Introduction

FANTASY AND IDEOLOGY

Never completely losing its grip, fantasy is always heading for the world it only appears to have left behind.
—Jacqueline Rose, *States of Fantasy*

Masochism is often regarded as a site of social and cultural intersections. But in late-nineteenth-century British colonial fiction, it focused one particular conjunction more than any other: the relationship between imperial politics and social class. This relationship has lately been an unfashionable topic for scholarly analysis, despite the intense scrutiny being applied to nearly every other aspect of British colonialism and some noteworthy protests about the imbalance. David Cannadine, for example, recently claimed that the "British Empire has been extensively studied as a complex *racial* hierarchy (and also as a less complex *gender* hierarchy); but it has received far less attention as an equally complex *social* hierarchy or, indeed, as a social organism, or construct, of any kind."[1] Ann Stoler has registered a similar complaint, while emphasizing the interdependence of these categories: "We know more than ever about the legitimating rhetoric of European civility and its gendered construals, but less about the class tensions that competing notions of 'civility' engendered. We are just beginning to identify how bourgeois sensibilities have been coded by race and, in turn, how finer scales measuring cultural competency and 'suitability' often replaced explicit racial criteria to define access to privilege in imperial ventures."[2] Many cultural critics share Stoler's assumptions about the mediated nature of colonial identities. In Anne McClintock's much quoted formulation from *Imperial Leather* (1995): "no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in social relation to other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways."[3] But methodologically sophisticated imperial studies have persistently marginalized social

[1] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 9. Italics in original.

[2] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 99.

[3] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 9.

class or have falsely stabilized it in relation to fluid hybridizations of gender, race, sexual orientation, and other forms of social classification. The former is evident in the subtitle of McClintock's book, for example (*Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*).

Analyzing representations of masochism can help to rectify this imbalance. Although masochism is not usually associated with social class, images of colonial masochism tended to bear with special weight on problems of status hierarchy, no matter how much they were also articulated upon other forms of social identity. These strong correlations between masochism and social class are not the explanatory key to colonial experience, nor can they be studied in "privileged isolation." But they do provide a reminder that class was a more important and a more complicated aspect of colonial life than recent scholarship has recognized. They can also demonstrate that ideologies of social class were intertwined with imperial self-consciousness in immensely variable ways.

The principal contention of this book is that figurations of masochism in British colonial fiction constituted a psychosocial language, in which problems of social class were addressed through the politics of imperialism and vice versa. I am not arguing that masochism had an inherent class or imperial politics. Neither would I wish to claim that social or imperial identity can be understood through collective psychology, masochistic or otherwise. My argument is simply that elements of masochistic fantasy resonated powerfully with both imperial and class discourses in late-nineteenth-century Britain. This discursive resonance presented writers of fiction with an extraordinary opportunity to refashion both imperial and class subjectivities by manipulating the complex intersections between them that masochistic fantasy helped to forge. In this sense, I am arguing that masochism played a vital role in the shaping and reshaping of social identity at the imperial periphery, which had important consequences in domestic British culture as well. I am also arguing that imperial and class ideologies in nineteenth-century Britain exploited a common and very powerful form of affective organization.

Because I regard masochism as a psychosocial language (rather than a fixed set of behaviors or a personality profile), I speak of it throughout this book as a fantasy structure. My emphasis on the centrality of fantasy to masochism—a notion entertained in Sigmund Freud's early studies and sustained by subsequent relational work—has a number of important consequences. For one thing, it circumvents some of the more mechanistic tendencies of psychoanalytic approaches to culture. Critical appropriations of psychoanalytic theory have too often closed off possibilities for cultural interpretation—largely by combining crude, reductive assumptions about psychological causality with hair-splitting terminological distinctions. But psychoanalytic models need not stifle cultural analysis, nor should they

provoke unproductive debates about whether the origins of subjectivity lie in private experience, psychobiology, or culture. Important object-relational studies of fantasy, such as Melanie Klein's work on the symbolic status of the mother, deanatomize the body and make it available for figural readings.[4] Poststructural analysts of fantasy, from Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis to Jacqueline Rose, have also insisted on the textualized character of phantasmagoric material.[5] The analysis of fantasy structures has, in fact, served a variety of psychoanalytic approaches seeking to understand the relationship between psychological and social processes without privileging one or the other. Understanding masochism as a fantasy structure means viewing it as a medium in which individual and social experience is intertwined. It also means regarding it as a medium of symbolic transformation that incorporates a wider range of behaviors than is usually conjured up by the term "masochism," which often provokes thoughts only of whips and chains, sexual role reversals, and physical self-mutilation.

Viewing masochism as a fantasy structure has other important methodological consequences. As Laplanche and Pontalis have famously pointed out, fantasy crosses the boundary between conscious and unconscious experience, linking the worlds of daydream and delusion to indecipherable psychic pressures that resist direct apprehension.[6] These pressures can be variously understood as pregiven, socially constructed, or individually developed. For that reason, the analysis of fantasy structures enables the cultural critic to place phantasmagoric forms of conscious awareness in relationship to unconscious material of all kinds, both psychological and social. As Terry Eagleton once observed, the study of ideology means linking together its most articulate with its least articulate levels.[7] Viewing fantasy as a set of psychosocial symbolic structures has the potential to do just that.

By concentrating on processes of discursive mediation, I resist the evaluative urgency that has been so common in the cultural analysis of masochism. Attempts to judge masochism's complicity with or subversion of dominant social power have all too often overwhelmed more nuanced ways of recognizing its powers of symbolic transformation. Masochistic fantasy is an instrument for social action—not an action in itself that has

[4] See, in particular, Melanie Klein, "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego," *Contributions to Psycho-analysis, 1921–1945* (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), pp. 236–50.

[5] Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 49 (1968), 1–18. Jacqueline Rose, *States of Fantasy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 3, claims that fantasy is the fundamental symbolic structure of the social.

[6] Laplanche and Pontalis, p. 11.

[7] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 50.

intrinsic political (or psychological) content. But neither is it an open-ended process of symbolic reversals, resistant to political interpretation. It is, rather, a symbolic language often used to achieve particular, determinate objectives. Of course, reading masochism as an ideological medium is itself a political choice as well as an ethical and aesthetic one. While its evenhandedness may alienate those with polemical views on the politics of masochism, it has the advantage of illuminating a great range of distinct ideological content in very different writers and colonial contexts.

Before venturing further into questions about what masochistic fantasy is and what it is not, I must begin with a brief sketch of the social and cultural contexts that enabled it to link late-Victorian discourses about imperialism and social class. If masochistic fantasy served as an important means for organizing what Cannadine calls the "complex social hierarchy" of British colonial experience, it did so because it was firmly embedded in British imperial and social history.

Masochism in Context

Although we are not used to scrutinizing instances of cherished pain in British imperial iconography very deeply, the glorification of suffering was an enormously important theme well before Victorian evangelicalism tried to Christianize every aspect of the imperial project. British imperialism may have fostered countless narratives of conquest, and it may have celebrated victorious heroes like Wellington, Clive, and Wolseley or great triumphs like Waterloo, Trafalgar, Plassey, and Red River. The arrogance of the British abroad was legendary, too, and often a source of perverse national pride. But British imperialism also generated a remarkable preoccupation with suffering, sacrifice, defeat, and melancholia. As Linda Colley has reminded us, one paradigm of British imperial narrative may well have been Crusoe. But another was Gulliver, a figure whose ordeals of enslavement and humiliation culminate in his subjection to an unquestionably superior race.[8] This subjection compels Gulliver to disavow the sense of legitimacy he had once vested in his nation and in himself, making melancholic abjection, in his case, a vehicle for self-transformation.

What is particularly striking about British imperial culture is how often it mythologized victimization and death as foundational events in the teleology of empire. There was, seemingly, a different crucifixion scene marking the historical gateway to each colonial theater: Captain Cook in the South Pacific, General Wolfe in Canada, General Gordon in the Sudan;

[8] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (2002; New York: Random House, 2004), pp. 1–4.

or else there was mass martyrdom (the Black Hole massacre in India) or crucifixion averted (the popular tale of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas in America). When, in 1871, W.H.G. Kingston lionized Cook for "the founding of two nations of the Anglo-Saxon race," for example, he was echoing a long tradition of Cookiana that continued to sustain the cultural identities of Australia and New Zealand well into the twentieth century.[9] This foundational myth, like the others mentioned above, revolved around the sanctification implicit in the imperial martyr's suffering—a sanctification that allied imperial pain with redemption and with the beginning, rather than the end, of history. In short, sanctification transformed the pain and finality of death or defeat into pleasurable fantasies of ecstatic rebirth or resurrection. After Cook's death in 1779, poems by Helen Maria Williams, William Cowper, and Hannah More, along with a famous elegy by Anna Seward, all compared him to Christ and stressed his having been deified by the Hawaiians who killed him (an assertion later contested by British and American missionaries). One of the first important paintings of Cook's death, Philip James De Loutherbourg's *Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1785), which was used as the backdrop for an immensely successful London pantomime and later published as an engraving, shows Cook being assumed into heaven by the figures of Britannia and Fame. Other influential paintings of the death scene by John Webber, John Cleveley, and Johann Zoffany represent Cook as an icon of emotional and spiritual transcendence—the only serene figure in a scene of chaotic violence.

Wolfe was similarly sanctified in the public imagination. A painting by Benjamin West, viewed by enthusiastic crowds when first exhibited in 1771, possesses, in Simon Schama's words, a "radiance illuminating the face of the martyr and bathing the grieving expressions of his brother officers in a reflection of impossible holiness."[10] The West painting is transparently modeled on Passion scenes, with an upraised British flag standing in for the cross. The Black Hole massacre, which took place in Calcutta in 1756 (helping in some measure to motivate Clive's successful campaign against the French at Plassey), was also transformed into a foundational myth in the second half of the nineteenth century by those who portrayed the victims as saintly martyrs. In 1902, ignoring warnings from the India Council in London against "parading our disaster," Lord Curzon lavishly restored the Black Hole monument in Calcutta and praised the "martyr

[9] William H. G. Kingston, *Captain Cook, His Life, Voyages and Discoveries* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1871), p. 319.

[10] Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 21.

band" in his dedicatory speech.[11] He defended his actions to the India Council on the grounds that "their death was practically the foundation stone of the British Empire in India."[12]

Many of these foundational scenes of martyrdom were military. The siege of Mafeking, the Mysore disaster, the catastrophic First Afghan War, Gordon's death at Khartoum—all figured in the national imagination as spectacles of military weakness or defeat that also inspired British resurgence. Many contemporary accounts of these military episodes, such as William Thomson's *Memoirs of the Late War in Asia* (1788) or Robert Sale's *A Journal of the Disasters in Afghanistan* (1843), are remarkable excursions into martyrology rather than documentary accounts. But the sanctification of the imperial sufferer was not simply a rallying point for military conquest. Imperial iconography is littered with nonmilitary martyrs as well: missionaries like John Williams and David Livingstone, for example, and explorers like Sir John Franklin, Mungo Park, and, of course, Cook. India was especially rich in civilian martyrs. These included Bishop Heber, whose death in 1826 was widely mourned in both India and Britain, as well as the many young scientists whose lives and work were tragically cut short by disease: William Griffith, Alexander Moon, William Kerr, John Champion, George Gardner, John Stocks, John Cathcart (to name only a few of the botanists).[13] These Keatsian deaths ensured that many a scientific text emerging from India was read as an implicit memorial to its prematurely deceased author. Celebrated instances of self-sacrifice such as these helped stiffen the ethos of martyrdom that underlay even the most ordinary colonial life. In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), St. John Rivers sees in Jane "a soul that revelled in the flame and excitement of sacrifice," which he regards as the supreme qualification for a life—inevitably short—of unheralded colonial service.[14] With a more penitential spirit, Peter Jenkyns in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853) expiates his youthful sins through the ennobling suffering of colonial service.

Of course, images of imperial martyrdom, self-sacrifice, or even self-abasement cannot be conflated with masochism. The images of cherished imperial suffering I am describing served a great many purposes. In part, they simply reflected the dangerous and often disastrous side of imperial enterprise. From the perspective of the empire at its height, narratives of

[11] Quoted in Zetland, Lawrence John Lumley Dundas, Marquis of, *The Life of Lord Curzon: Being the Authorized Biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, K.G.*, 3 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, 1928), 2:158.

[12] Quoted in Zetland, 2:159.

[13] I. H. Burkill, *Chapters on the History of Botany in India* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1965), makes for chilling reading on these and other untimely deaths.

[14] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (New York: Norton, 2001), p. 344.

conquest may have seemed like the most accurate descriptions of imperial history. But from the perspective of those who could not have anticipated future successes and who either knew of or had themselves experienced harrowing encounters with disease, captivity, enslavement, military defeat, dependence on nonwhites, or sadistic cruelties (whether at the hands of Europeans or non-Europeans), narratives of British suffering may have seemed more honest. Mythologies of imperial suffering also have rather obvious propaganda value, as we know too well in our own time from the political exploitation of the events of 9/11. Indeed, most studies of British imperial pathos regard it simply as a means of legitimating aggression and inspiring vengeance. Mary Louise Pratt has also demonstrated how such images could serve a mythology of anticonquest, engendering the notion that British colonizers were beneficent innocents.[15] On a practical level, representations of imperial suffering were a means of raising money for the redemption of British captives held overseas or the funding of missionary organizations.

But among the many kinds of significance inhering in the iconography of imperial suffering (whatever the intentions of those who promoted it) was the inevitability of its being inhabited by masochistic fantasy. At the very least, the melancholic potentials of imperial suffering were widely indulged. David Arnold has pointed out, for instance, that nineteenth-century India was transformed into a morbid topography, dotted with immense marble funerary monuments commemorating victims of the high colonial mortality rate.[16] Travel writing about India by Emily Eden and James Dalhousie featured mournful, lengthy descriptions of these cemeteries and funeral monuments, a tradition sustained in some of Rudyard Kipling's early journalistic sketches. Similar monuments back home, which introduced exotic Indian place names to British churchyards, helped reinforce a melancholic view of colonial India that had a strong hold from at least the late eighteenth century onwards, as novels like *Jane Eyre*, *Cranford*, or Flora Annie Steel's popular success *On the Face of the Waters* (1896) make abundantly clear. More broadly, encounters with decaying cultures often produced melancholic reflections on the inevitability of British imperial demise. On first contact with Polynesian culture, Robert Louis Stevenson reflected: "I saw their case as ours, death coming in like a tide, and the day already numbered when there should be no more

[15] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 7.

[16] For this point and for several other observations about India I am indebted to David Arnold, "Deathscapes: India in an Age of Romanticism and Empire, 1800–1856," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 26 (2004), 339–53.

Beretani, and no more of any race whatever, and (what oddly touched me) no more literary works and no more readers."[17]

But imperial masochism took more overt forms than melancholia, as we will see in detail throughout this book. The notion that colonial spaces offered opportunities for glorious suicide was deeply conventionalized in British culture, so much so that in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), George Eliot could count on readers recognizing the triteness of Rex Gascoigne's wish to banish himself to the colonies in order to dramatize his having been jilted in love. The rhetoric of histrionic imperial self-destructiveness has entered quite casually into much contemporary analysis of the imperial mind. Thus, James Morris echoes a common theme in writing about Gordon by declaring that he was "trapped by his own death-wish."[18] The unconfirmed but much relished story that Wolfe read Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" (1750) to his troops as a way of inspiring them on the eve of battle has helped lionize him as a melancholic fatalist. This rhetoric of histrionic martyrdom is not simply a retrospective imposition. It was often recirculated quite deliberately by military figures and colonists themselves. Robert Baden-Powell's cavalierly desperate dispatches from Mafeking, for instance, were modeled self-consciously on Gordon's from Khartoum. They also titillated the British public with images of endangered women and children that were bound to evoke memories of the massacre at Cawnpore during the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion—itself the single most engrossing spectacle of the British imperialist as victim, with over fifty novels about the rebellion published before the end of the century.

In the late nineteenth century, the masochistic overtones of imperial suffering were amplified by public debates about the rapidly growing but increasingly precarious empire. During this period of "new imperialism," when many Victorian writers sought to bolster public support for expansion, images of the imperialist as willing victim or martyr proliferated. Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (1899) is perhaps the most famous expression of masochistic jingoism. With its rapturous celebration of sacrifice, toil, and ingratitude, it promotes an apocalyptic vision of history, bestowing on the imperialist the mantle of the Israelites—a chosen people tried by suffering. In "Recessional" (1897), Kipling encouraged a national posture of submissive humility in exchange for divine blessing: "Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!"[19] More vulgar affirmations of painful self-sacrifice and bravery in the face of death saturated the adventure fiction for

[17] Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Skerryvore Edition, 30 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1924–1926), 18:26. "Beretani" was pidgin for Britain.

[18] James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), p. 33.

[19] Rudyard Kipling, "Recessional," *The Five Nations* (New York: Doubleday, 1903), p. 215.

boys that boomed in popularity during the last decades of the nineteenth century: novels by G. A. Henty, R. M. Ballantyne, H. Rider Haggard, Robert Louis Stevenson, W.H.G. Kingston, Gordon Stables, Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry Seton Merriman, and many others. This body of fiction helped foster a fundamentally masochistic ethos of British masculinity, in which the ability to absorb pain stoically—or even ecstatically—was greatly prized.

Late-nineteenth-century narratives of desired or self-inflicted imperial suffering fueled cautionary tales and anti-imperialist allegories as well. Haggard's *She* (1887) described the dangerous, seductive power an exotic dominatrix could exercise over willingly subservient British men. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) represented the threat of the native "other" in terms of its erotic power to compel the submission of both men and women. These novels portray imperial adventure as an initiation into perverse, willing victimage; symptomatically, Dracula cannot enter his victim's sanctuaries to attack them until he is invited to cross the threshold. Much of the late-century fiction Patrick Brantlinger has described as "Imperial Gothic" revolves around the unconsciously self-destructive impulses of Britons, who persistently and inexplicably seek out exotic forces that prove to be cruel, powerful, and pitiless: Doyle's "The Ring of Thoth" (1890) and "Lot No. 249" (1892), in which mummies removed to England come alive to torment their captors; Kipling's "The Mark of the Beast" (1891), in which an arrogant Englishman who provokingly insults a temple idol is possessed by a sadistic demon; or Stoker's *Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903), which is also about a removed mummy who comes to life, turning vindictively on her reanimators.[20]

These multivalent images of desired, self-inflicted, or otherwise cherished imperial pain could not fail to intersect attitudes toward suffering maintained elsewhere in British culture. In particular, glorified suffering had a prominent history in nineteenth-century conceptions of social class, most of all among the middle classes. Of course, a variety of British class ideologies reserved a place for the moral exaltation and social authority that might be conferred by suffering. Chivalric ideals long held by the upper class, which were appropriated by gentrified and professionalized middle-class ranks in the second half of the nineteenth century, revolved around the honor conferred by both physical and emotional trials. The ideals of stoic masculinity exalted by late-century adventure fiction were already present, in one form or another, among all Victorian social classes, including working-class cultures, whether conservative, militaristic, or

[20] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 227–54.

radical. The high ground of noble sacrifice was, in fact, an extremely important objective of ideological competition in nineteenth-century British culture. Harold Perkin once observed that the "struggle between the moralities was as much a part of the class conflict of the period as Parliamentary Reform or the campaign against the Corn Laws."[21] Perkin argued further (as have more recent historians, notably Dror Wahrman) that competition over moral authority was a central factor in the birth of class society itself.[22] Although cherished suffering played a role at many sites in this social transformation, it was particularly effective in helping to sustain the moral hegemony over Victorian culture that the middle classes had acquired by midcentury.

It is tempting to find the sources of this widespread valorization of suffering in British Protestantism. John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563) and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), which, until the twentieth century, trailed only the Bible in circulation, are distinctively British texts in their emphasis on suffering and exposure to danger as signs of grace.[23] But nineteenth-century middle-class moralism far exceeded the rigors of English Puritanism in its exaltation of self-punishment. Thanks to middle-class moral despotism, Sunday in Victorian England was not simply a day of prayer but also a time for mortification. In addition, pleasurable amusements like the theater and popular sports came under increasing attack early in the nineteenth century. Middle-class self-abnegation even pervaded entrepreneurial ideals. The Congregationalist minister Robert Vaughan once declared: "In relation to the affairs of this world, no less than to the affairs of religion, the man who would be successful 'must take up his cross and deny himself.'"[24] Contemporary observers were sometimes appalled at the consequences for middle-class social power of this pervasive ethos of self-denial. In *The English Constitution* (1867), Walter Bagehot excoriated middle-class culture for what he saw as its compulsive tendency to abase itself before authority—a "hypothesis of an essentially masochistic cultural and political unconscious," as Christopher Herbert has described it.[25] While popular accounts of Victorian prudery and self-denial have often made them seem absurd or even freakish, we must not

[21] Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780–1880* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 279.

[22] Perkin, p. 281. Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 395, argues that evangelical conceptions of separate sphere ideology were crucial to the formation of coherent middle-class political values.

[23] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 27–28, makes this point.

[24] Robert Vaughan, *The Age of Great Cities* (London: Jackson & Walford, 1843), p. 312.

[25] Christopher Herbert, *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 137.

forget how powerful a role ideals of virtuous suffering played in the consolidation of middle-class culture.

Middle-class fiction, for example, drew on a theme placed at the heart of the British novel by Samuel Richardson: the notion that individuals are redeemed by suffering. Widely read works such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861) defined the self-lacerating individual as the moral center of middle-class culture, an equation that inevitably gave rise to complex uncertainties and anxieties. In Brontë's novel, Heathcliff's apocalyptic wish to be annihilated follows on and parallels Cathy's enigmatic decision to frustrate her own passions by marrying a man she admits loving only superficially. These self-destructive choices, which are driven to some degree by the two characters' otherworldly idealism, are represented by Brontë as the darkest of threats to social stability—impulses that must be moderated in the more palatable forms of emotional restraint adopted by the novel's succeeding generation of lovers. Dickens, however, demonstrated how individuals could transform self-destructive tendencies directly into virtues. In the first third of *Great Expectations*, Pip's self-lacerating guilt is represented as the dangerous internalization of persecutions he suffers at the hands of hypocritical adults, a form of self-torture every reader can only hope he outgrows. But as the novel develops, it gives Pip reasons to embrace his guilt. His increasing remorse over his desire to rise out of the working classes and to enter the ranks of the gentry is precisely what defines Pip as a legitimately middle-class subject. Significantly, his moral and social purification is consummated in his penitential acceptance of colonial employment. In both novels, the struggle to define correctly the proportions, the means, and the social significance of willful self-martyrdom is represented as central to the emergence of middle-class culture.

At the fin de siècle, such struggles were aggravated by intraclass competition of several different kinds. Late-century bohemianism often posed the purity of its intellectual and fiscal askesis against the material complacency of the bourgeoisie. As Terry Eagleton has pointed out, too, late-century intellectuals who experimented with spiritualism, underworld sensationalism, or the reification of the aesthetic symbol were performing what he calls a "collective intellectual suicide" as they sought forms of experience outside of bourgeois self-interest and rationality.[26] Many of those intellectuals were performing their internal resistance to the class from which they had originated—a phenomenon we will see in more detail in Stevenson's career and to some extent in Olive Schreiner's. At the

[26] Terry Eagleton, "The Flight to the Real," *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 17.

same time, the late-Victorian lower middle class developed its own commitments to ideals of self-denial and hard work, which it saw as a means to respectability. These and other intraclass struggles to exploit the intellectual, moral, and social authority conferred by suffering and self-denial will be pivotal to my discussion of Victorian social hierarchies throughout the following chapters.

Just as imperial suffering cannot be conflated with masochism, so, too, glorifications of suffering in the realm of class ideology were overdetermined and cannot be regarded as intrinsically masochistic. It may not even be clear in what sense the class-coded exaltations of suffering I have been describing might be considered a discrete set of phenomena. The grouping of these various social trends together can suggest as many differences among them as similarities. From the global cultural perspective of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), the promotion of self-denial appeared to be a rationalized instrument of productivity in the nineteenth century, whereas Friedrich Nietzsche argued, in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), that it was a weapon wielded by priestly elites against secular authority. As I have suggested, glorified suffering took a variety of class-coded forms in nineteenth-century British society as well as taking part in a cultural climate unique to British Protestantism, which was intensified by mid-Victorian evangelicalism (rather than being wholly abstracted from religion, as Weber argued). Moreover, class-coded forms of suffering were mediated by other elements in late-Victorian culture, including the mythology of imperial suffering I have already sketched out. It would be reductive to derive from multifaceted British ideologies of glorified suffering a singular psychological or ideological determinant. Nevertheless, class-coded ideals of cherished suffering inevitably invited, encouraged, and sustained masochistic fantasy. In the chapters that follow, I contend that the potential of these class ideologies to trigger masochistic fantasy opened up crucial channels of symbolic exchange between discourses of class and empire in late-Victorian Britain. Masochistic fantasy should thus be considered a switching point between these two domains of discourse but not as their point of origin. That the intersection was complex and variable is precisely what made it such a contested ideological arena.

Before explaining exactly what I mean by "masochistic fantasy," I must say a few words more about the theoretical status of social class, a concept that has been under assault in cultural analysis for several decades. The principal objections have often revolved around the clash between political or economic descriptions of social stratification and claims about "class consciousness"—perspectives that tend to produce distinctly different formulations of class identity. Cultural dynamics that do not necessarily imply social self-consciousness—such as habits of association, antagonisms to

other social groups, patterns of consumption, common forms of speech and thought, and expectations about family life and domestic roles—are now often considered stronger factors in the organization of social class than either "class consciousness" or demonstrable economic and political affinities. The flexibility of cultural criteria for distinguishing between social groups has, of course, inevitably made the category of social class sociologically imprecise. But critics who have accepted the instability of cultural constructions of gender and race should have little difficulty understanding that such concepts remain useful even after their destabilization has been inscribed within them. The continued relevance of social class to British studies, even as a tentative social marker, should be apparent, if for no other reason than because of its obvious importance to nineteenth-century capitalism. Since it is the very nature of capitalism to distribute goods and privileges unequally and to pit social constituencies against one another, it makes little sense to object that such differentiation is never entirely clear-cut.

More powerful recent attacks have come from historians inspired by the "linguistic turn" in the social sciences. Many have pointed out that social power is more polymorphous and dispersed than is implied by conventional models of class hierarchy. The language of class also obscures other terms in which collectivity has been formulated.[27] Recent historians have been more inclined to see class as a political entity, in the sense that it has been imaginatively constructed for specific purposes and then supplied with a mystified history rather than being a stable referent grounded in the evolution of real social relationships. But the recognition that class did have an important role in political conflict, albeit a symbolic one, has compelled even a fiercely poststructuralist historian like Patrick Joyce to acknowledge that "class will not go away. It has its place, and an important one." Joyce adds, however, that "it does need from time to time to be put in it."[28] The intractability of class as an analytic tool would seem all the more important given the widespread acceptance of the tripartite model, as well as certain distinctions within each rank, among Victorian writers themselves. The increasing complexity of social stratification over the last century should not blind us to its relative clarity in the perceptions and practices of nineteenth-century social actors, whatever the sociological or economic realities to which they were responding.

In this book, I seek to put the concept of class "in its place" not by turning away from it toward other, equally problematic conceptions of

[27] See James Vernon, "Who's Afraid of the 'Linguistic Turn'? The Politics of Social History and Its Discontents," *Social History* 19 (1994), 81–97.

[28] Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 1.

social stratification but by applying to it some of the lessons the linguistic turn has taught us. Attention to the discursive nature of class—its status as an imagined category—should make us more sensitive to the ways it was culturally shaped and revised and to the social agency assumed by writers who undertook such revisions. Although Gareth Stedman Jones, a principal architect of the linguistic turn, is often invoked as an enemy of the concept of class, his *Languages of Class* (1983) was devoted to precisely this kind of discursive rehabilitation, in which class is newly conceived as a symbolic medium relating individual actors to social structures. Attention to class as a discursive structure should also make us more sensitive to the ways in which it intersects other cultural systems, including, for example, the politics of imperialism or the fantasy structures of masochism. It should direct us, too, to study the complex intraclass tensions that any imagined community inevitably harbors. In this book, "class" designates an arena of conflict in which the constitutive effects of politics, language, culture, fantasy, and desire are all in play and where conceptions of social identity are the outcome, rather than the empirically given conditions, of these interactions.

I am thus steering a middle course between theories of linguistic agency and theories of social determination. My assumption throughout this book is that late-nineteenth-century concepts of class functioned as a constitutive rhetoric. I also assume, however, that conflicts between different social collectivities, as well as within them, were actively manipulated by writers who had the fluid social landscape of colonialism upon which to draw for leverage. Some of these writers—Schreiner and Stevenson, for example—legitimated anti-imperialist crusades by refashioning the moral and ideological foundations of middle-class culture. Others, like Kipling, broadened the social base of support for jingoism by reshaping the class interests to which it appealed. By contrast, Joseph Conrad used colonial social fluidity to align middle-class professionalism with upper-class conservatism. Masochistic fantasy played a crucial role in all these quite different projects. While these four writers and their contemporaries were compelled by masochistic fantasy structures deeply embedded in class and imperial conflict, they seized the opportunity to craft new social identities in a variety of ways at both colonial and domestic sites.

While I have been at pains to locate masochistic fantasy within a broad range of cultural contexts, which means that the emphasis in some chapters falls heavily on these writers' nonliterary work, the focus of this book remains on novelists and novels. Literary scholars are increasingly losing their nerve when it comes to defending the study of literature, sometimes, it would seem, as if turning away from literature (and from the novel in particular) had become necessary and sufficient proof of interdisciplinary rigor. But centering this study on fiction makes sense on a number of

grounds. If nothing else, novels were instrumental in shaping late-century attitudes toward imperialism, a cultural fact that has long been recognized. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, as debates over imperial expansion intensified and questions about the rise or fall of the empire seemed to cut to the very heart of the national character, British readers turned increasingly to colonial fiction for coherent models of social identity. The enormous popularity of colonial fiction made Schreiner an instant celebrity when *The Story of an African Farm* was published in 1883; it compelled the *Times* to publish Stevenson's letters on Samoa and to rebuke him in print when it disagreed with his attacks on British policy; it prompted Mark Twain to call Kipling "the only living person not head of a nation, whose voice is heard around the world the moment it drops a remark."[29] It is a social phenomenon of some significance that Winston Churchill read *Kidnapped* (1886) while he was a prisoner of the Boers during the South African War; it is similarly striking that Conrad saw Captain Marryat as an "enslaver of youth," the inspiration (in translated versions) for his own early resolution to take to the sea.[30] Martin Green has claimed that "Marryat was often said to be the best recruiting officer the British Navy had."[31] For purely historical reasons, then, the ideological impact of fiction on the course of British imperialism and nationhood deserves careful study.

The same can be said of the novel's relationship to the other principal focal point of this book: social class. From the mid–eighteenth century throughout the nineteenth century, the novel played a crucial role in the formation of middle-class subjectivity. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), Nancy Armstrong argued that "the rise of the novel and the emergence of a coherent middle-class ethos [were] one and the same"—an argument she has developed comprehensively in *How Novels Think* (2006).[32] Even among less sophisticated critics, there has been no doubt, since the time of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), that middle-class ideology and the novel were intimately related. This point becomes even more important when we consider that colonial subject matter entered the domain of "serious" literature—which meant, for the most part, middle-class literature—in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Writers

[29] Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 287.

[30] Winston S. Churchill, *A Roving Commission* (New York: Scribner's, 1951), p. 290. Joseph Conrad, *Notes on Life and Letters* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Page, 1923), p. 53.

[31] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 214.

[32] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 10; *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719–1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

such as Conrad, Stevenson, and Kipling published in *Blackwood's*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, and the *Illustrated London News*—journals with a predominantly middle-class readership. As Green has noted, British expansionism may always have been driven by the mercantile class; but militarism and adventure fiction had long been identified with aristocratic and working-class audiences until, at the fin de siècle, a new crop of writers identified it with middle-class culture.[33] It was through such fiction and through the cultural authority its authors acquired that masochistic narratives insisted on the relationship between imperialism and social class.

Armstrong once casually remarked, in the course of a lecture, that "the Victorian novel is more historical than history, more political than politics, and more myself than I am."[34] The allusion to Cathy's passion for Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, as an instance of the novel's continuing power to produce subjectivity, points to one other important reason why fiction should be at the center of this study. No other form of writing in Victorian culture so powerfully brought together discourse about history and politics with psychological discourse. While we have recently seen a number of important studies of institutionalized nineteenth-century psychology, the narrowly rationalist, associationist tendencies of Victorian psychological science have limited the range of political perspectives that any such analysis can bring to light.[35] Novels show us that these mechanistic, physiological models were always in tension with other ways of conceiving the psyche—many retained from romantic psychology, with its emphasis on the fluidity and irrationality of psychic forces, or from the amalgamation of religious thought, epistemological priorities, gender ideology, and various other cultural practices that the novel alone was equipped to embed within narratives of desire. The Victorian novel thus observed but also exceeded the narrow limits of institutionalized psychology, and its excesses were crucial to the formation of Victorian subjectivity. Conversely, Victorian political discourse was supported by affective structures that only the novel can fully disclose, as Armstrong, Mary Poovey, Catherine Gallagher, Amanda Anderson, Elaine Hadley, and many other recent critics have demonstrated.

I should observe, finally, that my emphasis on social class has compelled me to deviate from recent "peripheralist" approaches to colonial material.

[33] Green, p. 37.

[34] Nancy Armstrong, "Feminism, Fiction, and the Utopian Politics of *Dracula*," Indiana University, October 18, 2003.

[35] Three excellent recent studies that investigate this relationship are Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Dianne F. Sadoff, *Sciences of the Flesh: Representing Body and Subject in Psychoanalysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Sarah Winter, *Freud and the Institution of Psychoanalytic Knowledge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

I attend to the mediating influence of Boer, Polynesian, and native Indian cultures on British writers, but I acknowledge that these interactions have many discrete sources and consequences which it has not been my purpose to explore. I firmly believe that colonial studies needs to assess the role of "hybrid" discourses from many points of view, and that this work is profitably being conducted by a great many scholars. But the assessment of these discourses through their contributing role in the formation of British social hierarchies is the more specific task of this book.

What Is Masochistic Fantasy?

This is not primarily a psychoanalytic study, in the double sense that it makes no pretense to contribute to psychoanalytic theory and that it refrains from lengthy psychoanalytic discussion. My focal point, as I hope I have made clear, is cultural politics. Nevertheless, a central goal of the book is to demonstrate new ways in which psychoanalysis can contribute to historicism. Any historically informed study of masochism must engage with psychoanalysis in any case, if only because the cultural study of masochism has been co-opted by a particular psychoanalytic tradition that has not yet been sufficiently critiqued. This tradition—the legacy of 1890s sexology (particularly Havelock Ellis's work on the sexual origins of psychopathology)—has supported a number of rigid assumptions about masochism and the ways in which it operates in social and cultural contexts.[36] Far from having displaced psychoanalysis, as it often claims, the cultural study of masochism has thus been constructed within its dominant paradigms. For all these reasons, I will devote this section to a revisionary model of masochism, one that counters the prevailing assumptions of cultural criticism, before returning to the arenas of social analysis that this model can help us to see freshly.

Recent cultural critics tend to share the belief that masochism eroticizes subjection, which give it the potential to undermine authoritarian power either by transforming pain into pleasure or by complicating dualisms of mastery and submission through the polymorphism of sexual desire. This kind of critical thinking reflects popular assumptions that masochism is fundamentally a sexual practice and that it typically occurs within relationships modeled on the power differentials between parent

[36] Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1900), was the first to postulate a physiological basis for masochism, describing it as a universal sexual process that he claimed to observe even in protozoa. Sigmund Freud reiterated this argument in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–73), 18:1–64. Hereafter cited as *SE*.

and child, in which the distorted expression of forbidden sexual desire is paramount. But the equation of masochism with sexuality (and with oedipal sexuality in particular) has originated within a certain tradition of psychoanalytic thought.

Freudian models of masochism always understand it in relation to drives. At one point, Freud saw masochism as the inversion of aggressive drives; later, he enshrined it as a primary drive in its own right.[37] In Laplanche's famous poststructuralist rereading, masochism becomes a fantasy *about* drives.[38] But understanding masochism as a problem of the drives, even if they are reunderstood as symbolic figurations, tends to elide masochism with oedipal sexuality. For Freud, all masochism originates in "erotogenic" masochism, and the oedipal beating fantasy is its basic form of expression.[39] For Laplanche, masochism is, quite simply, at the core of sexuality, and he locates the origins of both in oedipal conflict.[40] The Lacanian tradition also tends to model masochism on oedipal relations, since Lacan understood masochism in terms of the compulsion to repeat, which he equated with entry into the symbolic.[41] Each of these approaches views the oedipal stage as the moment when masochism is articulated erotically through conflicts with paternal authority. Each tends to see masochistic relations as triangular rather than dyadic, since the masochist appears to play out ambivalent sexual relationships with both mother and father. These approaches also emphasize oedipal themes that have come to dominate (so to speak) the cultural analytics of masochism: sexual prohibition, punishment, perversion, mastery, submission, and rivalry with the father. Popular as well as scholarly conceptions of masochism take their oedipal lexicon from this psychoanalytic tradition, which itself originated in Victorian sexology.

Gilles Deleuze's influential *Coldness and Cruelty* (1971), for example, set the terms for many cultural critics by viewing masochism as an oedipal rebellion. In his analysis of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's novella, *Venus in Furs* (1870), Deleuze argued that the male masochist seeks to overthrow patriarchal authority in order to win the mother's love, and that,

[37] For the first position, see Sigmund Freud, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," *SE*, 14: 109–40; for the second, see *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; or "The Economic Problem of Masochism," *SE*, 19:157–70.

[38] Jean Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 85–102.

[39] Freud consistently identified erotogenic masochism as the foundation of all other types. In "The Economic Problem of Masochism," he claimed that even moral masochism, once abstracted from its libidinal origins, becomes resexualized.

[40] Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, p. 102, proclaims "the privileged character of masochism in human sexuality."

[41] Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), pp. 80–83.

in his self-punishment, a father is being beaten: "The masochist feels guilty, he asks to be beaten, he expiates, but why and for what crime? Is it not precisely the father-image in him that is thus miniaturized, beaten, ridiculed, and humiliated? . . . The masochist thus liberates himself in preparation for a rebirth in which the father will have no part."[42] Enormously influenced by this model, literary and cultural theorists of masochism tend to invoke similar oedipal battle lines and to express a similar faith in masochism's liberating subversion of oedipal power. No matter how strenuously such approaches contest the authority of the father or hypothesize libidinal alternatives to paternal sexuality, they remain bound by a post-Freudian narrative that views masochism as a sexual rebellion governed by an oedipal thematics.

Although recent cultural theorists have often tried to move away from psychoanalysis in order to give masochism a specific cultural and political history, they tend only to sustain the themes and structures of this oedipal narrative. In his introduction to the anthology *One Hundred Years of Masochism* (2000), for example, Sander Gilman claims that masochism is always modeled on the child's fascination with paternal power, and he embraces Deleuze's notion that "the formula for masochism is the humiliated father." Gilman simply emphasizes social rather than private instances of that formula—in particular, battles over what he calls "positive sexuality."[43]

Because it blurs differentials of social power with ambiguities of sexual pleasure, this conception of masochism as an oedipal drama has produced irresolvable disagreements among cultural critics about which political battle the masochist is actually fighting and which side he or she is on. Defining masochism as the destabilization of oedipal sexuality has divided feminist critics, for example, on the issue of whether that destabilization serves feminism or patriarchy, prolonging a debate central to the "sex wars" of the 1980s. Kaja Silverman has famously defended the male masochist as a rebel against oedipal norms that equate masochism with feminine submission.[44] But some have argued that masochism is a ruse by which men proclaim their own sexual marginality in order to secure moral

[42] Gilles Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty* in *Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 60, 66. This volume was reprinted from the work titled *Sacher-Masoch*, trans. Jean McNeil (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), originally published as "Le Froid et le Cruel," in *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967).

[43] Sander Gilman, "Preface," *One Hundred Years of Masochism: Literary Texts, Social and Cultural Contexts*, ed. Michael C. Finke and Carl Niekerk (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. vii, vi.

[44] Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 213. Silverman's affirmative reading is echoed in various ways by Carol Siegel, *Male Masochism: Modern Revisions of the Story of Love* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Marianne Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. p. 9; and Eileen Gillooly, *Smile of Discontent: Humor, Gender, and*

authority.[45] Others warn that masochism's persistent association with submission makes it a dangerous weapon for women to wield against normative sexual roles.[46]

Theorists of queer sexuality have also disagreed about whether the masochist is a rebel or a collaborator. A long celebratory tradition—particularly evident in writings about lesbian sadomasochism—has seen the queer masochist as a figure who parodies the forms and techniques of political authority in order to release homoerotic energy through ungrounded roleplaying.[47] But skeptics have responded that such roleplaying can make political subjection seem palatable by infusing it with erotic pleasure.[48] Many male theorists have also suspended judgment about the dissident potentials of queer masochistic practices either because, like David Halperin, they see them as identitarian, or because, like Leo Bersani, they find them to lack gay specificity.[49]

Conceiving masochism within frameworks of eroticized mastery and submission (whether derived directly from Freud or not) limits its political legibility. It does so both by narrowing masochistic experience to real or simulated scenes of sexual domination (hence, literary and cultural critics always take S & M as the standard model) and by polarizing the masochist's oedipalized relationship (however reversible eroticization may make it) to authoritarian power. The sexualization of masochism tempts some theorists to read it as a set of infinitely ambiguous tropes for political domination and submission. In *The Mastery of Submission* (1997), for example, John Noyes concludes that "once the technologies of control become the object of erotic attachment, who is to say whether control is subverted by eroticism, or whether eroticism is reintegrated into control?"[50]

Nineteenth-Century British Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), esp. pp. 36–37.

[45] Suzanne R. Stewart, *Sublime Surrender: Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[46] This is a central argument in Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

[47] See Pat Califia, "A Secret Side of Lesbian Sexuality," *S and M: Studies in Sadomasochism*, ed. Thomas Weinberg and G. W. Levi Kamel (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1983), esp. p. 21; and Samois, *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1987). The most sophisticated recent study is Lynda Hart, *Between the Body and the Flesh: Performing Sadomasochism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[48] Nick Mansfield, *Masochism: The Art of Power* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), p. 102.

[49] David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 2; Leo Bersani, "The Gay Daddy," *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 77–112.

[50] John K. Noyes, *The Mastery of Submission: Inventions of Masochism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 14.

A central contention of this book is that contemporary relational psychoanalysis can provide a better metaphorics for masochism, one less confined to an analysis of sexual domination and submission and more determinate in its decoding of masochism's ideological significance.[51] Relational theorists often argue that the sexual conflicts of the oedipal crisis characterize only one developmental phase within masochism and not necessarily the pivotal one.[52] Contemporary clinicians have claimed, in fact, that sexual practices are among the rarest forms of what they would describe as masochistic behavior.[53] By questioning masochism's supposed genesis in the sexual conflicts of the oedipal stage, relational models have the potential to displace Freudian assumptions that have long undergirded both scholarly work and popular thought.

Before going further, I should emphasize that a metaphorics derived from relational theory cannot lay claim to "the truth" about masochism. Masochism is a recently invented concept, one whose usefulness to explain or to categorize self-wounding practices will always remain a matter of debate. Relational theories of masochism must be considered heuristic, which means that they will never escape tensions with other explanatory paradigms. As we will see, writers like Stevenson, Schreiner, Kipling, and Conrad actually dramatized these tensions in various ways—sometimes by bringing what can retrospectively be described as Freudian and relational paradigms into conflict with one another, sometimes by layering the two together, sometimes by displacing one paradigm with the other. My own emphasis falls heavily on relational theory because it brings to light a long tradition of masochistic representation, flourishing with unusual persistence in the British novel, which has been entirely obscured by post-Victorian culture's identification of masochism with oedipal sexuality. A relational metaphorics can thus broaden the cultural analysis of masochism; but its assumptions about the origins and functions of masochism must necessarily remain provisional.

[51] I am using the term "relational" to indicate a general type of psychoanalytic theory that departs from the drive model, turning instead to intersubjective dynamics. This diverse body of work includes British object relations, self-psychology, and relational-conflict theory. Some analysts reserve the term "relational" for a particular group of object-relations theorists, including Harry Stack Sullivan, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and other practitioners of what is sometimes also called "interpersonal" theory. My authority for using the term in a more general sense comes from Stephen A. Mitchell, *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[52] Jack Novick and Kerry Kelly Novick, *Fearful Symmetry: The Development and Treatment of Sadomasochism* (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1996), p. 47. Hereafter cited as *FS*.

[53] Robert A. Glick and Donald I. Meyers, "Introduction," *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, ed. Glick and Meyers (Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 1988), p. 8, conclude that "sexual" and "characterological" masochism are inconsistently related to one another.

Although the relational literature on masochism is vast, a consensus has emerged on two principal deviations from the Freudian model: first, that masochism should be understood within a narcissistic problematics, not a sexual one; and second, that omnipotent fantasy is the primary narcissistic compensation that masochism provides.[54] These perspectives were first developed as long ago as 1949 by Edmund Bergler, who argued that masochism functions to preserve preoedipal fantasies of omnipotence.[55] The first conflicts the newborn must negotiate, Bergler claimed, involve threats to infantile megalomania—that benign sensation of centrality and control first theorized by Freud and Ferenczi.[56] Bergler contended that frustrations to infantile megalomania produce a sense of helplessness, which can encourage a retreat to omnipotent fantasy—defined by Bergler as the assumption that one possesses magical powers over the limitations of the real world. Omnipotent fantasy is all the more tempting, Bergler reasoned, when emotional support from caregivers (whose role is overlooked in both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis) is lacking. Since Bergler's influential work, attention to the preoedipal origins of masochism in narcissistic trauma has preoccupied relational theorists with problems of individuation, separation, and self-esteem regulation. Trauma in these areas—and the feelings of abandonment, deprivation, and injustice that can result—has been theorized as the primary impetus behind masochistic versions of omnipotent fantasy (or, in shorthand, "masochistic fantasy").

Omnipotent fantasy can certainly thrive without masochism. But from a relational perspective, masochistic strategies are singularly dedicated to producing it. Jack and Kerry Kelly Novick, who have written the most comprehensive recent study, claim that "there is more to a masochistic fantasy than omnipotence but the delusion of omnipotence is a necessary part of it" (*FS*, 61). That self-inflicted pain might imply fantasies of omnipotent power may seem counterintuitive unless we remember that pain is the origin of the need for compensatory fantasies as well as the stubborn reality that omnipotence seeks magically to transform. The "omnipotent system," as it is sometimes called, creates a complex, variable set of relationships between pain and narcissistic compensation and a wide range of

[54] The psychoanalytic literature on masochism has been summarized usefully by William Grossman, "Notes on Masochism: A Discussion of the History and Development of a Psychoanalytic Concept," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 55 (1986), 379–413.

[55] Edmund Bergler, *The Basic Neurosis: Oral Regression and Psychic Masochism* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1949). Deleuze's idealized figure, the "oral mother" (55), is taken directly from Bergler and constitutes his work's closest affinity with the relational paradigm.

[56] Psychoanalytic studies of omnipotent fantasy often hearken back to Sándor Ferenczi, "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality," *First Contributions to Psycho-analysis*, trans. Ernest Jones (London: Hogarth Press, 1952), 213–39, although this work largely follows Freud's "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," *SE*, 12: 215–26.

phantasmagoric strategies through which pain might be transformed into omnipotence but also inscribed within it.

Theorists often locate the source of masochistic disorders within this phantasmic economy itself rather than in specific personal traumas or psychological dispositions. The Novicks have gone so far as to claim that "this fantasy structure is 'the essence of masochism'" (*FS*, 47), parodying a formulation of Freud's that referred to the oedipal contents of the beating fantasy. In most relational work, omnipotent fantasy is conceived as a loosely organized, complex field that can be maintained by a great variety of masochistic practices and can, in turn, help maintain them. This assumption has tended to produce not a single, definitive model of masochistic fantasy but an evolving set of descriptions that one clinician has called a "polyphonic theory."[57] Any attempt to schematize the masochistic fantasy structure may be a futile endeavor; another theorist has described it as an "always multilayered, interdigitated, overdetermined constellation."[58] But despite this fluidity, relational theory has been consistent in viewing masochistic fantasy as a compensation for narcissistic, preoedipal pain and in regarding such fantasy as the organizing structure behind masochistic behavior.

One way to conceptualize masochistic fantasy is to connect particular preoedipal traumas with the omnipotent compensations such fantasy provides. I will describe these relationships by means of a series of clinical anecdotes and profiles, which is the most vivid way to illuminate their dynamics. It is important to remember, though, that masochistic fantasy is an integrated system of transformations that underlies and motivates behavior rather than simply a fragmented set of omnipotent wishes emerging from individual cases. I will provisionally categorize masochistic fantasies of four distinct but often overlapping types: fantasies of total control over others, fantasies about the annihilation of others, fantasies that maintain the omnipotence of others, and fantasies of solitary omnipotence. Each type of masochistic fantasy can be involved with the others, and for that reason they do not constitute a neat schema with which the four writers studied in this book can be correlated. I offer these four categories simply as a device for illustrating the great range and complexity that can be assumed by masochistic fantasy structures, which often blur such categories in practice.

Masochism can enable fantasies of total control in several different ways. Convictions that control is absolute can be derived from the masochist's occasional success in manipulating others, either by eliciting their sympathy or by provoking their punishment. Conversely, a sense of victimization can

[57] Margaret Brenman, "On Teasing and Being Teased and The Problem of Moral Masochism," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 7 (1952), 264–85.

[58] Peter Blos, "Sadomasochism and the Defense against Recall of Painful Affect," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 39 (1991), p. 420.

authorize the conviction that one is specially entitled to lie, cheat, or use guile to control relationships. But the sensation of omnipotent control can also bear little relation to pragmatic results and can involve purely imaginary, magical reinterpretations of events, as in the delusion of power some masochists come to believe they hold over distant, erratic, or unresponsive caregivers by assuming that their own "badness" accounts for the caregiver's neglect. Imaginary control may also take the form of a reassuring emotional connection to an absent object that has become identified as the source of pain. As one of the Novicks' patients memorably observed: "When I'm feeling good, I feel all alone; when I'm feeling bad, I'm with my mother" (*FS*, 23). In a similar way, exaggerating one's suffering may preserve lost loved ones in fantasy through the process of melancholic introjection that Freud described in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917).

Masochism can also enable fantasies of infinite destructive power. Such fantasies can be euphoric, but they can also provoke self-punitive expiations that appear to be inextricable from that euphoria. The masochist may come to feel, possibly on the basis of observation, that self-punishment has the power to throw others into catastrophic confusion. In cases in which the masochist believes that his or her body is "owned" by an intrusive caregiver, attacks on the self may be imagined as a way to destroy the caregiver (as well as a strategy for concealing overwhelming hostility). Staging his or her victimization can also allow the masochist to fantasize about the power of annihilative wishes by projecting them onto others and exaggerating their intensity. Such staging can fulfill fantasies of reparation as well if the masochist believes that self-wounding will placate the figure against whom he or she harbors annihilative rage. Moreover, self-punishment may sustain a belief that the masochist's omnipotence is so overwhelmingly destructive that only he or she is powerful enough to control it and that such control depends on turning aggression back on the self.

Masochism may also revolve around the need to preserve fantasies about the omnipotence of others. The masochist's self-victimization may help idealize a parental figure's power in order to protect that figure, upon whom the masochist may be dependent, from his or her own annihilative rage. If the masochist's attempts to achieve autonomy are regarded as overly aggressive—a problem when caregivers feel threatened by the child's independence—then the masochist may be persuaded that parental figures need a helpless victim in order to remain in control, a conviction that can fuel grandiose delusions that the masochist keeps such figures strong by suffering. The masochist can also identify covertly with the apparent indomitability of an aggressive figure. By exaggerating his or her suffering, the masochist can provoke fantasies, too, that an unknown, infinitely sympathetic rescuer will someday appear. The projection of omnipotence onto others serves the masochist in a more general way by producing a morally simplified and thereby controllable world in which

judgments about others are always absolute and always serve the masochist's narcissistic needs. Others are seen either as lovingly authoritarian parental figures who can be safely idealized, evil sadists who can be condemned and hated, or helpless underdogs who confirm the masochist's self-pitying worldview.

Finally, masochism may transform suffering into glory by enshrining the masochist in the omnipotent splendor of solitude. In contrast to oedipal masochism, preoedipal masochism may thereby sustain fantasies of control in the absence of a punitive other. Omnipotent fantasies produced by self-wounding can sustain illusions, either conscious or unconscious, that one "need never grow up, grow old, die, have to choose, or give anything up" (*FS*, 89). They can make it appear that simply having a wish makes it come true. They can generate emotional grandiosity of various kinds, but they can also generate the belief—based on demonstrated tolerance for pain—that one can stop having feelings altogether and can live contented within a glorified narcissistic isolation. The masochist's sense of control may also accomplish what Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel calls "the murder of reality" by eradicating the lines of conceptual difference that defeat omnipotent control: differences of gender, age, temporality, the line between wishes and satisfactions, and, of course, the difference between pain and pleasure.[59] More simply, it may transform the feeling of being unloved into a general sense of specialness, an existential grandeur. Conversely, attacking the self may represent efforts to cope with the dysphoric loneliness that can be caused by omnipotent fantasy itself. It may, for example, express the wish for a strong, punitive figure who can limit the masochist's overwhelming rage and isolation.

Because these four types of masochistic fantasy bleed into one another, I will not maintain distinctions between them rigidly throughout this book, although such distinctions will play important roles at times, particularly in my discussion of Conrad. It should also be noted that conceiving masochism as a fantasy structure that promotes delusions of omnipotence necessarily broadens the range of behaviors that might be considered masochistic. For those troubled by such broadening, I must point out that it sets limits on the term, too. From a relational perspective, masochism includes any pursuit of physical pain, suffering, or humiliation that generates phantasmic, omnipotent compensations for narcissistic trauma.[60] According to this definition, deferred gratification that facilitates achievement, sublimation for the

[59] Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, "Sadomasochism in the Perversions: Some Thoughts on the Destruction of Reality," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 39 (1991), 399–415.

[60] This definition is derived from a number of sources but particularly from Jack Novick and Kerry Kelly Novick, "Not for Barbarians: An Appreciation of Freud's 'A Child Is Being Beaten,'" *On Freud's "A Child Is Being Beaten,"* ed. Ethel Spector Person (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 43.

purpose of effective functioning, self-denial mandated by moral belief, and suffering or death in the name of a cause one considers just are not inherently masochistic (even if masochistic fantasy might intrude parasitically on such behaviors). In this sense, for example, the patterns of rationalized self-denial that Weber and others have argued were fundamental to western capitalism cannot be considered essentially masochistic, even if they did furnish British culture with a set of everyday practices that could mobilize masochistic fantasy under certain conditions. The study of masochism, which can illuminate the phantasmic narcissism generated by both imperial and class ideologies, thus parallels and sometimes overlaps—without being reducible to—the pleasure-deferring, pragmatic emphasis on productivity described by the Weberian tradition.[61]

By the same token, according to this definition of masochism, such humble acts as failing to turn in homework out of a fear of tarnishing fantasies of narcissistic perfection or deferring to a spouse so as to redirect inwardly what feels like annihilative rage are grounded securely in masochistic fantasy. Recognizing masochism as a fantasy structure designed to create or protect fantasies of omnipotence makes it possible to regard it as a widespread aspect of human experience rather than a pathology or a perversion.[62] But it does not make any voluntary acceptance of pain necessarily masochistic. Conversely, not all instances of omnipotent delusion imply masochism. Only the conjunction of voluntarily chosen pain, suffering, or humiliation with omnipotent delusion—a conjunction that may bear an intermittent or partial relationship to specific physical or mental practices—signals the presence of masochistic fantasy.

Most importantly, conceiving masochistic fantasy as an instrument for transforming narcissistic trauma can help us understand how it intersects social discourses unrelated to sexual masochism or to the oedipal themes with which masochism has been commonly associated. None of the British discourses of imperialism and social class that associated self-inflicted suffering with fantasies of resurgent power simply *is* masochistic. But ideologically driven glorifications of suffering share an affinity with masochistic fantasy and offer possibilities for transforming painful experience into omnipotent delusion. The structures of masochistic fantasy can thus be abstracted from the clinical profiles I have offered and can be understood as a psychosocial system for transforming various kinds of suffering into convictions of magical power. Through masochistic fantasy, the pain of impotence and abandonment is transformed into fantasies of total control,

[61] A good recent example of this tradition in Victorian studies is Elaine Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk: Imagining a Safe England in a Dangerous World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 144–45.

[62] Theodor Reik, *Masochism in Modern Man* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), was the first to attribute masochism to universal unconscious desires for punishment, a position echoed by many contemporary theorists.

the fear of annihilation into fantasies of absolute destructive power, the agony of helplessness into fantasies of benign dependence, and the pain of solitude into fantasies of splendid isolation. By mobilizing these kinds of masochistic fantasy, particular ideologies have acquired extraordinary affective power. The burden of subsequent chapters will be to demonstrate the crucial role of such fantasy at the intersections of imperial and class discourse.

Relational theory, I repeat, cannot tell the whole story about masochism. As Jane Flax has pointed out, drive theory and relational theory often seem incomplete without each other. Relational theorists tend to overlook the erotic life of both mothers and infants (as well as risking potentially reactionary assumptions about motherhood), and the opposition between the two kinds of theory is dangerously gendered—drive theory seemingly centered on the father and relational theory on the mother.[63] These kinds of conflict between the two models should inform literary appropriations of either kind. Indeed, some relational theorists have anticipated this critique and have attempted to bridge the gap between drive-governed and intrapsychic models. Otto Kernberg, Heinz Kohut, and others have formulated developmental models of masochism that mediate between drive and relational theory.[64] These and other theorists of masochism have argued that although masochism's primary fantasy structures may arise in response to preoedipal conflicts, they can be altered dramatically in oedipal or postoedipal stages through sexualization and through sadomasochistic beating fantasies. The Novicks have argued that omnipotent fantasy binds all three developmental phases together and that none should be seen as a privileged origin or explanation (*FS*, 47).

Although I do not pretend to synthesize psychoanalytic models with the thoroughness of these ambitious projects, I have tried to avoid theoretical myopia. I have followed the relational paradigm in assuming that masochistic fantasy is most often organized around a preoedipal narcissistic problematics. Preoedipal fantasies may certainly be eroticized, but because they antedate the patterns of adult sexuality that characterize the oedipal stage, they have a more direct affinity with the problematics of narcissism. But I also assume that masochistic fantasy can be layered with oedipal elements, including sexual conflict. In this spirit, I have distanced myself from essentializing arguments about the political value of preoedipal as opposed to oedipal experience—arguments that drove many celebrations of preoedipal libido in 1980s feminist theory. While I may invoke the preoedipal to

[63] Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[64] Kohut recognizes biologically given drives as well as formative intersubjective experiences. Kernberg has followed Edith Jacobson in trying to integrate drive and relational models. See, in particular, Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975).

describe certain kinds of masochistic fantasy, I never suggest that preoedipality can redeem us from the evils of socialization or that a preoedipal emphasis alone is what makes a given writer interesting, as was the fashion in psychoanalytic literary criticism a generation ago. I have emphasized instead the ways in which omnipotent fantasy can wind like a common thread through both preoedipal and oedipal modes of masochism, linking narcissistic and sexualized gratifications to one another. On more general grounds, I have been careful not to identify masochism with gendered or gay-specific sexualities—elisions that have produced feeble political idealisms as well as a great deal of dangerous stereotyping.

I am aware, too, that sadism can play a role in masochistic fantasy. The sexualization that occurs in the oedipal stage can make a means to an end—self-inflicted pain—an end in itself, as omnipotent delusions merge with sexual wishes and pleasures. But even in such instances, the sexualization of masochistic fantasy can harbor distinctly narcissistic elements: compensations for abandonment, deprivation, and lack of empathy; the imaginative projection of omnipotent nurturing figures; the simultaneous expression of and defense against rage; delusions about self-sufficiency; and so forth. Masochistic fantasy does not require a sadistic antagonist; more often than not, it takes nonsexual forms. But on occasions when it does engage sexual desires or when omnipotent rage itself becomes sadistic, the term "sadomasochism" is warranted.

Throughout the book, I have used the psychoanalytic tools at my disposal rather than taking sides in debates about the origins of masochism. Because the relational perspective on masochistic fantasy offers powerful new instruments for cultural analysis, it will remain central. But I have attended to the variety of different ways in which it interacts with forms of masochism that are not reducible to a narcissistic problematics.

Multiple Masochisms

The chapters that follow use the psychoanalytic insights outlined above to demonstrate the vital role played by masochistic fantasy at the intersection of social class and imperial politics. In the process, I am contesting some common, intertwined assumptions of recent cultural and colonial studies: that masochism is always about sexuality; that it always organizes oedipal patterns of dominance and submission; and that, in colonial contexts, it is primarily about race, gender, or sexual orientation rather than social class. I have sought instead to demonstrate a proposition about certain novelists who were writing at the very time that sexology institutionalized masochism as a sexual practice: that they were creatively inscribing a broader range of social and cultural discourses into their representations of masochism.

Stevenson, Schreiner, Kipling, and Conrad were the writers most instrumental in moving colonialism from the periphery of serious British culture to its center. Together, they constitute a spectrum of ideological strategies revolving around the relationships among masochistic fantasy, class, and imperial politics rather than instances of a single practice. Masochistic fantasy enabled Stevenson to resolve on colonial ground ideological contradictions that were at the heart of his own class identity. It provided both Stevenson and Schreiner with heavily revised middle-class ethical models that they used to bolster controversial anti-imperialist positions. By contrast, such fantasy was pivotal in Kipling's efforts to broaden the social base of support for jingoism by fusing the discordant values of competitive middle-class constituencies. It allowed Conrad to splice chivalric and professional ideologies together and thus to reconcile gentrified imperial detachment with middle-class ethics. By virtue of this ordering, the first half of the book demonstrates how masochistic fantasy could serve anti-imperialist causes; the second half shows how it could sustain certain collaborations between imperialist and class ideologies. In each case, I am using the evidence of masochistic fantasy structures to argue for particular, determinate political interpretations while recognizing the pliability of such fantasy in the hands of writers with distinctly different attitudes toward social and imperial conflict. I am also proposing a more important role for ideologies of social class in the shaping of these political rhetorics than has yet been recognized. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, I seek to demonstrate how those rhetorics were animated affectively as well as how they entered into dialogue with one another by virtue of sharing a common fantasy structure.

The psychoanalytic plot of the book follows masochism's developmental stages, although this is not an evaluative mode of organization. I begin by exploring the preoedipal characteristics of masochistic fantasy in Stevenson and then the collision of preoedipal and oedipal fantasy elements that structured Schreiner's literary and feminist writings. In my discussion of Kipling, masochistic fantasy takes on fully oedipalized features, and for this reason I am more concerned with sadism and sadomasochism in his work than elsewhere. Conradian masochistic fantasy is layered with both preoedipal and oedipal elements and draws more freely than the work of any of the other writers from both registers. This ordering is not meant to suggest that one kind of writer or one kind of masochism is more mature than another. Neither is it meant to suggest that each kind of masochism corresponds to a particular ideological position.

The book is also ordered around other social systems that intersect representations of masochism, class, and imperialism. Two such systems played especially prominent roles in the late nineteenth century because of their strong affinities with masochistic fantasy: religion (particularly evangelicalism) and professionalism. If the first half of the book is more

concerned with evangelicalism and the second half with professionalism, that is a fortuitous symmetry and nothing more.

One final note. A few colleagues have described this project to me as a renaming of the terms and theoretical frameworks I employed in *Repression in Victorian Fiction* (1987). I prefer to think of it as a rethinking of the relationship between self-negating practices and Victorian subjectivity, a relationship I tried to describe in that earlier book. I have come to recognize the rigidity of the libidinal model (drawn primarily from Georges Bataille) upon which my earlier work depended. I have had second thoughts, too, about the idealized form of social collectivity I endorsed—an idealization I used to critique what I described as antisocial models of desire in Victorian fiction (models that more recent criticism has elaborated in a variety of useful ways). In the work at hand, I have viewed a broader range of self-negating practices as fantasy structures. I have also emphasized the social and political instrumentality of those practices rather than either their psychological causality or their utopian (or dystopian) potentials. I have also used a highly specific definition of masochism—the production of omnipotent fantasy by means of pain-seeking behavior—in the service of a highly differentiated set of social and cultural interpretations. Those interpretations depend on distinguishing particular forms of class-coded self-victimization from more general concepts, both psychological and social, that cannot be conflated with masochism: sexual repression, the death drive, domination, submission, moral restraint, and so forth. I hope the result has been a more accurate reading of Victorian affective experience and a more nuanced analysis of the ideological conditions of Victorian subjectivity. Above all, I hope to have demonstrated that masochistic fantasy was central, not peripheral, to the psychological and social frameworks of British imperialism.