The Function of the Expression "I am Unlucky" with Respect to Masochistic Personality

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SUMMARY

In this paper, complaints of "unluckiness," which are often heard in psychotherapy, are discussed with respect to masochistic personality. Luck is a concept that belongs to the outer world. However, the phrase "I am unlucky" can be a concept that becomes a part of one's own identity. Some clients in the therapy process, either explicitly or implicitly, express the idea that they are unluckier than other people. Seeing one's self as unluckier than others poses problems in the therapy process. The 'unluckiness' becomes a personality trait that is extremely difficult to handle, and thus, the therapist's job becomes just as difficult. Moreover, while luck is an outer world concept, unluckiness becomes a part of one's identity, and the boundary between the inner and outer worlds vanishes. In this paper, it is described how two clients in psychoanalytical-oriented therapy defined themselves as unlucky. The material from these cases is discussed using psychoanalytic concepts. An overly punitive superego, the need for punishment, death drive, and masochistic personality are the major axes of the discussion. It has been argued that in many instances where one describes him/herself as being unlucky, there may be an aggressive act in which the person aims harm at him/herself. The dynamics of this aggressive act are discussed. One of the major aspects of masochistic personality, the fantasy of "If I torture myself enough, eventually I will be loved" is also discussed. The view that the need for self-punishment or unconscious feelings of guilt may be obscuring feelings of grief is elaborated within the context of Winnicott's transition object concept. It has been argued that if the phrase "I am unlucky," which poses problems for therapists, is better understood, it may be better handled in the therapy process.

Keywords: Masochism, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, Freudian theory, aggression, instinct

INTRODUCTION

In Turkish, the word "şans" comes from the French language, and means 'luck'. The Turkish Language Association (TDK 2016) describes the meaning of the word "luck" as: 1. A force, chance, fortune, or fate that is the reason some coincidental events cannot be rationally explained, 2. Possibility of an event, 3. Acquired favorable condition as a result of coincidence, rather than of one's knowledge and endeavor. The origin of the word 'luck' comes from the word "cadentia" in Latin, which means 'falling to one's share or fortune'. The word "fate" comes from a similar origin. The concept discussed in this article is not 'luck', but rather, this article focuses on the expression "I am unlucky" or unluckiness. If luck is accepted as an external reality, the phrase "I am unlucky" implies an identity structuring, and an internal reality of one's unluckiness. Unluckiness is the transformation of an external phenomenon into a personality characteristic that affects one's identity. In this context, it can be argued that luckiness is associated with internalization. It would not be erroneous to define this internalization as the structuring of critical parents in the superego. The cases discussed herein have a form of internalization that has caused them many difficulties, most of which resulted from an unhealthy process.

Received: 09.12.2016 - **Accepted:** 17.05.2017

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doi:10.5080/u20539

The General Expression of Unluckiness in Psychotherapy

No matter the therapist's theoretical approach, the complaints of unluckiness and misfortune are often brought up by clients as a cause of distress. Generally, therapists hear expressions such as "Such mishaps always happen to me because I am unlucky", "I did not expect a positive outcome anyway, because I am always unlucky", and "One needs to be lucky in such matters". Sometimes, the belief that one is unlucky can also be intertwined with despair and inaction. In such situations, we often observe a reluctance to act, perceptions of the self as being unfavorable to others, and behaviors consistent with this inner acceptance. For example, although a person has a very impressive work history and often expresses that he/she is enthusiastic about his/her work, he/she never applies to the leading business organization in the field. This is because of the negative perception that he/she "knows" that he/she can't get the job, even if the managers in the leading company would approve of him/her. Such an approach is a masochistic, as well as a depressive, process. Depressive people are more concerned with losses they have experienced in the past, rather than their expectations for the future. The cases discussed in this article have more masochistic personalities rather than depressive personalities; they tend to experience self-torment by attacking themselves in various ways, and are unable to grieve over past losses. The reader is referred to McWilliams (1994) for an explanation of the differences between masochistic and depressive personality.

Since luck and unluckiness are parts of the outer world pointing to a vague causal factor, but at the same time experienced by the client as an internal characteristic, this presents a challenging situation to deal with in therapy. Unluckiness resembles a genetic disorder that was accidentally "assigned" to the client. The client often believes that unluckiness is an inherited condition that fundamentally exists as a genuine part of him/herself. In contrast, clients often believe that luck involves a series of concrete events that are experienced externally, arising from the organization of the external world toward the client. A client embracing unluckiness also makes his/her therapist a part of this unluckiness and helplessness; in addition, these clients often cannot separate the inner and outer world, and they become almost impossible to separate. I want to remind Winnicott's (1971) transition object concept which I will try to elaborate more while discussing the cases presented herein.

Regarding the client's unluckiness, the client expects that the therapist will acknowledge the unluckiness and accept the client's experienced sadness and anger, and more significantly, the client expects the therapist to accept his/her victimization without question (all these constitute the client's transference). These clients believe that the therapist should see and accept the victimization of the client, express how inescapable their destiny is, and share the client's sadness and anger towards others. However, those therapists who meet the clients' conscious or unconscious wishes become a part of the unluckiness in the mind of the client. This is because the therapist becomes just another observer who is incapable of changing or interfering with the client's bad fortune. The client believes that he/she is experiencing unluckiness by working with a weak or incompetent therapist.

CASES

Various features of the cases described herein have been changed to protect their identities. Both of these cases were referred to my office for psychotherapy following psychiatric assessment.

My attention was focused on the problem of unluckiness when two of my clients simultaneously brought up this topic in therapy. At the same time, I was coincidentally translating an excellent article to Turkish regarding extreme-punitive superego structure on the basis of cases (Temple 2013, 2nd Leyla Zileli Symposium).

My first client was a woman (case A.) in her late twenties who was the second-born child of a high-income family with five children. We were meeting once a week for a psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy for about two years. When we started, she was about to complete her master's degree in engineering at a leading university in Turkey. She lived on her own and had intense conflicts with both of her parents. She had completed her university education in another city, and was now living at the same city with her parents. She described that her mother's "strictly moral" attitude and her father's "perfectionist" expectations about her professional life were the main issues that raised conflict with her parents. For example, her mother was disapproving her relationships with men, and she was constantly criticizing her daughter for this reason. Her father defined her bachelor's degree as professionally inadequate. He demanded that she would obtain a master's degree, and used his connections to make her register for a master's program as a special student. Such parental attitudes supported her beliefs of worthlessness. She believed that she did not deserve a master's degree, she felt used by men, and she constantly punished herself with strong feelings of guilt. These punishments were manifested in the form of self-criticism, total devaluation in the face of mistakes, and sometimes, excessive alcohol use. I suggest that this case was a perfect example of a rigid and punitive superego structure as described by Temple (Temple 2013). Narcissistic and masochistic features were evident, and periodically, she was feeling very unhappy. She thought that she would only obtain real success if she was on the cover of a world famous magazine, and therefore, that was what she was "working" towards. However, when she experienced a minor failure this made her

feel completely useless and worthless, and her whole effort seemed meaningless to her. For example, when a lecturer in her master's program questioned her adequacy for the course since she came from a different university (another leading university in Turkey), we talked about this for weeks, and she revealed that she had aggressive dreams about the lecturer. It is clear that this questioning by the lecturer was similar to her mother's critiques about her relationships with men; she believed that she was "not accepted" and was deemed "inadequate" because she did not meet the standards of this new university as she did not meet the family standarts. In fact, only after a semester as a special student, she managed to re-register as a regular student to the program. However, she continued to believe that since she entered the program by means of her father, she did not deserve to be in the program, and her feelings of worthlessness continued. During this process, the internalized tormentor parental images became clearly visible.

This client expressed her unluckiness after a painful process of completing her thesis. In the process of leaving the university, she had a problem with the student's affairs office. As she entered the university as a special student, the score required on an exam organized by the Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM) was lower than that required for regular registration. She was very successful in the courses she took as a special student, and was readily accepted for regular registration. During this registration change, nobody mentioned about this test score, and no one asked her to take the test again. However, during extramatriculation a student affairs officer noticed her low test score, and threatened that she would not be able to receive her diploma, and would even have to undergo a disciplinary inquiry. Following this, she experienced a high intensity of anguish and anger. She accused the university for doing a perfunctory job, and she believed that the student affairs officer (he found a mistake in her, just like her perfectionist father) was responsible for this problem. In one of her sessions in which she was full of intense anger and frustration, she said that she was already unlucky, and she knew from the beginning that she wouldn't be able to finish this master's program. She believed that there were two parts to her unluckiness, as described above: she believed that she was condemned to fail, and that this was due to the actions of a malicious person. I believed that this point of view might be a way to avoid responsibility, and I asked her whether she had any responsibility in the way things evolved. At that point, she shared that she took the test before extramatriculation by her own initiative, and achieved the required score on the test. Although she knew that regular registration had different requirements, she did not take her score sheet to student affairs. Therefore, the situation that she described as unluckiness or malevolence of others was of her own creation. She did not take the document and challenged the university. I told her that she did not take the document to student affairs so that she could continue believing that she was unlucky while maintaining the role of the victimized and helpless (irresponsible) child of her disapproving parents and avoid taking responsibility. I added that she was so angry that she wanted to destroy her graduate degree, and thus her father, who always found her inadequate.

A very similar incident happened to my second client (case B). Our therapy process had been ongoing in weekly sessions for four years. This client was pursuing a PhD in law. Following a highly successful graduate education, she left the university where she also received her bachelor's degree and was accepted to a PhD program at another leading university in Turkey. This female client was living with her older brother, mother, father, and grandmother, and was in her mid-twenties. She described her father as an extremely angry and conservative person who tormented her mother. She had been trying to convince her mother to get a divorce for many years. As she stated, she could manage to act freely only by lying to her father. For example, when she wanted to go to a concert, she told her father that she was completing a research project at school. She also stated that her father was 'stingy'. The family had an average income, but she described her father as someone who would allow no luxury in order to save money. According to the client, her mother was weak, and was somehow unable to make a decision about the divorce. The client felt obligated to protect her mother from her father, so she did not attempt to leave the house, although she said she wanted to. B. wanted to become an academic, and during her master'seducation, she was thinking of pursuing a PhD abroad, which she desired very much. However, I observed that she did not make a proportionate effort to her desire. I felt that her sense of hopelessness prevented her from studying abroad, as well as did the fantasy of rescuing her mother. Despite all of her academic successes, she did not believe that she was at an adequate level to deserve to go abroad. While applying to universities abroad, she constantly put herself in the position of the jury who would make the decision of acceptance, and fantasized in detail the reasons for her not to be accepted. Thus, she only applied to two universities in haste, and when she was rejected, she closed the book on her dreams, and described it as a major failure. At this point, I observed that she was acting like a little girl trying to influence her father to love her, but she ended up getting frustrated and accusing herself each time. She believed that her father was a bad person and did not love her. But, she also believed that this was her own fault, because she had to exist in this world with certain unluckiness. According to her own narratives, she could not learn English as well as others did, and therefore, she lacked the ability to 'sell herself', and if she went abroad, everyone would see that she lacked many scientific skills. Therefore, she placed herself in the 'unlucky' group, and believed that it was not possible to overcome this. Meanwhile, following a very competitive process, she obtained a position as a research

assistant at a university. Her father commented about this position, saying, "They probably chose you since you are a woman, and you will only become a teacher (a profession found suitable for women in Turkey) at the university". She was very angry about this comment, and found it to be very devaluing. She could not laugh off her father's evaluation because there was always a side of herself that devalued her own efforts. For example, her master's thesis was met with great praise by the faculty members at the university, but she was never satisfied with it. The year following her acceptance to the PhD program, a research assistant position was available in her department. This position was an opportunity for her to get rid of her father's stingy domination as she would eventually earn her own money. In order to get this position, she was required to achieve high scores on the related OSYM exam and on the department exam. While preparing for the department exam, she expressed attitudes such as "I am studying only to increase my knowledge" and "It is not that important to me". Instead of strategically studying for the exam (she knew the instructors who would prepare the questions for the exam and could guess the types of questions they would ask) she was studying the all of the topics from the very beginning, which was an obstructive attitude and behavior. I told her that I believed that all of these strategies were preventing her from attaining her dream, and all of these strategies were being used as a way to protect herself from the despair she would feel if she failed the exam. Only after I made this comment did she focus on the exam in a strategic way. Following a hard studying process, and going back and forth between hope and desperation, she got the highest score on the exam, and achieved the research assistant position. However, just before she was assigned to the position, she was called by the dean's office, and learned that one of her documents was outdated, and therefore, a substitute colleague would be assigned to the position. In addition to losing the position, she was almost accused of fraud, since she provided them with an outdated document. In fact, she said that she had a different, more recent document that was not outdated and had an almost identical score (this score was a bit lower, but the difference would not have affect the outcome of the exam), but she did not pay attention to dates when presenting the documents. She was very angry with her department and with the carelessness of the dean's office who accepted the documents without checking them prior to the exam. She questioned why she was always encountered with obstacles while others easily achieved their positions, and talked about her unluckiness. At this point, I reminded her that she had not believed that she would achieve this position from the very beginning. I reminded her that she prepared for the exam by saying, "I am only studying to develop my knowledge," which distracted her from the goal, and that it may not be a coincidence that she did not pay attention to the validity of the document, although she was a very meticulous person. In fact, there was no such thing as being unlucky in this story. She unconsciously sabotaged herself from obtaining this position, which her own punitive superego did not deem her worthy of. In this sabotage, internalized punitive parental images dominated the superego.

DISCUSSION

To understand both of the aforementioned cases, we can turn to Sigmund Freud's notions of punitive superego, masochism, and the need for punishment (Freud, 1924). In a logical framework, it is difficult to understand why a person would sabotage his/her own life. On one side, there is something desired (in the cases above, graduating from a master's program and obtaining an academic position; or, on a deeper level, earning the love of the parents), and on the other side, there is a devastating process preventing them from achieving their desired goal, which leads to suffering.

Punitive Superego and Masochism

According to Freud, the superego tells the ego what *not* to do, as much as what *to* do, and it dominates the ego by using conscious and unconscious guilt (Freud 1923). The superego is the sum total of the internalized rules of one's parents, especially of the father, after the resolution of the oedipal conflict. We know that in some cases, internalized rules (i.e., the superego) can have extremely punitive (sadistic) content. Bion points out that a superego can acquire punitive features through a projective identification mechanism (Bion 1984). Temple (2013) emphasizes that this is due to the mother's inability to contain the aggression of the baby, and in turn, her responding back to the baby aggressively. This is important for the structuring of a sadistic superego, and these sadistic and masochistic cycles can be addictive. Indeed, some studies have shown that early mother-infant interaction plays an important role in the formation of pathways for endorphin secretion (Mitchell and Black 1995). These studies indicate that babies confronting aggression can only trigger pathways of endorphin secretion by self-tormenting.

For many years, Freud had difficulty associating masochism with the pleasure principle. This is because, according to the pleasure principle, people are expected to avoid painful situations (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983). For a theory describing the function of the psychic apparatus as achieving homeostasis it is not easy to explain repetitive behaviors inducing pain. After putting forth his last dual drive theory defining life and death drives, Freud explains the masochistic behaviors with the death drive of the subject directed to himself/herself; he conceptualizes the primary masochism concept as directing one's own aggression toward herself/himself before being directed to another object. Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) define masochism as "a sexual perversion of the subject in which gratification depends on suffering pain or humiliation," and

they add that Freud extends the notion of masochism beyond the perversion described by sexologists. First, he identifies masochistic elements in numerous types of sexual behaviors and sees rudiments of masochism in infantile sexuality. Second, he describes derivative forms, notably "moral masochism", where the subject, as a result of an unconscious sense of guilt, seeks out the position of victim, without any sexual pleasure being directly involved.

According to Freud, a part of the death drive functions in the superego. However, unlike libido, he did not emphasize the location of the death drive on the body. Freud described that the ultimate purpose of the death drive, which has no distinct location in the body, and fluctuates throughout the psyche as well as the superego, is to disrupt and destroy the ego (Freud 1920). It is possible to soothe the aggressiveness of the death drive, even just a little bit, via the libido. We know that in some cases, a certain dose of aggression can be highly erotic. Kernberg (1992) emphasized the role of libido in regulating aggression, stating that the sadomasochist aspect of child sexuality is particularly important in maintaining a balance between libidinal and aggressive interests because it represents a primitive synthesis between love and hate. One of the requirements for the libido to function in this way seems to be a positive and soothing attitude of parents in the early stages of the baby's life. In the two cases described above, it can be said that the parents, for various reasons, could not sufficiently provide this positive environment. Freud (1920) described some situations in which the superego becomes extremely rigid and enters into the dominance of the death drive. In such situations, cases may even contemplate suicide as the superego works to destroy the ego. Perhaps the cases mentioned above were not confronted with such severe destruction, but they have acted in such a way to destroy their own egos and cause major difficulties in their lives.

In Freud's theory, his classification of life and death drives has been one of the most controversial issues in psychoanalytic history. Some have found this concept to be useless both theoretically and clinically. There have been advocates (e.g., Klein and followers) that the death derive is inherited, as well as advocates (e.g., Winnicott) that the death drive is associated with disappointment and inadequate parenting. In addition, Kernberg brought a new perspective to the theory of drive. According to Kernberg, the instincts transform into libido and aggression drives through the organization of the affective states of the baby, which are generated from what the baby experiences in life in the forms of "pleasure" and "pain". Therefore, he believes that the affective states are the building blocks of the drives. The fundamental organizing entity is the affect of the person, not the drive. Kernberg (1992) claims that aggression, which is organized within the framework of negative emotions, turns into the death drive. In the perspectives of Freud and Kernberg, we revisit the age-old discussion of nature versus nurture: Is the death drive inherited, or, is it shaped by the environment? Of course, it is very difficult to clearly answer this question. In terms of the cases discussed in this article, the influence of the environment is evident in the case histories. However, we must ask the question: How do we explain the observed harmful behaviors to the self and others, even when the positive conditions of the environment are evident? When Freud said, "The goal of all life is death," he stated a tangible reality beyond theory about the finiteness of life. Besides the concreteness of death, it does not seem possible to deny the aggression of humanity thus a drive related with death. In his attempt to relate death drive to envy, Steiner (2008) stated, "It is difficult to understand the purpose of such an instinct [death drive], but it is impossible not to see its portents". I am leaning towards the idea that aggression is linked to a death drive that was present at birth. Moreover, since there is no ideal environment, we may perhaps read Hartmann's adaptation theory in reverse (for an overview see Mitchell & Black 2010): We may ask wouldn't an organism that adapts to an environment that is not ideal finally internalize the destructive aspects of its nature? It can be argued that the death drive has become a part of human biology and the human psyche. Indeed, it is known that various chemical mechanisms lead the cell to self-destruction (apoptosis) (Alberts et al. 2002). Apoptosis is known to prevent uncontrolled cell proliferation in multicellular organisms. However, there is no evidence to prove that such a mechanism at the cellular level can have an effect on the mind. Nevertheless, in the context of Freud's definition that the drive is at the boundary of physical and mental states, even though it is speculative, we can propose that the death drive may be shaped somehow through the projection of what is cellular on the mind.

Melanie Klein (1957) has also made important contributions to the understanding of masochist behavior. Klein defined libidinal and aggressive drives not as separate tensions, but as integrated concepts that are shaped by good and bad experiences. Hence, she accepts that aggression is present at birth, since it is experienced by the baby from the very beginning through disappointments and self-perceptions as being bad, it is a characteristic transferred to the objects by projection. This aggression is intertwined with extinction anxiety in the paranoid position, and includes extremely destructive fantasies. She argues that the aggression of the child which is projected onto his mother and father is then internalized as aggressive parental internal objects. Both of the cases described above were experiencing very aggressive and punitive parental images in their superego as a result of both their parent's real aggression and their own projected and internalized aggression.

Working on the definition of masochism, Kernberg (1992) emphasizes that masochistic behaviors and conflicts are universal, and that normal-psychopathological distinction is not easy. According to Kernberg, it would be useful to define masochistic syndromes in one of two main groups: 1 - neurotic

personality organization, and 2 - borderline personality organization. While there are several subgroups of these two main groups, I would like to focus on the concept of depressive masochistic personality disorder (at the level of neurotic personality organization) in order to better understand the cases discussed in this article. According to Kernberg, a masochistic organization of personality at this level acts in a way that exposes itself to torment in order to get narcissistic satisfaction through establishing moral superiority over other objects (Kernberg 1992). In both of the cases mentioned above, holding others responsible for their "unluckiness" was prominent. Both blamed the university system and the employees, who they believed did not do their jobs properly. Kernberg (1992) indicates that superego integration is critical to determining the level of a masochist's function (neurotic or borderline). Better integration indicates a neurotic level. I believe that both of the cases described herein have a personality organization closer to the neurotic level (of course, narcissistic and depressive features were prominent in both cases). One must remember that masochism is a concept that is difficult to define, and is approached from different perspectives by different authors. Indeed, Békés, Perry, and Robertson (2016) examined 23 published articles using standardized scales, and found that masochism is defined in six different ways in the psychoanalytic literature, with three primary and three secondary types.

Need for Punishment

Freud observed that analysands do not easily abandon their old behavior patterns, even if they understand the interpretations made in the analysis. This can be explained by the concept of repetition compulsion, which is regarded as an expression of death drive (Steiner 2008). The more "social" and superego-related form of repetition compulsion (which originates from the id) is explained with the concept of the need for punishment (Menninger and Holzman 1973). Clearly, the need for punishment is also related to unconscious guilt. Freud preferred the concept of "need for punishment," stating that emotions could not be unconscious. However, many contemporary theorists claim that emotions may be unconscious too. Unconscious guilt (or need for punishment) is a condition that stems from the punitive superego. Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) states that psycho-analytic investigation indicates that certain subjects seek out unpleasant or humiliating situations, from which they derive enjoyment (moral masochism). Whatever is irreducible in such behavior must then be ascribed to the death instinct.

It is not easy to clearly define why the unconscious guilt and associated self-torment emerged in the cases described herein. Nevertheless, I believe that a common characteristic in both cases was effective: they both have overly critical and underestimating parents. Turning against the self is a common defense mechanism in depressive and masochistic conditions (McWilliams 1994). We know that every human baby is born with an inadequacy, and in Freud's words, hits "the brick wall of reality" (Mitchell & Black 1995). It is the job of the parents to protect us from the brutality of this wall. Therefore, every human being needs a "good enough" mother. When the mother or caregiver is not good enough, the child must keep the hope of a good mother alive in order to survive. The baby believes that if he/she is good enough, and if he/she does exactly what his/her mother wants, he/she will eventually win over his/her mother's love. Thus, the object (the mother) is defined as good, and the subject (the baby) is defined as bad or inadequate. In the baby's mind, it is important to be worthy to the object in order to win her love and interest, even if it requires enduring suffering. The masochistic dynamic of self-punishment is rooted here. One has hope for uniting with the 'good' mother, the goal of winning her love is still alive, and therefore, the child endures repeated suffering. Unlike depressive personalities, masochistic personalities do not give up, and believe that one day they will be loved - after they have paid the price and have become perfect (McWilliams 1994).

Certainly, the narcissistic themes in this masochistic pattern are evident: the subject can control the object to love him/her, and it is possible for the subject to become perfect. Such narcissistic features clearly demonstrate problems in subject-object separation and superego formation. The images of critical parents in the superego sustain their existence without question, and they organize attacks on the subject's ego. Volkan (1976) notes that such internalized and punitive parental images are the only way the subject relates with his/her parents. The subject communicates in his/her mind with the objects in this way that has been difficult to communicate with since childhood, felt distant from, and in a way, that have been "lost".

The Concept of Transition Object

The transition from the period of primary narcissism (as defined by Freud) to the period in which domination of secondary processes and ego build-up takes place is an important developmental step. The emergence of secondary processes indicates that the reality principle has taken place. In other words, the inner (subject) and the outer (object) are separated from each other, and the symbiotic bond with the mother gradually loosens. Winnicott's transition object concept is important in this process which Mahler describes as separation-individuation (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983; Winnicott, 1971). While the child is trying to cope with "the brick wall of reality", it is not possible for the mother to always be available for her child, or to behave as the child wishes. In such situations, the child turns to transition objects for help. An object that is symbolized as a controllable form of the mother (such as a blanket with the smell of the mother or a toy that the child and mother played together) is used in

place of the mother. Transition objects or transitional areas, such as play rooms, ease the child's suffering from the confrontation with the insurmountable (for example, the mother not being there or thinking the mother is a "bad mother") and help the child to cope. As mentioned above, the concept of unluckiness may keep the subject between fantasy and reality, and this can confuse the therapist. Perhaps the concept of unluckiness surrounded by the unconscious guilt and self-punishment may serves just for that, keep the subject between fantasy and reality. The subject does not see that he/she played any role in his/her failure, does not grieve about his/her role in the failure, directs his/her anger toward a vague concept of "unluckiness," and then punishes him/herself. An important aspect of this punishment is a complete devaluation of the self. Instead of focusing on and solving the problem, the subject totally and irrationally devalues him/herself. In this case, instead of grieving for a real loss (for example, in the cases presented herein, recent problems such as the loss of the research assistant position, the failure to graduate, or past traumatic experiences), a process of ruthless self-punishment is experienced. As Temple (2013) indicated, no real learning takes place in such situations, because it is not possible to experience a corrective guilt and sadness. In these cases, Temple considers the guilt, which is unconscious and causes punishment, to be a function of the superego, and the inner, corrective court of conscience to be a function of the ego. The corrective guilt of the ego can be described as a libidinal process, because it involves compassion and taking care of the object in the relationship.

The claim that self-punishment takes place instead of guilt and sorrow (due to loss) has been debated by Carveth (2006) from a Kleinian perspective. While Freud describes guilt as a function of the superego and as an aggression directed to the self, Klein's definition of guilt indicates a depressive anxiety caused by the fear that the subject's hate will destroy the good objects in his/her life as well as the self. Followers of Klein distinguish the need for punishment from the feeling of guilt. According to Carveth (2006), the fear (or guilt) of harming the self or the object indicates a depressive state, and this fear is associated with love and affection (Eros). The need for punishment is related to tormentor anxiety and shame, originates from the paranoid-schizoid state, and is an expression of narcissism and hate (Thanatos). From this point of view, it would not be an exaggeration to conceptualize self-punishment as a transition object or field that the subject holds on to cope with the sorrow of the loss.

CONCLUSION

As described above, at first sight, it is not easy to understand the behavior of a person harming him/herself. However, psychoanalysis bravely deals with the difficult-to-understand and seemingly irrational behavior. I believe that it is very important to deal with the complaint of "unluckiness", as discussed in this article, within psychotherapy. Only then can our clients confront their hate, destructiveness, and tormentor side, which are traces of the death drive. As psychotherapists, we should acknowledge the destructiveness of the death drive, despite how difficult it may be to comprehend it. The psychoanalytic method may give psychotherapists a chance to gain this insight. If we take this chance, our clients may be able to change their aggression into love over time.

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