endurance in the most convenient means for obtaining the acclaim of the group. In a very few cases of this kind Adler's theory may be accepted. Self-mutilation rarely resulted here from excessive inquisitiveness into their inner experiences by introverted, suggestible individuals of unbalanced tendencies. Sometimes this need developed from an accidental observation of their dull sensitiveness to pain or painful experiences. Interest in such experiences sometimes betrayed a masochistic character. In other cases the cause was an interest in the endurance of pain by certain highly regarded characters of history and literature.

We were acquainted with the cases of several young people who observed themselves while inflicting physical pain on themselves, measuring how deeply they could insert a pin into their hands, and noticing how their faces would change as the pain increased. These individuals trained themselves to tolerate pain without showing the slightest change in expression. S, 18 years old, especially requested while undergoing a necessary operation that a nail be torn off his finger without anaesthetics, wanting to probe the limit of his endurance. The statement of physicians, during operations, or of dentists, during drilling and extraction of the teeth, that they are exceptionally patient in enduring pain gave these patients great pleasure.

A similar mechanism is shown in certain childrens' games; the so-called endurance games, based on competition on "who can stand the greater number of blows with the rod on the soles of the feet," or the determination of who will be able to kneel longer on peas, to stand longer on one foot, or to keep quiet longer in the classroom. Many competitors take part in these games; the initiative, however, usually comes from the types described above. A characteristic form of endurance game, without partners, combined with the need for perfection and the intolerance of mental suffering, is illustrated by the case of eight-year-old F, who, not being able to bear the sight of blood, and suffering from phobias and a state of excitation when watching the slaughter of animals, purposely watched the servant slaughter hens as a way to fortify herself and to distinguish herself in this field.

## 6. SELF-MUTILATION IN CONDITIONS OF EMOTIONAL HYPEREXCITABILITY AND LACK OF MENTAL BALANCE (INSTABILITY)

Many investigators of the emotional life of youth speak of individual or group excursions to cemetery chapels or morgues to observe the appearance of the dead, the expression of the face, the characteristic posture of the body and its morbidness. This phenomenon is fairly frequent, and we must consider it as a sign of interest in death because of its mystery and terror. In certain cases, however, the desire to look at the dead body is an urge to experience, to intensify, and to confirm with their senses the imaginations and oppressive feelings experienced in connection with the problem of their own deaths, their own destruction. To our questioning as to what drove them to such observations we were frequently told that they felt drawn to it in spite of moral pain and repulsion. Particular experiences related by some of them indicate that they like to visualize themselves in place of the corpse, and in imagination to vary the expression of the face, to change the position of the body, and to modify the surroundings as they imagine it would be in the case of their own death. Analysis of other aspects of the mental make-up of this type of individual very frequently throws light on these tendencies. Oftentimes, more or less typical nervous symptoms, neurasthenia or psychasthenia, were elicited; in many cases a feeling of inferiority was found. In the latter case, imagining oneself an object of interest, and visualizing the pity of parents and relatives may be one form of compensation of imagined or real inferiority. The psychasthenic or neurasthenic most frequently keeps himself outside of society. Unabsorbed by the changes and continuous currents of life, he has a chance for the observation of his deeper, less apparent symptoms. The emotional life unstirred by the outside world is turned inward. These factors make it easier to be occupied with such problems as that of death or the value of life. A normal person on the death of even an intimate friend or relative usually suffers merely a slight shock which does not leave deeper impressions. Not so with psychasthenics or neurasthenics, who are inclined to exaggerated self-analysis, phobias, and depression, "striving for ideals and homesick for eternity." To many of them the struggle with

the fear of death is a most important problem, from which result the attempts to accustom themselves to scenes of death and reflections on suicide. These experiences, despite the accompanying sadness and fear, are colored sometimes with the pleasant feeling resembling that which we experience when touching a painful spot. Obsessive thoughts of death as the end of all endeavors tinge the mood with sadness. Characteristic of these anxious psychasthenics is the inability to adapt themselves to the present mood of the environment, unless it be a sad one. These people, in a moment of joy, think of its rapid end and of oncoming unpleasantness. Constant rumination on restlessness, fear, and sadness obscures their happiness. We observed an individual with symptoms of self-mutilation who, in the most pleasant moments in his family circle or among friends, repeated in his thoughts: "Oh, if I could die, if I could only not exist." A reaction similar to this is a particular fondness for and tendency to deal with subjects full of unhappiness, sadness, and horror in life, literature, and painting. The outcome of action in literary works in a way which conflicts with the instinct of self-preservation, death of what should live, survival of what should perish, and the triumph of evil and pain over joy produces in such individuals exaggerated emotions which can hardly be explained as those of artistic satisfaction alone. A young and very cultured man stated, for instance, that of all the works of Puvis de Chavannes he liked best the picture entitled "Young Girls and Death," which presents six young girls dancing in the woods with flowers in their arms unaware of Death lurking among the flowers. Such tendencies frequently point to the existence of conflict within the ego. The feeling of sadness and pain, and the reflection on and increase of this feeling, may introduce an element of pleasure. The fact that this condition is unpleasant but inseparably associated with the mental structure of the subject, leads to the sublimation of sadness, pain, and morbidity into symbolic forms by which he measures the phenomena of the outside world. On the other hand, this is a sort of refuge from the outside world into his inner world which is emphasized and given a certain quality of sanctity and inaccessibility. Many individuals inclined to self-mutilation find satisfaction in the realization of their own solitude, injuries, sadness, and misunderstanding. "I prefer to be a dissatisfied Socrates than a satisfied animal," is for them a characteristic



expression of their inner feeling. The very solitude of the observer is frequently associated in nervous individuals with the ability to evaluate more easily the pretexts and falseness of the social milieu. Discovering "human beasts in the shape of man" (Zeromski) becomes a passion in many such people who look for the worst side of life.

In real life and in the creations of individuals inclined to self-mutilation we find many destructive tendencies. The created characters reveal destructive tendencies which destroy them mentally and physically. It is obvious that the solution of a problem by healthy reasoning should not destroy the individuals concerned. And yet we see that Judym (from "The Homeless" by Zeromski), a strong man, profoundly emotional, and a realist, condemns himself to destruction by casting aside Joas' deep love for him, which he supposed would have hindered him in fulfilling his obligations to society. Yet, putting ourselves into Joas' and Judym's position, we see precisely that their union would have increased the value of their work for others, and would have given Judym the necessary strength for the fulfillment of difficult tasks and also eliminated many inner conflicts. Joas' whole personality was exactly the converse of Judym's chimera; and the way in which Judym solves his internal conflicts forms in us the conviction that he will end by suicide or by breaking down mentally because of inner suffering, that he will not fulfill the accepted obligations to humanity, and that he will destroy Joas' life. One feels that the author is unable to remove some destroying force which exists everywhere, which inflicts the least expected and most painful blows because it is directed against youth, beauty, and the most cherished sentiments. These characters were all created by a man who possessed an appreciation of beauty, of individuality, and of heroism, who, in moments of the greatest blossoming of these qualities in his heroes, destroys them by blind accidental forces and foolishly insignificant conflicts existing in their imaginations. This is precisely "the laceration of his own wounds" but it is also evidence of his desires to destroy, as a symptom of his philosophy that "all arises from dust and to dust shall return." Such writers as Dostoyefsky and Zeromski possess, on the one hand, a strongly developed sense of reality, recognizing the "human beast" in general and in particular, and, on the other hand, a worship of upright and long-

suffering people who suffer only because of their spiritual values. They bear the painful knowledge that wrong is never rectified or revenged, that the evil of cosmic character frequently infects innocent and beautiful souls (Eva Pobratimska), and that in greatness lies the secret germ of lowness. This knowledge, together with the conviction that in a young beauty lies the bud of ugliness, and that in life lies the seed of death strengthening its power in each unit of life with every passing moment, produces a state of continuous restlessness, torment, and pessimism. The greater the ability to see the unpleasant side of life and, at the same time, to escape beyond it and beyond the realm of death, to disregard all values, the greater will be the restlessness and self-mutilation. The mind, not allowing itself to be deluded, and unable to adapt itself to life, will logically lead to self-mutilation, to suicide, and to more or less conscious hatred of its own disintegration. Since, however, this spirit is a real component of the mind of the individual, and since it is felt as one's own and therefore an integral part of the personality, it frequently becomes pleasurably colored. Thus a certain unpleasant state can be explained to some extent as agreeable and also as disagreeable. This mental splitting and aversion to life is opposed by the instinct of self-preservation and the sense of reality, which struggles with these tendencies in order to preserve the ego. The more pronounced this disintegration, the stronger is the urge for destruction and the wish to die. Schopenhauer's life was characterized by conflict between the instinct of self-preservation and the negation of the wish to live. The ability to notice the "human beast" in all its complexity and realism, along with sympathy for the down-trodden individual and a deep subtleness of feeling, characterizes Dostoyefsky, Tolstoy, and Zeromski. The need for spirituality, on the one hand, and the tendency toward sensuality, on the other hand, are the basic characteristics of Weininger. All these authors showed self-mutilating tendencies to a high degree, and some of them displayed certain hetero-mutilating tendencies as well.

Berent (7) calls attention to the conflicts of Nietzsche's mentality in the following way:

Actual conflict in Nietzsche is a discord of spirit, whose roots reach deep into human nature, an eternal quarrel of fiery emotions with coolness of thoughts, of dreaming, and of lively

imagination with severe calm of strict logic; the torment of the poet who considers himself insane, a phantom, an exile from the realm of truth with intuitive feeling of the deeper secrets of life, paralyzed by a distrust of feelings and intuitions.

Nietzsche's work is the expression of his spiritual reality. The conflict exists between Apollo, symbol of ideals, of sculpture and painting in the realm of art, of intuition, measure, number, and refinement, and Dionysus, symbol of music, passions, savageness, and abandonment. Nietzsche [according to Jung (47)] was of an intuitive type with a tendency to introversion (Apollo) which found its expression, for example, in *Geburt der Tragödie* and *Also sprach Zarathustra*. He had, however, the earmarks of savageness, the signs of an untamed will (Dionysus), and indications of episodes of strong erotic excitement.

What are the pathological foundations on which is based the mental structure of individuals showing a conflict of tendencies? This is a complicated problem, and we are not trying to solve it. We shall submit only a series of examples, indicating their complexity. Mental overexcitability may cause the need of action which may be expressed in the form of good for the community, in reform work, etc., but it is usually associated with sensitiveness (vulnerability), isolation, repression of emotional needs, and self-mutilation. In individuals with homosexual tendencies there occurs often a struggle between their natural instincts and the feeling of shame, inferiority, and depression associated with knowledge of their abnormality. In drug addicts, alcoholics, and gamblers endowed with a refined conscience, their tendencies are in constant struggle with the feeling of humiliation and helplessness. Compulsions and sado-masochistic impulses may be the bases of conflicts of different groups of tendencies (loss of some tendencies due to the awakening of aversion to them during the fight, love, and hatred involved in sado-masochism). The more they are equal in strength, the harder the struggles and the more intensive becomes the self-mutilation.

As we have shown, self-mutilation as an expression of the struggle of conflicting tendencies is met with in rather introverted individuals, whose subjective life overbalances the influence of objective life. A slight predominance of introversion over extraversion may be the basis of an excessive repression of tendencies of opposing natures, of a state of strong tension, and of self-mutilation (Jung).

## 7. ASCETICISM

Asceticism, in the present meaning of the term, is based on the repression of natural requirements for the attainment of a chosen end, usually religious. The practice of asceticism in different forms is found in the most remote eras of human history. The investigations of Durkheim (26) Levy-Bruhl, and others show that asceticism is one of the religious practices among primitive people. The endurance of pain, discomforts, and fear were indispensable qualifications of a leader or of a high personality. The recognition of these qualities as of high value served to introduce training in the endurance of pain as prerequisite to entrance into the class of warriors and to the elevation from childhood to manhood. In Australia only those were included into the men's circle who had for some time practiced asceticism. In civilized Sparta the boys were hardened by beating. Prostration of Christian warriors in the form of a cross prior to battle finds its analogy in the self-torture of men of nomadic tribes (American Indians, Australians) before war. The ability to control his sensitivity to pain proves that the given individual will not be afraid of wounds in battle, that he has lifted himself above minor things, and that he is nearer to God. After showing his heroism he is honored; after passing through a series of hardships he receives membership in many select and secret organizations. The observation that moderate asceticism strengthens not only courage, endurance, and mental power but also health was one of the bases for the introduction of regular fasts on appointed days; this also was necessary before making the more important decisions and the taking of any important steps. There is also, largely from the same source, prohibition of dancing and other pleasures during certain periods. In many people moderate asceticism is one means of assuring fertility. Asceticism, sanctioned by the state and religious authorities, soon began to take collective communal form (convents, sects, secret societies, etc.). As we have stated above, such or other forms of asceticism are found in all known people, primitive as well as civilized. In some people asceticism did not go beyond the form of moderation and training in endurance (Jews, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Japanese). Among the Jews, ascetic customs before the period of exile, as well as after (Hassidism and Rabbinitism),

explicitly forbade tortures and ordered fasts, spiritual exercises, and meditation. The body to the Jews was the expression of beauty created in the image of God. Close observance of the laws and emphasis on the value of fertility were the only outlets from the misery and difficulties of the reorganization of life after exile.

Roman asceticism was an asceticism of warriors characterized by exercises in the endurance of fatigue and pain and practical competition for public leadership. Moderation, chastity, and temperance in food and drink were associated with the performance of religious ceremonies in Japan. These, together with orders to control their passion for their chosen desires, were the means to bolster courage and readiness for sacrifice. We shall deal more closely with Greek, Hindu, and Christian forms of asceticism, as the most original, and exercising the greatest influence on the religious life of humanity.

The beginnings of the practice of Greek asceticism are found in the Elysian Mysteries of the cult of Dionysus. We find in them the rôle of ecstasy in purification (catharsis) from the baser elements of existence. The struggle between soul and body, pessimism concerning the value of temporary life, the necessity for preparation for the separation of the soul from the body by suffering and by states of ecstasy are expressed in the Mysteries. In the Orphics we find mystic practices by which it was possible to enter into relation with the occult world. The interdiction of meat-eating was based on the belief that in animals as well as in man is embedded the germ of indestructible life. These ideas are also found in the Pythagoreans who practiced exercises of silence and emphasized strict principles of life, and also in Empedocles' belief in reincarnation (the basis for the prohibition of meat consumption), and asceticism as a method of liberation from sensual life. The conflict between matter and form, between the sensual, changeable, and temporary, on one side, and the intellectual, immutable, and eternal, on the other, is most strongly emphasized in Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and in the Neoplatonism. The Cynics and Stoics realized these ideas most closely. For the former, the way to perfection was the systematic libertation from the outside world, limiting to the minimum one's natural needs; for the latter, strife against the sensual desires by submitting them to reasoning, by ruthlessly strict appraisal of the moral value of each action (absolute ethics, lack of appreciation of what lies between right and wrong).

The Greek asceticism emanates, as we see, from a philosophical investigation and the belief that there are two conflicting elements in man. The aesthetic taste of the Greeks, the development of their sculpture, their tendencies to philosophical contemplation, and the relative rarity of cruel persecutions and catastrophes were the factors which guarded the Greeks against practicing physical tortures. The Greek asceticism had a great influence on Europe, Asia Minor, and Africa, and especially on the Jews (viz., *Filon the Jew*, *De Vita Contemplativa*) and Romans.

Special sources in a particular phase of the development of asceticism are found in the Hindus. The Hindus are described as mild, cold, and passive. As a matter of fact, in the majority of cases they are nervous, emotionally and sexually overexcitable, and frequently impulsive. The mildness, calmness, and passivity is to a great extent the result of a turbulent mode of living and of a training and a philosophy of life grown out of experience and suffering. India was a country which afforded an abundance of such experiences: misery, starvation, malaria, and earthquake mercilessly sweeping away each year thousands of people, numerous victims of venomous snakes, the striking and humiliating antagonism of the castes (hunger of pariahs and their pitiful treatment in contrast with the wealth and power of the princes). An important factor was also the frequent conquest of India by people of little spiritual culture but of overwhelming physical force (Mongols, Mohammedans), or by powers seeking imperialistic development and material profits (British). These factors produced a feeling of helplessness, of fear and pain, and as a consequence, what is characteristic of people with whom one misfortune follows another, a subconscious desire for complete annihilation, the ending of the destructive work begun by fate. The daily occurring tragedies of life require constant adaptation to them. The Hindus adapted themselves to these conditions by resignation, self-withdrawal, mental shrinking, passivity, and self-mutilation, as means of becoming insensitive to pain, to misfortune, and death. They bore the tyranny of others calmly. A compensation for their humiliation was the feeling of spiritual elevation. Experience during the ages rendered permanent this characteristic attitude in regard to violence. The relation of the Hindus to reality was described in the holy books which were greatly respected

as guides of life. One who was able to tolerate the worst experiences with indifference, especially pain and death, won the name of ascetic and the highest esteem and admiration.

In Bhagavad-Ghita we find the definition of an ascetic as follows: "It is one who has neither desires nor prejudices (ill will)" (39). In hyperexcitable and introverted individuals it was insufficient to reach the state of indifference to experiences of life; they found an outlet for their excitability in increasing the life experiences by the application of self-mutilation. The following passages from Hindu books indicate various immediate causes for self-mutilation, all of which have as a common basis the desire for the annihilation of pain by producing indifference to earthly pleasures, for attaining higher aims, and for the transformation of the lowest orders to the values of higher orders.

He submitted himself to asceticism for a very long time and so battled his body that he became thin as a shade and almost turned into a spirit (53).

He went into the woods Gangadvar, where he practiced the severest asceticism. Once when a fire fed by a strong wind broke out in the forest, Dhatarasztra not only did not save himself by escaping but he awaited, with Gandhari and Kunti, the tongues of fire as their deliverers.

Dhatarasztra and two women, subjecting themselves to a sacrificial fire, understood that he gained for them eternal life in heaven (53).

The King Kshatrya, surnamed Viswamitra, in order to surpass the sage Vashishta hopelessly submitted himself for thousands of years to horrible self-mutilation, which in the end led to the foundation of the caste Brahma (53).

As the legend says, King Jonkhishaera tiring of life, and disillusioned, went to Mount Meru, and after many unpleasant adventures on the way reached the celestial mountains where he finally was admitted to the Swarg, the abode of happiness. Since that time many Saddhus courageously directed themselves toward the same goal, making this perilous journey alone and frequently never returning (11).

Sometimes the goal of the ascetic practice was the final annihilation of life, which was the source of all pain and evil. The fear of the continuous wandering of souls, with the belief that the

path to the heights of spiritual existence or that this existence itself will be a continuous torture, was the basis of self-mutilation by continuous and agonizing wandering to bring the final destruction closer.

Oftentimes this religious order (Dzajns) was joined by individuals tired of life. Bareheaded, barefooted, and nude, they wandered through India eight months out of the year, for two or three thousand years, often without assurance and even without trust in God. Mortifying their decrepit bodies only to prevent a new existence, they wandered constantly in order to assure themselves avoidance of the wandering of their souls,—eternal freedom and final annihilation (11).

Not all the forms of self-mutilation have as their aim the real elevation of the individual to a higher spiritual level. They were frequently combined with a tendency to dramatization, with tricks, produced for profit and the gratification of vanity and the excitement of admiration. Despite the difference between both forms we find in the second form an expression of the tendencies both to lift themselves to a higher level and also to get into the limelight. This is again a distorted way to perfection. As I have shown, the Hindus are introverts who rather favor mental dissociation, mysticism, and ecstasy. Many times the causal experience of agreeable states of excitement and ecstasy (accidental experience of fatigue, narcotization) was the basis for the application of this accidentally observed method of bringing themselves into this state. The observation that pain induced or increased the state of excitement had some significance in its adoption for this purpose. They used in India the diverse kinds of self-mutilation, ranging from the simple exercise of moderation in nourishment, clothing, talking, etc., to physical self-chastisement and the worst tortures. To the last belonged such forms as: spending whole days naked on spiked boards; holding the arms up for many months, or years, without interruption until atrophy of the muscles and stiffening of the joints set in; pressing the closed fists until the ingrowing nails broke through the palms. Different castes of Saddhus practice various forms of self-mutilation. Buddhism did not recognize self-torture but pointed the way to attaining insensibility to one's suffering by meditation and the exercise of control over natural instincts.



Christian asceticism was the result of a combination of Hebrew practices of moderation, Oriental influences (Egyptian, Hindu), Greek philosophy, Christ's principles based on his life and death, and finally the prolonged persecution which produced resistance to physical and moral pain. The last of these was due to the influence of the belief that earthly life is only a period of trial and preparation for eternity. The tradition of solitary and collective meditation, fasts, and other religious exercises as an initiation to the teaching of others, Christ's directing the way to Him of those who would become His pupils, and the influence of practices in other religions were the bases of the future establishment of monastic orders with rules for self-denial, prayers, and other forms of religious exercises. Whipping was one of the oldest and simplest forms of physical tortures based on the consideration of whipping as a punishment.

Asceticism had its periods of intensification during times of unusual stress (famine, epidemics, war, and earthquakes). Asceticism thrives most frequently in countries where the people are characterized by emotionality and sensitiveness (Spain, France, Italy, Russia), much less in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries.

The church did not officially recommend self-torture as a method of attaining perfection. Instead, it directed the exercise of self-denial in accordance with the principle that, by mastering oneself, one gains authority over others. Pope Gregory VII spread his reign over the world by withdrawing from it. The Protestant and Lutheran churches did not recognize asceticism. The unofficial but favorable treatment of moderate asceticism by the Catholic church was the basis for the formation of centers of asceticism by certain individuals who thus became founders of religious orders. Depending on the personality of the founder and on his experience, more or less strict regimentation was involved and different methods of asceticism were prescribed.

A series of facts shows that a great rôle in the practice of asceticism was played by ecstatic states, visions, etc., accidentally experienced or developed under the influence of reading the lives of saints, and based on mental excitability and tendencies to disintegration. Among Christian saints we find many personalities who were characterized by violence of emotions, bad habits, and the tendency to utilize neuropathic disorders. (St. Hieromius was tormented by the hardest

temptations; St. Paul, St. Francis d'Assisi, and St. Vincent de Paul showed violence of feelings; St. Augustine and St. Anthony, the hermit, were inclined toward sexual excitability; Saints Mary Magdalen, Afra, and Margaret of Cordova were courtesans). Over-excitable individuals who are inclined to experience strong emotional states are marked also by a greater tendency to dissociation. Stimulation of a particular excitable group of tendencies leads to the realization of these tendencies, despite opposition, resistance, and struggle. A great conflict between opposite tendencies arises from various states of emotional ambivalence (attraction and repulsion, a need and fear of its realization) which, in conjunction with a degree of mental disintegration, is the basis of the domination of one group of emotions over the others. This is realized many times by way of self-mutilation. I think that the transformation from a state of sexual passion to one of asceticism, from unrestrained bad habits to self-control and idealism, may be effected by a struggle of conflicting tendencies in which one tendency or group of tendencies is driven out by another. The beginning of the victory is most frequently the states of rapture and ecstasy, whose intensification may bring about permanent changes in the mental structure and provide a foundation for the strong development of one tendency at the expense of the suppressed or vanquished one.

The knowledge of one's sexual excitability, the strength of which one experiences constantly and which is distinctly antagonistic to another group of tendencies, the need of sensual purity, may cause physical self-mutilation. Whipping and other means of torture are often a means of release of sexual tension; as witnessed in the case of St. Pasquales Baylon who answered, when asked by one of his companions whether he experienced sexual temptations: "Yes, but as soon as I feel them, I immediately whip my body with rods until the pain appeases the temptation" (52).

In the initial stage of self-mutilation, sexual excitability most frequently increases and it ceases or transforms itself into other forms of psychomotor release only in more advanced stages. Self-mutilation may intensify a state of ecstasy; therefore, one frequently tortures the body subconsciously in a state of ecstasy to reach a higher degree of exaltation. Sometimes reflection on the different possibilities of

torture stirs up the individual to ecstatic states. This was the case with St. Theresa who wrote of the Child Jesus:

Ah, above all, I wish to be a martyr; to be a martyr, here is the dream of my youth! This dream grew in me in a cell at Carmel. But here is another madness for I desire not only one kind of martyrdom but to satisfy me I should need all of them. . . . . As you, my Adored One, I should like to be whipped, and crucified. . . . I should like to be plunged into boiling oil. I want to be torn by wild beasts like Ignatius of Antioch; to be bread worthy of God. With St. Agnes and St. Cecilia I should like to put my throat under the executioner's axe; to whisper the name of Jesus while burning at the stake like Joan of Arc. Jesus, open for me the book of the lives of the Saints, which contains the deeds which I should like to accomplish for you.

Reaching an ecstatic state by self-mutilation after its protracted practice requires very frequently an increase of the intensity of self-mutilation, because of the blunting of the excitability. On the other hand, exhaustion often follows a state of ecstasy and consequently there arises an unpleasant state of depression. Both these factors result in a need for an increase of suffering which becomes to some ascetics as essential as narcotics are to drug addicts.

Only suffering can from now on make my life bearable, all my wishes center on suffering: how many times do I raise my voice from the secret recesses of my soul to God, "Lord, to suffer or to die is the only thing I am asking Thee" (46).

We have discussed above the influence of strong impulses, of violence of feeling, and of conflict between groups of tendencies in self-mutilation observed among the saints. There exists, however, another group, characterized by a weakness of certain impulses. The fear of the experiences of life, fear of sexual impotency and of the entire sexual problem, and a tendency to ambivalent action of these impulses (curiosity and aversion) are included in this group. The consequences of such weakness are an increase of the anxiety state, self-accusation, and self-mutilation. In the saints we find, according to the observations of physicians and others, various disorders of the nervous system, principally of a functional nature such as hysteria, anxiety-neurosis, and neurasthenia, as well

as disorders of sensibility and attacks of violent pain. These nervous states are associated more or less with the disintegration of certain groups of tendencies and with self-mutilation.

In conclusion of this section on asceticism we shall consider Janet's theory which, although based primarily on the observation of self-mutilation in one female patient (observation over a 20-year period), gives some insight into one of the mechanisms of asceticism. At the bottom of asceticism Janet sees the fear of yielding to a flood of violent passions, together with the knowledge that submitting to them will lead to exhaustion. This patient of Janet's stated that she possessed the rudiments of the most dangerous passions and that, if she were not constantly on her guard, her passions, would dominate her and lead to unbridled licentiousness. This watching over herself, with the stifling of her sexual desires and the shrinking away from the difficulties of life, probably produced some suppression of other actions, which gave her pleasure. Janet thinks that many cases of asceticism can be explained by the need to escape from pleasure and the search of pain for the prevention of danger from uncontrolled debauches and passions. One may say that this is an action to assure a readiness to struggle with the passions, and also to assure a defense against future temptations. The fear of experiencing what is usually considered a pleasure is, according to Janet, the most important factor in this mechanism (44).

## 8. SUICIDE IN RELATION TO SELF-MUTILATION

We shall review here in brief only those kinds of suicide which reveal a common base with self-mutilating tendencies and primarily those which are the result of these tendencies. The starting-point is some exciting agent which, depending on its intensity, produces a disharmony of tendencies and becomes the center of the struggle in their attempts at reintegration. New complexes of tendencies arise by whose regrouping the formerly dominating tendency may be weakened. The reinforced exciting agent may subdue many tendencies to the disadvantage of the previously dominating one. Suicide follows in individuals in whom the undermined dominating tendency, which Janet calls the "reality function," becomes itself the irritating agent.

The suicide of Spitznagel, a friend of the great Polish romantic author Slowacki, is an example of suicide based on the irritability and struggle between tendencies. We know from the psychological works of Julius Slowacki that he was, in contrast to Spitznagel and despite his great overexcitability and tendency to depression, a type which easily realized his aims in the world of dreams and fancies by which he transformed real life as he wanted it. Spitznagel, on the contrary, needed to see spiritual values in life and had a much more strongly developed sense of reality and criticism, which did not allow him to transform reality at will. Not finding in the real world the spiritual values he sought, there was an intensification of the inner conflict resulting in self-mutilation and suicide.

Weininger's suicide was the result of an inner conflict between the need of spirituality and the sensual life symbolized by woman. In the period preceding his suicide, Weininger showed ascetic and self-mutilating tendencies, as well as a tendency to inflict pain on others.

Stavrogin's suicide (from Dostoyefsky's *Devils*) was the result of the continuous struggle of a whole complex of tendencies, namely, a tendency to auto- and hetero-mutilation, an attraction toward sin associated with a desire for atonement and a need and fear of self-derision. The desire to destroy fear led to an aversion to life and to the rejection of the dominating tendency, the ability to adapt to the changing conditions of life. An impulse to suicide, to kill the fear of death, is found in psychoneurotic individuals. Fear of

the cruelty of passing from life to death, the destruction of beauty and of all signs of existence, forms an unbearable situation and a need for freedom from it.

The following fragments of Korzecki's conversation with Judym from *The Homeless* of Zeromski throws light on Judym's mental state:

A young boy, a son of a poor miner, died here a few weeks ago. I brought him a little red hat once from Milan, a present bought on my trip . . . . for one franc. . . . Here in this garden he used to run and jump all day long. This little red head . . . . when I learned that he died of diphtheria, I purposely undertook the most important tasks, laid out plans, all in order not to think of him. Well . . . . and so it passed. And then one evening sitting in the armchair . . . . I raise my eyes and see a red spot moving along the wall. And in my ears rings his gay voice. Do I know after all if it was a spot? It was a sadness, red and awe-inspiring as the death itself of such an innocent life. . . . But I have also another sickness, I have an extremely refined conscience, there is an aching leftover. Misfortune and grief are the possessions of truth. Too great a distance lies between truth and the coal-pits.

In the character of Korzecki we find strong tendencies to self-mutilation in the form of irony and acrimony in regard to others as well as to himself. The too accurate observation of conflicts in life based on mental excitability and inner conflicts was the basis of self-mutilation and suicide. In individuals practicing self-mutilation, we often find the need for a gradual increase of the intensity of self-mutilation for obtaining a state of contentment. The gradual adaptation to agents of a certain strength leads to the infliction of ever increasing tortures; such situations may arouse suggestions of suicide or attempts at suicide as the most effective means of self-mutilation. This is a narcotization *sui generis* with suffering by which suicide becomes the strongest means of self-mutilating narcosis.

In states of depression, attacks of acute neurosis of vasomotor origin, in connection with which there arise a feeling of doom, a feeling of impending death, or a fear of insanity, suicide may appear to be the only means of liberation from an unbearable state after self-mutilating attempts at suicide. The experiencing of a suicidal

attempt and of freeing oneself from states of restlessness in the moment of decision to commit suicide increases the need and transforms it into an obsession. Individuals revealing tendencies to self-mutilation and suicide often have a feeling of aversion or of strangeness to oneself. One of Janet's patients who jumped out of the window motivated her decision by a wish to die by her illness and a feeling of wretchedness which, however, had no apparent organic basis. We associate symptoms similar to the above most frequently with a state of hypochondria, melancholia, etc., based, it is supposed, on a disorder of deep sensibility, of which nothing more definite can be said at present. A more exact knowledge of the mechanism of these feelings will most likely enable us to throw light on this type of suicide. The patient's difficulty of finding the cause of this feeling of wretchedness intensifies the struggle with the latter and increases the state of restlessness. This leads sometimes to rebellion against the ill-defined, obscure, and consequently most unpleasant excitation and, in these conditions, the instinct of self-preservation becomes itself the strongest exciting agent and produces a necessity for self-destruction. The above factors, which are at the bottom of self-mutilation and suicide, have their sources in the psychophysical structure of the individual (disharmony in a group of tendencies, neuropathic states, disorders of deep sensibility).

Difficult mental conflicts and an abnormal educational environment have a great influence on the arousal and development of suicidal desires as enlarged self-mutilating tendencies. Parental love and the child's feeling that he is of some value play a great part in the development and transformation of the child's egocentrism. An abandoned child is deprived of the influence of these factors. A break in the physical and spiritual contact with the mother and disorders during the developmental periods cause a weakening of self-esteem which retards the development of the instinct of self-preservation. The feeling of affection and cordiality is to the child as indispensable for his mental development as feeding is for his physical growth. The gradual development of self-reliance and of the ability to adapt easily to new surroundings is based on the feeling that in case of mistakes one has the unfailing help of his dear ones. Lack of this assurance causes mental overexcitability, a feeling of uncertainty and self-appraisal as an unnecessary and useless individual.

This is illustrated by the case of 15-year-old Z, who was disliked and neglected by her parents. Before one of her suicidal attempts she left her governess the following note: "I can't live without any security; I wanted to be a good soldier but I guess that I am only a coward." Before attempting suicide she often emphasized the worst sides of her appearance and character. She said that she wanted to die, that it is "better to disappear in the darkness."

"Injury and humiliation" as a basis of self-mutilation and attempts at suicide is illustrated by the following passage from the autobiography of Z:

I have the misfortune to belong to the class of the unknown, the homeless and the unnecessary in this world. From childhood, since I realized what a homeless child means, a horrible question tormented me: why didn't I have parents, why am I so unhappy? I envied all children their parents, especially when a mother caressed her child in my presence. I did not even try to go near the children of wealthy parents because I considered myself something inferior, evil and despised. . . . I willingly tried to comply within the limits of possibility with my guardian's instructions, but revolted more than once, which led to misunderstandings during which my guardian derided my origin and stated that such homeless children were good for nothing, that they were outcasts of society, who will never come to anything good. . . . I hated the parents, especially my mother, who for her momentary pleasure (when fifteen, I already understood it) brought me into the world and threw me at the mercy of fate instead of depriving me of life before birth, or immediately after. (If I met with such a misfortune, I would kill myself and the child.) When the guardian taxed me, as it seemed to me, too much, I decided to do away with myself. I then constrained myself to eat nothing the whole week; I became so weak that I fainted, but, death did not come. . . . After a few days of rest, and after again hearing the usual reproaches, I ran out several times at night barefooted in the snow or opened the window and stood there for sometime in order to catch cold and to die sooner, for such a life is a martyrdom.

Suicidal tendencies, especially in youth, may, according to Adler's theory, develop on the basis of a feeling of inferiority which in turn may be caused by an inferiority of certain organs, by conditions of



life, or conflicts in the family. As exposure to sickness and pain is often a form of self-mutilation in order to arouse pity among the interested ones, so may the contemplation of and attempts at suicide be used to arouse pity and to injure others. The refusal to eat and exposure to cold are often expressions of a need to attract attention or to play an important part in life. Lacking other means to reach the first rank and to arouse interest, one looks for it sometimes in dreams of death or in suicide. Suicide can finally be the strongest form of protest or vengeance for failure in life, the last stage of self-mutilation and, therefore, also of the torture of others (2).

Individuals whose lives are predominantly inner, introverts and schizoids, have ordinarily little emotional plasticity. Their emotional relationship with others is usually very deep and thus their disappointment and disillusionment more easily destroy their mental unity. Emotional overexcitability, ambition, and self-consciousness are the factors which prevent them from occupying themselves in the daily tasks because they brood over their mistakes. An unbearable state is created not only because the given individual has lost, for instance, a person with whom he was strongly connected emotionally but also because he himself has made such a mistake that the object of the emotion was not in keeping with an emotion of high moral value. In such a state, aversion and hatred may be turned against oneself as the cause of these mistakes. Sometimes psychic injury has such a force that it irreparably destroys the mental integrity. Emotionally overexcitable individuals, unable to create a philosophy explaining their past sufferings, often end by suicide. The impulse of self-destruction may begin with physical or psychical self-mutilation and end in suicide.

## 9. SELF-MUTILATION OF MICHELANGELO, DOSTOY- EFSKY, WEININGER, DAWID, AND TOLSTOY

### MICHELANGELO

Michelangelo Buonarotti had a characteristic group of self-mutilating traits. A series of complicated factors played a part in the arousal and development of these tendencies. His father was irritable, unstable, and inclined to phobias. Nothing definite is known about his mother. His mother's tiresome horseback trip a short time before his coming into the world may have had some influence on Michelangelo's nervousness (78). Severe punishments by his father and uncle for neglecting other studies because of his preference for drawing and sculpture were also not without influence (78).

At about 17 years of age he had a nervous shock when one of his companions, Pietro Torrigiano, in a fight broke the former's nose with a blow of the fist. The disfigurement remained permanent. Michelangelo had a strong but not well-proportioned figure (the upper half of the body was more strongly developed than the lower). His forehead was large in proportion to the whole skull. Since his early youth he was subject to many different ailments (headaches, neuralgia, toothaches, eye-aches, kidney and bladder stones); despite this he lived to be very old (12). Anxiety associated with nervousness, awareness of his physical unattractiveness, and past humiliations caused the birth of a feeling of inferiority compensated for by a tendency to irony, disdain, and irritability. Emotional hyperexcitability, at times when it was difficult to find a full outlet in art, released itself in self-mutilation, a characteristic means of release for the type of anxious and distinctly introverted individuals to which Michelangelo belonged. Emotionality and a predominantly inner life produced a strong need for love and deep enduring friendship. However, he experienced in this respect not only disappointments but also humiliations. One of his beloved ones played with his excitability: she excited his jealousy by flirting with others. He detested her in the end; he begged fate to disfigure her, and to make her fall in love with him, so that he could in his turn refuse her love and cause her pain.

Michaelangelo suffered on account of his bad looks because to such a man as he, loving physical beauty more than any-

body else, ugliness was a disgrace. Traces of this feeling of humiliation are found in a few poems he wrote. This feeling was the more vexing as during his whole life he was consumed by love, and it does not seem that any of his love was requited at any time . . . . .

A strong affection for Victoria Colonna and Th. Cavalieri did not cause him disappointment. The first affection was rather a friendship characterized by platonic love; Victoria Colonna had many masculine traits. The features of her face betrayed a strong will, a certain hardness (high forehead, long and plain nose, the upper lip short and peevish, the lower lip prominent, tight-mouthed, chin salient). Her profound knowledge of art and taste for the sciences were the outstanding reasons for the existence of this affectionate relationship. His emotional contact with Th. Cavalieri, a mixture of friendship and platonic love, showed traces of pathological infantile affection, as Rolland points out.

He wrote him letters (Th. Cavalieri), he turned to his idol with humble groveling submission. He called him a powerful genius, a wonder, the light of the century. He begged him not to scorn him, that he could compare himself with him, whom nobody could equal, he offered him in tribute his life, all his future. . . . .

Taking into consideration the peculiar form of his emotional link with Cavalieri (who must have been a very handsome man) and his feeling for Victoria Colonna, a woman of a rather masculine type, one may assume the possible existence of a certain homosexual and infantile trait in the genius of sculpture. Another indication of this is his portrayal of young forms of physical beauty in art, his lack of desire to marry (from a group of five brothers including Michelangelo only one was married), and a feeling of particular affection for handsome adolescents. This, however, was not of a definitely pathological character. Traits such as the subjection to mood changes the difficulty or impossibility of making a decision, and outbursts of anger point also to infantilism. From childhood Michelangelo suffered from states of anxiety. He was afraid of being infected with the Black Plague and worried about the health of his family; he was afraid of persecution and attacks on his life.

Most frequently, moreover, he suffered from a groundless, vague restlessness and from fears of pending misfortune (12). He was continually undecided, never being able to make up his mind to choose between two projects. He could not reach an agreement with himself and changed his mind frequently, which led him to outbursts of anger and shame, and caused self-aversion and self-hatred. States of restlessness, associated with physical troubles as well as with excessive mental excitability, the feeling of inferiority, and his introversion were the causes of reversals of decisions and changes in points of view. This led sometimes to lying and flattery. The realization of his condition and the hatred of certain traits of his character were the bases of self-mutilation, whipping, and asceticism. Michelangelo's excitability expressed itself also in excessive activity and in a pathological ardor for work.

Once while horseback riding he noticed a mountain dominating a whole region, and the desire arose in him to forge it into the Colossus visible to sailors from afar. He worked furiously, forgetting food and sleep. He wanted to do everything himself; it gratified him to support his father and his brothers by his work; he helped everywhere. He was seldom satisfied with himself and felt that he could not express in his work all his thoughts and desires. In letters he inserted postscripts, then destroyed most of them, dispatching few. The magnitude of his work, despite his tremendous energy, increased his restlessness and his doubts of being equal to his task. Behind the above-mentioned character traits was, on the one side, the feeling of talent, and, on the other side, a continuous restlessness which was seeking motor release in his plans and works. Here also lie the will to power and the need of greatness which were associated with the need of creation and also with feelings of inferiority in certain respects and the striving for their compensation. States of depression were caused by an excess of these needs, the superabundance of ideas and desires being in disharmony with the possibility of fulfillment. The feeling of inferiority, extreme sensitivity, and dwelling above all in the world of creation were some of the causes of his solitude and of his difficulties in relation to others. It was part of Michelangelo's individuality and at the same time an expression of his instinct of self-preservation and creative need to protect himself against the feverish political life and the superficialities of contemporary society.

This increased his difficulties in adapting to new surroundings and intensified his states of fear. The lack of expression of sentiment and the difficulties in his everyday life were compensated for by his tightening the emotional link to the family and to a small number of friends. The death of his dearest ones, resulting in increased solitude, with the coexistence of the above-mentioned traits produced pessimism, weariness of life, and yearning for death. Nobody was less receptive to joy and better created for pain. He noticed only pain in life; pain only he felt in the immense universe. "A hundred joys will not outweigh one torture." "All afflicts me," he wrote, "even the good because its brevity oppresses and saddens my soul as much as the wrong itself." He grew each year more sullen and the idea of death absorbed him more and more; he congratulated his nephew on the loss of his infant son. His room was as gloomy as a grave. On the stairway he painted Death with a coffin under his arm. He lived miserably and he entirely neglected himself. His plunge into the problem of death acted on him repulsively and alluringly at the same time. Often in such a state he indulged in mystical worship toward which he had had a tendency for a long time. He retained this association with his ascetic mode of life. (He ate only to keep himself alive, he slept in his clothes and shoes, and he suffered all kinds of discomfort.) He remained emotional and hyperexcitable, with an "absent-mindedness" in every kind of undertaking. In the last years of his life he thought less and less of his creations, giving them away and sometimes destroying them. When he finished work on "The Taking Down from the Cross," he broke it with a hammer. He would have shattered it to pieces if not for his servant, Anthony, who begged him to make him a gift of it. Such was the indifference which Michelangelo showed towards his work just before his death. The following factors contributed to his increasing pessimism and withdrawal into himself: the frequent chronic pathological disorders; the feeling that he was inferior in looks and in certain character traits; continual restlessness; the need for and lack of a strong love and the appreciation of his own genius and great moral value, together with the realization of his vacillation; lack of decision, lies and flattery; sudden arousal of likes and dislikes; disharmony between his numerous plans and the unfulfillment of the majority of his projects; the greatness of his

ideas and genius of his work, and the frequent immaturity of his procedure; and lastly, continuous disappointments in life. The lack of an adequate outlet in family life and love, and the aversion to life were compensated by his ardent pathological addiction to meditation on death, and on the organization of the environment which continually reminded him of suffering. Becoming accustomed to suffering and realizing that it is inseparably connected with our own minds, that through its intensity and its interweaving into life it constitutes our personal property, causes in such individuals as Michelangelo a fervent worship of suffering and death.

### DOSTOYEVSKY

Self-mutilation constitutes one of the most important personal traits of Dostoyefsky as well as of the heroes in his works. From authoritative sources concerning his life and from an analysis of his works, the following factors come to light as the bases of his self-mutilating tendencies and their realization:

1. Emotional overexcitability and a decidedly predominant inner life (introverted type).
2. Feeling of inferiority.
3. Lack of harmonious refinement of his personality (mental disharmony, conflicting groups of tendencies).
4. Acceptance of the philosophy of suffering as the most perfect system of living (on the basis of personal experiences).

We shall endeavor to examine these factors one by one. Dostoyefsky, from his childhood, showed signs of emotional overexcitability and nervousness. He suffered from nervous headaches and palpitations, according to Dr. Jaworsky (a close acquaintance), and showed symptoms of hypochondria. According to his wife, friends, and acquaintances he was of an explosive type, excitable, and inclined to extremes in feeling, judgments, and actions. Soloviev (a Russian philosopher and a friend of Dostoyefsky) describes him as a very sensitive man, a subjectivist who found references to himself in the most innocent conversations. This excitability brought him to the border of insanity. In states of excitement he was irritated by trivialities. Once the slamming of a door joining their rooms by his wife provoked a nervous outburst. On another occa-

sion he threatened to jump out of the window if she talked loudly. He was suspicious and groundlessly jealous; he often reacted with outbursts of anger to simple jokes. In states of excitement he showed a lack of self-control and judgment. This may be illustrated by his behavior when playing roulette. He would leave his wife at home without a penny, to spend his last few coins on the game, directing her not to yield him her savings despite his requests, and yet he would burst out in anger and beg for the remaining money after his losses in the game. He very often realized his pathological impulsiveness, but was unable to control it. Dostoyefsky said to himself that he was subject to great excitement, that all his life he was of a passionate nature, and that in his impulsive acting he would go beyond the normal. One of his heroes expresses this state in the following way: "I realized perfectly that I exaggerated these facts immensely; but how could it be helped? I had already lost control over myself and was trembling as in fever . . . when I once felt the urge for something, I went headlong after it." He easily fell into childish fears about his wife and children and often expressed a feeling of impending death. The mental overexcitability and the states of anxiety produced an unbearable self-consciousness, causing frequent outbursts, loss of presence of mind, and ridiculous actions, which became the basis of a feeling of guilt, humiliation, and self-accusation. Lacking the possibility of finding an outlet for the tension, the state of restlessness and excitement increased. The knowledge of an inner source of these states strengthened his self-accusation and self-mutilation. Dostoyefsky writes of himself that in the absence of outer excitation the inner ones became predominant and caused nervousness and day-dreaming (13).

This scarcity of outer excitations can be explained by the conditions of his rearing as well as by the influence of overexcitability and hypochondria. Dostoyefsky's parents spent a rather isolated life, and the children had no companions at home or even later at school. The lack of this broader relationship was compensated by a tightening of the link with the siblings, and hence one had to have his brother's traits to be a real friend. Dostoyefsky did not dance, he avoided the large meetings and brightly lighted places, and showed from his early years a tendency to discuss the principles of life. He hardly knew the countryside, did not embrace nature, and it played no part

in his life and creations. He was a novelist of the town, a talented creator of darkness and of human evil. Being an introvert, he was predisposed, under the influence of these tendencies, to inward reactions, to an inability to associate with others, to states of anxiety, to excessive inhibition, and to self-mutilation.

In Dostoyefsky's personal experiences as well as in his works, the feeling of inferiority is found as the basis for self-mutilation. In the awakening and development of this feeling in Dostoyefsky the following factors are found: debility, epilepsy and other ailments, a feeling of solitude, an inability to associate with others because of which he could not take his true place in the social life, and, lastly, the feeling of humiliation in connection with his passion for roulette. The emotional state, associated with feeling of unworthiness, finds an outlet in self-mutilation (exposure to humiliation, exaggeration of instability, self-abasement, and deliberate cynicism, physical self-mutilation, etc.). This is a "laceration of the wounds" (Zeromski), the desire for palpating one's painful spots. Individuals of such a nature often compensate for this feeling of inferiority in the world of dreams and in asceticism. These states are illustrated most strongly by *Memories of a Man from Underground*, *A Raw Youth*, and *The Insulted and Injured*, fragments of which we quote as follows:

The worst fact, however, was that I thought I had a stupid face. . . .

I know from looking in the mirror that my appearance is damaging to me because I have a common every day face. If I were only rich like Rothschild, who would pay attention to my face? Could not thousands of women, if I would only whistle to them, come flying to me with their beauty?

I have forgotten even the beating but I could not for anything pardon the way he pushed me aside without noticing me at all. . . .

It was the torment of torments, a ceaseless, unbearable feeling of humiliation, because of the thought which was turning itself into a continuous impression that I was a fly on the face of the whole world, an ugly unnecessary fly, the most reasonable intelligent and the noblest, that is another thing, but just the same a fly, which yields to everybody, whom everybody humiliates and insults . . . . no, I am simply Dolgoruky, an illegitimate son of my former landowner, Versilow. . . . .



Don't dare to sit together with well-born children, you are of a low origin the same as a lackey. And he slapped me very strongly on my plump pink cheek; and relishing it, hit me again and again. . . .

Each time I come to a place where there are many people, I get the impression that the eyes of everybody present act on me like electric sparks. I begin to shrink, to shrink physically. . . .

I could not acquire the slightest dignity. Once I reproach myself for an excessive softness and politeness, and again I get up and commit some rudeness. . . .

Everybody always laughed at me, but nobody knew that I was more conscious than all of them of my ridiculousness. What offended me most was that they did not guess it.

A secret feeling of power is more unbearably delightful than an open domination. If I were a millionaire it seems to me that I would find pleasure in wearing the oldest suit, so that I could be taken for a man of no account, almost a beggar, to be pushed and disdained. A knowledge of my true position would be enough for me.

Who knows that from my first dreams or almost from the earliest childhood I could not imagine myself otherwise than in the first rank.

I started to test myself to see if I was fit for a monastery and asceticism. To that end for a whole first month I ate only bread and water, afterwards I added soup, and morning and evenings a glass of tea. . . . So I lived a year in complete health and moral contentment, in continuous happiness and enthusiasm.

Many factors contributed to produce the lack of harmonious formation of Dostoyefsky's personality, his instability and tendency toward mental disintegration. His sensitivity and facile explosiveness produced changes in his relationship with his dearest ones and with himself. The passion for gambling was so strong that it transformed him mentally. According to reports of his wife he became loathsome while gambling (flushed cheeks, inflamed red eyes, trembling.) Besides this the hypochondriacal state and epileptic attacks were also an important factor in the periodic transformation of his self-consciousness. Dostoyefsky also had certain infantile traits (changeability of mood, dependance, suggestibility). From these sources arose states of enthusiasm and aversion, love and hatred,

feeling of his own value and scorn of himself, and excessive idealization alternating with exaggerated criticism.

The more nearly equal the strengths of the conflicting groups, the more the conflicts and their struggle are sharpened and the disintegration deepened. A strong repression of the vanquished traits by the victorious ones is associated with an increase of tension. The aroused resistance intensifies the repression, causing outbursts of rage and hatred in relation to himself. A return of victory to the originally dominating traits causes self-vengeance and release of the stifled tension by self-mutilation (in introverted types). In individuals of ambivalent feelings, a longer suppression of feelings or actions of base moral value may so intensify their tension that freedom from this state requires a very strong agent in the form of, for instance, the commission of a very degrading action below the standards of the perpetrator.

Dostoyefsky had a highly trained ability to penetrate into personalities and was exclusively interested in the inner life. Hence, in his own life, and in the lives of his heroes, we often see an abnormal interest in their own most unpleasant experiences. The passion for self-observation was the cause of experiments on himself, leading to his exposure to injuries, to day-dreaming about the most ghastly subjects, to the exercise of the innermost impulses in order to examine them, and to experience a deep feeling, shocking and unknown. The interest in the possibility of experiencing unusual states may change the normal direction of one's tendencies. This is due to the effect of consciousness on the regrouping of the tendencies, and we observe a slight degree of dissociation of the personality into three groups, of which one is self-observation, and the other two are the conflicting groups (for instance, love and hatred, pride and humiliation, pleasure and pain). Abasement, going down to lower depths of life, may be a means for emphasizing in a pathological way one's peculiarity and unusualness in the realization of these states. Dostoyefsky's own real experiences, as well as the one created in his imagination, are illustrated by a series of passages from his works:

Each moment I realized the existence of many most conflicting elements. I felt the turmoil in me. I knew they were always seething in me, that they tried to get out of me, but

I did not let them, I purposely did not let them out. . . .

Not only was I unable to become bad, but I became as nothing at all, neither bad nor good, neither vile nor upright, neither a hero nor a worm. . . .

These changes occurred in me somehow suddenly, for some time I could despise others, and here, suddenly, I began to raise them above myself. . . .

Besides that, a depression was emerging, a hysterical longing, and contrasts and conflicts were appearing, so I clung to debauchery. . . .

Please tell me, why did it happen to me, as if purposely, exactly in moments during which I was most able to realize with all subtleness "what is beautiful and sublime" as they once said, that exactly at that time (this I cannot account for) I had to commit such improper actions, which . . . well, just actions, which everybody commits, but which slipped out of me, as if purposely at that time, when I realized that this should never have been done. . . .

I came to the point wherein I felt some secret abnormal vile satisfaction, when returning to my corner sometimes during St. Petersburg's horrible nights. I painfully realized that today I again had committed obscenities, that what was done could not be undone, and inwardly I was gnawing at myself and exasperated myself to such a degree that the bitterness transformed itself finally into a shameful weakness, followed afterwards by a definite delight. The voluptuousness arose in this case on the basis of too sharp a realization of my degradation. . . .

Dostoyefsky's life, full of sad experiences and of suffering, had forged these elements into his sex and love experiences. As much as the love for his wife brought him calmness and satisfaction, so the love for Mrs. Suslova was bound with humiliation, restlessness, and other forms of suffering (abrupt breaking off, and making up, misunderstandings, attraction and repulsion). Dostoyefsky was of a rather passive, infantile type; Suslova was dominating, active, inclined to tyranny, categorical, and extreme (she divided people into the holy and the vile). Many of her relatives said that she was given to blind spells of passion. She had a commanding beauty and certain perverted traits (sadistic). She showed in regard to Dostoyefsky love interwoven with periods of aversion and hatred. She

demonstrated to him practically that love may be associated with hatred, including sadistic and masochistic tendencies (13). She excited his sexual desires and then refused relations. Her irony and sarcasm, preceding and surrendering to passions, played the part in associating suffering with joy, abasement with delight. Tormenting and degradation of emotional, overexcitable, but weak-willed individuals by a beloved person increase the normal sexual excitability. In such conditions the increase of irritation, anger, and hatred in relation to the object of feeling may be transformed into strong adoration and ecstasy. The experience of such a state leaves a trace combining pain with pleasure. In *Idiot*, *Memories from Underground*, *Humble*, and others, we find a series of characters and experiences illustrating the above-mentioned emotional states: "That I wanted more and more to lie at her feet, and again to kiss the ground on which rested her soles, and worship her." "My eyes were inflamed with passion; and how I detested her and how she attracted me at that moment."

Dostoyefsky's life brought him many sad and tragic experiences. As mentioned above, he was emotionally strongly attached to his family, and he had no capacity for association with his colleagues. The conditions of life arranged themselves so that he could not, since his early youth, live with his family. As a young college student (17 years old) his father was murdered. A few years later he was accused of anti-governmental activities and sentenced to death. The sentence was read to him with all the formalities and he was convinced that he had only a few minutes to live. At the last moment the death sentence was commuted to several years imprisonment in Siberia. In the *Idiot*, Mishkin mirrors Dostoyefsky's emotions in regard to capital punishment in the following way: "Who can say that human nature can bear it without becoming ill? Why this incomprehensively unnecessary degradation?"

The restraint of the prison and his debasement to the criminal class created an unbearable state. There began the epileptic attacks, the state of mental disorder, which, Dostoyefsky tells, seemed to be distinguished by a mental splitting and the separation of the processes of thinking from the emotions and the will. For a man who loved to be alone, to remain with his thoughts, it was unbearable to stay among the criminals under the constant surveillance of the guards.

He wrote about it in his letter to his brother Michael:

"For five years I have been under the control of wardens in a crowd of human beings, and never, not even for one hour, was I alone. To be alone is indispensable for a human being, as is drinking and eating; otherwise, in this forced communal life you become a hater of mankind" (13).

One can find three phases of reaction to suffering in general, and especially to the unmerited and forced sufferings of the overexcitable, introverted individual. The first is a momentary state of stupor, followed by a feeling of rage and hatred against the cause of suffering; the second is a somewhat chronic state of psychic intoxication with suffering, self-retirement, and a necessity to frighten others with his suffering; the third and last, is the creation of a philosophy of suffering on the discovery of its power to deliver one from the higher moral values. It is clear that I am giving here only a brief outline. In principle, however, it is in accordance with the reaction to Dostoyefsky's suffering and many of his heroes. Such an adaptation to suffering may not reach the third phase, but may stop at one of the intermediate stages. The less clearly the perpetrator is determined and the more distant he is, the greater is the state of excitement and helpless anger. I have already mentioned, in the first chapter, that indistinctly localized vague excitations cause a stronger mental tension and make its release more difficult in contrast to the simple visible excitations. Such vague and poorly localized excitations are seen in self-mutilation in the psychic sphere, where the suffering is undeserved and imposed by an unknown perpetrator (forces of nature, laws of society for which all of society is responsible, etc.). The lack of a starting-point for the outlet of tension causes states of helpless fury. In overexcitable and introverted individuals of a high cultural level two things may occur simultaneously in the first and second phases as a reaction to great misfortunes: suicide and mental disease. Suicide is rarely met with as a reaction in passive types (Dostoyefsky). In order not to reach the third phase, a suffering individual must find some points of support, even illusory and weak. We think that in the case of a type like Dostoyefsky, these props were the feelings of exclusiveness and superiority by tragic living, and a feeling of delight in suffering, which may be the

influence of the instinct of self-preservation in a helpless situation. To this we must add the decrease of tension by frightening others with his sufferings and its demonstration in a most painful way. Dostoyevsky embraced a gulf of suffering, misery, and primitive passions; these traits became his second nature. His first suffering is imposed on him, but later this is weakened and diluted by his voluntarily accepting an attitude of suffering, which he then exhibits for the attainment of sympathy and exciting of interest. Only after many years does Dostoyevsky begin to glorify his punishment and his suffering, reaching the third phase of reaction—the formation of the philosophy of suffering. In *The Brothers Karamasov*, and especially in the *Idiot*, he introduces submission to suffering (Mishkin) as a principle of life. In the figure of Mishkin he presents his thesis that spiritual strength is associated with physical weakness and suffering. The three indicated phases of suffering are illustrated by quotations from Dostoyevsky's works:

Even a toothache can cause pleasure. These groans firstly drive away all your humiliating consciousness and the aimlessness of the experienced pain, the whole immovability of nature, for which you suffer in spite of all. But nature does not.

Consciousness departs, the enemy is no more; the pain, however, exists. The knowledge that if somebody, somewhere, somehow desires it, your teeth will stop aching, and if not, they can go on aching for three months and finally nothing will remain for your comfort but self-whipping or strongly striking of your fist against the wall and absolutely nothing more.

The man looks, the cause disappears, the reason evaporates, the guilty cannot be found, the offense stops being offensive and changes itself into fate, something similar to a toothache, for which nobody is responsible, for which there is the same remedy, striking the fist against the wall.

She (Nellie) was begging, not out of necessity, she was not abandoned, not left at the mercy of fate. She ran away, not from cruel persecutors, but from friends who loved and adored her; she wanted to astonish and frighten with her actions, as if boasting about her actions. But something mysterious ripened in her soul. . . . So, the old man was right, she was insulted, her wound could not heal, as if she tried purposely to irritate it, with secrecy and distrust of all of us as if she delighted in her pain, in this egotism of sufferings, if we may

say so. This aggravation of pain and the delight in it was comprehensible to all; it is a delight of many of the insulted and injured, oppressed by fate and feeling this injustice.

In Nellie the need for confidence and sympathy were struggling, on the one hand, with the fear of confidence and, on the other hand, with a recollection of past tortures. The plastic mind of the child embraced too many tragedies and injustices and, therefore, it could not get out of the chaos which had arisen following her transition from the atmosphere of insult and violence into an atmosphere of friendship. The state of intoxication by suffering lasted for such a long period that it led to a habitual search for sad experiences because of a need for the assurance of the permanency of the change. The struggle of conflicting tendencies led after a long period to the formation of a new system of tendencies.

I used to have such moments, that if it happened that somebody slapped me in the face, possibly I would even be glad. I say that certainly I could succeed in finding, even in such a case, a certain feeling of pleasure; of course, a pleasure of despair but nevertheless it is in despair that the greatest delight is located, especially when one clearly feels the hopelessness of a situation.

The knowledge of infamy glimmering through for a moment, knowledge which made my soul shiver—will anybody believe?—was intoxicating me all the more. Why, if one must fall—one must.

I realized well this despair, yet—will anybody believe?—ecstasies grew in my heart to such an irrepressible degree that I thought I was dying.

Well, from these insults, from these railleries of unknown origin, begins finally delight, reaching sometimes the summit of voluptuousness.

Well, a man loves not only well-being, does he like suffering in the same degree? Sometimes a man likes suffering very much, to an insane degree.

Suffering—why, it is the principal cause of conscience. True, I declared that conscience is man's greatest misfortune, yet, I know that man loves it and will not exchange it for any pleasure.

These examples illustrate how the philosophy of suffering grew

out of Dostoyefsky's personal experiences. He reached the summit of suffering beyond which could only be mental disease.

### WEININGER

The mental profile of a young suicidal thinker is clearly outlined by an analysis of the work and correspondence of Weininger as well as by the testimony of his friends. He had a mentality inclined to a strong degree of self-mutilation. Despite his exceptional capacity for logical analytical thinking and a great mental penetration, Weininger's synthesizing ability was artistic rather than scientific. His ideas, which could form at most a skeleton of theories requiring many changes and completion, were for him, due to his suggestibility, negativism, and emotionality, real values with which was associated an obsessive need to convey the proof of their exactness. His chief work, *Sex and Character*, has an unbalanced scientific value. Much as the first part is a systematic, highly objective analysis of a biopsychic hypothesis, so the second part forms the summary of a subjective judgment permeated with emotionality, and striking by its arbitrariness. The first shows the needs of the author's mind; the second, the needs of his impulses. The whole reflects the author's changeability of methods and moods and a certain childishness of his mentality. It bespeaks also a conflict between mind and sensuality, between what is free (noumenon) and what is not free (phenomenon). The opposing natures of the basic tendencies is the cause of the struggle between them, where the strength and duration depend on the difference between the strength of the conflicting tendencies, and the more this force reaches equality, the fiercer is the fight. Herman Swoboda (77) aptly states that "Man liebt die Widerstände, die man besiegt, man hasst die Widerstände, vor denen man zurück weicht."

Conflicts hard to combat and continuously irritating sharpened the antagonism of tendencies in Weininger. Through autosuggestion these grew and took on a stubborn character. In the world of ideas, this conflict and the hatred of conflicting tendencies took in Weininger the form of a struggle between the mind and sensuality, which in him became identified with the struggle between male and female. The above process points to a certain mechanism, in the develop-



ment of the process, of the basic rôle of autosuggestion and tendencies to sensual and emotional obsessions in the arousal of a hatred of one's own tendencies. Continuous mutual irritation by conflicting tendencies contributed to the formation of emotional or logical arguments for the degradation of the conflicting tendencies. All of Weininger's nearest friends call attention to his tendencies to self-mutilation and to asceticism, and especially the fear in the last month of his life of suicide. He exhibits, on the one hand, a search for the vilest traits of woman and, on the other, asceticism, the striving for sanctity. Exhaustion in the struggle without result was implied in Weininger's opinion that there are three ways out of mental conflicts: "Selbstmord, Galgen oder ein Ziel, grösser und herrlicher als es jedem Mensch errungen."

The agent determining Weininger's death was, rightly, the conflict between the announcement of his work, which proved the lack of soul in woman and considered her as a sensual element, a denial of existence, and the impossibility to reconcile his conduct with this theory. But the development itself of such a situation points to a predisposition to self-mutilation. Self-mutilation was here an extreme form of striving to destroy certain tendencies. The publication of *Geschlecht und Charakter* put Weininger in a situation without a solution, because if he remained alive he would have to behave in conflict with his theory and tell lies which would, according to him, carry the greatest harm to the mind, and be a sign of retraction.

### J. W. DAWID

The eminent Polish psychologist known in the United States for his work entitled "Intelligence, Will, and Ability to Work,"<sup>3</sup> represents one of the few figures in scientific literature whose mental attitude molded during thirty years of mature life and active work was completely changed as a result of a great shock, which became the fulcrum of shifting tendencies repressing one another.

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<sup>3</sup>The value of this work may be judged from the contents of the following letter received by Dawid: "Having read your work, we all heartily wish to see it published. In the meantime, President G. Stanley Hall decided to make for you a rare exception. If you will trust us your manuscript, we shall copy and publish it in an abbreviated form in the *Pedagogical Seminary* at the University's expense."

From early youth Dawid showed a great liking for books; he was contemplative, self-sufficient, did not take part in plays with his brothers and schoolmates. He was wrapped in himself, introverted, probably of schizoid nature. Those who knew him found him outwardly cool, even-tempered, possibly impersonal, proud of himself and of his work, and conscious of his mental power.

He was always an exponent of the school of experimental psychology. Accuracy was a characteristic feature of his thinking, and clarity, of his speech.

As a young scientist, during the International Educational Congress in Munich, in 1896, he called attention to the degeneration of the analytic school of psychology and pedagogics, the decided victory of the positivist school to the exclusion of spiritualism, telepathy, and mediumism. This passionate battle against the analytic school would indicate that, in spite of Dawid's acceptance of this experimental view, he does not lack interest in philosophy which would be expressed by a more indifferent manner. It shows rather a keen penetrating mind, searching for facts and disliking vague argumentation, and simultaneously needing a philosophy of life, with rather strongly suppressed metaphysical impulses. The following is proof of the emotionalism of this outwardly cool personality: "There were always things in the face of which I was unable to be quiet and indifferent, to restrain myself from a protest." In spite of this, his work as a whole, between 1881 and 1910, reveals the calm of an accurate investigator. He finds an explanation for the world in physicochemical phenomena. That which could not be experimented upon was not worth the effort of thought. The last four years of his life bear a totally different character. It was a period of exceptional shocks, suffering, breakdowns, and the development of the belief in the existence of a supernatural world. The cause of this change, seldom found in such minds, was the suicide of his wife whom he loved very dearly, but whom he failed to help in her mental conflicts and thus was unable to prevent her death. It is conceivable that schizoid, introvert types, self-centered, outwardly indifferent, usually get more attached to their dear ones, and separation from them more often causes severe shocks and breakdowns, because of more frequent than normal exclusiveness of their feelings, their greater intensity, and the greater difficulty of adapt-

ing themselves to new conditions of life. Dawid's letters throw light on this period of crisis and struggle:

I loved my wife deeply, she filled the greater part of my life, but I loved her also for myself, not for her. After the catastrophe I became aware of it. The pain of losing this most beloved one is inexpressible. It is a burning remorse that I did not do anything to save her, that for a series of years I led her on to this by my behavior... I always felt sure of myself, I was proud, hard, and a severe judge. Nothing existed before which I could bend, except material and social forces. And, behold, here was a power before which I felt crushed... death awakened in me something like a new organ, the ability to see or realize certain things.

All that was best and most beautiful in my life, all that can be considered as happiness—I owe to my wife. I, myself was not sufficiently aware of this before. Now the only thing which is left to me is despair, which is absolutely a deadly disease, only death is so terribly slow in coming. People will say that this is weakness. Perhaps it is, it depends upon the point of view. I only know that last year I learned more than during my previous life, and that I never possessed such a full knowledge of myself, the consciousness of the sense of life and duty.

The above quotations clearly show the change of tendencies caused by a shock. These tendencies, depending on the personality, sought another fulcrum and, led by the instinct of self-preservation, found it in the belief in the existence of spiritual life. According to Lukrec, Dawid's friend and biographer, there was in him "a deadly struggle between the empirist and the mystic, the Titan of exact science, demanding proofs and facts, and the despairingly lonesome, solitary man, wishing to believe in life hereafter and the possibility of a reunion with the beloved one he had lost." These struggles lasted years; it was accompanied by a characteristic symptom frequently found in deep mystics, the tendency to moral self-scourging, self-accusation, and asceticism. Dawid had no real sin behind this self-torment. Lukrec explains this as follows:

This moral self-calumniation is a test, not of Dawid's moral value, but of his new spiritual state. To find a proper criterion to appreciate Dawid's value, we must seek it in his works and

ideals, the highest ethical standards of his life, his disinterestedness, poverty, unshaken ceaseless defense of the weak and tormented, and his vigorous fight for scientific, social, and political principles and convictions.

His despair at the loss of his wife ruined him physically and completely exhausted him mentally. He gradually developed tuberculosis. Simultaneously with the weakening of the functions of his body, the need of spiritual union with his wife grew through paroxysms of pain, acuteness of intuition, sometimes hallucinations.

Pain caught me with new strength. Walking along the street, I cried. One day, when I was in this state, I heard a voice: "Don't cry, Wladzio, it had to be. I was obliged to do it." These words were pronounced by myself, but, on the other hand, as if against my will . . . . . all at once the thought came to me: Why—I can die, yes, I shall die. This idea made me very happy and from then on brought me relief. The first motive seemed to me to be the escape from pain, later, other feelings and motives of punishment and expiation accumulated around this decision.

In this newly developed mental attitude, idealism takes place of materialism; in psychologico-educational methods of work, intuition finds place beside the experiment. Transformation through personal experiences, especially suffering, and the conscious, active weakening and destruction of selfish impulses of an individual capable of intense spiritual life (spirit of sacrifice, charity, suffering) becomes the aim of education. Voluntarily accepted suffering plays a rôle of decisive importance in this process.

In his desire to establish himself firmly in the reality of the spirit, man, within the limits of his possibilities, suppresses all that attached him to life up to that moment, first of all his personal sensual feelings and needs.

Practice has, for a long time, taught ascetics that it is indispensable for them to repress the sex impulse in order to develop a higher spiritual-religious life. The strength of this impulse is then sublimated. This interdependence is proved in a way almost experimental by the quoted cases of Novalis and others, in which sensual love is transformed directly into spiritual love; the object of sexual feeling becomes one of religious cult.

Suffering, endeavor, and abnegation are most closely connected with the emancipation of the spirit. Their mutual relation is that of cause and effect.

I consider every suffering and voluntary renouncement as if I were returning something I had previously taken unjustly through selfishness, weakness, covetousness, through something in which there was guilt.

We saw that suffering elevates man, ennobles his spirit. But this is only in cases of active suffering resulting from a conscious will, an effort, a denial, a sacrifice in the name of a higher ideal.

I am afraid that I may lose the capacity for suffering, as this suffering keeps her alive; it seems to me, the moment I cease to suffer, she will die again—this time for good.

We see here that the need of suffering and its evaluation are caused by the firm belief that it is the only means of contact with the beloved person. Suffering which finds its expression in the feeling of guilt may be considered, on one hand, as the mark of personality (introspection, self-sufficiency, introversion), which always takes full and rather exaggerated responsibility for its actions: on the other hand, as the sign of the appearance of a new and strong complex coming to the fore with sudden and extraordinary force, causing in the person a feeling of dazzling, but also of sadness, that so strong a complex was hitherto suppressed and insignificant (the reality of spiritual life).

Essentially, suffering which is, so to speak, thrust upon one, accepted and considered as an indispensable condition for spiritual life and for the satisfaction of the highest needs (spiritual relationship with his wife) must be included in the philosophy of life of a thinker, must be exercised by an active personality and afterwards amplified to produce intense spiritual experiences. Hence arises the problem of sacrifice and death as the most intense suffering, and at the same time the condition for complete transition to spiritual life.

The deepest ultimate feature of mystical life is the need, the hunger for sacrifice, in one form or another, partial or complete. The highest, most perfect sacrifice is death, and, as a matter of fact, from a certain point of view, one may say that the essence of mysticism, its guiding idea, is the process of partial dying, and its final word is—death.

Dying is not only a passive self-denial, but also a simultaneous active self-sacrifice. Each disinterested action, each sacrifice, endeavor, and effort made for others is a partial death, the giving up of some part of one's body.

Courage is the state of mind of one who has either never learned to love life or was compelled to renounce it, and always thought that at any moment such a renouncement, planned and accepted in advance, might be fulfilled.

Courage can be understood only as the state of mind of one who has risen beyond life, i.e., beyond organic and sensual life, beyond what is need and satisfaction, gain or loss, and which, therefore, is able to act in a manner contrary to his own interests and self-preservation.

In the moral ecstasy which accompanies acts of sacrifice and heroism, the readiness for death is an obvious fact. Every act of courage is a decision of death.

One must become indifferent to fame, to sensual pleasures and intellectual delights. We must lose them to conquer others. We must renounce everything that is good in life so that later it will become our property through effort, will, and contemplation.

Why are people taught to live and not to die? The one who does not know how to die will not know how to live. To value life above all is to miss its purpose—such a life becomes an error, a toy of external forces.

To be capable of these actions (heroism, sacrifice) we must agree to acknowledge death as such, accept it in advance and consider it as one of our most essential problems.

The idealization of his wife, the feeling of guilt in connection with her suicide, inclusion of suicide in his philosophy of life, and his own suicidal tendency are among the fundamental factors for his acceptance of the suicide, as a positive symptom, from a moral point of view.

It was chiefly a question of suicide as a punishment, a sacrifice, a means of reunion with the beloved person, an expression of void in life.

In all great changes, moral crises, the idea of suicide nearly always arises—at least as one of the alternatives.

Mystics disregard their bodies and senses, they yearn for death, conversions are often accompanied by thoughts of suicide.

Suicidal ideas usually arise when a struggle begins between complexes of opposing tendencies, neither of which prevails over the other, or when the difference is insignificant. The result is the destruction of both, neither of them being able to gain preponderance, thus making impossible the creation of one predominant complex, supported by several minor ones. As soon as one of the principal complexes gains distinct preponderance, the philosophy of life is formed, peace ensues and the tendency to suicide subsides.

The tendency to suicide goes together with instability of personality, variability of states and moods.

In order to take away his life, one has to stop being oneself and to become another personality. A split of personality must appear. This second person is beyond life, is transcendental, for, only that kind is able to oppose and counteract the empirical person. The impulse to suicide, the same as the impulse to heroic death in sacrifice, is the gaining of the sense of the transcendental being, its independence, its becoming active.

Man agrees to the amputation of an arm, knowing that the other will carry the work. In the same manner, he resolves to meet a voluntary death because he knows that some other form will take the place of his ruined body.

The will to die is a declaration of desire of future life.

The faith in the life hereafter, in the world beyond, is a protest and a final victory of the instinct of life in all its symptoms over death, suffering, deception, which belong to "this world."

Another world is opposed to this one, a world in which all is saved and preserved that gives life its value, and the highest of values—life itself. It is not only preserved but exalted, made perfect.

For types such as Dawid (introvert, self-sufficient, inclined to deep and exclusive affections), a new and quite different philosophy of life was the only way to hold on to life, the necessary solution of the instinct of self-preservation. In this manner he solved the impossibility of agreeing to the separation from his dear beloved, also the problem of the moral rôle of suffering and sacrifice, and besides found new sources of the maxim: "Love and death are the principal sources of individual knowledge."

## TOLSTOY

Tolstoy does not show such striking inclinations to self-mutilation as does Dostoyefsky. Nevertheless, a closer study of his works reveals distinctly the writer's self-mutilating tendencies and the deepest strata of his mentality. The factors causing Tolstoy's self-mutilating symptoms may be grouped as follows:

1. A sensual overexcitability, craving for pleasure, ability for introspection, sensitivity, and fear of yielding too easily to impulses.
2. A strong physique, a sense of abundant energy, an emotional excitability, a strong tendency to attach himself to individuals and to brood over the loss of dear ones.
3. A feeling of inferiority, guilt, and need of penitence, on one hand, and a desire of distinction, on the other.
4. Autoerotism, as well as certain homosexual traits.
5. The urge to create and a gradually developing sense of worthlessness of his own productions as his moral systems of life were becoming more complicated.
6. A need of self-penetration into his most hidden hypocritical feelings, tendencies, and actions.
7. A tendency to states of overexcitability and depression.
8. A conflict between his pride (innate and acquired through his environment) and the subconscious desire for humility derived from his mental attitude.

These factors will be described in their logical order on the basis of the writer's diary and memoirs, as well as of those works which reflect his personality to a greater degree. Tolstoy was naturally exuberantly healthy, full of energy, which, unreleased in work, sought to escape in channels common to people of his class namely in sensual pleasures. The force of these physical demands and of their gratification was so strong that it made Tolstoy quite helpless, filled him with fear of yielding completely to these impulses. He feared his desires, yet his strong, healthy body derived contentment from these experiences. The smell of horses' sweat and the suffering of hunted animals intoxicated him. He excels in the description of war pictures, yet he is one of the greatest exponents of pacifism. We find in the majority of his works (*War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Power of Darkness*, *The Devil*, *Father Sergius*).



meditations on the fatalistic influence of sexual impulses on man's life. They destroy man's personality, debase his character, and drag him down morally. Experiences of this kind lead him to subject himself to ascetic rigors. In his youth he enlisted in the army, in an attempt to suppress his low impulses by military discipline, only to return with a stronger desire to the sexual pleasures. The keener his sexual tendencies, the more arduous is the struggle to suppress them, which leads to his medieval ascetic attitude toward marriage.

He presented these experiences most distinctly in *The Kreuzer's Sonata* and in *Father Sergius*.

The most disgusting is that, in theory, love is sublime and ideal, while in practice it is so swinish and abominable that the very thought of it provokes nausea and disgust.

Sexual desire is always a torment, a terrible torment, which ought to be checked, not yielded to, as we do.

It should be recognized that prostitutes who sell themselves for a short time are ordinarily looked upon with scorn, while women who sell themselves for a long time are usually respected.

Tolstoy strongly attached himself to his family and his dear ones, and from his earliest youth he suffered greatly through the death of his beloved mother and friends.

His excessive emotional sensitivity caused much stronger traumas than usual in such situations.

I noticed a pale, yellow, transparent object; I could not believe it to be a face; but, gazing at it intently, I recognized the familiar beloved features. . . . Then only, I understood where the heavy odor came from, which together with incense, filled the whole room. The thought that this face, which a few days ago, was full of beauty, the face I loved better than anything else, could cause such fear revealed the bitter truth and brought me to genuine despair.

The ability to observe and urge for introspection as well as the power of plastic reproduction of events was the cause of strong emotions.

The feelings of aversion and disgust which affected Nechlu-dow grew stronger as he listened to the description of the decaying body, of the liquid oozing from the nostrils of the poisoned man, and of his protruding eyes.

The worship of health, strength, and physical beauty suffers here an exceptionally strong blow; the consciousness of transformation of beauty into decay, evoked by the sight of the dead body, produces a strong mental shock. The urge to investigate, to study each phenomenon exhaustively, produces interest in the problem of death. The more successful he was in life, the more frequently and deeply he thought of death as an inevitable end; an awe inspired by death transformed itself into a metaphysical fear. These meditations brought him to the idea of suicide (*The Death of Ivan Ilyitch*). He concealed articles with which he could put an end to his life when the moment arrived. Each succeeding death of his near ones increased this morbid state. His grandmother, his father, two brothers, and a son died. The instinct of self-preservation draws him away from the study of this problem for a short time, but at the occurrence of a new death he suffers a stronger blow than before.

"I wanted to show a smiling face, but at this moment my astonished eyes beheld the lid of a coffin leaning against my door."

He cannot tolerate the contrast of the coexistence of despair and joy, the hypocrisy of nature, smiling at death. "The birds twittered in the grove about great happiness, as though enchanted" (*Three Deaths*). To the tragedy of the enigma of death is added the consciousness of mankind's egotistical attitude to it.

"The very fact of the death of close ones always produced in everyone the feeling of joy—that it was he who was dead and not I" (*The Death of Ivan Ilyitch*). The need of adjusting oneself very quickly to death causes a feverish self-tormenting inquiry into all of its phenomena and peculiarities. Out of this internal struggle alone rises the question of immortality, caused probably by the instinct of self-preservation. The most desirable form of such immortality would be the reincarnation of the whole physical being. Tolstoy felt, however, that this was impossible (*Impressions of the Decaying Body*).

The peaceful death of plain people who depart from life without despair, having fulfilled their destiny, becomes one of the sources of calmness. "She quit life without regret, she was not afraid of death, accepted it as a favor or joy; how often these words are spoken; how rarely they are anything but an empty phrase. In this earthly life she accomplished a great thing: she died without fear

or regret." These intense sensations gradually reached the climax and produced a more tolerant attitude to the question. Tolstoy learned slowly to adapt himself to the thought of death, included it in his philosophy of life, and began his notes with E. B. J. (*esli budu jit*: if I shall live).

The death of his relatives strengthened this attitude. "It was at Petia's (his son) burial that, for the first time, I began to wonder where I shall be buried."

In this period of involution, a slight loss of strength and decrease of sexual desire were compensated by the search for faith and spiritual immortality, regardless of physical death. For a long time Tolstoy could not visualize the value of spiritual immortality alone. Thus, more and more frequently and clearly he began to see the possibility of acquiring immortality by spiritual development and sensual suppressions. "Whoever sees the meaning of life in self-perfection, cannot believe in death, nor that such perfection can be interrupted."

One of the main reasons for Tolstoy's self-torment was the discord between his physical ugliness and the desire to be popular and in the limelight, between timidity and shyness, on one hand, and the need to play an important rôle in the world, on the other. Zweig gives the following description of his physical appearance:

Rough-hewn like wood split for firing are the cross-beams of the forehead surmounting the little windows, the tiny eyes. The skin, like the outer surface of a wattle-and-dab cottage, is of clay, is greasy looking and lustreless. In the middle of the full quadrangle of the face, we see a nose with gaping bestial nostrils, a nose that is broad and pulpy as if flattened by a blow from a fist. Behind untidy wisps of hair project misshapen flapping ears. Between the hollowed cheeks lies a thick-lipped surly mouth. The general effect is inharmonious, rugged, ordinary, verging on the coarse.

Tolstoy himself says he had "the most ordinary, vulgar, and ugly features."

I didn't even have anything noble; on the contrary, my face was common, just as my large feet looked like those of a peasant. At the time, I felt very much ashamed of it.

In another place he says of himself, "I, a boy with a flat nose and hair sticking up on my head." He wanted to dance, but did not know how; he wanted to play a rôle in society, but did not succeed. In situations demanding quick reactions, he reacted too late. He envied his brother the ease with which he approached girls and kissed them, whereas he was unable to do it although he desired it. It hurt him that he had to play a secondary rôle in society, that in games and dances he always came out last.

All this made him irritable; he felt the least annoyance in the most exaggerated manner. Every punishment humiliated him too deeply. When his tutor locked him up, he became hysterical, felt sure that nobody loved him, and meditated on God's injustice. Many a time, as a reaction to vexations, he would imagine his injurer dead. "When Dad called me a wretch, I hated him for a long time and wished his death." He reacted to praise in the same exaggerated fashion. "Praise acts so powerfully, not only on emotions, but also on the mind of man, that under its pleasant influence I became twice as wise." The feeling of humiliation, together with his ugliness and bashfulness, sought compensation in the fields in which he could come to the foreground in his imagination. "I was too sensitive and ambitious to be reconciled with my fate. I forced myself to despise the pleasures procured through the possession of a good-looking face. I made a great effort to find delight in my proud isolation." He wanted to become the greatest athlete in the world, and in view of this went in for sports. He wanted to be the greatest scientist in Russia and even in Europe. To find an outlet for mental strain based on his feeling of inferiority and great sensitiveness, he sought annoyances and irritations to free himself of this state. "I expected with joy the moment when they would lead us out (of a first rate restaurant to which Tolstoy had brought a poor musician) and it would at last be possible to give way to my anger." The desire to distinguish himself sometimes took the form of self-torment in his imagination: "It would be better for me if I were a criminal, then, there would be a kind of consoling morbid glory in my despair."

The feeling of inferiority, of imperfection and of bashfulness produced in him a feeling of guilt, dislike, and hatred of certain of his own features, the need of sacrifice, torment, and destruction of certain of his own complexes, and the desire of working toward

self-perfection. He understood that his feeling of inferiority and his ugliness might bring about compensation in some valuable form, that suffering growing out of such a background is of great importance for spiritual perfection.

Yesterday I thought that if my nose were deformed, it would be an incentive toward moral perfection. I nearly felt like experiencing this affliction which I called misfortune, but which would make suicide justifiable.

Great introspection, an obtrusive desire to examine every matter thoroughly, and taking this as a basis for his principles of behavior, caused a strong tendency to self-torment after he had attained the consciousness of his unworthiness, of his sin and guilt. Even in his youth this led him to seek self-perfection through suffering, to a sacrifice of his needs, of his selfish impulses and comforts.

The man who acquires the habit of suffering must be happy. To this end, to harden myself to pain, I would hold heavy scientific books at arm's length for five minutes, or go to the closet and scourge myself till I had tears in my eyes.

In search of punishment he fasts, goes on pilgrimages to cloisters, refuses himself many comforts to which he is accustomed, and above all indulges in moral self-scourging.

I am guilty of all sorts of disgraceful sins: I lied, plundered what belonged to others, committed adultery and all kinds of brutish acts, I used to get drunk; I had every possible crime on my conscience. At that time I began to write, out of vanity and desire of gain; pride pushed me to it.

The violence of the passionate struggle is a proof of the lack of harmony and peace of mind in Tolstoy.

The abolition of some of his characteristics must also involve the destruction of the causes of an excessive attachment to physical life, to pleasures which include doing wrong to others. This produces the tendency to get rid of property. The idea of distributing his land and running away from people of his social standing (Nechludow attempted to marry a prostitute) and voluntary self-imposed realization of his convictions. From childhood on to old age, there is an ever growing tendency toward self-sacrifice for the sake of others. In his youth, he wants to sacrifice his love for Marusia (his

first love for a servant), for her happiness and that of the man she loves, he wants to look for people who need his help; to do without servants, to sell the carriage and to distribute the money to the poor; at a mature age, he wants to sacrifice fame as a writer (he refused the Nobel prize), honors, and land. All this, as an expression of his craving for reform, was based on a feeling of guilt: "Now he understood that the only means of deliverance from evil from which people perish is the obliteration of their guilt in their own selves, that everyone should blame only himself and not others."

Besides this, certain slightly marked autoerotic and homosexual features were one of the reasons for the lack of mental balance between the opposing tendencies. Admiration of his own body, even in his childhood and adolescence, strong egocentricity which he could restrain but with difficulty, would be a proof of the former, whereas certain tender sentimental feelings for some of his school-fellows and friends (*Serge* in his memoirs of childhood) would suggest arguments for his possessing the latter, although to a lesser degree.

One of the more important causes of unrest and torture in Tolstoy was the contrast of his two halves: the artist and the moralist. As an artist he was above all a naturalist, an impressionist, a genius in reproducing nature's life in its most varied forms, especially physical life. As a moralist, he considered the spirit as the only indestructible substance which develops more and more with the suppression of sensual life. Nearly all forms of art, outside of some works designed for special moments (religious music) were to Tolstoy harmful to spiritual perfection, because they excited passions—particularly the imagination. "Everybody knows that most adulteries are committed under the influence created by these arts—especially music."

"How could anyone who feels like it be permitted to hypnotize people and do whatever he pleases with them. And worse still—when the hypnotizer happens to be any kind of rascal."

Tolstoy's dislike of art grew in proportion to his dread of its power over him, of the too strong impression it made on him, as under its influence he would forget all his moral principles. Music affected him to tears.

A great psychological penetration, a passion for pleasure, as well

as for the struggle against it, an inclination to probe himself, a strong and unconditional acceptance of moral principles, produced a tendency to ruthless unmasking of all falsehood, lies, and appearances, chiefly his own. He was tormented by the realization of the inadequacy of means of carrying his convictions into effect, and looked with suspicion on his former ideas as to who is "*comme il faut*." He was subject to states of emotional excitement, sometimes bordering on that of ecstasy, to euphoria followed by a state of depression, usually of short duration. This variability of moods is tied up with a restless dissatisfaction and a feeling of unfulfillment. One of the reasons for unrest and dissatisfaction with himself was the contradiction existing between his proud, aristocratic carriage, his desire to command, and his craving for humility derived from his philosophy of life. Violence, authoritativeness, determined views, when coming in contact with people, the practical inability to adapt himself to the masses, and, on the other hand, awareness of the morality of people of his class far inferior to that of simple folks. Spontaneity of feeling, attachment, and faithfulness were qualities he found more often among the latter. Inclined somewhat to being demonstrative and decorative, he expressed his desire for simplicity and humility, among other things, by wearing a peasant's shirt, learning how to make boots, ploughing for a short while, drinking kvas, and so on. He was unable, however, to get in direct touch with the life of peasants, to know them more intimately, to establish a closer contact. This caused an inclination to self-criticism, pangs of conscience, and a dislike for half-hearted solutions.

All the mentioned complexes are only examples of the lack of mental balance of Tolstoy's personality. The vitality of his nature caused constant struggles between these opposing tendencies whose heterogeneous interplay would be impossible to trace because of their being so numerous and complicated. Their struggle caused shiftings, subduing, or permanent suppression. The suppression of some of them and arising or awakening of others could produce the combination of pleasant and disagreeable feelings (disappearance and birth). Symptoms of this phenomenon can be found in profusion on nearly every page of his works:

But in spite of this, or perhaps just because of this, some unrestrainable power forced me, against my will, to politeness and cordiality toward him.

I lived through some sublime, incomprehensible sweet and, at the same time, sad moments of delight.

The very consciousness of my position (consciousness of his wife's betrayal) filled me with joy (intoxication with his own humiliation).

The feeling of humility—it made his heart bleed with joy and pain at the same time.

Nechludow felt in himself the voices of two people; one of them called for happiness which would also involve others, the other desired his own pleasure, even at the expense of his dear ones . . . the latter man-beast developed now in Nechludow and vanquished the other—the spiritual one.

Those opposing tendencies given the test of life kept on causing new complications and producing actions which confused them still more.

He struggled against hypocrisy and maintained that words without acts do not mean much, but he himself, for many years, was unable to act according to his principles and carried them into effect only so far as appearances were concerned (outward mania for peasant life), because he did not have the strength to break up with his family. He tended toward modesty and simplicity, but invariably led the life of a rich man; he wanted to distribute his land among peasants, but fear of his wife, threatening suicide, and of family conflicts prevented him from doing so. He detested his creative art, hated music, and yet rested when he gave way to them. He considered the body as a center of evil, but it was inexpressibly difficult for him to free himself of its excessive influence on his emotional state, his thoughts, and actions. All his life long he fought against the fear of death which tormented him nearly to his last days; he admired people who died quietly, and, in his older years, felt an unfulfilled desire for life. He wanted to become accustomed to the idea of death, to consider it as a means of freeing himself of earthly life, but this desire remained too distant an aim and became real only in the last months of his life.

"The whole life of a man who desires death would be a constant drawing nearer to his aim, and finally its becoming true."



## 10. THE RELATION BETWEEN SELF-MUTILATION AND HETEROMUTILATION

Weininger betrayed a tendency to mutilate himself as well as to torture others. In the peremptory, ardent analysis of the most degrading traits of woman and the tendency to extend to woman in general his exaggerated subjective observations, we see him delighted with his theory of denial and hatred. Here are a few examples of the original statement by Weininger concerning his theory:

I maintain that there is no mother to whom it could cause only pain if a stranger, though with quite base intentions and vile calculations, desires her daughter and seduces her, or . . . . A man is not interested in the nudeness of another man, while every woman in her own thoughts lays bare every other woman, thus proving exactly the common general shamelessness of her sex (80).

This hatred, rather more theoretical than practical, arose in Weininger in the last month of his life, or at least was intensified, on the one hand, perhaps by the influence of unpleasant personal experiences, and, on the other hand, by the influence of an ever growing conviction of the truth of his theory. Hating and struggling against his sensuality, he combatted and hated it outwardly as symbolic of the woman in himself. The difficulty of the struggle increased his excitability and hatred. As a reason for his suicide Weininger gives the need of killing himself in order not to kill others. In accordance with the above, killing himself would be destroying a separate entity; killing another, however, would be the destruction of his own hated tendencies by the destruction of these tendencies in others. Weininger presents this problem as follows: "He who kills himself, kills simultaneously the whole world, and he who murders another, commits by this act, the greatest crime in that he murders himself in the one who is murdered."

We find many a time, as a seemingly inexplicable fact, one-sided and mutual aversion and even hatred among individuals of similar mental and physical structure. Let us consider the case of *W*, an alcoholic, showing nervousness, excitability, and conflicting tendencies towards explosiveness and reticence. Moreover, in childhood, he

showed signs of somnambulism, restless sleep, and nightmares. At first, *W* showed dislike, then hatred, for his 12-year-old son who possessed a character and physical build, and had certain psychopathic traits, similar to his own. *W* frequently expressed hatred for his son by torturing him mentally and by cruel beatings. He liked and treated his daughter quite well despite her striking peculiarities. This fact might be explained by the action of an unknown agent or by the influence of greater affection for the child of opposite sex. However, such cases are very frequent, and cases where we find hatred of the child of similar mental structure and love of the other of the same sex but of different mentality exclude such an interpretation. I think that a similar mechanism may be posited in regard to Stavrogin's hatred of Verchoviensky (from *Devils* by Dostoyefsky). Stavrogin hated in Verchoviensky the vileness, to some extent similar to his own, and the actions arising from it committed for the sake of acting, for the delight of doing wrong. It is a known fact that we do not like people who have traits similar to those of our own which are unpleasant to us in one respect or another or at one time or another. They irritate us too frequently and we think of them or others remind us of them too frequently for us to be able to accept with calmness their somewhat external objectification. Hating these characteristics in ourselves, we bear them still less in others. On the other hand, it is easier to find an outlet for an aversion or hatred to our own traits when we notice them in our dear ones. Hence the frequently met torturing of others, as an expression of mutilation of ourselves. Such an explanation of the existing correlation between auto- and heteromutilation allows us to understand in many cases the pleasure and delight felt by people who are humiliated, derided, and who feel the same pleasure in torturing others, often in a most refined way.

Many a time it is difficult to find in an object of torture a similarity to the traits of the torturer, the traits he hates. Here we may consider the case of little Matrosha (from Dostoyefsky's *Devils*), with a "freckled, common face and, at the same time, very childish and unbelievably gentle," whom Stavrogin purposely exposed to chastisement by her mother and whose soul he poisoned by awakening her sexual feelings. He did this perhaps to ascertain whether he would be able, by damaging an innocent one, to awaken clearly

in himself a moral sensitivity and a consciousness of his moral structure. Stavrogin, by artifice, brings her to sin, fills her little head with pangs of conscience, and leads her to suicide. He anticipates her act with restlessness and delight, and makes no effort to prevent it. The destruction of a sympathetic feeling for Matrosha, his leading her to suicide and awaiting it in a state of strong tension, testifies to an obsessive need for the finding of the strongest agents for liberation from a state of restlessness. Besides this deed, the repression of an immediate reaction to the insulting behavior of other people (a slap in the face) was in many cases the means of probing the limit of his vileness, which caused him a "delight superseding everything." We shall understand it more clearly on the basis of Stavrogin's self-analysis, included in the so-called "document" in *Devils*.

As often in my life as I happened to be in a disgraceful, humiliating, vile and especially ridiculous situation, I felt, parallel with an unbelievable anger, an unusual delight. The same occurred in moments of crime and danger. Invariably, while committing a theft, I would be intoxicated by the depth of my downfall. Not only the baseness gave me pleasure (in this respect I always had a sound mind) but also the tormenting feeling of infamy. Whenever I stood as a target waiting for the shot of my adversary, the same degrading and ecstatic feeling grew in me. I shall confess, that I was always looking for this feeling, since I did not know other stronger impressions. When I was slapped in the face (and this happened in my life twice) I again felt the same in spite of the terrible anger. If I controlled the anger the delight superseded anything imaginable.

Stavrogin had frequent possibilities for outbursts of anger and for the humiliation of others, but seldom did he have a chance to experience great humiliation and derision. Hence, the experiencing of the latter would require a much greater tension. Mental over-excitability, and a tendency to psychopathic outbursts are released more easily and strongly by the action of the strongest agents. Therefore the search for humiliating and derisive situations becomes more comprehensible. Stavrogin provoked and insulted others in order to elicit an insult and abasement of himself. He illustrates a

continuous inner struggle between the feeling of anger, aggression, and of the anger of others. In cases where it was difficult to become an object of aggression, Stavrogin found the object and subject in himself. He was the perpetrator of mutilation, and its victim. This is illustrated by a passage from the "document":

I took out my anger on whomever I could. On one such occasion, not without any reason, the thought seized me to mutilate my own life, but in a most ludicrous manner. For a year already I had been thinking of suicide, but now something better occurred to me. One day, looking at lame Mary, Lebedkin's sister, who served here and there and who at that time was not yet insane but simply an ecstatic idiot and madly in love with me (my companions found it out), I decided to marry her. The idea of marriage with such a despised creature irritated my nerves. It was hard to imagine anything more monstrous. Anyway, I did not marry her only because of a wager on champagne after a drunken dinner.

This passage calls our attention once more to the close connection of self-mutilation and suicide with the torturing of others, and secondly to the great facility by which the focus of anger and aggression is shifted from the object in the outside world to certain personal groups of tendencies. Admission of the hypothesis that heteromutilation is often a realization of a need of torturing because of certain of one's own traits facilitates the analysis of many types of similar behavior. We are not free to evaluate, in regard to the case analyzed above and in other similar cases, the other factors which can influence the realization of auto- and heteromutilating tendencies. Some of these factors are the needs of conduct against the dominating tendencies in order to experience pleasure; the need of self-observation which is combined with new and very irritating experiences; strong impulsiveness; tendencies to obsessions and compulsions; tendencies to periodic emotional tension expressing itself in successive states of excitation and depression, followed by the need of submission to the action of strong agents frequently of opposite natures for obtaining a mental outlet. All of these last-named tendencies may intensify the auto- or heteromutilating tendency, and in many cases may constitute the basis predisposing to the development of the latter.

The scale of intensity and of variability of the auto- or heteromutilating tendencies depends on many factors. First, it depends on the complexity of the mental structure; secondly on the variety of experiences; lastly, on sex and age. Here is another example of Dostoyevsky's rich collection of types presenting a coexistence of auto- and heteromutilating tendencies, but in a different direction and application than in the previous example. The 14-year-old Nellie (*Insulted and Injured*), abused by life, in whom, in a less complicated way because she is childish and without an admixture of criminal tendencies, appears a tendency to an auto- and heteromutilation under the influence of the same incentive. Here are her words:

They will scold me, and I purposely shall keep quiet, they will beat me, and I shall keep quiet and quietly let them beat. I shall not burst into tears for anything in the world. And they will feel angrier, because I don't cry. . . .

And, referring to another experience:

Let her (daughter) leave him for good. Better let her beg, let him see his daughter begging, and suffer.

The knowledge that moral and physical pain is not the exclusive possession of one, but a property of all, brings alleviation to suffering. Therefore, suffering people do not tolerate contentment or joy near them. Frequently the despair may be assuaged by meeting a greater misery in others; in a suffering man, the decrease of pain may occur by its real or imagined causing of pain in others. The injury often produces an aversion and sometimes a hatred to the uninjured. Knowledge of a lack of guilt (as in the case of Nellie) intensifies this state, and self-mutilation may be the result of the desire to intensify the imposed pain in order to manifest to others the guilt by blaming everybody for the injury. On the other hand, a protracted state of moral pain may be replaced by a gradually increasing euphoria or a certain kind of mental anaesthesia produced by an excessive increase of pain and destroying the ability to feel it.

To torture others by self-mutilation may lead to a condition converse of the above. In children and adolescents, too much pampered and spoiled, overexcitable, and introverted, we find the symptoms of

nervous dramatization, as described in the third chapter, appearing with the infliction of injury by more or less conscious self-mutilation in order to cause pain to parents and guardians. This is one form of torturing others by self-mutilation.

In Weininger's and Stavrogin's examples we touched the problem of the association of criminal with suicidal tendencies. It would seem at first hand, that here is complete independence, just as there seemed to be in the relation of self-mutilation with heteromutilation. In fact, it is not so simple as in the latter case. Frequently murder, with suicides following, give us examples of this relation. For instance, we often find the murder of a deceiver and then suicide of the murderer. What is the most convincing explanation of this process? A whole complex of positive tendencies constituting the mental peculiarities of a given individual changes its quality more or less quickly, and this change is somehow imposed on him. Despite the experience of delight in suffering, many pathological individuals strive at the end to destroy what is unpleasant, and the degree of their striving depends on the strength of the group of conflicting tendencies and the speed of action of the unpleasant agent. If the complex of denied tendencies is at the given moment a dominating one in the mentality of the individual, its annihilation produces a striving for the destruction of the personality whose most important component has lost its *raison d'être*. However, besides the desire for self-destruction, there arises simultaneously the desire to destroy the object of the disowned impulse, that object which forms a part of the mentality of the individual, and which is symbolized in the external object. There arises a need to destroy both inseparable components: the object and the subject. The self-murder is in relation to himself a murderer; he kills in himself a complex of the conflicting and dominating tendencies.

The phenomenon of the suicide pact throws light on this problem. It often occurs that a man, who in the beginning agrees to be murdered, later opposes the murder with all the strength of the instinct of self-preservation. This opposition causes aggressiveness on the part of the other member of the agreement. We have in this case complete disregard of the wish to live. The self-murderer decided about the life of his companion as well as of his own; he includes this life in the components of his own mentality which he sentenced to die.

These facts, concerning sometimes even the élite of the intellectuals, testify to the consideration of the one sentenced to death as a projection of one's own mentality. This is illustrated by the case of *M M*, a high official who killed his wife and sons (the sons were 12 and 16 years old) as they fled his shots. *M M* obtained his high position through his own work and he was liked and respected by his friends and subordinates. For some time before the tragic event he changed his occupation often and showed a lack of method in his work. The following is a passage of his diary, found after his death:

Is life worth living? Whoever decides to free himself from the painful prison of life resembles a bird which, after spending the winter in a peasant's hovel, lights for the first time before the window and starts on his flight toward the sun. . . . What a delight to be free, never to feel the cold or the hunger, not to become ill, not to fear skepticism, or terror, not to bear the human beast, not to tolerate violence; to forget the horrors of prostitution, not to see pampered parasites any more, not to observe the sneering and cynical smiles. The reaching of this state of perfect happiness is entirely within our power. We can transform the tragic illusion of life into a happy existence of absolute insensibility, without effort, without longer suffering and without tiresome struggle. Let us not be afraid of death, let us spread its cult, let us create in ourselves a state of striving for freedom, for eternal silence (36).

While reading this, we get the impression that this passage is the voice of a deeply thinking man, sensitive to the most unpleasant sides of life, a pessimist who was at the time exceedingly depressed. The fact, however, of imposing death on his wife and children remains in conflict with the mentioned aversion for the toleration of violence. For the murdered ones, fleeing in terror from the bullets, the submission to death was not "without effort, without longer suffering and without tiresome struggle." It may be assumed that, at the time of the murder, the author of the diary was in a state of melancholy, under the influence of the already existing tendencies to destroy not only himself but others also. In many people showing suicidal tendencies, one may observe the coexistence of a tendency to kill others. Therefore, Talian's aphorism that "He does not kill

himself who did not want to kill another, or at least did not wish another to die" is somewhat justified.

According to Freud, in each case of suicide one can find some desire to kill the one with whom the suicide identified himself. Many phantasies about death, fears of death, and the feeling of impending death, found in neuroses, betray a mechanism which may be expressed as follows: one wished somebody to die, one is this somebody (most frequently the father), and one is dead (need of punishment). Wishing someone or oneself to die may be the expression of the feeling that only death can solve the conflict (34). The subjects of the dreams and phantasies of people showing suicidal attempts often indicate the existence of destructive tendencies, containing cosmic catastrophes, epidemics, ravaging of humanity, or similar events. One seldom finds in creatures of a pessimistic philosophy a knowledge of the sources of their personal pessimistic outlook on the world. On the contrary, there exists a striving toward objectivity of their tendencies in the form of a philosophic system. Suicide as a logical conclusion of a worldly outlook associated itself with the need to impose this outlook on others and to destroy them. Schopenhauer's philosophy of denial, based on cosmic arguments concerning the social and individual vital uselessness of life, ought to lead to suicide. According to Schopenhauer each of us would give up living if committing suicide would not be associated with unpleasant experiences. In this view we see a struggle of conflicting tendencies in Schopenhauer himself. It is an erroneous statement that each of us would most likely end life if this end were not connected with unpleasant experiences. It should rather be assumed that Schopenhauer wanted his wish to die to be more generalized. But this was not so, and hence the intensification of his aversion for society, turning into hatred, perhaps motivated by the fact that he felt in himself what he despised in others, namely, the very strong wish to live, the force of inexhaustible instincts which made him enjoy in his later years the spending of his works among the despised society. The extreme conflict between the mental and the sensual needs, the increasing suppression of the wish to live, and the surrender to this wish were the basis of the state of overexcitability and of states of anxiety and aggression in literary creations as well as in life, in the form of irony, disdain, and hatred directed toward men in general.



This was intensified perhaps by the fact that logically the hatred should have been directed primarily toward himself, which was difficult on account of the presence of a greater wish that he live rather than the others. Therefore, the hatred was projected outwardly.

These projections of hatred on society, in association with fancies of destruction, are frequent, and appear coupled with various forms of psychopathy but having many interrelations. We often observe the easy commission of suicide in murderers or in people contemplating murder. The history of the Russian anarchism and nihilism supplies us in this respect with many facts of the frequent occurrence of murder followed by suicide. We find quite often in criminals, killers either without scruples or with a certain feeling of pleasure, a great degree of emotional insensibility when learning of their sentence to death or during their execution. Destructive tendencies, which in execution have their realization through destroying the subject of such feeling, play a rôle. Such or another degree of mental disintegration, usually associated with the struggle of opposite tendencies, is to some extent an explanation. Some light is thrown on the relation between suicide and murder by their statistical relation in different countries or periods of time, which cannot, however, give the expected conclusions on account of the scarcity and the unsystematic arrangement of the data. As an example we submit the figures of H. Denis (15) concerning suicides and murders in Belgium.

TABLE 1

	Per 1,000,000 inhabitants	
	<i>Murders</i>	<i>Suicides</i>
1870-1874	15.6	69
1875-1879	17.0	83
1880-1884	17.7	103
1885-1889	15.2	117
1890-1894	16.3	127
1895-1899	16.5	119
1900	18.6	117
1901	19.7	126

## 11. SADISM AND MASOCHISM IN RELATION TO SELF-MUTILATION AND HETEROMUTILATION

Closely related to self-mutilation and heteromutilation are two forms of sexual psychopathy: masochism and sadism. We may call masochism a physical and mental, passive or active self-mutilation giving sexual satisfaction. This definition is close to the one given by Kraft-Ebing, according to whom masochism is based on sexual pleasure by subjection of the individual to some despotism, mistreatment, and humiliation. I emphasized above that masochism may take active form—this opinion may arouse disagreement. On the one hand, we may consider self-mutilation (physical or mental) for the purpose of finding sexual satisfaction as an active form of masochism; on the other hand, this form may be considered as a symptom of sadism practiced on oneself. I think that the first view is nearer the truth, inasmuch as the “active self-mutilation” most frequently appears as one of the components of a whole complex of masochistic symptoms. We shall call sadism, by analogy with the above, the physical or mental torturing of others, causing sexual satisfaction to the torturer. Masochism is one of the forms of self-mutilation but concerns only the sexual sphere.

Observations show us that masochism appears most frequently in women. It appears occasionally in men of a personality approaching the feminine and of a build, facial expression, voice, and movements diverging from the male type in greater or less degree (*typus feminus*). Otherwise, tendencies to self-mutilation on sexual grounds are characteristic rather of the female; a tendency to torture others on this ground marks the male. Many individuals with masochistic tendencies are of an infantile type which approaches in certain respects the feminine type. Very frequently there co-exist in one individual masochistic tendencies, a tendency to self-mutilation, and a tendency to experience pleasure in pain. Let us take the example of Alfred de Musset, who was inclined to mental self-mutilation, to ecstasy, to intoxication with self-inflicted pain, and the need of gratification for some sexual impulses by way of self-inflicted, physical pain. This is pointed out in a passage from *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*:

She gave me a locket with her miniature portrait. I wore it near my heart, as many men do, but one day, after finding at

a merchant's a figure made of iron at the end of which was a plate covered with sharp points, I fastened the locket to the plate and wore it so. These pins which pricked my chest at each movement, produced in me such an unknown delight that I often pressed it with my hand, to feel it more intensively. I knew well that it was an act of madness; love causes others, worse ones. . . . Since this woman had deceived me I took off this locket. I can't express with what sadness I took off this iron belt, and what a sigh my heart gave, when it became free. Ah, my poor scars. So you will become effaced? Ah, wound, dear wound, what balsam shall I put on you? . . . I should have hated this woman. She was, if I may express it so, in the blood of my veins. I cursed her, but I dreamed of her. . . . (61).

As the infliction of physical pain produced the feeling of pleasure by sexual excitement and the expectation of gratification of the sexual impulse, so the accompanying moral pain, arising from the obstacles in the realization of the sexual desire, caused strong sexual excitement which sought an outlet. Liberation for a longer or shorter period of time from certain emotional states (fear, anger, depression) by sexual relations is characteristic of excitable people. In many cases an already existing sexual excitement is increased by moral or physical pain, thus securing a faster relief of the sexual tension. Paul Federn says, justly, that "strong painful sensations of the skin seem to act physiologically as an aphrodisiac in many, perhaps in all, people (27). It should be added that there will be a great difference in the efficiency of the action "as aphrodisiac" depending on whether it will act on a person with a masochistic tendency or a normal one.

Predisposing factors to a feeling of pain as an agent exciting the sexual instinct, besides the psychopathic basis, may be: firstly, the arousal of unpleasant emotional excitements, together with the sexual ones, caused by some organic disorder as, for instance, phimosis; secondly, our observations indicate the important influence of strong pain in the region of the rectum, during sexual relations, caused by hemorrhoids or dilation of the rectum; and lastly, the feeling of pleasure, emphasized by Adler, in children beaten on the buttocks due to the simultaneous sexual excitement. This coexistence of sexual excitement and physical pain may pass into a prolonged state, which may cause a permanent combination of these two states.

Similar deductions from these observations are made again by Federn:

Algotania in its strict meaning arises first of all in people in whom pain is associated with sexual impression. This impression may be so strong that the co-existing pain loses its unpleasant character and colors only qualitatively this sexual experience.

Nevertheless, the observed cases point to the frequent lack of apparent organic irritations. In these cases, it may be assumed that the exciting factor may be a certain functional disorder of the sex organs, for instance, in early or late maturity or what we call "childish paradoxism," and in the opposite state, infantilism. In the first case we deal with the exaggerated excitability of the sexual instinct frequently associated with an exceptionally strong activity of the sex glands; in the second, we are concerned with an accompanying mental overexcitability caused by the protraction of the maturing period, and most frequently connected with so-called sexual psychoneurasthenia, states of anxiety and shame which often play a part in determining masochistic tendencies. Besides the above factors, an important rôle is played by the sex of the subject on which the above-quoted agents act selectively. We have already stated that sadism is more often met with in men, masochism in women or in men with certain feminine or childish traits. This is associated with man's sexual activity and woman's passivity. Certain investigators, like Sadger, point to the importance of the sexual dermal excitability in masochists. This is in accordance with the observed facts of the greater dermal excitability of the male masochists than in normal cases. We presented as an example of masochism the case of Alfred de Musset who showed many feminine traits and some mental infantilism. The tendency to masochism in J. J. Rousseau, who showed many infantile traits, is also known.

A man with a tendency to masochism seeks most frequently the type of woman who would complete his weakened masculine traits. To a certain degree he resigns his independence to her influence and designs. We see a strong analogy between the mechanism governing the masochistic complex and the mechanism of the broader group of these phenomena, i.e., with mental and physical self-mutilation. In both states, a strong part is played by mental and physical irritation,

strengthened by the tendency to obsessional thoughts, feelings, and impulses. In the one and in the other we observe conflicting systems of tendencies (male masochists, female sado-masochists). These states most frequently develop on a neuropsychopathic basis, marked by disorders in the system of tendencies and frequently by a lack of arrangement of complexes of tendencies and the submission of them to a dominating one.

Sadism, as well as masochism, is a normal symptom when present in a slight degree. Sadistic tendencies should be considered as a result, on the one hand, of cruelty and of masculine activity, and, on the other, of a too intensive sexual excitement. We have already spoken of the rôle of sexual excitement and of the relation of activity and passivity in this state. Cruelty is founded on the desire to inflict suffering on others, whereby the perpetrator feels pleasure in causing suffering. A sadist feels the same, but that pleasure possesses a sexual color. Sadism, as well as heteromutilation, is connected with a destructive tendency. The cruelty of a sadist will most frequently, but not exclusively, involve sex. Guy de Maupassant, possessing sado-masochistic tendencies, said of his cane: "The marvelous instrument, with the aid of which I already killed twenty dogs" (37). Sadists very frequently come from families whose members showed strong tendencies to cruelty and aggression, and also to masochism.

Many of the factors determining sadism by sexual excitement act as in masochism (balanitis, phimosis). Adler calls attention, justly, to the significance of punishment, beatings, and states of fear in the feeling of inferiority and in its compensation in the form of aggression, in the form of a "will for power," which may, among other things, express itself in a tendency to sadism. Impulses of aggression, arising as a consequence of suppressed instincts, either sexual or otherwise, may also lead to sadism. Sometimes a too intensive stifling of different impulses and the long lasting realization of self-mutilating tendencies in man may cause a protest of the dormant sadistic impulses. We suppose that such a mechanism was active in many Inquisitors whose poorly realized need of torturing others appeared in the most convenient and sanctioned form of inflicting tortures as if coming by order of the existing religious heads. The difficulties in the realization of many natural impulses, external and internal conflicts, cause in many anger and aversion to indications

of the more natural consummation of these impulses in others. Joy, naturalness, signs of harmony in a given group cause in such people hatred, anger, and a need to oppress others. This may be noticed very frequently among teachers, educators, and monastic authorities in their treatment of pupils or wards. It begins, most frequently, by an unconscious heteromutilating activity with a sadistic tinge in relation to people who symbolize groups of tendencies repressed or destroyed in the torturer. All the investigators who inquire into this problem point to the association of sadism with masochism. Freud sees in Dostoyefsky an impulse to destruction directed against himself, expressing itself in masochistic tendencies and feeling of guilt. He sees in him also definite sadistic traits: excitability, quarrelsomeness, intolerance even in relation to the beloved ones, finding pleasure in humiliating others, etc., (34). Such an explanation is in accordance with Freud's view of the structure of the majority of perversions, which are, according to him, an alliance between two opposed impulses (68). Sadism, as well as masochism, according to Freud, is a frequent derivative of the Oedipus complex, and the phantasy of being beaten, punished, and humiliated. Freud thinks that masochism is not a primitive impulse, but arises from sadism which became reversed and directed against oneself (shifting from the object to the ego). The phantasies of being beaten, arising as the basis of masochism, have frequently the same meaning as being loved, in the genital sense (32). Phantasies on the subject of being beaten and castration are found, according to Freud, in erotogenic masochism. In the so-called moral masochism we deal with the sexualization of the super-ego, which becomes the sadistic factor in relation to the ego. The third and simplest form of masochism is the feminine masochism, seen in men either of infantile type or those who betray certain feminine traits (30).

Tendencies of both kinds often coexist in the same individual. Sometimes sadistic impulses arise in a given person in relation to one sex, and the masochistic in relation to another. Federn describes cases in which he observed changes of the sadistic into masochistic tendencies during treatment. We observed a case of sadism in a man in relation to his son, and of masochism in relation to his wife, as well as a case where a mother was sadistic in regard to her son, and masochistic in her relation to her husband. Sadistic interest may be

aroused by a potentially existing masochistic tendency. Let us take, for example, the Marquis de Sade, who, in his works, along with the description of sadism, gave descriptions of all kinds of sexual perversions, with such a knowledge of the subject and such a penetration into the mechanism of the particular perversions and of the emotional states associated with them that we may suppose that he possessed complicated sexual perversion, passing from one into another. Furthermore, his biographers submit proofs concerning the existence in him of some equal perversions besides sadism. Torturing others combines itself in Marquis de Sade (23) with the need to torture himself. The wish to die and to destroy himself (nirvana principle) took in him a peculiar form, namely, a wish that the earth over his grave appear as if it had never been cut and that the spot be forgotten.

A sado-masochistic complex of weaker intensity, developing itself in a person of a subtle and romantic disposition, is seen in the life of Alfred de Musset (61). It is evident in his *Confessions of a Child of the Century* and from the poet's correspondence. On the one hand, we observe physical and mental self-mutilation frequently with sexual excitation. On the other hand, we read of mental mistreatment of his beloved. Paying her homage turned after a few minutes into the infliction of a deep moral pain. The passage from weeping, praying, and adoration to swearing and mistreatment points, in accordance with the above views, to the existence of a sado-masochistic complex. This is demonstrated by the following passage from *Confessions of a Child of the Century*:

After the end of these scenes where my mind exhausted itself in tortures and rent my heart, in turn accusing and sneering, but always with an urge to suffering and to return to the past,—after the end of it, an unknown love, an exaltation pushed to excess, ordered me to treat my beloved like an idol, like a goddess. . . . A short while after accusing her, I was on my knees. If I did not accuse her, I begged for forgiveness, when I did not sneer, I cried.

That lack of a distinct predominance of activity over passivity, of the masculine mental traits over the feminine ones, developed on a neuropathic basis into a sado-masochistic form with the predominance of masochism into a special form of Dugas' "mental instability."

We showed above that the relation of sadism and masochism in the same individual may differ, with more or less great predominance of one or the other. We had under observation a 17-year-old student, *W*, who presented himself with a request for a medico-psychological qualification for a military training school. From the conversation it was found that he was subject to frequent fainting attacks on observation of his own slightest wound or "a drop of blood." He was indifferent to the sight of blood or a wound in others, and very frequently purposely looked forward to seeing wounds and blood. He inspected with pleasure the murdered or the dead. In phantasies and dreams he imagined a field of battle covered with dead troops. He was then strongly sexually excited. No disorders of heart and vascular system were found. From further observation and conversation it was found that *W* began to masturbate a few years before he matured; he showed a tendency to onychophagia, laceration of the skin, especially of the nipples which, incidentally, became enlarged under the influence of their mutilation and frequent excitation. Besides this, he was obtrusive and aggressive in his relations with his family. This indicates the presence in *W* of the sado-masochistic complex, with predominance of the first. His dermal hyperexcitability and irritation of the nipples, associated with pleasure, testify to the presence of a masochistic complex.



## 12. EDUCO-THERAPEUTIC CONCLUSIONS

We have no special up-to-date treatise concerning self-mutilation as a total complex. Certain symptoms are touched only occasionally in discussions of various mental problems. We do not pretend to advance this problem so far as to be able to make very definite educational suggestions. Moreover, the fact that self-mutilation is in many cases related to or symptomatic of various pathological disorders (nervousness, psychasthenia, hysteria, and others) makes it difficult to suggest educo-therapeutic methods which could be applied to symptoms and not to the basis of the disease. These arguments explain the limitation of our presentation in this section to very general suggestions. We treated, however, in a somewhat broad manner certain aspects of a few forms of self-mutilation which probably constitute a separate disorder.

Self-mutilation on the basis of psychomotor excitability may be prevented by:

1. Periodic psychomotor release.
  - (a). Sports, games, interesting discussions, interesting occupation during convalescent period in bed (hand work, interesting reading, and conversation), the quickest possible getting out of bed.
  - (b). Treatment by means of therapeutic gymnastics.
2. Adequate choice of profession affording active occupation, avoiding sedentary life.
3. Persuasion and gradual working up of the self-control in the psychomotor sphere.
4. Hydrotherapy.
5. Prevention of such causes of psychomotor excitability as alcoholism, diseases of the nervous system, shocks, emotional conflicts, etc.

There arises, in regard to disappointments, the problem of the prophylactic preparation of young emotional and introverted individuals for the broader orientation in regard to vital problems, and the keener observation and understanding of people, for seeing reality as it is, and for changing the tendencies to idolatry into definite lasting values (a life of high moral value, interest in religion, literature, art, and social work). Sources of states of melancholy and depression are so diverse that presenting even a general outline concerning self-

mutilation on the basis of these is impossible. Of great importance in the prevention of anxiety states is an early formation in the child of an ability to form broader contacts, and the sparing of conditions which might cause unconscious suppression of natural instincts. Finally, the elimination of punishment, of fright, and of quickly countermanded orders should be replaced by persuasion, especially in introverted and overexcitable individuals. Neuropathic dramatization has its most frequent source in the excessive fondling of the child, or conversely, in neglecting it, in useless activity, vacillation, or unequal treatment of children. Educational suggestions appear rather distinctly as a result of the content of the above-described cases. Methods which may be applied to hysterics *eo ipso* may be applied to self-mutilation on a hysterical basis. Self-mutilation on the basis of a real inferiority in one or another respect may be compensated for by the discovery in the given person of values which allow him to distinguish himself. (Usually such values can be found.) Definite suggestions come up in relation to people whose self-mutilation is based on anxiety or timidity. Gradually becoming accustomed to contacts in a small group of friends of the same age and different sexes is suggested in such cases. In cases of self-mutilation on the basis of feelings of guilt and inferiority, combined with inadequate environmental influence on the development of the sex instinct in the child, the basic problem, again, must be attacked. So-called self-mutilating endurance games most often do not require therapeutic or educational prophylaxis, but only a slight change of the need to distinguish oneself into a more mature and less infantile sphere of behavior.

Self-mutilation produces similar traits in emotionally hyperexcitable individuals through distressing experiences, submission to pessimistic moods, meditation about death and the uselessness of life, etc. The early creation in the child of an ability to form wider association and the formation of an inclination in a definite direction, depending on his interests and capacities, would be valuable in weakening the tendency towards an exclusively inner life and strengthening the life in the family group. In such people, the formation of an active basis for life and of a faculty to fight the evil in himself and others is possible. Pathological forms of asceticism, such as mutilation of the body, extreme self-

destruction, bringing oneself to ecstasies by self-mutilation, or by the use of narcotics, the infliction of pain for the delight of suffering (intoxication with suffering), may develop on the basis of: experiences of mental injuries in childhood, states of anxiety and feelings of guilt, hysteria, tendency to obsessions, lack of refinement of the personality, or mental overexcitability. Therefore, the prevention and treatment of this type of self-mutilating symptom must be aimed at the basic disorder. Constitutional factors of poorly known structure and mechanism take part in the arousal of auto- and heteromutilating and sado-masochistic complexes, playing a great part in self-mutilating processes. According to the theory of Freud, the education of a child during the first years of life, based on principles of mental hygiene of the sexual life, can have great prophylactic value. The early prevention of overexcitability and of tendencies to aggression and explosiveness and the development of persuasion and self-control may also be of importance here. The comprehension by pedagogues, physicians, and parents of the psychology of the developmental periods (especially the period of maturation) may be of great importance for the prevention of the pathological appearance of these disharmonious tendencies and struggles of conflicting complexes characteristic of overexcitable individuals in this period. Lastly, the elimination of such determining factors as balanitis, phimosis, and various irritations of the rectum may weaken masochistic and sadistic tendencies. The struggle of conflicting complexes is very frequently of constitutional origin (sado-masochism, sexual ambivalence, and different states of disintegration of tendencies) and hence, it is difficult for us to discuss the treatment of these basic causes. We can modify only the effects of the activity of environmental influences on a given complex of constitutional traits, and in that way influence one or another system of traits. The same may be said in regard to introversion (which plays a great rôle in the predisposition to self-mutilation) if this introversion has arisen and developed on a constitutional basis (astheno-schizoid types of Kretschmer, tetanoid types of Jaensch, etc.). Introversion, as well as the group of conflicting tendencies which have arisen or become intensified following specific environmental influences, may be modified only within certain limits. It is a question of not allowing it to develop into self-mutilation, or into a greater disorder, and of the best possible arrangement of conditions for the relationship of

such individuals with others, in order to take advantage of their oftentimes valuable cultural potentialities.

We can say nothing more definite about therapeutic influences on the disorders of deep sensibility which is assumedly at the basis of many self-mutilating and suicidal tendencies. Further investigations of the autonomic nervous system and endocrine glands may help to solve this problem.

### 13. CULTURAL VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-MUTILATION

We think that it is erroneous to consider all neuropathic and psychopathic symptoms only as pathological disorders which need to be cured. Up to date, we are far from having mastered man's various psychobiological mechanisms. We cannot tell why in one case children of alcoholic heredity show unusual capacities, in another, epilepsy. We do not know why hereditary syphilis exists, in one case in conjunction with a striking personality, in another with imbecility.

We must be still more careful in the treatment of psychoneurotics only as patients. Dr. Serrin's examination (at Dr. Toulouse's) of very capable children revealed that about three-fourths of a large group presented various symptoms of nervousness. The feeling of inferiority, whose compensation often leads to self-mutilation (self-accusation, aversion, and hatred of certain of one's own traits and their conscious suppression, overcoming and destruction), may be the source of many cultural advances according to the following view of Dr. C. Macfie Campbell:

A feeling of inferiority may be an incentive to put forth one's best efforts, and perhaps no great accomplishment has ever been attained except under the spur of some such stimulus (9).

Such and other forms of inability to adapt to changing conditions and to broader relationships with others are found in authors of great philosophical and educational systems and in representatives of science. Lack of easy "rapport" with others is usually compensated for by a tightening of the emotional link to one's family (self-mutilation and suicide after loss of a near relative) and the intensification of the religious and cultural life. Psychic overexcitability, the lack of a uniform molding of the personality, and instability of the psychic structure are not always the basis of mental disease. Frequently, independent of disease, or after having gone through a psychotic episode, great mental suffering because of conflicts, or a crisis, stabilization of the personality at a higher level occurs (Beers, Dostoyefsky). States of struggle of conflicting complexes, suppression, and torture of one complex by another often produce outbursts of energy from a strong tension in the form of creative activity (Dostoyefsky, Scho-

penhauer, Nietzsche, Weininger, Zeromski, and others). We think that educational suggestions recommending temperance, the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions, and the undertaking of necessary responsibilities are not alien to the spirit of a reasonable and moderate asceticism. It is an expression of the indispensable subordination of natural impulses under the will of the subject (9).

Reaching a high level of self-control and of inner harmony requires a long systematic training. Exercises in submitting the natural instincts to the authority of the intellect and moral principles of a philosophy of life in order to reach a high degree of self-control and inner harmony is by all means desirable. The desire for difficult undertakings, in spite of penetration of many obstacles for reaching a valuable goal, is in harmony with ascetic principles. Asceticism has also great merits in combating the tendency to live from day to day, to live for enjoyment. It has shown us definitely that in emotional individuals with strong and conflicting complexes one can, by great systematic effort, subordinate a complex of lower to one of higher value and use the combined energy for the perfection of moral values. The emphasis on the need for subordination of lower values to higher ones has not been without influence on the development of the idea of self-sacrifice for goals accepted as more exalted (society, fatherland, science). At the basis of self-sacrifice one can often find the influence of the doctrine of religious asceticism. A large degree of civic asceticism, arising under a strong, though most frequently barely noticeable, influence of religious asceticism, is the self-sacrifice in accepted obligations, as in saving one from drowning, in the leaders' not deserting the troops or the crew ["Where the sheep perish, must the shepherd also fall,—Zolkiewski (58)]. Lastly, one of the highest ideas of humanity, the purifying value of suffering (provided it is correctly interpreted), is continuously alive, for example, in the deepening of the moral culture of man by suffering, in its influence on philosophical creation and on the origin of the educational and moral system. We must, on the other hand, direct our attention to the perverted practices of asceticism, beginning with the torturing of the body and ascetic epidemics (cults of self-flagellants), and ending with self-abasement, ecstasy in degradation, the practice of tortures for the sake of torturing, more or less unconscious narcotization by suffering (58), and, lastly, inconsistent with human self-respect, the ter-

rorization of the senses and compensation of sensual needs in a humiliating manner. This testifies to the absence of culture of the pseudo-ascetic (baseless idolization of the chosen persons of the other sex, application of tortures as strongest-agent for sexual experiences, etc.) Separation from family obligations, symptoms of cruelty to the nearest ones, indifference to the sufferings of others, with the simultaneous practice of strict asceticism in relation to oneself, again give no evidence of a high level of moral culture but, rather, of a warped personality or a serious mental illness. Severity to oneself should be accompanied by sensitivity to the sufferings of others. In other cases we deal with pathological fanaticism, with a need for torturing not only oneself but also others, which has grown out of a pathological repression of one's desires, and a more or less unconscious need of vengeance on others, under the guise of a fight for religious principles (Inquisition).

In the conclusion of our deliberation we gain the conviction that voluntary and non-pathological forms of self-mutilation, useful for self-control and the harmonization into a higher type of personality, are a very important mechanism of self-education, of the completion of sublimation of a way to a philosophy of life, based on the ennobling value of suffering. In emotionally overexcitable, introverted individuals, this is one of the noblest forms of adaptation to life after having experienced hardships, an expression of the protest against injury, suffering, and death.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Non-adaptation of these individuals may express itself in such forms of protest as mental disease, suicide, and crime.

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