



B P S I

boston psychoanalytic
society & institute

Developmental Aspects of Masochism

Frances Lang, LICSW

Sexual Perversion in which satisfaction is tied to the suffering or humiliation undergone by the subject.

*Freud extends the notion of masochism beyond the perversion as described by sexologists. In the first place, he identifies masochistic elements in numerous types of sexual behavior and sees rudiments of masochism in infantile sexuality. Secondly, 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. (Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.-B. 1988. "Masochism," *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, 244.)*

* * * *

December 2

Grossman, W. 1986. "Notes on Masochism: A Discussion of the History and Development of a Psychoanalytic Concept." *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 55:379-413. [PEP Web Link](#)

Hashmonay, G. 2020. "On Masochism: A Resident's Conflict between Masochism and Self Preservation During the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. 68:471-473. [PEP Web Link](#)

References:

Maleson, F. 1984. "The Multiple Meanings of Masochism in Psychoanalytic Discourse." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 32:325-356. [PEP Web Link](#)

McWilliams, N. 2011. "Masochistic (Self Defeating) Personalities" *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis*. NY: Guilford Press, pp. 267- 288. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to identify one similar and one distinct idea about masochism from the psychoanalytic writings of Grossman and DeMonchy.

December 9

Watch "Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan"
Supermasochist." 1997. [available on [Apple TV](#) and [Vudu](#)]

Miller, P. 2001. "Pain: a therapeutics of survival? Some elements for further thought," *Driving Soma*. London: Karnac. Pp. 209-219 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to assess 3 factors influencing an individual with cystic fibrosis to become, in his words, a "supermasochist."

December 16

Fraiberg, S. & Adelson, E. 1976. "Infant-Parent Psychotherapy on Behalf of a Child in a Critical Nutritional State." *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*. 31:461-491. [PEP Web Link](#)

Sugarman, A. 2012. "Masochism in Childhood and Adolescence as a Self-Regulatory Disorder." In Holtzman, D. and Kulish, N. eds, *The Clinical Problem of Masochism*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

References:

Fraiberg, S. 1987. "The Clinical Dimension of Baby Games." *Selected Writings of Selma Fraiberg*. Louis Fraiberg, ed. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, pp. 362-381. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Galenson, E. 1986. "Some Thoughts about Infant Psychopathology and Aggressive Development." *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 13:349-354. [PEP Web Link](#)

Glenn, J. 1984. "A Note on Loss, Pain and Masochism in Children." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 32:63-73. [PEP Web Link](#)

Haynes-Seman, C. 1987. "Developmental Origin of Moral Masochism: A Failure-To-Thrive Toddler's Interactions with Mother." *Child Abuse & Neglect, Vol. 11*, pp. 319-330. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Herzog, J.M. 1983. "A Neonatal Intensive Care Syndrome: A Pain Complex Involving Neuroplasticity and Psychic Trauma." In Call, J.D. et al. eds., *Frontiers in Infant Psychiatry* NY: Basic Books, pp. 291-300 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, students will be able to describe the impact of early experiences of psychological and physical pain on the potential for the development of masochism.

January 6

Donnelly, D. 2012. "The Function of Suffering as Portrayed in *The Scarlet Letter* and Reflected in Clinical Work" *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 60(6):1139-1159. [PEP Web Link](#)

Stolorow, R. 1975. "The Narcissistic Function of Masochism (And Sadism)." *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 56:441-448 [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to describe the need for self-cohesion as a contributor to a masochistic adaptation.

January 13

Freud, A. 1923. "The Relation of Beating Phantasies to a Daydream." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 4:89-102 [PEP Web Link](#)

Lang, F. 2013. "Discussion of Freud's "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love". Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, Solange Skinner Lecture. Unpublished. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Shengold, L. 1997. "Comments on Freud's 'A Child is Being Beaten': A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions." *On Freud's "A Child Is Being Beaten."* Yale University Press. 92-93. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsi.org].

Reference:

Freud, S. 1919. "A Child is Being Beaten: A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversions." *SE of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 17:175-204 [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, the students will be able to describe Freud's theory of the beating fantasy as the essential attribute of masochism.

January 27

Watch the movie "Notes from the Underground" with Henry Czerny, available on Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/53848596>

Joseph, B. 1982. "Addiction to Near Death." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 63:449-456. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

Ghent, E. 1990. "Masochism, Submission, Surrender – Masochism as a Perversion of Surrender". *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 26:108-136. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, the students will be able to list 2 self-defeating and morally masochistic strategies characterizing a masochistic adaptation.

February 3

Bader, M. 1993. "Adaptive Sadomasochism and Psychological Growth." *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 3:279-300 [PEP Web Link](#)

De Monchy, Rene. 1950. "Masochism as a Pathological and as a Normal Phenomenon in the Human Mind." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 31:95-97. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

Rosenberg, B. 1982. "Erotogenic Masochism and the Pleasure Principle." *Les Cahiers du Centre de Psychoanalyse et de Psychotherapie* 5. translated by Ann Levy. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Reference: Laplanche, J. 1999. "Masochism and the General Theory of Seduction." *Essays on Otherness*. NY: Routledge. Pp 197-213 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, the students will be able to identify 2 potentially beneficial functions of masochism.

February 10

Menaker, E. 1942. "The Masochistic Factor in the Psychoanalytic Situation." *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 11:171-186 [PEP Web Link](#)

Wald, E. 1995. "Therapy," in *Meeting the Master*. NY: Grove Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Optional: Racker, H. (1958) "Psychoanalytic Technique and the Analyst's Unconscious Masochism." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*. 27:555-562 [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, the students will be able to demonstrate one way in which masochism functions in both analyst and analysand (or therapist and patient) in the analytic (therapeutic) situation.