

...be merged as an "individual," for the fact of his separateness cannot be reversed; it is an escape from an unbearable situation which would make life impossible if it were prolonged. This course of escape, therefore, is characterized by its compulsive character, like every escape from threatening panic; it is also characterized by the more or less complete surrender of individuality and the integrity of the self. Thus it is not a solution which leads to happiness and positive freedom; it is, in principle, a solution which is to be found in all neurotic phenomena. It assuages an unbearable anxiety and makes life possible by avoiding panic; yet it does not solve the underlying problem and is paid for by a kind of life that often consists only of automatic or compulsive activities. Some of these mechanisms of escape are of relatively small social import; they are to be found in any marked degree only in individuals with severe mental and emotional disturbances. In this chapter I shall discuss only those mechanisms which are culturally significant and the understanding of which is a necessary premise for the psychological analysis of the social phenomena with which we shall deal in the following chapters: the Fascist system, on one hand, modern democracy, on the other." From a different viewpoint K. Horney In her "neurotic trends" (New Ways in Psychoanalysis) has arrived at a concept which has certain similarities with my concept of the "mechanisms of escape." The main differences between the two concepts are these: the neurotic trends are the driving forces in individual neurosis while the mechanisms of escape are driving forces in normal man. Furthermore, Horney's main emphasis is on anxiety while mine is on the isolation of the individual.

MECHANISMS OF ESCAPE

1. AUTHORITARIANISM

The first mechanism of escape from freedom I am going to deal with is the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse one's self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking. Or, to put it in different words, to seek for new, "secondary bonds" as a substitute for the primary bonds which have been lost. The more distinct forms of this mechanism are to be found in the striving for submission and domination, or, as we would rather put it, in the masochistic and sadistic strivings as they exist in varying degrees in normal and neurotic persons respectively. We shall first describe these tendencies and then try to show that both of them are an escape from an unbearable aloneness. The most frequent forms in which masochistic strivings appear are feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance, The analysis of persons who are obsessed by these feelings show that while they consciously complain about these feelings and want to get rid of them, unconsciously some power within themselves drives them to feel inferior or insignificant, Their feelings are more than realizations of actual shortcomings and weaknesses (although they are usually rationalized as though they were); these persons show a tendency to belittle themselves, to make themselves weak, and not to master things. Quite regularly these people show a marked dependence on powers outside of themselves, on other people, or institutions, or nature. They tend not to

assert themselves, not to do what they want, but to submit to the factual or alleged orders of these outside forces. Often they are quite incapable of experiencing the feeling "I want" or "I am." Life, as a whole, is felt by them as something overwhelmingly powerful, which they cannot master or control.

In the more extreme cases-and there are many -one finds besides these tendencies to belittle oneself and to submit to outside forces a tendency to hurt oneself and to make oneself suffer.

This tendency can assume various forms. We find that there are people who indulge in selfaccusation and self-criticism which even their worst enemies would scarcely bring against them. There are others, such as certain compulsive neurotics, who tend to torture themselves with compulsory rites and thoughts. In a certain type of neurotic personality, we find a tendency to become physically ill, and to wait, consciously or unconsciously, for an illness as if it were a gift of the gods. Often they incur accidents which would not have happened had there not been at work an unconscious tendency to incur them. These tendencies directed against themselves are often revealed in still less overt or dramatic forms. For instance, there are persons who are incapable of answering questions in an examination when the answers are very well known to them at the time of the examination and even afterwards. There are others who say things which 'antagonize those whom they love or on whom they are dependent, although actually they feel friendly toward them and did not intend to say those things. With such people, it almost seems as if they were following advice given them by an enemy to behave in such a way as to be most detrimental to themselves.

The masochistic trends are often felt as plainly pathological or irrational. More frequently they are rationalized. Masochistic dependency is conceived as love or loyalty, inferiority feelings as an adequate expression of actual shortcomings, and one's suffering as being entirely due to unchangeable circumstances.

Besides these masochistic trends, the very opposite of them, namely, sadistic tendencies, are regularly to be found in the same kind of characters. They vary in strength, are more or less conscious, yet they are never missing. We find three kinds of sadistic tendencies, more or less closely knit together. One is to make others dependent on oneself and to have absolute and unrestricted power over them, so as to make of them nothing but instruments, "clay in the potter's hand." Another consists of the impulse not only to rule over others in this absolute fashion, but to exploit them, to use them, to steal from them, to disembowel them, and, so to speak, to incorporate anything eatable in them. This desire can refer to material things as well as to immaterial ones, such as the emotional or intellectual qualities a person has to offer. A third kind of sadistic tendency is the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. This suffering can be physical, but more often it is mental suffering. Its aim is to hurt actively, to humiliate, embarrass others, or to see them in embarrassing and humiliating situations.

Sadistic tendencies for obvious reasons are usually less conscious and more rationalized than the socially more harmless masochistic trends. Often they are entirely covered up by

reaction formations of over goodness or over concern for others. Some of the most frequent rationalizations are the following: "I rule over you because I know what is best for you, and in your own interest you should follow me without opposition." Or, "I am so wonderful and unique, that I have a right to expect that other people become dependent on me." Another rationalization which often covers the exploiting tendencies is: "I have done so much for you, and now I am entitled to take from you what I want." The more aggressive kind of sadistic impulse finds its most frequent rationalization in two forms: "I have been hurt by others and my wish to hurt them is nothing but retaliation," or, "By striking first I am defending myself or my friends against the danger of being hurt."

There is one factor in the relationship of the sadistic person to the object of his sadism which is often neglected and therefore deserves especial emphasis here: his dependence on the object of his sadism.

While the masochistic person's dependence is obvious, our expectation with regard to the sadistic person is just the reverse: he seems so strong and domineering, and the object of his sadism so weak and submissive, that it is difficult to think of the strong one as being dependent on the one over whom he rules. And yet close analysis shows that this is true. The sadist needs the person over whom he rules, he needs him very badly, since his own feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone. This dependence may be entirely unconscious. Thus, for example, a man may treat his wife very sadistically and tell her repeatedly that she can leave the house any day and that he would be only too glad if she did. Often she will be so crushed that she will not dare to make an attempt to leave, and therefore they both will continue to believe that what he says is true. But if she musters up enough courage to declare that she will leave him, something quite unexpected to both of them may happen. He will become desperate, break down, and beg her not to leave him; he will say he cannot live without her, and will declare how much he loves her and so on. Usually, being afraid of asserting herself anyhow, she will be prone to believe him, change her decision and stay. At this point the play starts again. He resumes his old behavior, she finds it increasingly difficult to stay with him, explodes again, he breaks down again, she stays, and so on and on many times.

There are thousands upon thousands of marriages and other personal relationships in which this cycle is repeated again and again, and the magic circle is never broken through. Did he lie when he said he loved her so much that he could not live without her? As far as love is concerned, it all depends on what one means by love. As far as his assertion goes that he could not live without her, it is - of course not taking it literally - perfectly true. He cannot live without her or at least without someone else whom he feels to be the helpless instrument in his hands. While in such a case feelings of love appear only when the relationship threatens to be dissolved, in other cases the sadistic person quite manifestly "loves" those over whom he feels power. Whether it is his wife, his child, an assistant, a waiter, or a beggar on the street, there is a feeling of "love" and even gratitude for those objects of his domination. He may think that he wishes to dominate their lives because he loves them so much. He actually "loves" them because he dominates them. He bribes them with material things, with praise, assurances of love, the display of wit and brilliance, or by showing concern. He may give them everything -

everything except one thing: the right to be free and independent. This constellation is often to be found particularly in the relationship of parents and children. There, the attitude of domination-and ownership -is often covered by what seems to be the "natural" concern or feeling of protectiveness for a child. The child is put into a golden cage; it can have everything provided it does not want to leave the cage. The result of this is often a profound fear of love on the part of the child when he grows up, as "love", to him implies being caught and blocked in his own quest for freedom.

Sadism to many observers seemed less of a puzzle than masochism. That one wished to hurt others or to dominate them seemed, though not necessarily "good," quite natural. Hobbes assumed as a "general inclination of all mankind" the existence of "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in Death." ² For him the wish for power has no diabolical quality but is a perfectly rational result of man's desire for pleasure and security. From Hobbes to Hitler, who explains the wish for domination as the logical result of the biologically conditioned struggle for survival of the fittest, the lust for power has been explained as a part of human nature which does not warrant any explanation beyond the obvious. Masochistic strivings, however, tendencies directed against one's own self, seem to be a riddle. How should one understand the fact that people not only want to belittle and weaken and hurt themselves, but even enjoy doing so? Does not the phenomenon of masochism contradict our whole picture of the human psyche as directed toward pleasure and self preservation? How can one explain that some men are attracted by and tend to incur what we all seem to go to such length to avoid: pain and suffering?

There is a phenomenon, however, which proves that suffering and weakness can be the aim of human striving: the masochistic perversion. Here we find that people quite consciously want to suffer in one way or another and enjoy it. In the masochistic perversion, a person feels sexual excitement when experiencing pain inflicted upon him by another person. But this is not the only form of masochistic perversion. Frequently it is not the actual suffering of pain that is sought for, but the excitement and satisfaction aroused by being physically bound, made helpless and weak. Often all that is wanted in the masochistic perversion is to be made weak ¹¹ "morally" by being treated or spoken to like a little child, or by being scolded or humiliated in different ways. In the sadistic perversion, we find the satisfaction derived from corresponding devices, that is, from hurting other persons physically, from tying them with ropes or chains, or from humiliating them by actions or words.

The masochistic perversion with its conscious and intentional enjoyment of pain or humiliation caught...

² Hobbes Leviathan, London, 1951, p, 47.