

Our counter framing is dialectical reasoning

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1. **Reason is a** special sort of capacity or competence: the **capacity to weigh considerations for and against adopting** either (1) a belief, or (2) **a course of action**. To be rational, in the relevant sense, is to be capable of deliberating about these considerations, which are called “reasons” (to believe or to act). When we weigh reasons to believe, we call this activity epistemic reasoning; when we weigh reasons to act, we call this practical reasoning. 2. In the marxist tradition, notably in the work of Marx himself, the favoured mode of reasoning, about both epistemic and practical matters, is **dialectical reasoning**. It **is favoured because** the “point” of reasoning, **in this tradition, is** not “scholastic,” but **transformative**: “The **philosophers** have [hitherto] only **interpreted the world**; the point, **however**, is to change it.” **Dialectical reasoning encourages the interpreter** to understand the world as **a** field for possible **transformative interventions**, to be “understood in its contradiction and revolutionized in practice.” (All of these quoted passages are from Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” 1845.)marx123 3. **Dialectical rationality**, in the marxist tradition, is the competence to **deploy a set of higher-order interpretive standards** about how best to weigh reasons at the first-order level, in light of the overriding “practical-critical” interest (or “point”) **that animates dialectical research**, which is to lay bare the opportunities for potent and emancipatory intervention **into dynamic systems of conflict and subordination** or “fettered” human “development.” Reasoning is dialectical, in this “practical-critical” way, when the standards it uses to steer decision-making (about what to believe or to do) jointly prioritize an understanding of the world, and the intervention-opportunities it offers, that is informed by a conception of events and actions as importantly embedded within and largely generated by antagonistic and dynamic systems with discernible developmental trajectories (concepts that I explain below). 4. The interpretive norms that qualify reasoning (about what to believe or to do) as dialectical can be stated concisely: (a) **First, dialectical reason is committed to** a norm of systemic **understanding**, according to which events and actions are to be understood, **not in** terms of **pure facticity** (as something that “just happens”) **or pure agency** (as voluntary choices **of an unconstrained “free will”**), **but rather in terms of larger antagonisms and systems** that tend to generate events and acts of the relevant kinds, in ways **that comply with an intelligible systemic logic**. For instance, dialectical reasoning discourages adoption of the belief that a certain CEO chose to attack a union due to her moral failings as an individual. The “dialectical” basis for casting doubt on such an interpretation is that the proposed view understands the events and actions under consideration as generated by voluntary decisions made by an individual, who could just as easily have chosen to encourage union activity. **When we adopt the interpretive norm of systemic understanding, we** tend to **discount** such **judgments as ill-founded, in favour of competing interpretations**, according to which (for example) the CEO is responding to systemic imperatives that tend to govern her choices, systematically encouraging profit-maximizing choices, and systematically discouraging public-interest-furthering choices. Dialectical reasoning treats **the systemic character** of this second **interpretive** option as **counting in favour of its adoption** (other things being equal). At the level of practical reason, our reasoning accords with this norm of systemic understanding, when it diagnoses the antagonism between the CEO and his or her employees, “not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals’ social conditions of existence” (Marx, Capital), and therefore prescribes interventions that target the systemic logic at work, rather than the individual choices of a specific personage. (b) **Second, dialectical reason is committed to** a norm of **dynamic understanding, according to which** these **systems are** to be understood, **not** as **stable structures that** automatically **self-regulate** toward a reliable equilibrium, **but unstable, dynamic systems that transform themselves** according to discernible (albeit not necessarily predictable) developmental trajectories. As Lukacs puts the point, dialectical reason regards the “present as history,” always already undergoing transformation and reconfiguration. For example, a description or explanation of “the economy” will better accord with the interpretive standards of dialectical reason to the extent that it highlights the tendencies toward instability, crisis and system-malfunctioning. Conversely, dialectical reasoning will tend to view sceptically any description or explanation of “the economy” as tending automatically to gravitate toward a stable equilibrium. (Again, this is not a matter of refusing to recognize reality, under the influence of some a priori ideological commitment. Rather, it is a matter of highlighting the points of possible intervention, and “laying bare” the instabilities that can focus proposals or projects for emancipatory practical engagement — all of which are glossed over or repressed by undialectical interpretations.) (c) **Third, dialectical reason is committed to** a norm of **antagonistic understanding**, according to which the **dynamics of unstable systems** are to be **understood in terms of conflicts and antagonisms that animate and destabilize them**. For example, **dialectical reasoning will assess** a proposed description or explanation of **a social problem** (like climate change or unemployment) **more favourably**, other things being equal, **to the extent** that the proposed **interpretation reveals the**

basis of transformation; and instabilities of prevailing systems as products of the tensions, conflicts

and struggles between opposing social forces or groups, pitted against one another in ways that undermines social cohesion. An interpretation of climate change in terms of “overpopulation” or “overconsumption,” for instance, will tend to be weighed unfavourably by **dialectical reasoning**, to the extent that it glosses over or conceals the roots of social actions and events in conflicts between profit-motivated employers and need-motivated workers, or the antagonism between business interests and the public interest. A class-struggle analysis, and/or an anti-colonial analysis, will — by contrast — be weighed more favourably by reasoning that is dialectical, assuming that the analysis highlights rather than covering up the conflicts between what Marx called “the mass of the people” and “a few usurpers.” (d) Fourth, there is the norm of negation-negative understanding, according to which the conflicts and antagonisms that animate dynamic, unstable systems are to be analyzed in terms of “fetters” on the “free development” of social “forces” or social energies that antagonistic systems both rely crucially upon and continually struggle to constrain and domesticate. (In the jargon of dialectical research, the overcoming of fetters that block development is called the “negation of the negation.”) Dialectical standards of sound understanding encourage adoption of proposed descriptions or explanations of actions and events when these interpretations reveal forces or energies within the prevailing situation (that is, the socio-historical object under study) that are blocked or held back from full and free development by established social relations. For example, a dialectical interpretation of unemployment will highlight the capacity for productive, socially useful work by unemployed people, whose contributions are blocked from taking full effect by the dominance of a social structure (the labour market) that allocates labour power according to criteria of profit-maximization rather than need-satisfaction. Such an interpretation brings into view a kind of “negativity” or “lack” within observable reality, consisting of possibilities that are present in principle, but blocked in practice by existing social relations. As such, it highlights prospects for liberating transformations that un-block reality (negate the prevailing negation) in order to actualize potentialities that are “fettered” or tied up due to interest-conflicts between antagonistic social forces (e.g., workers and capitalists). A dialectical interpretation will thus tend to reveal existing social relations as (to cite the Communist Manifesto) “so many fetters” to be “burst asunder.” The norm of negation-negative understanding is particularly important in dialectical practical reasoning, since it discourages us from weighing heavily a reason to act which does not link a proposal for change to fettered forces (blocked or negated potentialities) that can be unleashed and turned against the social relations that limit and block them. For instance, Marx’s critique of Utopian socialism was grounded in the norm of negation-negative understanding: the Utopians proposed abstract ideals that were purely exterior to the status quo, rather than finding within capitalism itself the social forces (productive forces, organizational forms, like co-operatives and unions, and the collective agency of working class people) that could be mobilized and turned against the system to “burst asunder” the constraints that block their development, negating the negativity or fettering that held them back. As Marx says in the Grundrisse, “if we did not find concealed in society as it is the material conditions of production and the corresponding relations of exchange prerequisite for a classless society, then all attempts to explode it would be quixotic” (Karl Marx, Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft), trans. M. Nicolaus, Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 159.) 5. **These broadly “methodological” or “meta-interpretive” commitments to an understanding of social reality that reveals its susceptibility to transformative political action through anti-systemic mobilization** are **clearly substantive**, in the sense that they predispose dialectical social analysis to adopt a certain range of descriptions and explanations over others. In principle, it is possible that the substantive pre-commitments of dialectical inquiry might prove to be systematically misleading (to be, not only prejudgments, but prejudices, in the worst sense). But here, **the materialist-dialectical approach to inquiry** returns to its guiding intuition: that the “practical-critical” mode of inquiry will **prove itself** in the context of **emancipatory political struggle**. The question of the “ultimate” justifiability of these dialectical commitments “is not a question of theory but is a practical question,” according to the marxist tradition. Ultimately, critical researchers “must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness [Diesseitigkeit] of [dialectical] thinking, in practice. **The dispute over the reality or non-reality** of thinking which **is** isolated from practice is a purely **scholastic question**,” **and** hence **falls outside the** scope of **dialectical** thought. But the exclusion of this “metaphysical” question, about whether and to what extent dialectical reason is justified by the way the world “really is,” indicates less a limitation of dialectical reason than a limitation of the pertinence or value of metaphysical speculation for the projects that motivate dialectical research in the first place. Once again: “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.” (Quotations in this section are from Theses on Feuerbach.)

Sadomasochism K

The attempt to make wage labor humane is falsified grace in the face of sadomasochistic desire of the system and purports an endless branding of submission which makes the willing submissive slave devour itself

Parramore, L. (2015). Fifty shades of capitalism: Pain and bondage in the American workplace. [online] libcom.org. Available at: <https://libcom.org/article/fifty-shades-capitalism-pain-and-bondage-american-workplace> [Accessed 20 Aug. 2024].

Drunk on the intoxicants of wealth and power. Fifty Shades of Grey hints at a sinister cultural shift that is unfolding in its pages before our eyes. The innocent Anastasias will no longer merely have their lifeblood slowly drained by **capitalist predators**. They're going to be whipped, humiliated and forced to wear a butt-plug. The vampire in the night has given way to the **dominating overlord of a hierarchical, sadomasochistic world in which everybody without money is a helpless submissive.**

Welcome to late-stage capitalism. Invisible Handcuffs This has been coming for some time. Ever since the Reagan era, from the factory to the office tower, **the American workplace has been morphing** for many **into a tightly-managed torture chamber of exploitation and domination.** Bosses strut about making stupid commands. Employees trapped by ridiculous bureaucratic procedures censor themselves for fear of getting a pink slip. Inefficiencies are everywhere. Bad management and **draconian policies** prop up the **system of command and control where the boss is God** and the **workers** are so many **expendable units in the great capitalist machine.** The iron handmaidens of high unemployment and economic inequality keep the show going. How did this happen? Economists known as "free-market fundamentalists" who claim Adam Smith as their forefather like to paint a picture of the economy as a voluntary system magically guided by an "invisible hand" toward outcomes that are good for most people. They tell us that our economy is a system of equal exchanges between workers and employers in which everybody who does her part is respected and comes out ahead. Something has obviously gone horribly wrong with the contract. Thieving CEOs get mega-yachts while hard-working Americans get stagnant wages, crappy healthcare, climate change, and unrelenting insecurity. **Human potential is wasted, initiative punished and creativity starved.** Much of **the evil stems from the** fact that **free-market** economists **who still dominate the Ivy League and the policy circles** have focused on markets at the expense of those inconvenient encumbrances known as "people." Their fancy mathematical models make calculations about buying and selling, but they tend to leave out one important thing: production. In other words, they don't give a hoot about the **labor** of those who sustain the economy. Their perverted religion may have something to say about **unemployment or wages** – keeping the former high and the latter low – but the conditions workers face receive nary a footnote. Michael Perelman, one of a small group of heretical economists who question this anti-human regime, draws attention to the neglect, abuse and **domination of workers** in his aptly named book, **The Invisible Handcuffs: How Market Tyranny Stifles the Economy by Stunting Workers.** He reveals that instead of a system of fair exchanges, we have "one in which the interests of employees and employers are sharply at odds." This creates conditions of festering conflict and **employers** who have to take ever-stronger measures to exert control. Hostility among workers **thrives**, which results **in more punishment.** Respect, the free flow of information, inclusive decision-making – all the things that would make for a productive work environment – fly out the window. The word of the manager is the law, and endless time and energy is expended rationalizing its essential goodness. Americans are supposed to be people who love freedom above everything else. But where is the citizen less free than in the typical workplace? Workers are denied bathroom breaks. They cannot leave to care for a sick child. Downtime and vacations are a joke. Some – just ask who picked your tomatoes – have been **reduced to slave-like conditions.** In the current climate of more than three years of unemployment over 8 percent, the longest stretch since the Great Depression, **the worker has little choice but to submit. And** pretend to **like it.** A medieval peasant had plenty of things to worry about, but the year-round control of daily life was not one of them. Perelman points out that in pre-capitalist societies, people toiled relatively few hours over the course of a year compared to what Americans work now. They labored like dogs during the harvest, but there was ample free time during the off-seasons. Holidays were abundant – as many as 200 per year. It was Karl Marx, in his Theory of Alienation, who saw that modern industrial production under capitalist conditions would rob workers of control of their lives as they lost control of their work. Unlike the blacksmith or the shoemaker who owned his shop, decided on his own working conditions, shaped his product, and had a say in how his goods were bartered or sold, the modern worker would have little autonomy. His relationships with the people at work would become impersonal and hollow. Clearly, the technological wonders of **our capitalist system have not released human beings** from the burden of work. **They have brought** us more work. They have not brought most of us more freedom, but less.

Naked domination was not always the law of the land. In the early 1960s, when unions were stronger and the New Deal's commitment to full employment still meant something, a worker subjected to abuse could bargain with his employer or simply walk. Not so today. The high unemployment sustained by the Federal Reserve's corporate-focused obsession with "fighting inflation" (code for "keeping down wages") works out well **for the sado-capitalist.** The unrelenting attack on government blocks large-scale public works programs that might rebalance the scale by putting people back on the job. The assault on collective bargaining robs the worker of any recourse to unfair conditions. Meanwhile, the tsunami of money in politics drowns the democratic system of rule by the people. And the redistribution of wealth toward the top ensures that most of us are scrapping too hard for our daily bread to fight for anything better. The corporate media cheer. Turning the Tables

In the early '70s, the S&M counterculture scene followed the rise of anti-authoritarian punk rock, providing a form of transgressive release for people enduring too much control in their daily lives. Bondage-influenced images hit the mainstream in 1980 — the year the union-busting Ronald Reagan was elected president — in the form of a workplace comedy, 9 to 5, which became one of the highest grossing comedies of all time. 9 to 5 struck a chord with millions of Americans toiling in dead-end jobs ruled by authoritarian bosses. Audiences howled with joy to see three working women act out their **fantasies of revenge on a workplace tyrant** by **suspending [them]** him **in chains and shutting [their]** his **mouth with** a ball-gag. More recently, the 2011 film Horrible Bosses follows the plot of three friends who decide to murder their respective domineering, abusive bosses. The film exceeded financial expectations, raking in over \$28 million in the first three days. It went on to become the highest grossing black comedy film of all time. The fantasy of turning the tables on the boss speaks to the deep-seated outrage that trickle-down policies and the war on workers has wrought. People naturally want to work in a rational, healthy system that offers them dignity and a chance to increase their standard of living and develop their potential. When this doesn't happen, the social and economic losses are profound. Today's workers are caught in Perelman's "invisible handcuffs" — both trapped and blinded by the extent to which capitalism restricts their lives. The market has become a monster, demanding that we fit its constraints. As long as we ignore this, the strength of the U.S. economy will continue to erode. Freedom and equality, those cornerstones of democracy, will diminish. For now, many working people have unconsciously accepted the conditions that exist as somehow natural, unaware of how the machine is constructed and manipulated to favor elites. **Fear and frustration** can even **make us crave authority. We collaborate in our own oppression. Just ask** Anastasia Steele, **whose slave contract spells out** her duties with **business-like efficiency: Does the submissive consent to:** -Bondage with rope -Bondage with leather cuffs -Bondage with **handcuffs/shackles/manacles** -Bondage with **tape** -Bondage with **other Yes!** She consents. **The hypnotic consumption** Christian **offers in a world replete with** fancy dinners and helicopter rides — **goodies that will be revoked if [they]** she **fails to obey — overturns** her natural **desire for free will**. Once Anastasia has signed on the dotted line, her master rewards her with a telling gift that is often the first "present" an office employee receives: "I need to be able to contact you at all times...I figured you needed a BlackBerry

Sadomasochistic desire is inseparable from the human condition and has become asymmetric with life itself - this reveals the dialectical ground

Carrette, J. (2006). Intense Exchange: Sadomasochism, Theology and the Politics of Late Capitalism - The Other Journal. [online] The Other Journal. Available at: <https://theotherjournal.com/2006/04/intense-exchange-sadomasochism-theology-and-the-politics-of-late-capitalism/> [Accessed 26 Aug. 2024].

However titillating and strategically important the introductions of S&M into Christian discourse may be, we have to remember that S&M is a recent discourse developed from the writings of the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his 1886 *Psychopathia Sexualis*. **S&M is a psychosexual discourse that operates in modern capitalistic societies as a transgressive** sub-cultural form of resistance to **hegemonic sexual practices** — in so far as it identifies pleasure outside the procreative act. We must also be aware that contemporary S&M, including the wider BDSM, is a spectrum of engagements in a diverse set of contexts and cannot, like all aspects of **ethical** concern about sexual relationships, be placed in one hegemonic category. It covers the **'voyeuristic aesthetic'** of art and pornography (in theology playing with the images of religious pain and suffering), it is a mild engagement with **positions of domination and submission** in a diverse set of relations, from married couples to the professional dominatrix, and it is also **an intense psycho-physical encounter with painful pleasures and desires** (both mild and extreme in nature), acts also carried out both within and outside traditional relationships. The context is as important in understanding the oppression and liberation of S&M as the acts themselves. My concern with the economic status, consensual politics and social construction of **S&M relates to all these various expressions** in slightly different ways, but **all reflect the politics of late capitalism. The striking** feature of S&M is its curious **"secret visibility."** It is described as the "velvet underground" and, outside the specific dynamics of individual couples who draw on the subculture, it operates within small private, social networks (particularly in its more concealed heterosexual manifestations), it is however also publicly manifest, most notably in its forms of political resistance in the gay leather scene — most cities have gay S&M bars and clubs, as Weinberg and Kamel note (Weinberg 1995). It is also important to recognise that you cannot read subcultures, as David Muggleton indicates, outside commerce and the media, to which we may also add fashion trends, the sex industry and now cyberspace (Muggleton 2000. See also Steele 1996). **S&M is specifically** a technology of **modern living**, which draws on a whole series of cultural resources. Brain McNair's study of the media and pornography demonstrates there has been the development of "s/m chic" (a claim by made Judith Coburn in New Times in 1977). S&M here becomes a commercial strategy for selling amongst other things Tennent's Lager and Pot Noodle (McNair 1996:154). To read **S&M outside its psychosexual** subcultural, **and commercial context is** to create **an ahistorical fantasm**. This means we need to be cautious about simplistic associations between S&M and Christian theology, this point is made clear in

Karmen MacKendrick's excellent study of S&M in literature and culture, entitled *Counterpleasures*. Here she states: Despite my consistent conjunction [here] between asceticism and s/m, I think that we must be wary of the association made between the erotic and spiritual, which more often than not turns to a kind of New Age fluff (veering often, though by no means inevitably, toward the sanitised and pastoral). (Mackendrick 1999: 157). What is important to note about this delineation of S&M within a late-modern context is to recognise that the discourses of pain, domination, and submission and the history of religions are not restricted to popular discourses about **S&M**. This can be seen in Ariel Glucklich's recent study *Sacred Pain*, which **acknowledges** the way **pain** has **played an important part in** religion and culture, but he divorces this from S&M. Glucklich, still caught in a psycho-physical model, develops a hypothesis based on a **neuropsychological model of agency** and the self to show how **pain is a way of transcending the self** and the emergence of a new self (Glucklich 2001: 207). He argues that **pain in ritualised contexts** throughout history leads to new states of consciousness and can be perceived as **a good thing** (Glucklich 2001: 88). The separation of the history of bodily pain from the discourse of S&M is crucially important at this point. Pain, the body, and religious practices have a long history, **but this is not the modern invention of S&M**. While it is not in question that at some level religious **suffering and S&M** may **constitute a parallel event** and hold a common denominator in the suffering body, there **are huge epistemological quandaries in** understanding the erotic experience of S&M as religious or theological. What is held in the space of S&M erotics is different but related to the history of Christianity, particularly as the context and belief behind a specific infliction of pain on the body is crucially important. The desire to die for Christ in the literature of martyrdom, or the bodily denial of the flesh in any form of religious asceticism, exists within a different order of experience (both socially, politically and historically) from, for example, the **general practices of submission and domination** in the heterosexual houses of British suburbia or the gay bathhouses of San Francisco. While there is some political value in the subversive and sensual tactics of theologians and writers delighting in the connection between S&M and the history of Christianity, I find this connection both prosaic and at times a misplaced anachronism. There is important historiographical work to be carried out in this area, but it merely restates a central problematic about relations of pain, domination and submission in the space of theology, rather than reflecting an understanding of **the specific aspects of S&M as a modern set of sexed relations in the contemporary capitalistic world**. I do not find the comparison between S&M and Christianity, in the arena of historical practices, psychopathology, or studies of pain, as the major issue of concern. What seems more important – and the key issue at stake – is the material structures of sexual relations and ethics of exchange, which requires a new political economy of sex in relation to power and gender. Few writers have started to think critically about the relationship between the bodily pains and suffering in religious practices and S&M erotic pleasure from this perspective. One of the problems, as I have already indicated, is that there is **an uncritical utilisation** of the term S&M, which is a modern invention of just over a 100 years old, mutated **through psychological** history **and capitalistic processes of commodification**. What is often forgotten, as Gary Taylor has indicated, is that S&M is not so much a mirroring of religious violations of the body but that it is rather socially constructed through religious discourses. Religious discourses of **suffering permeate into contemporary eroticism**. If we see S&M as a socially constructed discourse **built up from** the fragments of **modern living** then, as Taylor has argued, it is necessary to “investigate the way in which these discourses are used by people to define, shape and make sense of their sexualities and so explore the way in which SM sexualities are discursively and materially shaped” (Taylor 1997:121). Taylor touches upon the key question here, but never grasps the full force of the material structures of S&M and never relates this to Christian theology (which resides outside his remit). It is important then to recognise that the discussion of S&M and Christianity is a late modern discourse, related to but distinct from the history of Christian asceticism. Taylor's work seems to imply that there are two necessary tasks to carry out in the engagement between of S&M and Christianity; first, we need to explore critically the images of Christian asceticism that are carried into S&M subcultures and attempt to understand why such images becomes useful for erotic play, which will include bringing some critical ethical insight from such traditions; second, we need to reverse the equation and ask what S&M subcultures in modern capitalistic societies can teach contemporary Christian theology about the importance of **embodied pleasure and the material relations of** our **intense exchanges**.

The impact of not forcing the sadistic order to consume itself faster does unjust harm to the external life and allows for the enigma of sadistic desire to terminate all things

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Despite the inspirational platitude, we must realize that **failure is an option**. **Our future is problematic at best and doomed at worst**. There is no inherent purpose we are here to fulfill, no destiny at which we are assured to arrive at in glory, however tardy, tattered, bruised, and blackened we might be. There are no guiding angels to protect us from failure and no God to save us from an apocalypse. **Countless millions of species have been annihilated in past extinction events**, our Homo ancestors are gone forever, **we are dispatching thousands of other species into oblivion**, and there is nothing but the determination of aware, concerned, and committed peoples to save Homo sapiens from vanishing into nothingness as well. As Michael Boulter notes, **the earth is a self-organizing system that strives toward balance, and species lose out, if necessary, to the larger dynamics of ecological imperatives**. "Extinctions are **an essential stimulus to the evolutionary process**," and **humans are not only expendable in the overall calculus, their demise would be a positive and necessary event**.¹ Nor are there inexorable laws or wheels of fate that have predetermined disaster and demise. We must change our course, and we can—if a critical mass of people throughout the world can understand the current crises and respond with the level of urgency, solidarity, and militancy necessary to transcend this evolutionary impasse. **While horrifying to contemplate from our perspective, Homo sapiens may not have the will, intelligence, or resolve to meet the greatest challenge and threat it has ever faced**. It might thereby succumb to the same oblivion that engulfed all its hominid ancestors, and into which it dispatched countless thousands of other species. Just as ancestral hominids have gone extinct, so have prior civilizations collapsed. As Diamond has shown, numerous civilizations throughout history (including the inhabitants of Easter Island, the ancient Mayan, and the Greenland Norse) have suffered economic and social collapse due to overpopulation, overfarming, overgrazing, overhunting, deforestation, soil erosion, and starvation.² **We are repeating the same mistakes of the past, still refusing to recognize ecological laws and limits to growth; the future is as bleak as the historical pattern is monotonously clear**. In an era of catastrophe and crisis, **the continuation of the human species in a viable or desirable form, is obviously contingent and not a given or a necessary good**. But **considered from the standpoint of animals and the earth, the demise of humanity would be the best imaginable event possible, and the sooner the better**. The extinction of Homo sapiens would remove the malignancy ravaging the planet, destroy a parasite consuming its host, shut down the killing machines, and allow the earth to regenerate while permitting new species to evolve. After 4.6 billion years of evolution, earth is only middle-aged, and there is ample time for an amazing abundance of stunning new life forms to emerge. **This time it is we who are the meteor crashing into the earth, and we keep crashing and crashing, never allowing the planet to recover**. **We are a meteor storm that continuously, repetitively keeps slamming into the planet, precluding adaptation and blocking recovery**. **If we cannot learn how to live on this planet and harmonize our existence with other species and the biocommunity as a whole, then, frankly, we have no right to live at all**. **If we can only exploit, plunder, and destroy, then surely our demise is for the greater good**. **Whereas worms, pollinators, dung beetles, and countless other species are vital to a flourishing planet, Homo sapiens is the one species the earth could well do without**. **Every crisis harbors opportunities for profound change, whether it is a disease in the body or a deep disturbance in a species and its dysfunctional mode of existence**. **The current state of emergency and the severity of the social and ecological crises haunting humanity and the planet are so grave as to demand radical positive changes in humanity itself**. **It requires nothing less than our drawing on every positive capacity we have and forcing us to evolve at every level, individually and collectively, spiritually and politically**. **Human evolution is not a fait accompli—either in the sense that things will improve with the passage of time or that our species will continue at all**.

the alt. Warrants the immediate negation of human value and mandates the most pleasurable end to the sadomasochistic mind - the alt. Is pleasurable suicide

Kernberg, O. (2009). The concept of the death drive: A clinical perspective. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, [online] 90(5), pp.1009–1023.

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It is only under conditions of severe aggressive, particularly unconsciously aggressive, impulses towards the lost object where the pathology of the depressive position evolves in the form of relentless self-attacks now derived from the internalization of aggressive aspects of the object into the superego and an attack of the self from the superego, and the simultaneous identification of the object with the ego or the self. This combination leads to potentially severely dangerous and very often actualized suicidal tendencies. But we do find such self-destructive suicidal behavior also in patients who are not depressed, precisely in severe narcissistic personalities. Here a sense of defeat, failure, humiliation, in essence, the loss of their grandiosity, may bring about not only feelings of extremely devastating shameful defeat and inferiority, but a compensatory sense of triumph over reality by taking their own life, thus demonstrating to themselves and to the world that they are not afraid of pain and death. To the contrary, death emerges as an even elegant abandonment of a depreciated, worthless world (Kernberg, 2007). We have seen that severe self-destructive psychopathology warrants the clinical assumption of powerful, sometimes **uncontrollable self-destructive impulses reflected in** the phenomena of repetition compulsion, **sadism and masochism**, negative therapeutic **reaction** and **suicide**, both in severe depression as well as in other forms of psychopathology. But, in addition, Freud also described **severe self-destructiveness as a social phenomenon** in the behavior of large social group processes, in **human**

masses as ideologically united conglomerates, in mutual identification with a grandiose and aggressive leader (Freud, 1921). In this process, the group projects their individual superego functions onto the group leader, with the consequence of group sanctioned **expression of primitive, ordinarily suppressed impulses**, particularly of an aggressive type. A mass movement may coalesce around **a drive to** search and **destroy** enemy formations, the sense of power derived from their liberated, now focused aggression, their sense of protected dependency by their allegiance to the leader, and the **regression to the most primitive dissociation of object relations into idealized and persecutory ones**. This development represented for Freud **the activation of** severe **destructiveness at a social level**. The projection of the superego onto the leader, the mutual identification of all participants with him or her, as well as **the sanctioned expression of aggression are the fundamental explanation** for the aggressive behavior of mass movements and large social structures, applying even to international conflicts. But the aggression activated in regressive group processes may also be channeled onto the group itself, **guided by a grandiose, self-destructive** leader, **ending** in a religiously or **ideologically rationalized mass suicide**. Freud's theory of mass psychology, dramatically demonstrated in a thousand forms in the mass psychology of the fundamentalist movements of the last century, has been complemented by Bion's (1961) work with small groups of 10 to 15 individuals, and Pierre Turquet (1975) and Didier Anzieu (1981) with large groups of 100 to 150 individuals. I do not have space here to describe in detail all these findings, but would summarize them by stating that, when small or large groups are unstructured, that is, without a clear task and its corresponding structure relating that group constructively to its environment, and when, in contrast, the only task of such groups is meeting to study their own reactions for, say, an hour and a half during a sequence of several days or a few weeks, they present striking and similar phenomena. They show the immediate activation of intense anxiety, and an effort to escape that anxiety by some soothing ad hoc philosophy expounded by a friendly, mediocre, grandfatherly leader who calms down the group's anxiety with clichés. When this effort fails, they show a tendency to the development of intense violence, the search for a paranoid leader, the division of the group itself, or its perception of the surrounding social environment, into an idealized and a persecutory one, with active aggression directed against what is perceived as the hostile segment of the world in order to protect the perfection and the security of the ideal group. Vamik Volkan (2004), who has applied psychoanalytic theory to the study of inter-group and international conflicts, has expanded these observations by systematically studying the nature of the ideal world of fundamentalists groups, the reason for their need to search for and destroy enemies, their strivings to preserve rigid boundaries and the purity of their group, and the obvious connection between these categories and fundamentalist political, racial, and religious movements. In conclusion of this point, there is impressive clinical and sociological evidence for a universal potential for violence in human beings that can be triggered too easily under certain conditions of group regression and corresponding leadership, and that, from the perspective of survival of human societies, may be considered as fundamentally self-destructive

The alt seeks to solve the sadomasochistic world and preserving the external world by elating the hidden sadomasochistic drive towards annihilation in which mass suicide elates both desires creating the blissful cure to destruction - thats significant in resolving the tension underlying the sadomasochistic dialectic

Palazzolo, S. (20**07**). Demystifying A Sexual Perversion: An Existential Reading of Demystifying A Sexual Perversion: An Existential Reading of Sadomasochism and Erich Fromm's Call to Love Sadomasochism and Erich Fromm's Call to Love.

Another original contribution by Fromm that brought even more depth to the understanding of sadomasochism was his analysis of the sadomasochistic individual who becomes an "authoritarian character." Just as sexual sadomasochism is a distortion of erotic urges as discussed in symbiosis, the desire to dominate the will of other people can be viewed as a depravity of a genuine sense of potency borne out of helplessness, powerlessness, and inferiority. According to Fromm (1972), an underlying "sense of vital impotence" (p. 326) is at the root of the authoritarian character, which is reflected in the seductive influence that hierarchies of power have on the authoritarian individual (Fromm, 1941, p. 166). As Fromm (1941) wrote, "Power fascinates... [the authoritarian] not for any values for which a specific power may stand, but just because it is power. Just as his 'love' is automatically aroused by power, so powerless people or institutions automatically arouse his contempt"(p. 166). The most notable characteristic of the authoritarian character is an outward political expression of inward sadomasochistic tendencies. As explained by Fromm (1973) below: **The sadomasochist has also been called** the "authoritarian character," translating **the psychological** aspect of his **character** structure into terms of a political attitude. This concept finds its justification in the fact that persons whose political attitude is generally described as authoritarian (active and passive) usually **exhibit** (in our society) the traits of the sadomasochistic character: **control of those below and submission to those above**. (p.326) Fromm shows us in this passage how the authoritarian character, **trapped in a dynamic of dominance and submission within hierarchies of unequal power distribution** (pp. 142-143), can **enact sadistic** and/or masochistic **tendencies**. Both the active and

passive forms of authoritarianism stem from the same origin of primary powerlessness (impotence) that is embedded in the factual conditions of our aloneness and separateness from others in the world. Just like in symbiosis, where the need for primary relatedness and erotic fulfillment are sought through individual pseudo-love attachments that are ultimately unfulfilling, so in authoritarianism, the attachment to someone or something deemed more or less powerful outside the self may temporarily ameliorate the fear of powerlessness in the psyche of the person, but a deeper sense of human vitality and empowerment is sacrificed. For Fromm, authoritarianism and symbiosis are different modes of sadomasochistic escape from existential aloneness that attempt to resolve our existential needs through pseudo-attachments which offer a temporary respite from the fears of isolation and powerlessness. Both are shown to be inadequate by Fromm as answers to our more human need for relatedness with others. In the next mechanism of escape, as we shall see, Fromm again expanded the parameters of sadomasochism theory by exploring a more sinister and actively violent solution to the problem of existential aloneness. Destructiveness “Destructiveness” is the attempt to escape the terror of aloneness by completely annihilating the outside world. Whereas symbiosis and authoritarianism seek to submit to and/or dominate others outside the self, the destructive person wishes to remove all possible threat of needing another by obliterating the feared other-as-object. Destructiveness is related to the need 156 for transcendence, which is rooted in our very existence. 108 According to Fromm, we all seek to transcend the accidental and passive nature of our given existence. If rooted in love, then our need for transcendence will lead to creative activity that is productive and grounded in freedom.109 Fromm (1955) noted however, that alongside the need to create out of freedom and love, there co-exists a desire to destroy which can fill our need for transcendence (p. 41). Acts of destructiveness vary according to the social conditions and characteristics of the individual, and can take many forms (Fromm, 1941, p. 178). For example, though warfare may be rationalized as inspired by transcendent values such as love, duty, conscience, or patriotism, it has the potential to be destructive at its core, which again, is embedded in our very existence. On the surface, destructiveness appears to be linked with the same kind of hostility seen in sadistic and masochistic tendencies because of its original escape from the anxieties of separateness. Indeed, it is rooted in the same “unbearableness of individual powerlessness and isolation” (Fromm, 1941, p. 177). But, unlike ordinary sadomasochistic hostility, which is borne out of a dependency on its object, destructiveness aims at the elimination of its object. The destructive individual seeks to escape powerlessness by destroying any other person or thing that poses a threat to the self. A good example of a destructive personality is Hitler or Stalin. Symbiosis, authoritarianism, and destructiveness are all explicit modes of sadomasochistic escape from aloneness that redefined sadomasochism theory. The next two mechanisms of escape were never explicitly examined by Fromm as having sadomasochistic outcomes, but their connection to sadomasochism is worth noting and easy to overlook