

John K. Noyes. *The Mastery of Submission: Inventions of Masochism.* (Cornell Studies in the History of Psychiatry.) x + 265 pp., illus., bibl., index. Ithaca, N.Y./London: Cornell University Press, 1997. \$29.95.

This book discusses seven aspects of the evolving definition of masochism, each in its own chapter. John Noyes uses literary (popular and classic) and psychological (almost exclusively Freudian and neo-Freudian) references to support his views but largely ignores the sociological and sexological literature. He assumes that the reader is aware of the references on which he bases his argument. Statements like "Drawing on Norbert Elias' theory of modernity, Wetzstein . . ." (p. 215), without any citation to or explanation of Elias's work, pepper the book. In the end, he did not convince me that his historical references had much influence on the present-day understanding or definition of masochism. Either to Noyes's credit or because of my difficulty with his writing, I was never sure how he feels about masochism: a normal part of our psyche or a psychopathology?

His review of the history seemed cursory, especially for a book in the "History of Psychiatry" series. Noyes discusses the inclusion of the self-defeating personality disorder category in the *DSM-III-R* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, 3rd ed., rev.). He does not mention that it was listed in an appendix—"Proposed Diagnostic Categories Needing Further Study"—nor does he discuss why it was abandoned in *DSM-IV*. He does not discuss the motivation of or changes to the diagnosis of sexual masochism, which changed considerably over the five editions of the *DSM*. He does not discuss how either the public or psychotherapy professionals actually view masochism now.

Noyes's style sometimes becomes unnecessarily impenetrable. Statements like "In the post-modern problematic of masochism, the struggles of liberal subjectivity and the modernist enactment of modernity's failures play virtually no role at all" (p. 211) are too common. He also assumes more than I think that the average reader is willing to accept; for example, "Both [Sacher-

Masoch and Krafft-Ebing] agree that, in its origin, the sexual drive is naive, since it is unreflective and hence requires no modesty" (p. 69). I sheepishly admit that I identified his conclusion—"Social violence is never very far below the surface of masochistic passion" (p. 8)—by consulting the back cover.

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