El grupo paranoide

Chapter 22

Death

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Sacrifice

> Nationalism
>
> The *nation*, a fiction forged from historical, aesthetic and ethical notions, is precisely the cultural construct that enables the modern individual to connect with the State; so that *his* country appears to him adorned with the merits and sacrifices, beauties and virtues of the people who preceded him. *My* nation creates in the subject propensities and emotional states toward sacrifice in the service of the State (1).

The following example illustrates this *propensity for sacrifice* generated by nationalism.

> Romanian Fascism. Legion of the Archangel Saint Michael
>
> The fact that the Legion conceived of life and politics above all as a 'war' seemed to contradict this, but Codreanu advocated a two-sphere doctrine: sinful human life, which constituted the field of political activity, and the reconciled and redeemed community of the nation, which was ultimately to partake in eternal life. Ordinary human life was a sphere of constant war and eternal struggle, above all against the enemies of the *Tara* ('the homeland'). The legionary was to forgive his personal enemies, but not those of the homeland, whom he was duty-bound to punish and destroy, even at the risk of his own salvation. Violence and murder were absolutely necessary for the redemption of the nation; if the acts this required placed the soul of the militant who carried them out in peril, the necessary sacrifice would simply be greater. His punishment would be the punishment proper to the act in this world (and he was not to avoid it), as well as the possible loss of eternal life, which he was to accept joyfully. One of the principal consequences of this political theology was a cult of death, extraordinarily morbid, even for a fascist movement.
>
> Self-sacrifice was something that all fascist and revolutionary movements extolled, but in the Legion martyrdom was almost demanded, accompanied by the heterodoxy we have just explained. The legionaries were aware of how unique their doctrines were and of the important differences between themselves and the secular fascist movements, although they also felt that they shared the identity and, partially, the objectives of the latter. The emphasis on self-sacrifice provoked genuine immolation, which was reminiscent of the most moralistic and idealistic of the Russian revolutionary socialist assassins of the early century (26).

The pursuit of an early death, brought about not by natural causes but by weapons (those of the enemy or one's own sword) stood at the center of samurai ideology. From childhood, members of the warrior caste (exempt from the most menial manual labor) were prepared to die in the most glorious manner possible: swiftly and pierced by steel.

> Warriors. The samurai bushido
>
> Pilgrimages to all manner of strange places —to places where executions were carried out, to graves, to houses reputed to be haunted— formed part of the favorite pastimes of the young. In the times when beheadings were public, not only were small children sent to witness the horrific scene, but they were required to visit the site alone in the darkness of night and leave a mark of their visit on the head that had been severed from the body (23).

The IPP seeks *sacrifice*, that is, its own death, which it may achieve by killing itself (as a group or alone), by allowing itself to be killed (executed or on the battlefield), or by allowing itself to die (through deprivation of care). There is likewise a megalomaniacal accidental death, *apparently* not sought. In the sections that follow we will describe each of these modalities of the paranoid passage to a better life.

Collective Suicides

The collective suicide, in 1978, of more than 800 followers of Reverend Jim Jones, in the Republic of Guyana, produced a tremendous impact on world public opinion and gave great impetus to the anti-cult movement, which took shape in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in other Western countries. The episode served to alert people to a new danger to which "destructive cults" seemed capable of leading, which at that time were considered a historically novel phenomenon. And, certainly, following the Guyanese suicide, several similar episodes have occurred within groups considered to be cult-like (Order of the Solar Temple, Heaven's Gate, Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments…).

Alongside these collective suicides, which, all things considered, have not been so numerous, several threats have also occurred since the People's Temple episode, which fortunately never came to fruition. For example:

> Cult groups. Great White Brotherhood

> She calls herself Maria Devi Christos or *Seventh Messiah*, and the White Brotherhood cult she leads has asked its nearly 150,000 followers to gather in Kiev on the coming 24th of November, the day which, according to them, marks the *end of the world*, and to immolate themselves en masse to accompany her in her ascent to heaven. The matter has caused great concern to the Ukrainian authorities, who have already banned the cult and issued an arrest warrant against the *guru* Yuri Krivonogov, an old professor from the mining region of Donetsk who is on the run in Poland, according to the police (22).

But collective self-immolations are not a novel phenomenon. There are historically recorded precedents for them, far predating 1978.

> Warriors
>
> Caesar reported that the Aquitanians possessed a warrior elite of *solidurri*, or 'bound by duty', who had sworn to die together in battle or to take their own lives if they survived (10).

In the year 73 AD 960 Jewish *sicarii* immolated themselves in the fortress of Masada; all those who were there except two women and five children. They were led by the chieftain Eleazar ben Yair. At that moment, they were surrounded by the Tenth Roman Legion whose entry into the fortress was imminent, having overcome their armed resistance. Although this episode has often been presented as an example of the indomitable character of the Jewish people, the truth is that it only reflected the indomitable character of the *sicarii*. Those who committed suicide at Masada were the followers of a violent and radical movement, with which the bulk of the Jewish population had no sympathy.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a notable episode took place, instigated by a sebastianist chieftain, in the Brazilian region of Pernambuco. Dom Sebastiao himself revealed to the mestizo Joao Antonio dos Santos that two towers would emerge from an enchanted lake and an equally enchanted kingdom would be established upon it. All who followed him would receive enormous riches. After wandering with his followers from town to town, they settled in the place known as Piedra Bonita.

> Other paranoid groups. The sebastianisms of Pernambuco (19th century)
>
> They lived by plundering neighboring farms and on their expeditions they captured men, women, children and dogs that were to be ritually sacrificed according to the cruel prescriptions of their religion. Indeed, the return of Dom Sebastián depended on a bloody practice: it

was necessary that the base of the two rocks be soaked in blood. The faithful who voluntarily offered themselves for sacrifice would be resurrected on the day of the miracle as wealthy, immortal and powerful, and the blacks would become white. The sacrificed dogs would reappear in the form of ferocious dragons and devour their former masters.
On May 14, 1838, the king delivered an impassioned speech to the faithful, describing the sorrow of Don Sebastián, who saw how his people, weak and hypocritical, were disobeying his orders, since no blood had been shed to break the spell that weighed upon the two towers of the cathedral. At once, a volunteer stepped away from the group and, clinging to one of the pyramids, offered his head as a sacrifice. For three days, incredible scenes unfolded. Fathers and mothers murdered their children, an old man threw himself from the top of a rock carrying his two grandchildren in his arms, men and women were beheaded and the blood that flowed was immediately cast upon the stones and the ground (30).

Suicide in the IPP

Paranoia
Sometimes abrupt suicidal thoughts appear (19).

The option of suicide is not alien to paranoiacs, who contemplate it, sometimes, as the final response to different types of problems (always linked, as we shall see, to themes related to honor, persecution, justice, etc.).

And, on occasion, the acting out occurs, like the jealous individuals who periodically appear in the media, and who end their own lives with a gunshot after having done so to their spouses or ex-spouses.

Undoubtedly, the paradigmatic example of paranoid suicide is what is known interchangeably as *hara-kiri* or *seppuku*, practiced by the warrior caste of the samurai, which developed alongside Japanese feudalism (approximately in the 12th century of our era). The *seppuku* was practiced until the Meiji Revolution (1868), which brought about the end of the feudal system, although from the 17th century onward, following its prohibition by the *shogun*, it had begun to fall into disuse. For the samurai, hara-kiri was the only response by which to maintain honor in a multitude of situations, and for that death they prepared themselves from childhood onward.

It was a highly ceremonious act in which even the smallest details were regulated. From the time of its performance (dawn), the place (usually a garden) and the witnesses who were required to attend (representing the feudal lord and, if etiquette demanded it, the *shogun*) to the color of the suicide's kimono (white, the color of death). After various preparations, which included the writing of a poem alluding to the season of the year and to his state of mind, the suicide made a deep cut from the lower left side of his abdomen to the lower right side, and subsequently an upward cut of sufficient dimension to allow the intestinal package to emerge (the entrails were considered something akin to the seat of the soul). The samurai's obligations did not end with the evisceration of his intestines; rather, he was immediately required to bow respectfully forward, avoiding the indignity of falling backward. The final act of the ritual was performed by another samurai (usually his closest friend), who severed his neck with his sword, though taking care not to cut it completely through, so as to spare the deceased the humiliation of separating the head from the rest of the body.

The *hara-kiri* fills us with astonishment at its unsurpassable masochism, and is conceivable only in a mentally ill person or in completely fanatical individuals, as was the case of the members of that warrior caste, fanatics of one of humanity's oldest religions: war.

Martyrdom

A dynamic closely related to that of suicide, denoting the same attraction to one's own death, is martyrdom. The act of *killing oneself* is now transformed into *being killed*. The PI not only does not oppose it but does what is necessary to bring about his own execution and even plans it himself.

> *Folie à deux*. The *luluai* and his friend
>
> An old male *luluai* from the Madang district was admitted to hospital after killing a friend. The two men had discussed for years the ways and means to raise their *status* to that of industrialized peoples with all their material possessions. The *luluai* decided that the only way to achieve this was to emulate the Christian Passion, as he understood it, on the assumption that the arrival of Christianity was responsible for the prosperity and standing of Europeans. His friend readily agreed with him. He arranged for the erection of an enclosure with a platform in the middle from which he addressed his followers. He invited the bishop to a ceremony, the nature and purpose of which he did not reveal. He then obtained an American

machete, took his friend by the hand, and led him into the enclosure. All those present subsequently insisted that the friend appeared completely cooperative. The friend then raised his hand 'to the sun, the moon and the stars' to inform these cosmic forces of what was about to happen. The friend then tilted his head back, exposing his neck, and the *luluai* delivered a swift and violent slash. Blood flowed copiously; the friend fell to the ground and died. Most of those present fled. In a subsequent explanation, the *luluai* stated that some years earlier the friend had said that the spirit of God had appeared before him and told him that he had to die and shed his blood like Jesus Christ in order to secure a series of wonderful changes in the life of the people. These included a new ethical system in which there would be no more fighting, no stealing of pigs, no more disputes over women, and a new era of prestige and material goods.

[...] He was ordered to remain at His Majesty's disposal in *The Corrective Institution*. Later transferred to the now non-existent Bomana Mental Hospital and subsequently to the Laloki Psychiatric Centre. It was clear that his belief met the three essential criteria of delusion. First, he held a belief that was in fact false. Second, it was completely immovable and impenetrable to logical argument. Third, it was not held in the same persistent manner by the people of his cultural linguistic group. They said they would not continue to believe, and that they would only do so if they could see the wonderful changes happen before their eyes. The belief pattern was quickly abandoned by those followers who had previously seemed to defend it. However, the *luluai* remained steadfast, and when examined many months later he still held the same beliefs along with many other fantasies. The pattern of symptoms was consistent with grandiose paranoia. The visual hallucination of the friend and his cooperation in his own death make it likely that he too held the same beliefs as the *luluai*. He would certainly be the passive party in the context of a *folie à deux* (7).

Persecutor-persecuted. Arnaud (1903)

[...] the *regicides* [...] a mystical element mingles with pride and perverse tendencies. They know that their attempts will lead them to death or lengthy imprisonment. They know this and face this danger with unquestionable courage. They have as a desire for martyrdom that, in their eyes, will sanctify their cause and justify their crime (2).

In other cases, a clear connection is perceived between martyrdom and honor and pride.

Japanese nationalism

> At this point in the conflict, when the military in power knew that defeat was only a matter of time, surrender would have saved the lives of millions of citizens, and yet that was an unimaginable option: 'Now the real war begins!' said the Prime Minister of Japan… (24).

In its most bearable manifestation, the martyrdom dynamic takes shape in the insistence of the PCI on seeing and presenting itself as a martyr, when it is not one at all. The tendency to imagine persecutions and plots, to see hidden enemies, to magnify any expression of hostility from the opposing side, added to the fact that the PCI's own attitude tends to produce a truly hostile reaction from the environment, causes PCIs to feel like genuine *victims* of a *martyrdom*, even though this does not materialize in a death in the strict sense of the word.

> Delusion of grievance. Clinical case
> [...] proclaims himself 'the martyr of truth' (31).

Although true martyrdom may never come to pass, PCGs carry out a preparation for it through indoctrination. By urging members to be available for death, the PCG causes the adept to repeatedly imagine their own martyrdom, which ultimately leads to a genuine experience of it in the realm of the imagination. Recreating over and over again the images of their own execution, the adept gradually prepares themselves for that eventuality.

> Sokagakkai
> [...] go to work, to fight and even to die for the people (16).

> Sokagakkai
> - The day is approaching when a truly intense campaign will begin for the cause of kosen-rufu. In favor of said struggle, every member of the Soka Gakkai must be prepared to follow the leadership of our president, Josei Toda, and each one, considering their mission to be that of the Four Bodhisattvas, must be willing to give their life for our cause (16).

In those PAs in which deaths have indeed occurred as a consequence of having been subjected to persecution, the memory of the martyrs always constitutes a *leit motiv*.

> Italian Fascism

> By the end of 1921, the fascist style and liturgy were already fully developed, based especially on the precedents established by D'Annunzio in Fiume. Elaborate ceremonies were held, decorated with countless flags and special new visual symbols, accompanied by mass chanting. Large-scale marches were common, and particularly impressive were the funerals of the fallen, which had become a central element of fascist ritual, in which the living and the dead were united in tribute to valor and the transcendence of mere mortality. The collective response of 'Present!' when the murdered comrades were named expressed the new fascist cult of transcendence through violence and death (25).

The fallen are transformed into an example to be followed, in their boundless fidelity to the group and its objectives. Their blood demands imitation, vengeance, or reparation, and so, for the militants, abandonment or the mere act of faltering constitutes a great betrayal of their memory.

> Sokagakkai
> The *Gosho* teaches us that death is inevitable, and that we must find comfort in adversity. The difficulties we face are nothing compared to the persecutions suffered by Nichiren Daishonin in Komatsubara, or in Izu and Sado, where he was exiled. They are nothing, compared to the martyrdom of his followers in Atsuhara. We will endure whatever we must bear (16).

Recourse is also made to the memory of martyrs who, while not strictly belonging to the AP, formed part of what it perceives as its "broader we."

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> On the 6th, the centenary of the assassination of Gabriel García Moreno, Martyr President of Ecuador, members of the TFP take part in a solemn procession, presided over by religious, civil and military authorities... (8).

The most intense expression of the dynamics of martyrdom is that seen in those sectarian groups in which intransigent positions are adopted that are known in advance to lead to the persecution of members and even to their execution. The members throw themselves enthusiastically into a self-provoked immolation. Some years ago, numerous Jehovah's Witnesses were executed in an African country for refusing to join the single party. It was no more than a mere formal formality required of all citizens, but their radical antipoliticism prevented them from doing so…

The readiness for martyrdom includes, in addition to the acceptance or pursuit of one's own death, the willingness to endure torture. There is probably a proportional relationship between the degree of paranoidization and the capacity to withstand all manner of torments without betraying one's own cause.

> Messianic movements. Sicarios. Judas the Galilean
> The followers of Judas, who refuse to submit to human authority, fear neither repression nor torture. They display an uncommon fanaticism and a total disregard for danger (5).

> Maoist Leninism
> His uncle Pei-o –the prison warden– and Dong, the executioner, had told him that Communist prisoners were the most courageous: 'They are the ones with the strongest bones –his uncle used to say–. They sing, shout slogans and curse the Japanese until the very last moment before dying by strangulation,' said Dong (18).

Heroic death

Since war was discovered some ten thousand years ago and castes specialized in said activity emerged (and in subjugating and living at the expense of the vanquished and subdued), the members of these castes have extolled death on the battlefield as the noblest and most desirable of destinies to which a man can aspire (but not a woman).

> Warriors
> Is it not wonderful for a man that, having been born as a man, he should die at the hands of another man and then, with his quiver and his bow by his side, lie on the earth as a corpse? (Mongolian proverb from the era of Genghis Khan) (10).

This fascination responds to an evident practical objective: a successful army needs men who do not fear death. However, it becomes more difficult to explain when the warrior shows himself willing to seek death for death's sake, setting aside the objective of victory.

> Warriors

> Among North American Indians, the commitment to 'never retreat' was also known. A Crow Indian could 'pledge his body to the enemy', which meant that he was willing to die in a desperate attack (10).

The advent of the modern nation produced the miracle of transforming the totality of the male population of a given territory (mostly peasants) into heroic warriors, following passage through the schooling system and military training.

> French nationalism
>
> The French Revolution, which occurred shortly after the War of Independence, had profound effects at both ends of the military hierarchy. In the lower echelons of that hierarchy, it meant that the common soldier no longer saw himself as the subject of a monarch, but as a citizen of a nation. Due to this sudden elevation of his *status* as perceived, the soldier was less willing than before to die in the old style, rigidly forming in ranks and firing volley after volley when ordered to do so. But the Revolution also endowed him with a new willingness to 'lay down his life' when necessary. Because now he had something to lay it down for: the nation, conceived as *his* nation. In Mosse's view, before the Revolution no efforts had been made to 'encourage soldiers to identify with the objectives of the war. It was taken for granted that they had no interest in doing so'. But, after the Revolution, 'the soldier no longer fought only for the king, but for an ideal that embraced the entire nation under the symbols of the Tricolor and the Marseillaise. In the words of historian J. Christopher Herrold, the soldiers of the French Revolution were '[...] the first men of the people who were permitted to distinguish themselves through acts of personal initiative and heroism until then tolerated only among aristocrats (10).

The enthusiasm of its armies played a paramount role in the military successes and expansion of the Napoleonic empire. From that moment on, the active participation and boldness in war of the male citizenry as a whole within a State was to become an essential variable in the increase of military power. In Barbara Ehrenreich's analysis (10) the fostering among the masses of the population of patriotic sentiment appears to respond, above all, to a military logic.

> Nationalism
>
> And simultaneously, as modern warfare illustrates, the interests of the state now depended on the participation of the ordinary citizen to a degree not previously contemplated. Whether

> armies were formed by conscripts or volunteers, the willingness of men to serve was now an essential variable in governmental calculations [...] The degree of sacrifice that could be imposed on civilians had to enter into the strategists' plans... (15).

The fact is that, across the planet, the exaltation of heroic dedication on the battlefield would become one of the fundamental elements of that newly minted religion that is nationalism. So it was preached by the fathers of nationalist thought.

> Italian Nationalism
> The homeland –wrote [Mazzini, ideologist of Italian nationalism] in 1859– is first and foremost the awareness of the homeland [...]: the homeland is faith in the homeland', and only those who possess this faith and are willing to shed their blood for it [it being understood that in war] (23).

And the generality of nationalisms made this attitude their own.

> Italian Fascism
> And it proclaims a moral of sacrifice and militia, by which the individual must always be prepared to meet death for a reality that is situated above him" (Giovanni Gentile, cited in 14).

> Serbian Nationalism
> Even more than other nationalisms, Serbian egocentrism terribly overestimates its role in the world and the degree of attention that the outside world grants it. But so much betrayal, as those who hold this worldview believe they have suffered, requires a response, and the majority of Serbs demand that it occur, even if it also entails suffering for themselves. Martyrology is part of the 'Serbhood', they tell themselves, before the rebirth of the 'Serbian empire' that will redeem them from all sin and hardship (37).

Throughout the centuries, warrior elites always sought to have religion legitimize their activity and, so to speak, sanctify it, placing war on a plane distinct from that of craftsmanship, herding, or agriculture. And so, nationalist militarism has also sought that legitimization from religious authority and has striven to give war –its wars– a sacred dimension.

> Nationalism

> [...] during the First World War. War was compared to the Last Supper; the soldier's death, to the martyrdom of Christ…, for example, in postcards featuring little angels fluttering over beautiful corpses with no apparent wounds and with expressions of happiness (10).

Australian nationalism

> In Australia, on the contrary, the religion of the nation has replaced traditional religions, Christian or otherwise, adopting much of their symbols and rites. Thus, Kapferer analyzes the imagery and symbolism of the *Australian War Memorial* in Canberra, which commemorates the egalitarian ideals and self-sacrifice of the ANZAC soldiers in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915. He considers it to be a national altar in which the secular was sacralized following Christian models in the construction of the building, the stained-glass windows, and the rites of *ANZAC Day*. By placing emphasis on themes such as suffering, death, sacrifice, and rebirth, secular Australian nationalism was endowed with a religious framework… (34).

Like the Crow warriors, the most fervent nationalists have also sought heroic death when it could no longer bring victory.

Nazism

> ... Of the army that only a few weeks ago numbered more than a quarter of a million soldiers, only 100,000 remain alive. The rest have fallen; they have died of cold and hunger or have been taken prisoner.
> Von Paulus requests authorization from Hitler to capitulate, but the cable with which the Führer and supreme commander replies reads:
> 'I forbid capitulation. The Army will hold its position to the last man and the last cartridge;... (41).

Only a small minority of PAs –guerrillas or terrorists– live in a genuine armed struggle against the surrounding power, that of States. The members of these groups adopt a lifestyle that places them in a position of extremely high risk of death, accidental or in confrontations with police forces and armies. It is the self-represented images in which they see themselves as acclaimed and immortalized heroes of a triumphant cause that drive them to press on with a lifestyle so hazardous and full of hardships. But it is among the current terrorists of Islamic fundamentalism –the suicide bombers– where the active pursuit of a heroic death is most forcefully revealed.

Other PAs, even without engaging in armed struggle, believe it to be imminent (in their millenarianism), and prepare themselves to take part in it.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> One of the most important aspects of the training to which adherents are subjected is preparation for combat to the death, which will be obligatory in the now imminent days of the *Bagarre* (27).

Adherents find themselves immersed in a warlike atmosphere, in which the importance of a combative attitude is incessantly recalled.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> The furniture is in period style and the walls display paintings of Our Lady of Fatima, photos of Professor Plinio Correa de Oliveira and banners bearing the rampant lion, symbol of Catholic combativeness, and the Cross, an object of struggle, upon the red field signifying self-abnegation and heroism to the point of bloodshed (33).

So that the adherents may steel themselves for the final battle, the PCGs-warriors-in-the-making employ the same resources as nations do: military training, the emotional remembrance of fallen heroes…

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> One cannot ignore that beneath the stone slabs of the glorious building lies the crypt where rest the remains of General Moscardó and of more than a hundred heroes who fell defending the historic precinct (9).

(…) or the oath of loyalty.

> Sectarian groups. Moonies
> He makes the thousands of Moonists present swear to sacrifice their lives if necessary in defense of the 38th parallel (the border between the two Koreas) and for South Korea [...] This promise, without doubt, is not in its spirit a gratuitous ritual. Two months earlier, the Vietcong had entered Saigon victoriously (6).

Deprivation of care

A *mild variant* of suicide, quite common in cult groups, consists of the deprivation of medical care, imposed by the group and accepted by the sick adherent.

> Cult groups. Ordo Templi Orientis
>
> Medical care was nonexistent in my family. They believed that physical illness was a consequence of incorrect thinking and, therefore, when the body presented problems, the best thing was to attend to one's thinking. I knew my mother had physical problems; in fact, she was dying. But my father told me that it was her mind that was wrong, that she was getting what she deserved until she mended her ways, and that there was nothing he or I could do (38).

There are groups in which certain medical interventions, such as blood transfusions, are forbidden for being contrary to divine will, which amounts to being ready for death when such an intervention becomes indispensable.

> Messianic movements. Georges-Ernest Roux (20th century)
>
> On September 26, 1954, Gaston and Jacqueline Debray were driving at full speed in the direction of Toulon. Jacqueline was holding in her arms her daughter, Jolle, three months old. For several days, the baby had been suffering from a severe ear infection. But the Debray family were members of the Universal Christian Church. In other words, they venerated a new Christ named Georges-Ernest Roux.
>
> And the messiah claimed to be a healer. When the little one began to cry out in pain, he forbade her from being treated. He then ordered her parents to transfer her immediately from Brest to Toulon, where the main place of worship of the Witnesses of the new Christ is located: the Temple of Light.
>
> But the journey is endless and the illness worsens. The otitis transforms into acute mastoiditis and Jolle dies in the car before reaching Avignon. However, the Debray family continues on their way to Toulon and enters the Temple of Light triumphantly, displaying the girl's corpse. Those present are exultant: 'God has taken her with him!'. Later, the universal Christian Church openly claims the child's death. For the disciples of the new Christ, it was necessary for the girl to die so that the world would hear of Georges-Ernest Roux (5).

There also exist therapeutic groups, based on scarcely scientific theories, that prohibit conventional medical treatments and replace them with actions of zero efficacy (beyond the placebo effect). The adherent-patients cling to these treatments, completely closed to the possibility of even evaluating the alternative of conventional treatment. Insofar as the *pseudopersonality of the cult* (using West's terminology) never fully manages to supplant or eradicate the *pre-cult personality*, it turns out that, in a hidden corner of themselves, these adherent-patients know that in all probability they are denying themselves the possibility of being cured, or even of surviving…

Also in those APs that have not developed an "anti-medical" ideology, the ethic of absolute dedication to the cause, which imposes the consecration of absolutely all one's efforts to it, on some occasions leads to insufficient attention, potentially dangerous, toward physical symptoms. With particular intensity in APs of religious orientation, the exaltation of austerity and suffering leads to a resigned attitude toward pain, which may be considered both a divine punishment and a trial to be overcome (rather than being interpreted as a possible symptom of illness), which can delay — and indeed sometimes does — the diagnosis and treatment of serious diseases. I recall the case of a teenage girl from a Christian group, anemic and with recurrent cystitis, who was not only denied a medical evaluation, but was subjected to further mortifications and more cold-water showers for her "weakness".

Why Die

For what reasons, and under what conditions, do PI and members of PCG provoke their own death?

First of all, for honor, when the PPI has committed or believes they have committed shameful actions.

> Acute psychoses. Clinical case
>
> He accused himself of having attempted to seduce his stepsister and, with growing anguish and discomfort, announced his intention to harm himself. An attempt at self-harm (he tried to cut his wrists), which had no consequences, led to his hospitalization (2).

One circumstance that can lead to self-inflicted death is definitive defeat, an experience always arduous to assimilate, but which for the proud PPI can prove unbearable.

Querulants

The prognosis is usually not good and Jaspers (1959) described the case of a man who committed suicide after a ten-year struggle with the law, having first given notice of it to the newspapers (29).

Suicide is a preferable way out over becoming prisoners or slaves of the enemy, and is also preferable to death at the hands of the enemy. This suicide is characteristic of the leaders of totalitarian movements.

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

It left us stunned when he announced that, in his opinion, Cinque had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head in those final moments when the others had died around him. They said there were powder burns on the head wound that had killed Cinque, with the bullet entering through the right temple and exiting slightly higher on the left (13).

Nazism

While being examined for the second time in an internment camp in Lüneburg Himmler put an end to his life with a poison capsule hidden in his mouth" (Goebbels, cited in 39).

Nazism

It was a transcendental moment. Hitler realized that the war was lost, that the story of the alpine fortress was nothing but a dream and that there would be no new weapons. He decided to apply to the situation something that had always moved him in the tradition of sailors: the captain did not surrender, but rather went to the bottom of the ocean bound to the helm of his ship. On April 22, 1945, Hitler decided to die with Berlin, the city he had dreamed of as the most beautiful in the world (35).

In the Symbionese Liberation Army it was even a regulated obligation to take one's own life rather than be captured by the enemy.

Sectarian-Leninist splinter group. SLA

He declared that both, Osi and Bo, deserved to be sentenced to death. They had violated the Codes of War by allowing themselves to be captured alive (13).

Among the samurai there existed a swift form of hara-kiri, to be carried out on the battlefield itself, in which the numerous ritual prescriptions were set aside and through which the warrior could take his own life, thereby avoiding capture.

The suicide intended to prevent capture by the enemy sometimes takes on a collective character. We may mention here the autolysis of the Sicarii followers of Eleazar, at the fortress of Masada, and the suicide of the child-samurai of the White Tigers Regiment, in Aizu, when the army of their *daimyo* (feudal lord) and their allies fell defeated before the regular government troops.

It is also the sense of honor that leads to prolonging the battle when one knows that it is lost and that irredentism can lead only to death.

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
>
> They were totally committed to the revolution. I sensed that they were suicidal. I believed them when they said that if the FBI, with all its pretentious expertise, found the SLA in its hideout, there would be a battle with guns, no surrender, until everyone was dead. They talked incessantly about this imaginary shootout, and my paranoia about the FBI finding us was beginning to match theirs (13).

The paranoid contagion group prefers for its members this honorable death to any surrender and even to the negotiation of a compromise.

> Serbian nationalism
>
> Kosovo was the origin of that great Serbian cultural dogma of the apology for total sacrifice and death in the face of the opprobrium of capitulation or compromise. The Serbian nation, this message says, prefers to succumb collectively –as at Kosovo Polje before the Turks– than to descend to the levels of other nations that negotiate with the enemy. That Serb who does not obey this maxim is denying obedience to the call of the blood. He is a traitor who deserves a worse death than the enemy (37).

In addition to honor, the IPP has other motives for dying, for he gives his life to a great ideal, to a noble objective, to a supreme cause.

> Sokagakkai

They may come, but we are determined to follow President Toda and to fight for the achievement of kosen-rufu, even at the cost of our lives (16).

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

[...] to save the lives of hungry men, women and children of all races, and I, together with the loyal men and women of many races who love the people, are willing to give our lives to liberate the people at any cost (13).

Maoist Leninism

[...] we do not stop at any personal sacrifice and we are willing at all times to give our lives for this cause (21).

Nazism

[...] everyone must know clearly that to achieve success, lives must be sacrificed (4).

Maoist Leninism

Where there is struggle, there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But, for us, who have our minds set on the interests of the people and on the sufferings of the great majority, it is a worthy death to die for the people (21).

A marked altruistic component often appears in the discourse of self-immolation.

Hypochondriac delusions. Clinical case

Five months later she was readmitted again. On this occasion, in addition to the delusion of rabies infection, she was tearful, trembling, hopeless and expressed a wish to die [...] Three months later [...] She felt guilty about the possibility of infecting her family and that was the reason for her suicidal ideation (11).

Paranoia. Clinical case

A man named Hadfield was tried in 1800 for having fired at King George III. He believed that his mission was to die so that the world would be saved. From his point of view, firing at the king would result in his desired death; he was convinced through his delusional system that his crime was not only not morally wrong, but that it was a religious act (36).

The IP also practices protest suicide.

> Paranoid personality
> [...] suicide with the meaning of a public protest (20).

In the *Bushido*, the Warrior Code of the samurai, *hara-kiri* was considered the most appropriate way through which a warrior could *show his indignation* against any injustice or against any decision made by his lord with which he disagreed. A dignified and eloquent way of making one's feelings known.

There remains one final explanation for this inclination of IPPs to kill themselves and to be killed: gratitude toward the group or the leader to whom so much is owed.

> French Imperialism
> The value system of that society had radically departed from the critical attitude toward the army that the Enlightenment had fostered. From this point on, the key concept was honor with all its military connotations. 'It is difficult, even for a Frenchman, to explain exactly what honor is,' Pierre Crouzet would say to his students at Saint Cyr shortly after Austerlitz, citing as examples Bayard, Du Guesclin, Joan of Arc, and –curiously– the Dutchman Barneveldt: By deeds, far better than by words, can they define and demonstrate their existence. Honor, gentlemen, is the second religion of the French warrior... Sons of our heroes, think that your august emperor is your father: showered with his gifts, you owe him your every drop of blood... For him you must live, for him you must die: to sacrifice your life for him is to sacrifice it to honor itself, which has never had a nobler image upon this earth (40).

The megalomaniac accidental death

They cannot be considered suicides, *a priori*, the deaths caused by *delusional recklessness*, brought about by paranoid megalomania, in which the deceased had not expected to die (even though it may have been foreseeable to common sense).

This section must encompass the deaths that occur in groups with a therapeutic vocation, which administer useless treatments and proscribe conventional ones, as well as those deaths that take place while awaiting a divine intervention that will most certainly occur in the short term.

Not to mention the belief in immunity to bullets, widespread in crisis cults and of foreseeable consequences. A belief that is not an exclusive thing of the past. A few years ago, a Burmese guerrilla was dismantled and its ringleaders captured, two twin children, lean and hardened smokers, who preached a Christian fundamentalism. They had convinced their followers that they would be immune to bullets.

The megalomaniac death admits other variants.

Messianic movements. Moses of Crete (5th century)

Some centuries later, Moses of Crete wishes to attempt the feat anew. Drawing on a Talmudic calculation that foresees the coming of the messiah between 440 and 471, Moses proclaims himself the Anointed of Yahweh and endeavors at all costs to embark the Jews of Crete on a new exodus.

An important detail: Moses is historically the first Jewish messiah to have appeared outside the Holy Land.

His faithful sell all their possessions and one fine day gather at the top of a promontory overlooking the sea. Moses explains to them that the sea will part and that they will return to Israel.

However, the immense blue shimmers with indifference. Is one to be daunted by this? 'Jump!', the messiah commands them. A good number of Cretans plunge in with arms and bundles. The farce turns to tragedy: the majority of the disciples drown (5).

Crisis cults. The Melanesian cargo (20th century)

He led a group of about fifteen people to a lake called Tindipa and told them that they would find in the water the path to the future world, a paradise. He told them that if they jumped into the water they would go there and would not drown. As was the case with most people in that area, they did not know how to swim. The group joined arms placing themselves at the edge of the lake and I. and two assistants held a cloth that surrounded them. At I.'s signal they leapt forward pushing the people into the lake, where they drowned (32).

On the ownership of one's own life

> Sokagakkai
> [...] I will give my life for the Law... (17).

The principle underlying the various forms of paranoid death (suicide, martyrdom, heroic combat…) is the prior renunciation of effective possession of one's own life. The adept surrenders ownership of their existence to a movement, a cause, an ideal, an objective, or a leader. In the pact established between the paranoid contagion group and each of its members, they do not give the group reasonable compensation for what they supposedly receive from it, but rather give it their entire being, without limitations (and not a few hours a week, nor a monthly fee…). This unconditional surrender formed part of the Rousseauian utopia.

> Nationalist utopia. The social contract
> As soon as public service ceases to be the chief concern of the citizens, and they would rather serve with their money than with their persons, the State is not far from its fall (28).

> Nationalist utopia. The social contract
> The social contract has as its end the preservation of the contracting parties. He who wills the end wills the means, and the means in this case are inseparable from some risks and some losses. He who wishes to preserve his life at the expense of others must also be willing to give it up for them when necessary. Consequently, the citizen is not the judge of the danger to which the law exposes him, and when the sovereign says to him: 'It is expedient for the State that you should die,' he ought to die, since it is only on that condition that he has been living in security up to the present, and since his life is no longer a mere bounty of nature, but a conditional gift of the State (28).

In this way, and unlike the suicide of depressive or hysterical patients, the death of the IPP is conceived as the fulfillment of a *duty*, in the manner of samurai who were required to perform *hara-kiri* at any moment their lord demanded it, without asking for reasons and without showing any sign of displeasure.

A duty that must be regarded as an honor, a privilege for which to feel happy and grateful.

Japanese Nationalism

The 'nation-body', symbolized by the Emperor and the Shinto temples, demanded absolute loyalty from its citizens, to the point that they had to be prepared to give their lives. Just as in European nationalist ideology, dying was not a tragedy if one's own death served to strengthen the nation-body or the nation-organism. A document published by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1937 sets forth a line of reasoning that could very well be Hegel's: Far from constituting what is called self-sacrifice, offering our lives for the Emperor is the shedding of our small selves in order to live under the shelter of imperial grace and to magnify the true life of the people and the State (10).

Sokagakkai

We are happy to offer body and mind, to you and to our cause (16).

Despite all this, the principle of giving up one's own life only exceptionally comes to be realized in the actual death of the IPP. Its most common manifestation becomes evident in the willingness to *orient* one's existence entirely in the service of the leader, the group, or the ideals. Occasionally this commitment is made public in a ceremonial manner.

Sokagakkai

2. We, the members of the Suiko-kai, swear firmly to achieve Toda's public objective of saving humanity, and to dedicate our lives to the effort of realizing his long-awaited goal (16).

Leninism. Shining Path

As his clandestine existence caused the myth to grow and his plans and strategies were fulfilled with apparent inexorability, the cult of Gonzalo began to acquire a dynamic of its own and to lose even the proportion of excess. The new party militants had to write a 'letter of subjection' in which they declared their willingness to give their lives not only for the party and the revolution but also for him (12).

Another alternative to the death of the adept, far more restrained, is the death of a small part of the self.

Messianic movements. Simon bar Koseba

Emerging from nowhere in the second century, he suddenly sets in motion one of the most powerful messianic movements in all of Jewish history.
[...] his popularity is immense. He commands an army of two hundred thousand people. As a sign of determination, each of his soldiers agrees to amputate a finger! (5).

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