

Sade Revisited

A commented abridged version of a **discussion about Sade** that took place on the C18-L listserv in the winter of 2004-05. All of the comments posted here were authorized by their authors, except for a handful, identified as "A" (for Anonymous).

It is unfortunate that we should have to mention, on this occasion, the regrettable behavior of the C18-L listserv moderator, Kevin J. Berland, who assailed the posting, claiming without knowledge of the facts that it was not authorized and asking for its retraction. Since I had mentioned that the C18-L listserv was mostly anglo-saxon in composition (a fact supported by the statistics provided by Mr. Berland himself), Mr. Berland also claimed that I was insulting the C18-list and asked for apologies. And there is worse, as even after being corrected on both accounts, Mr. Berland kept his aggressive stance, and went as far as calling on my administration to intervene, threatening legal action !!!

In any case, the reader will be at a loss to understand the reasons for such an hysteric behavior, reading the following discussion. But what it shows, is that you can be the moderator of a list dedicated to the **Enlightenment**, and still be perfectly narrow-minded !

Vale.

Norbert Sclippa

Charleston, July-August 2005.

PS. I salute Dr. Carol Barton, and those who called on Mr. Berland to apologize for his behavior – which he never did – as well as those who left his list in protest. It would truly be a shame if sadean or any other scholars should be reduced to silence by such spiteful behavior as was here exhibited.

[It all started here upon a comment I made about Sade following the death of Jacques Derrida.]

from: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 4:07 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Derrida's Passing

[...] It rather seems from your mail that you are pissed off that I keep mentioning Sade - but it is my job to educate the public about the most daring intellectual hero and freest mind the world has ever known - and that is sadly still misunderstood or ignored by many so-called eighteenth-century "specialists" who cannot begin to

comprehend that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING SADE.

Yours thoughtfully

Norbert

[I was criticized for having stated that my job was to educate the public about Sade. But that is what it is, just as it is the job of a Voltairian to educate the public about Voltaire, or a Rousseauist, about Rousseau, no ? The job of a sadeian – or a sadean if you prefer – is to educate the public about Sade.]

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Allen Michie
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 5:07 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Derrida's Passing

Norbert Sclippa writes: [...]

From _120 Days of Sodom_:

83. Formerly he loved to fuck very youthful mouths and asses; his later improvement consists in snatching out the heart of a living girl, widening the space that organ occupied, fucking the warm hole, replacing the heart in that pool of blood and fuck, sewing up the wound, and leaving the girl to her fate, without help of any kind. In which case the wait is not long.

[As if it were possible !!!... Have you ever heard of anyone living after having the heart “snatched out” , Mr. Michie ? Perhaps like chicken continue to live after their heads are cut off ?...]

Still wroth with the lovely Constance, Curval maintains that there is no reason under the sun why one cannot successfully bear a child even though one has a broken limb, and therefore they fracture that unlucky creature's arm the same evening. Durcet slices off one of Marie's nipples after she has been well warmed by the lash and made copiously to shit.

This is not MY eighteenth century.

Just educating the public,
Allen Michie

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 5:58 PM

To: Allen Michie; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: RE: Derrida's Passing

It is at least interesting to see that some people will not shy from attacking an author sometimes (wrongly) deemed arrogant by arrogantly stating they are "educating the public" by quoting a passage out of all context and providing no explanation whatsoever about it.

Please, READ Sade. Not just an extract here and there, but the WHOLE think. It has been said (appropriately, methink) that it is not possible to understand Sade without reading the WHOLE of his work (and that is, "understanding" - "explaining" would be altogether quite another matter !). Sade is difficult, very difficult.

[Not that difficult, actually. But it requires good will, or at least seriousness.]

I rejoice that you have read the 120 Days (but have you ?), and there are still several thousand pages to read. Then, let's talk.

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 7:00 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade

Sclippa, Norbert" <SclippaN@COFC.EDU>:

"but it is my job to educate the public about the most daring intellectual hero and freest mind the world has ever known"

Maybe. Couldn't say, myself. But is the fact that he kidnapped, tortured and (however accidentally) poisoned actual women irrelevant to any appreciation of him as either a thinker or as an individual? [Myths die hard. Note that Sade never "poisoned" any women – unless you want to call poisoning a case of diarrhea caused by the ingestion of Spanish fly, nor kidnapped and tortured women. Rose Keller's case might be mentioned, but the terms chosen to depict the event might be overstated, even here, as amply demonstrated by Maurice Lever's and other recent biographies.]

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 8:00 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: RE: Sade

I would certainly not confuse both. Let's assume that Plato would have "kidnapped" a woman (enticed her to follow him) and then roughed her up... Inexcusable ? Perhaps

so. But let the judgment of that to the woman and justice. That he would have made some prostitutes accidentally sick by giving them aphrodisiacs, is that a crime ? And in any case, how is that related to his thinking ? Should we throw out Plato's work because of what remains after all (even in the eyes of a fervent feminist like Simone de Beauvoir) minor anomalies of behaviour, especially for the times, the milieu, and place - - and Sade is certainly a much more thorough thinker than Plato !

[Admittedly, not my better answer : Sade did not poison anyone. The prostitutes who took too much of the Spanish-fly he gave them, got sick, but were not "poisoned". His having "tortured" R. Keller, as she later claimed, remains hearsay (See Maurice Lever's account of this episode in his "Sade").]

Norbert Sclipa

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 8:53 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

That he lured a woman to his house on the pretext of employment, held her prisoner, cut her and poured hot wax in the wounds (as I recall) seems to me pretty directly a crime. Also, whatever Plato's offenses to whatever law, I don't know that any were directly intended to cause pain to another human being.

Sade's not only were, but were directly related to his 'philosophy'. In other words, what some seem to view as interesting 'transgressive' exploration was in fact part and parcel of what he would do in real life, given the chance.

Do you really think that's irrelevant? Bret Easton Ellis may have written the repulsive "American Psycho", but if he's committed any of the crimes in it, he's so far managed to keep them secret.

Jim Chevallier

From: Sclipa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 10/19/2004 8:00 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: RE: Sade

Interesting that you should present a statement as fact, and then ask me if I find it relevant. What Sade "would do in real life, given a chance" is anybody's guess. You mention his "philosophy", however, and I wonder what it is you imagine this to be. Sade is a monism materialist thinker, of the same school as Epicurus, Democritus, Lucretius, Spinoza, Gassendi, Robinet, Diderot, D'Holbach, Helvétius, La Mettrie, etc... So that to understand his project, one must locate him in that general school of thought.

Best,

NS

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 2:17 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/19/2004 7:51:17 PM Pacific Daylight Time, SclippaN@COFC.EDU writes:
Interesting that you should present a statement as fact, and then ask me if I find it relevant. What Sade "would do in real life, given a chance" is anybody's guess.

Honestly, you are avoiding a very straightforward question. I haven't asked a single question about where Sade's philosophy fits in a larger scheme, yet you answer that (unasked) question. As for what Sade would do in real life, here's a famous sample (not a guess, either):

"on Easter Sunday, April 4th, 1768, Sade victimized another unsuspecting young woman. Rose Kellor, an unemployed cook and widow, was seen by Sade begging for alms outside of the Church of the Little Fathers in Paris. The Marquis stepped forward and offered her money in return for "domestic" services. She reluctantly agreed, and was brought to a cottage in the countryside outside of Paris, all the while being reassured by Sade that he will take good care of her. Upon entering the cottage, Sade brought her to a room and ordered her to take off her clothes. Frightened and bewildered, the young woman asked why, to which Sade replied, "For fun." She stripped of everything but her shirt, but this only served to enrage Sade, who ripped the shirt from her body. He then flung her to the bed, face down, and began to whip her bare buttocks with a cat-o-nine-tails. Oblivious to the woman's terrified screams, Sade came to orgasm, emitting violent shrieks of his own."

http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/famous/sade/scandals_5.html?sect=13

This is - as you must know if you have read about Sade's life at all - a famous incident. Another account of the same incident appears in <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-83183> starting at page 33.

It is also very much in keeping with the inflicting of pain upon women which lards his works. Call it his 'philosophy' or what you will.

I repeat again, he didn't just write or philosophize about such acts. He committed them. And I ask again, do you think this fact irrelevant to any evaluation of him as either a writer or a human being?

Please bear in mind too - I haven't said any of this completely negates the importance of his work (or not). Nor made any other sweeping claim.

I'm really asking a very simple question. And not getting a simple straightforward answer.

Jim Chevallier

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 8:07 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade

Mr Chevallier,

I have already told you that I am not interested in the life of the Marquis de Sade, and will refer you in this domain to the excellent biographies of Maurice Lever, Neil Schaeffer, et all... Certainly that if he is famous to-day, it is not because of his life. Neither are Plato, Shakespeare, or Norman Mailer. It is because of his body of works. (And incidentally, I will ask you to answer this question : Have you read Sade ? I am always surprised at how many people discussing Sade, have not read Sade !).

But here is the point. You described Sade's work as "interesting 'transgressive' exploration". It is that, certainly, but it is also more than that. If it were only that, it wouldn't be any different from many of contemporary such works who mostly aim at shock value but will likely not survive our times. The fact that Sade has become a classic, and that we are just beginning to understand the real scope of his works, is that he articulates, is an essential illustration (no capitals, notice) of both the monist atomistic & materialistic tradition (of Epicurus, Democritus, etc...) and of the philosophy of nature in the 18th century. He is an illustration of Alexander Pope famous verse : WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT, if you will, and you simply cannot - in my view - understand that verse and the philosophy behind it, if you have not read Sade.

Vale,

Norbert Sclippa

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 12:39 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/20/2004 5:10:58 AM Pacific Daylight Time, SclippaN@COFC.EDU writes:
Certainly that if he is famous to-day, it is not because of his life. Neither are Plato, Shakespeare, or Norman Mailer. It is because of his body of works.
This is not strictly true. Unlike any of these people (never mind that Mailer puts his own life rather noisily in play), Sade's work is intimately bound with the scandals of his life. Would people be totally disinterested in his works if they were truly anonymous? Probably not. But people who care about him at all (beyond the use of his name as a generic term) are likely to know that he had a scandalous life.

Also, again, unlike those other writers, his work puts great emphasis on hurting people, and he seems to have done so in real life. If Shakespeare had been a murderous hunchback who slept with his victim's widow, you can be sure people would be talking about that too.
(And incidentally, I will ask you to answer this question : Have you read Sade ? I am always surprised at how many people discussing Sade, have not read Sade !).
Pages, not works. But it's silly to suggest that one needs to read thousands of pages of a person whose work is known for its emphasis on cruelty to know whether or not the work emphasizes cruelty.

Since you have read so many pages however, perhaps you can cite specific pages that support your very high estimation of his work.

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 12:56 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: netiquette and c18-l

In a message dated 10/20/2004 8:07:16 AM Pacific Daylight Time, priley@MAIL.COLGATE.EDU writes: I think the responses to Norbert Scippa's comments are the self-righteous ravings of small souls, My own, at any rate, was only a question*, not meant to imply any sweeping assertions about Sade one way or the other. Nor have I questioned that Sade has an importance of some sort. But in fairness to us all, Norbert Scippa has made enormous, monumental claims for Sade. You hardly have to 'rave' to want restore some proportion to the discussion.

Either one of you could restore some sanity (or non-raving if you prefer) simply by giving specific quotes from Sade's work that justify the very high evaluation of him that has been asserted, or by, at a more general level, giving a more useful guide to his value than the requirement that we read thousands of pages of his work. I'm sure people here hold a whole range of opinions on Sade, from negative to admiring, and that many would welcome a discussion of specifics on his subject rather than ringing generalities.

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 1:19 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Le 20 oct. 04, à 18:39, Jim Chevallier a écrit :

> Also, again, unlike those other writers, his work puts great emphasis
> on hurting people, and he seems to have done so in real life. If
> Shakespeare had been a murderous hunchback who slept with his victim's
> widow, you can be sure people would be talking about that too.

I am not persuaded that what Sade did or did not do in real life has a significant bearing on his importance as a writer. Shakespeare does not seem to have led a scandalous existence, but his work is replete with cruelty. Would it be any more or less cruel had he himself been an adept of the red-hot poker? But of course Jim is right that Shakespeare's private activities would, if we knew anything about them, attract comment in proportion to their impropriety.

As for Sade, my own view is that one cannot have enough dismal news about the human condition -- knowing how badly we can behave helps us to avoid situations in which the worst can happen. And Sade, acting as he did in his younger years, and writing as he did in later life, was no doubt avoiding the worst in his own fashion.

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 3:04 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Perhaps a sample will help show what's possible in discussing Sade:

"In a 1951 essay, "Must We Burn Sade," Simone de Beauvoir identifies Sade as a forerunner of Freud with an intuitive grasp of the nature of the human heart:

"It is remarkable, for example, that in 1795 Sade wrote: 'Sexual pleasure is, I agree, a passion to which all others are subordinate but in which they all unite.' Not only does Sade, in the first part of this text, anticipate what has been called the 'pansexuality' of Freud, but also he makes eroticism the mainspring of human behavior. In addition, he asserts...that sexuality is charged with a significance that goes beyond it. Libido is everywhere, and it is always far more than itself. Sade certainly anticipated this great truth. He knew that the 'perversions' that are vulgarly regarded as moral monstrosities or physiological defects actually envelop what would now be called an intentionality. He understood, too, that our tastes are motivated not by the intrinsic qualities of the object but by the latter's relationship with the subject. In a passage in *La Nouvelle Justine* he tries to explain coprophilia. His reply is faltering, but clumsily using the notion of imagination, he points out that the truth of a thing lies not in what it is but in the meaning it has taken on for us in the course of our individual experience. Intuitions such as these allow us to hail Sade as a precursor of psychoanalysis."

More at

http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/famous/sade/epilogue_7.html?sect=13

Still, there's a wide river between this and calling Sade more important than Plato, or even central to our era.

The whole issue of how much an artist's life relates to their work is probably larger than this list. But I do think the question takes a very different form when you're dealing with a writer who clearly draws on external sources (as did Shakespeare), one who's largely autobiographical (Kerouac), one who draws generously on autobiography and acquaintances (Cather) to create separate fiction and one whose presentation of extreme (and non-consensual) violence towards others corresponds to similar acts in his life (Sade).

In the latest (and lovely) exhibit at LACMA ("The Eye of Duncan Phillips"), I saw one of many paintings Van Gogh did in the weeks before he committed suicide. Certainly, the work all by itself affected me. But part of me was thinking, "This is an artifact of the thought process of a person who is moving towards suicide." In the case of Van Gogh - whom Picasso called "that Christ of painting" - I don't know how much anyone at all familiar with his life can separate his paintings, even excluding the self-portraits, from the turmoil behind them.

Etc. I simply don't think one answer applies to all artists in this area.

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Rictor Norton
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 4:05 PM

To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU

Subject: Re: Sade

De Sade exemplifies some of the major features of the Enlightenment project: in fact his philosophy represents the logical conclusion of much Enlightenment thought. For example, he demonstrates that morals are historically and culturally contingent, that is, they are merely mores or customs and traditions of specific societies in specific times and places. One custom or morality is no more valid than another. He employs the evidence and techniques of comparative anthropology in precisely the same way as less audacious figures from the 1760s onwards, to demonstrate that there are no universal customs and hence no universal morality or religion. There is, of course, no God, only scientifically discoverable mechanistic principles or chemical interactions that determine all actions and feelings, a view shared by many unitarians and deists. He was a great advocate of natural philosophy, and certainly believed that scientific observation was more accurate than sentimental reasoning. Nature, as he perceived, is utterly devoid of moral intention, and consists mainly of aimless repetition, waste and destruction. The only natural universal rules are self-interest and the pursuit of pleasure, mainly sexual pleasure. Man and woman are entirely creatures of nature, like all animals, and can only be judged by the rules of nature. The only immoral act is to resist your own nature. The only moral standard is that asserted by Polonius: To thine own self be true, thou canst not then be false to any man. That is why De Sade's own sadomasochistic acts in his real life are so important to his philosophy: they demonstrate his morality because they demonstrate that he was not a sham, an intellectual impostor. He was a deconstructionist *avant la lettre*: he set out to expose the hypocrisies and power relations behind all systems of morality, then subverted or inverted them to free the individual as authentic/instinctual subject rather than ideologically/culturally constructed object.

Rictor Norton, London

From: Sclippa, Norbert

Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 4:46 PM

To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU

Subject: RE: Sade

I was just about to mention Simone de Beauvoir, but your request was to quote from the canon, and... anyways... Simone de Beauvoir, even though she did never fully understand Sade, made some striking comments. For instance, in "Faut-il Bruler Sade ?" (Gallimard, 1955, p. 82) : "Dans la solitude des cachots, Sade a réalisé une nuit éthique analogue à la nuit intellectuelle dont s'est enveloppé Descartes; il n'en a pas fait jaillir une évidence : mais du moins a-t-il contesté toutes les réponses trop faciles." [In the solitude of dungeons, Sade brought about an ethical night analogous to the intellectual night Descartes wrapped around himself; he did not extract any evidence from it : but at least he has contested all the too easy questions]. Now, everyone familiar with the importance of Descartes in French intellectual life, the "cartesian nation", cannot fail to be struck by this "analogous", of the highest praise. And that he did not bring out an evidence from it (as Descartes' cogito), does not in

the least diminish his merit. As perhaps it is quite simply (and this indeed was my point) that no such evidence exists.

More on it all later. Need to work too !

Cheers,

Norbert Sclipa
College of Charleston, S.C.

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 5:05 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Le 20 oct. 04, à 22:05, Rictor Norton a écrit :

> That is why De Sade's own sadomasochistic acts in his real life are so
> important to his philosophy: they demonstrate his morality because
> they demonstrate that he was not a sham, an intellectual impostor.

I maintain that this is icing on the cake -- other metaphors are of course possible and permissible. If the records of Sade's various adventures had not survived would our appreciation of his work be different? I doubt it. There is nothing tentative about his prose.

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Charles Harrison Wallace
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 6:32 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 20/10/2004 22:48:31 GMT Standard Time, rictor_norton@YAHOO.CO.UK writes: Nature, as he perceived, is utterly devoid of moral intention, and consists mainly of aimless repetition, waste and destruction. The only natural universal rules are self-interest and the pursuit of pleasure, mainly sexual pleasure. Man and woman are entirely creatures of nature, like all animals, and can only be judged by the rules of nature. The only immoral act is to resist your own nature. The only moral standard is that asserted by Polonius: To thine own self be true, thou canst not then be false to any man. That is why De Sade's own sadomasochistic acts in his real life are so important to his philosophy: they demonstrate his morality because they demonstrate that he was not a sham, an intellectual impostor. All I know about Sade is that I read, I think, Justine, a long time ago, and found it an unpleasant book. However, the above fairly categorical statements, and argument, strike me as just plain wrong.

Nature, in the sense of whatever is, may be devoid of moral intention, but life within Nature is not aimless. Its purpose is to live, to continue living, and, in a sense, to defeat death. A mammal's passions are first, to breathe; second, to eat; third, to procreate. It's no longer certain that sex is necessary for procreation, and for many other forms of life it isn't. It has a lower priority than breathing and eating, and it doesn't permeate everything. Co-operation, or "morality", within a species, is concerned with maintaining life, securing it, and trying to prolong it. Rules of behaviour evolve to achieve these objectives. Rules of behaviour may well involve suppressing spontaneous desires, for the greater good of the species.

Presumably, if everyone ignored these rules, solely pursuing pleasure and self-interest, the species would rapidly expire. Men and women are not to be judged by the "rules of Nature", but by the rules of the society within which they survive. The emphasis is on group survival, not dying in some holocaustic orgy of sado-masochism.

My apologies if I misuse the term.

CHW

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 10:01 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/20/2004 5:31:58 PM Pacific Daylight Time, SclippaN@COFC.EDU writes:
The whole world is such an holocaustic orgy, and there is nothing sado-masochistic about it. It's just life, a matter of perception perhaps : the Hindus call this endless movement "Lîla" - cosmic joy...
Hoo boy. I can't wait to see a Hindu respond to THIS connection.

Nature may not be sado-masochistic, but Sade's universe (personal and literary) seems to be very much so. If the whole defense of Sade comes down to an acceptance of the Wheel of Life, of Death and suffering as being inevitable and natural, that really doesn't explain why the suffering here is almost exclusively inflicted by human beings.

So far as I know too sadism doesn't exist in other species (unless you count a cat playing with a mouse, which I believe has nothing to do with sexual pleasure.) Treating it as an expression of Nature seems to me very far-fetched. Sadism as practiced by human beings (our author among them) is very much about power. Sade's ability to live out his impulses had a great deal to do with his being a noble with powerful protectors. If there were any lower class Sades, we probably don't know about them because their careers would have ended early and in most cases with finality.

"But all in nature dies too. Sade optimism springs from this (age old) perception precisely, that death is a unique and very essential moment in the cycle of what we call "life". "

Sade's optimism has a lot to do with the fact that his focus was more on the suffering and sometimes death of others than on his own. If you know of passages where he looks with equanimity on his own mortality, I'd love to see them.

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Wed 10/20/2004 10:26 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Norbert Sclippa: "It's just life, a matter of perception perhaps : the Hindus call this endless movement "Lîla" - cosmic joy..."

Which is exactly what Lucretius argues, as does Henri Bergson, and more recently, Deleuze. Sade is not perverse anti-Enlightenment, but Enlightenment proper: Epicureanism. Cary Wolfe makes a quite compelling argument for the Silence of the Lambs as a revealing imbrication of humanism and its leftovers. And speaking of Derrida, "The Question of the Animal." This despite the fact that there are people who actually eat people. There's Reality TV and There's Reality TV (Baghdad and all). They certainly reflect one another but to say they are the same misses the

point -- the point where teh afterlives of contained ideologies begin to bust their seams.

And Sade's text is a text, like any other. Imagine if we held Colley Cibber (a benign example; but not so much for Charlotte) or even Milton accountable to their "real world" actions. And by whose account? There was little question at a particular juncture that Milton's blindness was a result of his support of barbarous regicide. Milton's indictment we can historicize and ameliorate, but not Sade's. Cibber we barley know. This in itself says quite a lot. "Sadism": it's far more common term than passing, diluted as it is as cultural meme.

I'm amazed that the intentional fallacy of 'real author' and text flourished for awhile, BTW.

And what a hotbed. You'd think we were witnessing the transformation of western enlightenment culture as we once knew it (ah ha!).

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 2:48 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Le 21 oct. 04, à 00:32, Charles Harrison Wallace a écrit :

> Nature, in the sense of whatever is, may be devoid of moral intention,
> but life within Nature is not aimless. Its purpose is to live, to
> continue living, and, in a sense, to defeat death.

This, in my view, confuses fact with purpose.

Living creatures tend to go to the trouble of living because without that tendency they would not be here. They have no purpose, they simply *are* (I am talking here of course about the extremely small number of creatures that are indeed currently alive, the vast majority of those ever conceived or born having failed to fight off death for more than a short while) and if there is any point about existence, ours included, it is that it is entirely and absolutely pointless.

It does not, for me, follow from this that we may go out and whip servant girls, but that could be because I am still burdened by the baggage of my upbringing and/or have not yet read enough Sade.

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 7:37 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade, again!

Dear Colleagues,

I've been reading the thread on Sade with interest, and I find much to admire in both sides of the argument. Sade was, pretty clearly, a repulsive character, a sick man to put it charitably. His private life is interesting, but I don't think except for gossip columnists of much

relevance to his works. But his importance as a writer and thinker is beyond question, if only as a dramatization of an extreme tendency in Enlightenment thought and as a challenge to squeamish readers. I read most of Sade once for a long reference article I wrote years ago ("Sade," in *European Writers: The Age of Reason and the Enlightenment*, ed. George Stade. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.), and I think one has to distinguish between the readable and supremely interesting (and deeply disturbing and often disgusting) works such as **Justine** and **Philosophy in the Bedroom** (this latter in my view his best work), the important but often stomach-churning **The 120 Days of Sodom**, which he is thought to have written while a prisoner in the Bastille and is of interest partly because of that, and the totally unreadable and in fact deranged longer novels such as **Juliette**, which give disgust a new dimension. But I don't think even in this latter work one can literalize things; the monstrous libertines, male and female, can only be read as fantastic and metaphorical. And yet as one reads, fascinated and totally repelled, one can't help but visualize to the point of nausea. For an unwatchable and truly disgusting cinematic version of **The 120 Days of Sodom** that makes this clear, that dramatizes the moral abyss Sade can invoke, see Pasolini's **Salò**, the most revolting and nightmarish movie I've ever seen. It literally gave me nightmares for a while after I sat through it at the NY City film festival years ago.

But one has to read Sade. He is, in small doses, essential.

Yours,

A

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 8:24 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade in Horkheimer & Adorno [was Sade]

A poses two questions about Sade's role in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*:

>1. Adorno & Horkheimer in *_Dialectic of Enlightenment_* make the argument
>that's been either implicit, or more recently, made explicit in this
>conversation: that Sade's philosophy takes the principles of Enlightenment
>to their logical conclusion. They don't, nonetheless, find this to be
>admirable, for reasons that related to Jim Chevallier's critique. Has
>anyone written a systematic response to the critique of Sade in *_Dialectic
>of Enlightenment_*?

I don't know of an extended discussion of this section of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, though (from some work I've been doing with Leo Lowenthal's papers) there are a few things which can be clarified

about their discussion. It was the second section of the book to be written, and seems to have been pretty much exclusively the work of Horkheimer, whose interest in Sade went back to the 1930s (I'm not sure that Adorno had much of an interest in Sade -- this was always Horkheimer's concern, not Adorno's). It was originally intended to be a chapter entitled "Moralism and Rigorism," but was turned into an "Excursus" after Adorno produced his discussion of the Odyssey. I would read Horkheimer's treatment of Sade somewhat more positively than Professor Vietto does: Sade (like Mandeville and Machiavelli -- two names which are generally linked with Sade in Horkheimer's discussions) had the great virtue, in Horkheimer's eyes, of not glossing over the violence inherent in modern social relations.

>2. Does anyone know when Sade was first read in the U.S.?

That's an interesting question and perhaps one of the Sade specialists on the list knows something about the circulation of manuscripts on this side of the Atlantic. Horkheimer seems to have brought his copies of Sade with him when he went into exile since there are extensive quotations in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (in other cases, Horkheimer seems to have quoted from memory and then had Lowenthal track down books in the Columbia library -- Horkheimer was writing the book with Adorno in California, Lowenthal was left in New York). There is one English Sade scholar who crossed Horkheimer and Adorno's path in the US: Geoffrey Gorer, the author of an early book on Sade that appeared in various editions under various titles. Adorno met Gorer while the two were working on Paul Lazarsfeld's radio research project in the late 1930s, and Adorno brought a copy of Gorer's book west with him when he joined Horkheimer in California to begin work on *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. I don't think the book had a great deal of influence on Horkheimer, though.

To pose some questions of my own:

Was Horkheimer's interest in Sade, which as I noted dates back to the early 1930s, unusual among German leftist academics? Did Sade figure in the works of other German academic Marxists during this period? In some of his early lectures on 18th century philosophy, Horkheimer tends to assimilate Sade into French materialism. Was that the usual reading?

A

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 8:36 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

> So far as I know too sadism doesn't exist in other species (unless you count
> a cat playing with a mouse, which I believe has nothing to do with sexual
> pleasure.)

When cats are on a farm, allowed to hunt according to their nature, they

only bat at prey that are too large to kill cleanly. By stunning a big rat, for example, the cat doesn't risk being bitten when it goes for the rat's throat. An indoor cat, which has usually never hunted anything larger than the occasional insect, usually suffers from an atrophy of these natural instincts, and mistakenly perceives the mouse as "large" prey. That's why cats "toy" with mice--they've been pampered, and their idleness has dulled their senses and their instincts, so that they mistakenly begin to treat trifling prey with deadly seriousness.

Interesting. I started this response as a cat-lover, but looking back over it, I think that perhaps I've also said something not entirely unrelated to the on-going thread that prompted it.

A

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Rictor Norton
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 9:09 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

De Sade spends a lot of time deconstructing the concept of "procreation", and exposes the fact that in Nature, behaviour within the category called "procreation" consists mainly of (a) non-procreative acts, and (b) anti-procreative acts. For example, Nature is profligate in the way she casts her seed about: millions of seeds die while only one fertilizes the egg, and innumerable eggs are produced every month that will never come to fruition but are simply discarded unused. The vast majority of sexual acts do not result in fertilization and are so frequent and overabundant that fertilization cannot really be said to be their aim. Lubricity, rather than procreation, seems to be the aim of the so-called passion to 'procreate'. "Semen has been produced to be expelled from the body, like any other secretion or excretion" (_Juliette_); that is, ejaculation is disguised as procreation in the sentimentalists' view of Nature. Observations of the predominance of non-procreation and anti-procreation in nature are used by De Sade to celebrate the natural superiority of masturbation and sodomy over conventional heterosexual intercourse. Secondly, much of the so-called mating season consists not of mating, but of battles in which a dominant male tries to ensure that all other males do not get an opportunity to procreate. There is no cooperation to ensure the survival of "the" species, simply conflict between different branches or families of that species, each fighting for the dominance of their corner. Further, Nature doesn't really care about the survival of any species. It is common for one species to systematically try to render another species extinct (if only by eating them all). Beyond this, earthquakes, floods, famines, conflagrations, plagues, are also common in Nature, which has no overall "purpose" to achieve. The major characteristics of Nature are not continuity and conservation, but change and destruction.

Rictor Norton, London

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 9:49 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

Two points re. Rictor's last message:

1) Most of Rictor's points, though perhaps unanswerable from an 18th-c. position, were answered conclusively by Darwin and the neo-Darwinians. Rictor is right when he suggests there's a tendency in the 18th c. to argue that procreation perpetuates the species, but the neo-Darwinians will argue, rightly, that it's not the species but the genes that are perpetuating themselves. In that sense, these Sadean points about procreation are of some historical interest, but aren't going to win any arguments today.

2) On the theme of the 18th-c. sentimentalists' view of Nature, the notion of Nature as chaos, battleground, senseless process of creation and destruction is expressed by the century's ultimate sentimentalist, Werther. Unlike Sade, though, Werther isn't exactly thrilled by the idea: Can we say of anything that it exists when all passes away, when time, with the speed of a storm, carries all things onward, -- and our transitory existence, hurried along by the torrent, is either swallowed up by the waves or dashed against the rocks? There is not a moment but preys upon you, -- and upon all around you, not a moment in which you do not yourself become a destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life thousands of poor insects: one step destroys the fabric of the industrious ant, and converts a little world into chaos. No: it is not the great and rare calamities of the world, the floods which sweep away whole villages, the earthquakes which swallow up our towns, that affect me. My heart is wasted by the thought of that destructive power which lies concealed in every part of universal nature. Nature has formed nothing that does not consume itself, and every object near it: so that, surrounded by earth and air, and all the active powers, I wander on my way with aching heart; and the universe is to me a fearful monster, for ever devouring its own offspring. (letter of 18 August)

[Expression of a typical romantic sensitivity (cf. Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Musset, etc...). But Sade is altogether different. It is the same destructive power of nature that is the occasion of his meditations, but whereas Romantics see destruction as the end of all things, Sade sees it as their BEGINNING.]

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 10:38 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade

I find this thread absolutely fascinating, and wish I had more time to answer every querry, but I would agree with Omer J. de Meyst that we are simply not ready to discuss libertinage at this time on the list, especially as relates to Sade. Sade's work is still too little known, approached with too many preconceptions, fears, and prejudices. Yet notwithstanding the scorn of some, or the irritating arrogance or ignorance of others, I still find the conversation fascinating, and religiously collect every single piece of it - would it only be for posterity, when I have passed* (like a football I hope)

and people come investigate our progress in understanding Sade to-day, in the history barely beginning of his discovery, progress, and final conquest of human intelligence.

There is that fascinating passage in Yukio Mishima's "Madame de Sade", when Renée exclaims : "This man [Sade], who has abandoned all human feelings, has shut the world of men behind irons bars, and goes walking around it, jingling the keys." (CHARLES E. TUTTLE CO.: PUBLISHERS, Tokyo. p. 104 - sorry, the book appears to be shouting there).

And such are things to-day. He is the keeper of the keys. What irony indeed, for all those showering scorn and spite on him to suddenly discover that they have ... all along been on the wrong side of the bars !

Norbert Sclipa

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 1:02 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade in Horkheimer & Adorno [was Sade]

I would like to respond to the aspect of Professor Schmidt's enquiry dealing with the reception of Sade among German intellectuals. There is the recent and detailed survey by Julia Bohnengel: "Sade in Deutschland. Eine Spurensuche im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert", St. Ingbert, Röhrig, 2003. The interesting treatise published by Eugen Dühren (Iwan Bloch) entitled "Neue Forschungen über den Marquis de Sade und seine Zeit. Mit besond. Berücksichtigung der Sexualphilosophie de Sade's aufgrund des neuentdeckten Manuskripts seines Hauptwerks ,Die 120 Tage von Sodom'", Berlin, 1904, is noteworthy and so is Otto Bauer's ,Geistesgeschichte' "Der Weg zum Sozialismus", Berlin, 1919.

A

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 1:39 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/21/2004 6:12:47 AM Pacific Daylight Time, rictor_norton@YAHOO.CO.UK writes: It is common for one species to systematically try to render another species extinct (if only by eating them all). Beyond this, earthquakes, floods, famines, conflagrations, plagues, are also common in Nature, which has no overall "purpose" to achieve. The major characteristics of Nature are not continuity and conservation, but change and destruction. Put it that way and a little whipping seems downright benign...

Sade as dancing Shiva?

[Good point, Jim. Also as a rejoinder to my "Lila" commentary. But you don't need a God to tell you which way nature dances.]

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 1:35 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/21/2004 5:40:06 AM Pacific Daylight Time, A writes:
their
idleness has dulled their senses and their instincts, so that they
mistakenly begin to treat trifling prey with deadly seriousness.

Interesting. I started this response as a cat-lover, but looking back
over it, I think that perhaps I've also said something not entirely
unrelated to the on-going thread that prompted it.
oh yes.

Could it be that sadism is a (possible) side effect of domestication?

[Or of culture, indeed. The only sadists I know are not characters in Sade's novels, but people around me, some of which are also considered as perfectly honorable by others !].

Jim Chevallier

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 2:36 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade in the U.S.

>> >2. Does anyone know when Sade was first read in the U.S.?
>>

Although, Olympia Press in Paris began publishing translations of Sade into English as early as the 1930s, these would not have been readily available. There were dribs and drabs of selections, bowdlerized versions, subscriber-only editions, and the less licentious works available throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It was Grove Press that really made Sade available to a wide English-speaking audience with the publication of *Justine*, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, *Juliette*, *The 120 Days of Sodom*, and other writings starting in 1965 (hardback editions were quickly followed by inexpensive paperbacks). These are still the only translations of the major works. Interestingly, Grove chose to introduce these volumes with statements on Sade by major French intellectuals: De Beauvoir, Klossowski, Blanchot, and Jean

Paulhan. This was, I believe, a way to show that Sade's works had already been deemed to have an interest other than prurient (thus getting around obscenity laws). In fact, many of these intellectuals had testified on behalf of Jean-Jacques Pauvert, who had been dragged into court on obscenity charges when he tried to publish the works of Sade in France.

Let me add that the relation of Sade's biography to his literary output has been a constant of his reception. Important--if not always nuanced--statements in this regard will be found in Paulhan's "Sade and his Accomplice," Andrea Dworkin's *Pornography*, and Roger Shattuck's *Forbidden Knowledge*. I note as well that some forty years ago Lester Crocker in his studies of eighteenth-century philosophy argued that Sade was the logical outgrowth of Enlightenment rationality. Crocker called this the "nihilist dissolution"--and like Horkheimer and Lacan, he made a connection between Kant's ethical rigorism and Sade's attacks on sentimentality.

Cheers,

A

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 4:19 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Perspective

A wrote : "Not being a Sadist (oh, my! I think my students might disagree!), I know little of Sade, other than his moral reputation, and am interested to know what makes Professor Sclippa distinguish what he would likely admit is a pretty sordid reputation from positive contributions he made, much in the way that some people will travel the globe to see a production of *The Ring Cycle*, but despise who Wagner was as a person. "

Sade's sordid reputation stems in great part from [a misreading of] his works : Yasusuke Oura made an outstanding presentation about this during the First World Congress on Sade in the USA (published in "Lire Sade", the proceedings from the Congress). We should keep in mind that what he actually "did" is practically nothing to raise an eyebrow about : it is being regularly done in any of our major sin cities every day for a few bucks, without anyone being pilloried for it. It was also pretty much standard for members of his social class at the times. As Simone de Beauvoir

put it : "A vrai dire, c'est un bien petit exploit que de fouetter, moyennant une rétribution convenue, quelques filles." ("Faut-il bruler Sade ?", p. 17). [In truth, it is rather meagre exploits to whip, for a agreed upon fee, a few prostitutes]. What Sade didn't care to do - and here we branch to the idea of Rictor Norton in a later message : that he was (at least in his eyes) being moral when acting these fantasies - was to hide, or care to hide... And Sade was not just anybody, he was the scion of a foremost family, tied to kinship, etc...

What has happened in his case, then, is a phenomenon of literary "contamination", if I may say. People read his books (badly), and concluded, as some people still do to-day, that since his characters (that is, FICTIONAL characters) acted in certain ways, that necessarily meant that, given the chance [as mentioned above by many] , he would act in the same way in "real life" (whatever that is). Hence his sulfurous reputation. Notice that pretty much the same thing happened to Choderlos de Laclos for writing "Liaisons" : a wellknown courtesane (i.e., lady for sale) is known to have asked his servants not to let him in when he visited. "I would be afraid to find myself alone in the company of such a man" ... hehehe

Cheers ,

Norbert

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Thu 10/21/2004 4:54 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Perspective

In a message dated 10/21/2004 1:23:56 PM Pacific Daylight Time, Sclippan@COFC.EDU writes:
We should keep in mind that what he actually "did" is practically nothing to raise an eyebrow about : it is being regularly done in any of our major sin cities every day for a few bucks, without anyone being pilloried for it.
Only if you edit his biography to exclude out and out kidnappings.

[And here we go again. I have read several of Sade's biographies and did not find record of "out and out kidnappings". Prof. Chevallier must have insights that the others of us are not privy to.]

Yes, unfortunately what he did is still done. Adults and children, male and female, are kidnapped for sexual purposes, often involving torture. One aging judge in New York, in giving a light sentence to a man who had kidnapped an Irish au pair and tortured her, said, "Well, it's not like she was killed."

We're not talking about consensual activity here, though Sade certainly had that as well. I know someone who is a submissive, quite happily 'collared' to their dominant partner. This disturbs me not at all.

An upper class man committing crimes against weaker, poorer people and being spared punishment because of his powerful relations (and their fear of scandal even when, as with his mother-in-law, they didn't like him) disturbs me. And it's not like similar things don't happen today.

It's very misleading to reduce Sade's behavior to 'libertinism' which suggests essentially consensual activities, however (by some people's measure) extreme. I'm sure some of what I've done (especially as a musician in his twenties) would have been considered quite shocking to many I know. I am not, in that sense, easily shocked.

Violence against weaker parties continues (despite all) to shock me. That's what Sade was guilty of. Those discussing his life, whatever they feel about his work, would do well to avoid reducing his behavior to indulging his natural impulses in some innocent optimistic way. He did so very much at the expense of, and against the will of, others - which is exactly the dividing line those of us who defend a whole range of other sexual liberties consider crucial.

Jim Chevallier

[“That’s what Sade was guilty of !” Oy veh ! But if you have not noticed, it is quite useless to try and discuss with people like Jim Chevallier. They have not read your author, know little about his life, yet they always will know better than you. Why ? because they project their fantasy, or phantasmagory (and I fear, a rather scary one) upon the reality at hand.]

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A

Sent: Fri 10/22/2004 9:04 AM

To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU

Subject: Re: Horkheimer and Mandeville and Machiavelli

There are passing references to Machiavelli and Mandeville (along with Hobbes) in Horkheimer's discussion of Sade in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (see pages 71 and 93 of Jephcott's new translation, which is a major improvement over the old translation) -- they are grouped with Sade and Nietzsche as the "somber writers of the bourgeoisie" who "spoke up for the egoism of the self" and "thereby recognized society as the destructive principle and denounced harmony before it was elevated to the official doctrine by the bearers of light." There is an extended discussion of Machiavelli in Horkheimer's short book from 1930 "*Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History*" (which has been translated in the collection *Between Philosophy and Social Science*. There are also a few references to Mandeville (along with Bayle and Spinoza) as "materialists."

My sense is that, in all of these discussions, Horkheimer was drawing on lectures he delivered for his 1927 survey course on modern philosophy at Frankfurt (the lecture notes have been published in Volume 9 of his *Gesammelte Schriften*), which include a fair amount on 18th century philosophy (there may be something on Mandeville in there as well). None of Horkheimer's discussions are particularly insightful, but they do suggest that Horkheimer had actually read a fair amount of 18th century philosophy, especially the philosophes, something which might not be evident to a reader of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where it is hard to tell whether Horkheimer had any familiarity with actual thinkers from the Enlightenment.

This is a query for James Schmidt or anyone else who might be able to answer it. I hadn't realized that Horkheimer had a particular interest in Mandeville or Machiavelli. Could you expand a bit on Horkheimer's writing on these figures? I don't remember those two

writers appearing in the Dialectic of Enlightenment.

Thanks,

A

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Bruce Merrill

Sent: Fri 10/22/2004 10:38 AM

To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU

Subject: Sade as a corrupted Modern

I'm not familiar with Sade's theory or any 18C criticism of this, but it is certainly the case that already in the 18C we find substantial criticism of his position (as summarized by Rictor Norton), as an instance of the degraded nature of the modern era. Assuming that Sade promotes a cynical, individualist, hedonic, reductive, instrumentalist, materialist interpretation of human nature and human congress, then Rousseau has already begun to criticize this doctrine in the second Discourse, & Emile. Rousseau has already made the point-- well instantiated in Sade's life?-- that the unbridled and obsessive pursuit of happiness.... makes us miserable. This is one paradox that Rousseau finds all around him.

[And also noted by Sade : « Le vrai secret, pour prolonger sa vie, est d'être sobre et tempérant ». (*Juliette*, Pléiade, p. 1121). ("The real secret, to prolong one's life, is to be sober and temperate").

And that

the individualist, hedonic (happiness-seeking), instrumentalist, combative attitudes found in Paris (which are raised into a kind of nightmare in de Sade's fiction?) were not manifestations of a timeless human condition, but were the result of our decline from a happier and simpler and less grasping era... into "commercial society." Hence Sade would be the epitome of someone who thinks they are free-- but in truth are only enslaved, degraded and ruined by their appetites. Wanking away in his jail cell.

[Unfortunately, at this point, we still have a confusion of fiction and reality. But what applies to the one does not necessarily apply to the other : this would perhaps be the first lesson in sadean hermeneutics. (The second one being that, as a matter of fact, the one can easily be the exact obverse of the other.)

Sade and La Mettrie (another exponent of hedonic, reductive, materialism), etc may think of themselves as "moderns," esp. because they depict themselves as fully secularized & clear-headed (they suppose) in relation to the backwardness of the institutionalized religion. It is a gratifying dualism. But also naive, and the diagnosis of this position as part of the corruption & pathology of modernity (to be sustained by gloomy Horkheimer) is already taking place.

[I wouldn't read Horkheimer to try understanding Sade... A little like reading a telephone directory to try reaching orgasm...]

Hence Rousseau (and Kant who takes off from him at this juncture) are already seeking a successful middle path, between the benighted conservatives and secular reductive hedonism of the modern world. The latter being just as benighted as the former.

A useful point of comparison is the 19C case of Max Stirner, who thought of himself as a ruthless clear-headed individualist, etc., but from Marx's standpoint, he was an expression of the pathology of the bourgeois world-view. Which is another way of looking at De Sade, and relevant to how Rousseau and Kant would have reacted to him, if he had appeared on their horizons.

Bruce Merrill

PS Methodological aside: Since texts do not materialize out of thin air, I submit that it is useful to understand their matrix. The case that Rousseau gave up his children is relevant to Emile. The case that Jefferson was a slave holder bears upon his theory-- even if his theory controverts his actions. I say this as an admirer of both. And so, by extension, Sade's life and writings are to be conjoined. To whatever degree this is possible. Systematic is better than deracinated, n'est-ce pas?

[A sincere post. I wish you would read Sade, and might then have a better understanding of him. Stirner is in many ways compatible, but also vastly different.]

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Rictor Norton
Sent: Fri 10/22/2004 11:12 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

De Sade defends (or, rather, celebrates) sadomasochism in several ways.

First, Nature at its most natural consists in the exercise of crime rather than the suppression of crime. Natural beings (e.g. animals untainted by civilisation) are cruelly indifferent to the fate of others, selfishly interested in their own pleasures, concerned to exercise absolute dominance over others, and always inflict pain and destruction and intimidation to achieve that power, and even inflict pain for their own pleasure. (People who hold to a sentimental view of nature were quite shocked by the episode in David Attenborough's *Life on Earth* which showed the Minky (sp?) whales tossing about and killing baby seals solely for the sake of their own pleasure.)

Second, and perhaps most frequently, De Sade argues simply that certain men and women have it in their nature to take pleasure in giving and receiving sexual pain. That is, it is natural behaviour for them, and they are right in acting in accordance with their nature: "in no case have you the right to be surprised or to reproach me, because I am acting in accordance with the way Nature designed me, am following the bent she imparted to me, and because, in a word, in forcing you to accede to my harsh and brutal lusts, they alone which are capable of leading me to

the uppermost pitch of pleasure, I act pursuant to the same principle of delicacy as the tepid swain who knows nought but the roses of a sentiment whereof I recognize only the thorns; for I, torturing you, rending you limb from limb, I am merely doing the one thing that is able to move me, just as he, sorrowfully encunting his mistress, does that which alone moves him agreeably; but he can have his effeminate delicacy, it's not for me." (_Juliette_). De Sade acknowledges that this passion is a "mania", but it is a natural one, and natural grounds are the only grounds on which natural passions can be judged.

Third, and most importantly, sadomasochism is the technique or tool for realigning Man with Nature. As De Sade explains in _Juliette_, it provides the "jolt" (I'm sorry, I can't at the moment determine exactly the French word which is translated as "jolt") which is strong enough to redirect Man from the false path of Civilisation into the authentic path of Nature. (If De Sade were to use a railroad metaphor, sadomasochism would be the electrical jolt that derails one from the false track sets one on the right track.) The sadistic libertine experiences the keenest, most intense, most poignant, pleasure through the creation of pain and, ultimately, terror in his victim. This literally "brutal" passion strips all humanity from both participants, the exerciser of absolute POWER as well as the victims reduced to abject POWERLESSNESS, who are thereby enabled to realise themselves as Creatures of Nature, which for De Sade is a Good Thing. In other words, sadomasochism is an instrument of revolution. Similarly, blasphemy is used to free oneself from the shackles of religion in exactly the same way that sadomasochism is used to liberate oneself from all anti-natural constraints. That is, though blasphemy does not occur among animal nature, it is nevertheless a justifiable technique used by libertines to reestablish a Natural order rather than the Christian order. Blasphemy and sadomasochism are very much tied together in De Sade's world, and I think that the transparent way he uses blasphemy helps us see how he similarly uses sadomasochism as a political tool, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is a tool of Enlightenment and self-realisation.

Rictor Norton

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Fri 10/22/2004 1:41 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade / Horkheimer / materialism

Dear list,

a few quick points.

1) To read "all" or "a great deal" of Sade produces an effect well-known to those who have done so, and described by Klossowski, Bataille et al. : a kind of boredom and inertia.

[Well noted by as many (Apollinaire, Lély, Delon), that he also produces the opposite effect : excitement and energy. He energizes me. So, this cannot be correct.]

It works very badly as pornography or stimulus.

[And that for a very good reason : it is not pornography or stimulus (but I have it from a friend that he stopped reading Sade because of the hard-ons it gave him...)]

The example of Pasolini's film (which is often critiqued as a grafting of Fascism onto Sade) is eloquent in this regard : it may be many things, but hardly pleasurable. - If one reads a contemporary of Sade's like Retif de la Bretonne, there one has commercially produced 'erotica'/porn'; not without interest either, of course, but without the peculiarly monomaniacal, hubristic, and formally experimental character of Sade.

2) One does not need to be 'defending' Sade to point out that his 'life practice', during the fairly short period of freedom he had, is not unusual, not least for an aristocrat of the time. It's a sad truth and does not make the existence of power relations any better. However, the point is that he depicted such things at length in his works, precisely as the 'doings' of figures termed "libertines", who are primarily in positions of social authority. The "Marxist" reading of all this obviously took the road of claiming Sade as a critic of authoritarianism rather than an apologetist thereof.

[Or the opposite (Sartre) : Sade as a decadent writer.]

(In passing, I note that it's interesting to look at Foucault, who accepted point [1] above while rejecting [2] ; he assimilates Sade to a disciplinary model of bodies, and little more.)

[Should you read Spanish, I will refer you to the excellent article by Alberto Pinzon-Leon on Foucault and Sade, on Congrès Sade : <http://www.cofc.edu/desade/papers/pinzon01.pdf> .]

3) I think, in response to J. Schmidt, that there is a strong "libertaire" tradition in reading him, in which Apollinaire fits nicely. "Libertaire" in the anarchistic sense. I vaguely recall that the works of Eugen Duehren were popular in this kind of community. The usage of Sade in a revolutionary narrative of course reaches a kind of crux in '68' (the liberation of desire), perpetuating the Surrealist reading of him. I'm not sure where Lynn Hunt's recent book on the Family Romance of the French Revolution, which has discussion of Sade, fits in this. - I would imagine that the biographical interconnections of the Frankfurt School in Parisian exile and Bataille's 'College de sociologie', in the 30s, are relevant here.

4) As far as the assimilation to 18th-c. French materialism, it's common, of course, usually to confirm the bad opinion of the former. La Mettrie, as Lucia Pulino pointed out, is usually described as a forerunner of Sade in non-complimentary terms. And all he did wrong in his personal life is die from disorders pursuant to overeating. The funny anecdotal element is that Sade himself of course tried to create this filiation/lineage ; there is a small, and quite good philosophical poem by him - definitely on Voltaire's level at least, if Andrew Brown has read it I wonder if he agrees - entitled "La Verite", to which he added the subtitle "Piece trouvee parmi les papiers de La Mettrie"; that is, he wanted it to be attributed to La Mettrie.

5) The Dialectic of Enlightenment initiated a tradition of saying that Sade is a 'truth' of the Enlightenment, again in non-praiseworthy terms. One can spin it differently and say: his radical naturalism (beautifully summarized here by Rictor Norton) is indeed the ultimate consequence of trends that go back a long ways. It's thus no surprise that Epicurus / Epicureanism, or 'Spinoza / Spinozism' (see Jonathan Israel's <Radical Enlightenment>, are so often criticized in moral terms. The person who made this most explicit, without the posturing found either in 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' or in Lacan's essay from the 60s "Kant avec Sade", is Lester Crocker, the Diderot scholar. I think it's in his 'Age of Crisis'. Crocker practices intellectual history the way we're now trying not to, and says: Diderot is an immoralist who can't face himself or the truth of his ideas; Sade takes the immoralism to the conclusion.

I'm not sure if this helps anything, but regards anyhow

A

[A very interesting post, and indeed (point missed by misreaders) : Sade takes immoralism to its logical conclusion : moralism.]

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Sat 10/23/2004 2:04 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade

" Blasphemy and sadomasochism are very much tied together in De Sade's world, and I think that the transparent way he uses blasphemy helps us see how he similarly uses sadomasochism as a political tool, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is a tool of Enlightenment and self-realisation." Rictor Norton.

And

" In a 1951 essay, "Must We Burn Sade," Simone de Beauvoir identifies Sade as a forerunner of Freud with an intuitive grasp of the nature of the human heart:

"It is remarkable, for example, that in 1795 Sade wrote: 'Sexual pleasure is, I agree, a passion to which all others are subordinate but in which they all unite.' Not only does Sade, in the first part of this text, anticipate what has been called the 'pansexuality' of Freud, but also he makes eroticism the mainspring of human behavior. In addition, he asserts...that sexuality is charged with a significance that goes beyond it. Libido is everywhere, and it is always far more than itself. Sade certainly anticipated this great truth. He knew that the 'perversions' that are vulgarly regarded as moral monstrosities or physiological defects actually envelop what would now be called an intentionality. He understood, too, that our tastes are motivated not by the intrinsic qualities of the object but by the latter's relationship with the subject. In a passage in *La Nouvelle Justine* he tries to explain coprophilia. His reply is faltering, but clumsily using the notion of imagination, he points out that the truth of a thing lies not in what it is but in

the meaning it has taken on for us in the course of our individual experience. Intuitions such as these allow us to hail Sade as a precursor of psychoanalysis." "

http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/famous/sade/epilogue_7.html?sect=13

Sade is, literally and in every sense, the INVERTED world of the Law, the universe of Desire that Freud (partially) re-discovered latter. As Lacan points out in "Kant avec Sade" : "... la loi et le désir refoulé sont une seule et même chose, c'est même ce que Freud a découvert." ["... law and repressed desire are one and the same thing, it is even what Freud discovered.] (Ecrits, Seuil, 1966, p. 782). Stangely enough, Lacan began his paper by negating that there could be any connection between Sade and Freud (!), when the whole of Sade's works is nothing but the revealed universe of repressed desires. Freud's, and his faithful disciple Lacan's error, and in my opinion more than an error - a fatal flaw, is to have tried in turn to find a new set of laws in that inverted universe, where I believe there are none. Desire is desire, quite simply. [**But whatever the case might be,**] Sade's works operate as a tool of Enlightenment by freeing us from the age-old curse of guilt visited upon us by generations of judeo-christian tradition and institutions. He does so, [**simply**], by showing us that desire, every desire,* is Natural, and that is one of the major contributions of his works.

Norbert Sclippa

Charleston, S.C.

[* Desire, or affects.]

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier
Sent: Sat 10/23/2004 2:28 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade

In a message dated 10/23/2004 11:08:00 AM Pacific Daylight Time, SclippaN@COFC.EDU writes:
Desire is desire, quite simply, and it is in this sense that Sade's works operates as a tool of Enlightenment : Sade free's us from the age-old curse of guilt visited upon us by generations of judeo-christian traditions and institutions. He does so by showing us that desire, every desire, is Natural, and that is one of the major contributions of his works.

This is the reasoning I find so maddening in all these defenses of Sade - the idea that the most violent, abusive incarnation of human desire is somehow the most 'liberated'. It reminds me of porn stars out here who say that they're not 'hypocrites' because they just do what other people don't admit to.

The fact is, lots of very sexually liberated people don't want to have sex on camera, and lots of them don't want to experience or inflict pain. I've known a wide range of people living a wide range of sex lives, well beyond any Judeo-Christian strictures, and sometimes well beyond what I personally consider healthy. Very few of them seem to have found either sadism or masochism very interesting.

What's equally disturbing about it of course is the fact that it confirms the worst fantasies of people - some of them currently running repressive governments - about where 'liberty' leads.

S&M and/or B&D are options for some people in a sexually liberated society. Even when consensual, they are hardly emblematic of sexual liberty in general. And even in our era, numerous other people - from the glazier Menetra to Voltaire - lived guilt-free sex lives that, if not untouched by violence, certainly did not center around that or domination of others.

Jim Chevallier

[But again... Anyways... I mean, I agree with this, but Chevallier is not talking about Sade.]

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Sat 10/23/2004 5:22 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade

"This is the reasoning I find so maddening in all these defenses of Sade - the idea that the most violent, abusive incarnation of human desire is somehow the most 'liberated'. It reminds me of porn stars out here who say that they're not 'hypocrites' because they just do what other people don't admit to."

"On n'est point criminel pour faire la peinture

Des bizarres penchants qu'inspire la nature", writes Sade. (This is the epigraph to "Histoire de Juliette"). ["One is not a criminal for depicting those weird inclinations inspired by nature."]

And we find in this depiction all the items you mention. This is Sade's project : depicting, not prozeliting. The fact that he shows us the Naturalness of desire does not mean that we must follow up on it. It only shows that there is a chiasm between inner and outer worlds (society) where one is [or can be] the REVERSE image of the other [as in a mirror what is right becomes left, and vice-versa]. (like a tree : our inner life would be the roots, and our social life, the branches and leaves = world of desire inside, world of the laws outside. They are not the same). What Sade shows us is that BOTH are necessary [to produce] a complete [...] individual : [both] the total inner freedom yielded by imagination and desire AND the world of laws [are necessary] - one cannot live without roots any more than without leaves and branches. I will take as proof of this the Statutes of the Society of the Friends of Crime, which establish that members of the society shall in no way try to disturb the existing order (article 43). One could also see the locus of sadean action (the castle, dungeons, inner, closed

spaces) as [apt metaphors] of this inner world, separate, but not cut-off from the outside, the castle of Silling being a prime exemple of it (it is entirely "sealed" indeed)... Yet of course, some will object to this that other characters are apologetic of just the opposite : violence, destruction, chaos, etc..., but OF COURSE that they must be, since they would loose all [their] credibility in propounding virtues of the "other" world : [tree roots exposed to the air dry up and die. Leaves buried in the ground will rot.]

Vale,

Norbert Sclippa

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Mon 10/25/2004 7:41 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade, Derrida and No Exit (wch could add Sartre, if you want)

"once an underlying basis for order and morality has been displaced, what's left but to yield to impulse and excess?"

[But] Sade's work is highly moral.

By deconstructing fiction, Sade shows us what morality ought to be : not a blind idiotism, but rather, [a] clear knowledge - [which] is why his heroes "yield to impulse and excess".

The role of fiction as we know it, still to-day as in the 18th century, is precisely to serve as "an underlying basis for order and morality" [[N.B. -] it is also the role of culture at large : a policing role.] Deconstructing that order and [the] morality (ethics and esthetics) [underpinning it] is also the first step towards explaining it, and therefore philosophy.

["Moi je détruis, je simplifie." (The Dying Man to the Priest). "I, I destroy, I simplify."]

Norbert Sclippa

From: VZW Smac
Sent: Wed 10/27/2004 10:34 AM
To: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: Sade agree on publishing

I hope there will be more than the poor exposés we have had on the web

Omer J. De Meyst
vzw SMAC
The Sens of the Nonsens

Ps: The publishing of the mails will certainly not surprise the world!!!

[This was posted after I mentioned that I was thinking about publishing the discussion.]

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Rictor Norton
Sent: Fri 10/29/2004 6:10 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade as a corrupted Modern

Bruce Merrill writes: "Rousseau has already made the point-- well instantiated in Sade's life?-- that the unbridled and obsessive pursuit of happiness.... makes us miserable."

On the contrary, this is not instantiated in Sade's life. De Sade was imprisoned for most of his adult life, with pitifully few opportunities to pursue happiness, and whatever misery he experienced was directly linked to his punishment rather than his obsessions.

Bruce Merrill goes on: "Sade would be the epitome of someone who thinks they are free -- but in truth are only enslaved, degraded and ruined by their appetites. Wanking away in his jail cell."

But in fact, De Sade was enslaved and ruined by society's response to his appetites, not by his appetites in themselves. Incidentally, I am rather surprised that in the 21st century it can still be suggested that masturbation is a degrading sexual act, or that it can still be characterised as being obsessive or a poor compensation or last resort. Unlike the anti-Onanists of the early 18th century and then the 19th century, De Sade was one of the first persons to argue that masturbation was wholly natural, and a valuable pleasure in and of itself. I had thought that most of the modern medical profession had come round to De Sade's clear-headed view that masturbation was not pathological.

Charles Wolfe suggests that "To read "all" or "a great deal" of Sade produces an effect well-known to those who have done so, and described by Klossowski, Bataille et al.: a kind of boredom and inertia. It works very badly as pornography or stimulus."

On the contrary, I don't think this is the universal experience of readers of De Sade. I suspect this is a trope of torpor used by the high-minded to dismiss the power of pornography. Most users of pornography require the repetition of unvarying images, often unremittingly precise and fetishistic. The more often a reader's very particular taste is detailed, the more satisfying it is to him (or, sometimes, her), however boring or ludicrous it may appear to someone with a different taste. It is of course embarrassing to publicly argue that an obscene work is stimulating, so the

people who say it is boring will usually win, hands down. I think that this trope of boredom also draws upon the fairly common experience of using pornography of forbidden sexuality, in that once the moment of satisfaction passes, a feeling of self-disgust ensues. However, the overcoming of disgust is the pleasure of the libertine.

In terms of sexual philosophy, I find De Sade's works intellectually exhilarating -- even after reading his complete works, albeit mostly in English translation, at least twice, and the shorter works and *Justine* four or five times. Every time he slaughters a sacred cow, I get a rush of joy. I think his use of the technique of Socratic dialogue is superb, and I don't know how readers can fail to engage with it. His *Dialogue Between a Priest and a Dying Man* and some of the shorter works (and perhaps non-obscene excerpts from *Justine*) could well be discussed in university classes without fear of being accused of promoting pornography, and are sure to promote lively class discussion and debate. Rousseau, in contrast, is so much humbug.

PS: Ellen Moody notes that Francine de Plessix Gray's book *At Home with the Marquis de Sade* (which I haven't read) relies too heavily on Freudianism. So does Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman* (1979), even though she acknowledges that Freud's theories are "poetic truths" but false psychology. Mostly, however, Carter relies on Jungian theories (which is more satisfying for De Sade, since he deals with Culture more than with the Family). On the whole, Carter's extended essay is an elegant and illuminating critique of De Sade's pornography and philosophy, particularly in relation to the sexual liberation of women. Carter's own fiction embodies the sadomasochistic imagination (yes, I've read her complete works as well!), so her often-celebratory analysis of De Sade is particularly interesting as coming from the same school.

Rictor Norton, London

From: Sclipa, Norbert
Sent: Fri 10/29/2004 9:57 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclipa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade as a corrupted Modern

I was not intent on pursuing this thread about Sade, but if there is help indeed, it still might go on for a while.

The reason I was not intent on pursuing this thread is that Sade's philosophy is something so simple that for many it becomes impossible to understand.

... and that is of course

it's major difficulty !!!...

Yet I will limit my comments to one remark.

About his life - much has been said about his deviances (which were not, by the way, the reason for his imprisonments. He was jailed, like many sons of the well-to-do, on orders from his family - Mme de Montreuil in this case - who didn't pardon him for having seduced her second daughter, and spending the family's money much too liberally). However nothing was said about some very revealing acts, in my opinion. When Sade was secretary of the Section des Piques during the Revolution, he had a chance to avenge himself on the hatred Mme de Merteuil. You would think that such a "creep" would have taken advantage of this. But he didn't. Not only did he not, but he SAVED the Montreuil. Yes, he saved them when it would have been perfectly LEGAL and also very much laudatory to send them to the "national razor". And not only that, but he then got himself in trouble for refusing to validate what he calls in his correspondence "horrors", that the sans-culottes were planning to carry out. This led to his imprisonment, and possible execution - his having been saved only by a twist of fate : he couldn't be found the day of the execution in the many jails of the Committee of Public Safety, and the next day, Robespierre fell. (And how is that for a splendid play on Sade ?...).

Yet no one has mentioned this. That he whipped a prostitute, and took advantage and/or somewhat brutalized a woman has become of the utmost significance, worth our undying moral outrage, and eternal condemnation. Yet he never KILLED anyone (like Robespierre or Saint-Just for instance, who to this day have many faithful admirers - we seem to have much less tolerance with minor sexual deviance than we do for plain murderers !). Sade saved people when he had a chance to "hurt them" - like the sadist in power - and got himself in trouble for it. Let us remember this when expressing moral outrage about his life - what would we have done in his place... And incidentally, this also proves a major point of his philosophy : that if crime should become the norm, then people will become offended by virtue.

Norbert Sclippa

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of A
Sent: Sat 10/30/2004 11:53 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: PS - Sade/De Sade

If we're to trust Lacan, Sade unveils the truth of Kant's ethical rigorism - the sadism of the Law, kind of superego that sadistically tortures the masochist ego. There's some kind of parallel between Kant's

extreme moralism and Sade's extreme immoralism, in the way that both rule out all kind of sensibility or human concern.

<http://aejcpp.free.fr/lacan/1962-09-00.htm>

About caps or no, Lacan is, as usual, a real pervert :

"You can write Sade however you like: either with a capital S, to render homage to the poor idiot who gave us interminable writings on that subject -- or with a lower-case s, for in the final analysis that's morality's own way of being agreeable (...) -- or, still better, you can write it as çade, since one must, after all, say that morality ends at the level of the id ("ça" in French), which doesn't go very far. Stated differently, the point is that love is impossible and the sexual relationship drops into the abyss of nonsense, which doesn't in any way diminish the interest we must have in the Other." (S XX, 87)"

<http://www.apres-coup.org/archives/articles/rabate.html>

I hate Lacan : the correct spelling should be "Marquis de çade"...

Actually, Sade doesn't write that love is impossible, but rather that it's a stupid feeling, restricting sexual pleasure : "O filles voluptueuses, livrez-nous donc vos corps tant que vous le pourrez ! F..., divertissez-vous, voilà l'essentiel ; mais fuyez avec soin l'amour (...) Je le répète, amusez-vous ; mais n'aimez point" : famous part where Augustin appears, who is not Saint Augustine...). However, Sartre grounds his theory of the impossibility of love on Sade (L'Être et le néant, III, 3, 1).

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Jim Chevallier

Sent: Mon 11/1/2004 4:24 PM

To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU

Subject: Re: Can we shut up, already?

In a message dated 11/1/2004 10:42:52 AM Pacific Standard Time, Roy@GWM.SC.EDU writes:

This could go on forever, this academic (in the sense of useless) debate about the value of Sadean philosophy.

While I don't much enjoy sterile debate for its own sake (one reason I hate to see politics creep on to this list), I'd like to point out that the current exchanges are about 180 degrees away from the blanket "Sade is the greatest - read Sade" statements that started all this. Reasoned statements are being made as to why educated scholars consider Sade important. As an amateur researcher, I have no trouble confessing that I find this informative and educational. But I suspect even many more credentialed lurkers are getting new insights into why - agree or disagree - very serious scholars take Sade seriously. In that sense, the debate may be inconclusive (few minds will be changed) but it is certainly not, in its current state, useless. Isn't it time to talk about

something else important to the study of the eighteenth century?

Hey, I *tried* to talk about outhouses and latrines... :)

I'm sure there is a lot we could talk about. The new George Washington bio, for instance, which was just covered on morning TV. Or the new bio of Audubon, born in our century:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/31/books/review/31ROSENL.html>

One might have thought that the subject of convents would lead to all manner of contributions. But it's already fizzled.

In a word: maybe there is something else more important to talk about. But nobody seems to be doing it, if so.

Jim Chevallier

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Mon 11/1/2004 8:19 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Can we shut up, already?

"Tout ce qui se fait dans le corps de l'homme et de tout animal est aussi mécanique que ce qui se fait dans une montre." [All that takes place in the body of man and every animal is as mechanical as what happens in a watch.] Leibniz (cited in La Mettrie's "L'homme-Machine", Folio/Denoël 1981, p. 50)

"Toutes les choses qui sont artificielles sont avec cela naturelles. Car, par exemple, lorsqu'une montre marque les heures par le moyen des roues dont elle est faite, cela ne lui est pas moins naturel qu'il l'est à un arbre de produire des fruits." ["All artificial things are altogether natural. Since, for instance, when a clock marks the hours by the means of the wheels it is made of, that is no less natural for it than it is for a tree to produce fruits."] Descartes. (Principes de philosophie, l. IV, 203)

Sade has done none other than to extend these paradigms to the realm of the mind and productive imagination : it is no less natural for the mind to produce thoughts, than for a tree to produce fruits, [etc...] . Why would expressing this thought not be philosophy ?

NS

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Wed 11/3/2004 8:06 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade and Misogyny

Le 3 nov. 04, à 13:29, A a écrit :

- > In pornography the character or point
- > of view that wins out is dependent on the individual
- > characteristics -- or physical and cunning prowess
- > -- of the active sexual predator. Thus there is a
- > continual overthrowing of the norms of our society
- > and exultation for someone who can identify with
- > the central character or point of view.

In eighteenth-century Europe, pornographic and radical works were often printed by the same printers and distributed by the same means, and were indeed grouped and sold together under the portmanteau heading of "livres philosophiques".

(Voltaire's number one printer, Gabriel Grasset -- number one from 1764 -- printed both, and was finally nailed for his pornographic ventures after managing to keep one step ahead of the authorities during the 15 years he spent distributing the poisons brewed in Ferney.)

It is accepted that pornography was used in France before the Revolution as a means of expressing political dissent and of encouraging precisely the overthrow of norms, both civil and ecclesiastical. Principal ostensible targets were licentious priests and the actors in the real and imaginary antics at Versailles, the standing of both being undermined by a relentless exposure of their sexual weaknesses and dependency.

Sade probably needs to be seen in this context, rather than against an Anglo-Saxon background where pornography appears to have taken a different form and to have served a different purpose, if "Fanny Hill" is a reliable guide. Was pornography mainly about sex in England? Or is the picture more complex? Did the lewd political cartoon serve a purpose similar to that of the French pornographic pamphlet?

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Rictor Norton
Sent: Thu 11/4/2004 10:42 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

I don't agree with A that Sade's novels can be labelled as simply "cruel misogyny". Sade's inversion of conventional moral values is so extreme, that the term "misogyny" becomes almost meaningless in this context. But aside from this, there is a very real sense in which Sade was a feminist, albeit a very extreme one, who advocated burning more than just the bras. Sade knew that women were imprisoned by the construct of Woman, and that the central feature of this construct was the identification of woman with her reproductive biology. Sade explicitly argued that the New Woman could be liberated only by totally rejecting the view that reproduction was essential to her nature, by rejecting the view that she existed only in relation to man, by affirming the view that she was a sexual subject (rather than sex object) who could enjoy sex entirely for her own sake. Feminists since the 18th century have recognized that the main impediment to the freedom of women are the constructs of woman as wife and mother and child -- all of which reduce Woman to the biological principle of reproduction. Sade aims to free women by systematically demystifying these constructs of Woman.

This is why, in *Philosophy in the Boudoir (or Bedroom)*, Eugenie rapes her mother with a huge dildo, gets a syphilitic to infect her mother, and then sews up her mother's genital orifice with needle and thread. These are not the personal sexual fantasies of a misogynist, but a set of images quite systematically employed to support an argument about personal and sexual liberation. Here are some perceptions from Angela Carter's analysis of this theme in the novel (in *The Sadeian Woman*): "Eugenie must effectively annihilate her mother's sexuality before she herself can be free. ... Eugenie, unlike Oedipus, acts in the knowledge she is committing a crime. Her crime is the culmination of her search for knowledge. She fucks her mother out of vengeance and so finds herself in the position of a female Oedipus but she is not blinded, she is enlightened. ... The basis of the plot is Eugenie's relation to her mother and her final ambivalent triumph over the female principle as typified in the reproductive function. ... Sexual hostility is therefore the inevitable relation between mother and daughter, as long as the mother regards

sexuality as synonymous with reproduction and hence sanctified activity in which only the Holy Mother, herself, may indulge. ... [The Mother in Sade's novels] is a shrine of reproductive sexuality. She is herself the embodiment of the repression of sexual pleasure. ... Mother is in herself a concrete denial of the idea of sexual pleasure since her sexuality has been placed at the service of reproductive function alone. ... Vengeance. Transgression. Glory! Engenie offers her arse to her mother and invites her to kiss it. Her seizure of her own autonomy necessitates the rupture of all the taboos she can apprehend. ... To deny the bankrupt enchantments of the womb is to pare a good deal of the fraudulent magic from the idea of women, to reveal us as we are, simple creatures of flesh and blood whose expectations deviate from biological necessity sufficiently to force us to abandon, perhaps regretfully, perhaps with relief, the deluded priestesshood of a holy reproductive function."

Well, we can argue about Carter's analysis, but she at least is one feminist who believes that it would be wrong to interpret Sade merely as hating or fearing woman's sexuality: it is specifically the sexuality constructed FOR women that Sade hates.

Rictor Norton, London

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Thu 11/4/2004 1:02 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

Le 4 nov. 04, à 17:07, Allen Michie a écrit :

> Sounds about like this to me: "Bush endorses policies that kill
> thousands in war, tortures prisoners, reduces health care while it
> increases unemployment, and energizes his voters by filling them with
> hatred and fear. These are not the personal power fantasies of a
> proto-fascist, but a set of policies quite systematically employed to
> support an argument about compassionate Christianity and 'moral
> values.'"
>
> It's all double-speak. Maybe double-speak about double-speak cancels
> itself out in Sade's case, but I suspect there are simpler ways to get
> there. If infecting yourself with syphilis and sewing shut your
> genitals gains someone their sexual liberation, great for them, but
> this ain't gonna win you any votes in the Heartland (so to speak).

This could well be why readings from Sade feature so rarely in election programmes.

But Sade is not saying that the needle and thread constitute the path to sexual liberation, he is simply pointing, with considerable (or even excessive) emphasis, at what it is that makes us tick. And the parallel presented above by Allen Michie is at once an argument for and against taking an interest in what Sade himself got up to: for, in that it indicates the enormous gulf in damage between what he did and what

others have done since with apparent legitimacy; and against, because whenever Sade talks about needles we see him in our mind's eye threading one and rise from our seats wagging a finger.

AB

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 11/4/2004 3:16 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

Sade and women :

"The Marquis de Sade, that freest of spirits to have lived so far, had ideas of his own on the subject of woman : he wanted her to be as free as man. Out of these ideas - they will come through some day - grew a dual novel, Justine and Juliette. It was not by accident the Marquis chose heroines and not heroes. Justine is the woman as she has been hitherto, enslaved, miserable and less than human; her opposite, Juliette represents the woman whose advent he anticipated, a figure of whom minds have as yet no conception, who is arising out of mankind, who shall have wings, and who shall renew the world." - Guillaume Apollinaire as quoted in the 1949 Pauvert edition of Sade's works.

Norbert Sclippa

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 11/4/2004 3:56 PM
To: Allen Michie; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

The works of Sade are not a handbook on perversions. They leave one free to behave as one wishes : turn to S&M, perhaps, but just as well, embrace eastern mysticism, or become a monk/nun. The fact that his characters, precisely because they are characters and can afford to do so, practice and advocate crime, does not mean that we have to behave like them. This would be worse than the example of the man telling you to go jump off a bridge. Will you, because you are told so ? And here, in addition, it would be following the injunction of a fictional character !!!... Sade does mention somewhere that his books are absolutely harmless for those who can read, and that if anyone would commit a crime out of reading them, it is very likely that any book could have had a similar effect on that person. And history proves this true : never were so many people sadistically tortured, skewed, boiled, hanged, quartered, minced, fried, slaughtered wholesale, maimed, de-brained (figuratively and literally),etc...

NOT as the result of reading Sade's, but of two or three very famous books (that I see no one condemning on this list) : the old and new testaments, and the Koran. No one claims that Sade's books have been the occasion of atrocities, here of there, and even though they might have been found in the belongings of some madmen together with other books (the bible too sometimes). So that my point is, if we should ban a book for being REALLY dangerous (which I do not recommend), ban the bible, and the Koran. These are the ones that have historically been breeding fanaticism, madness, slaughter and crime - THEY STILL DO.

Norbert Sclippa

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 11/4/2004 10:41 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Spam: Re: Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

A :

"Civilized people know the dangers of anarchy and of each person pleasing only himself."

But that is precisely why civilized people have lots of fun reading Sade.

This type of argument was all along levelled at a certain type of materialists yet by another type of materialists : Diderot and d'Holbach accused La Mettrie of the same crime (heralding the ruin of society) - and La Mettrie is of the same school as Sade : that not of an "anti-social" materialism, but simply of a naturalistic one.

Yet isn't it ironic that the first road, progressive, leads to Marxism, while the second, simply to philosophy ?...

"Il n'y aurait individualisme au sens immédiat que si la société accédait chez La Mettrie au statut de réalité universelle, alors qu'elle est définie par une simple *absence*. ["There would be individualism, in the immediate sense of the term, only if society achieved in La Mettrie a universal reality, whereas it is defined (in it) simply by its *absence*"]. (emphasis by the author : P-L Assoun, "La Mettrie/L'Homme Machine, Folio/Gallinard, 1981, p.91)

Sade's discourse, like La Mettrie's, is not about society, but about the self - the old Greek ΓΝΟΣΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ, Kant's *sapere aude*...

NS

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Fri 11/5/2004 1:21 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Rép : Sade: Misogynist or Feminist?

In a message dated 04/11/2004 12:24:27 GMT Standard Time,
A writes:

- > In response to Andrew Brown and Charles Wallace,
- >
- > I think you are avoiding the actual question.
- > If dissent is misogynous, is that okay?
- > When you adduce nationalism, you change
- > the terms I put forward. The misogyny I'm
- > pointing to occurs across cultural boundaries.

Not for the first time I see traces of a message that never made it as far as Ferney...

The French eighteenth-century pornography I was talking about is not misogynous, rather the opposite, and shows power (usually in clerical guise) exploiting innocence or desire. The intention is to undermine that power, denouncing exploitation. I contrasted it with "Fanny Hill", which seems to me to have little or no political agenda. Both could be contrasted with the sort of pornography we are now offered twenty times a day, but I am not convinced that this is specifically misogynous either: it looks to me more like the result of a generalised contempt for actor and consumer alike and as such differs little from many of the other commercial products currently available for purchase.

Are the writings of Sade misogynous? That they represent it is clear; that they advocate it not in the least evident; that they have encouraged it entirely possible.

Norbert Sclipa says:

- > No one claims that Sade's books have been the occasion of atrocities...

I should be surprised if this were true. We know little of the reading habits of those who torture and kill others, except perhaps in the very rare cases when they end up in court, and it is at least possible, and probably probable, that a reading (mis-reading?) of Sade has preceded the commission of acts of sexual and physical violence. Many would say that this argues in favour of less Sade. Having been brought up in a relatively Sade-free society, the England of the 1950s, I consider that the opposite approach is likely to be more fruitful. Many children are still raised on a fearful mish-mash of fantasy and falsehood and enter into sexual maturity with little or no understanding of what it is all about. Forewarned is, at least to some extent, forearmed.

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Fri 11/5/2004 1:41 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: Sade Misogynist

Le 5 nov. 04, à 15:01, A a écrit :

> I have to say to Andrew Brown, by-the-bye, that I do
> not agree that women are naturally in love with pain,
> naturally love to be beaten and humiliated, and that
> this is a fundamental element in men's relationship
> to women. That is the implication of his posting.

If we are talking about the same post (there is a problem of uncited sources here, in A's reluctance to use the clumsy cut-and-paste form of reply) I am at a loss to read it in the same way as A. But then we clearly don't read Sade in the same way either. The crux of the matter seems to lie in A's suggestion that Sade invites the reader "to take pleasure in" the acts he describes. He issues no such invitation, but draws aside a curtain that is usually closed. My contention is that it should not be closed, but kept resolutely open, and that it is only by looking our devils in the eye that we can come to terms with them.

Domination and submission are indeed fundamental elements in relations between men and women, as between men and men and women and women, but to recognise this fact does not imply agreement or acceptance of that state of affairs, still less that one sex or another does or should naturally take pleasure in their own pain and humiliation or that of their partner. Encore un effort, A!

AB

From: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion on behalf of Andrew Brown
Sent: Sat 11/6/2004 12:26 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: Re: "America...a product of Enlightenment values"?

Le 6 nov. 04, à 17:37, A a écrit :

> I hope here is an area where Andrew Brown and I find common ground.

I think that the only area in which we have difficulty is Sade, and he is known for being a trouble-maker. [...[Is this coming from a Voltairian ?...](#)] I even enjoy Jane Austen on a quiet day, not to mention Trollope.

There has been, I think, no mention of Margaret Thatcher. I had no great affection for British society before her long term of office began, but even less after it had ended. Many parallels strike me between her administration and that now in place in the States, and I'm afraid that this is on the whole not a happy thought.

But when times are hard it can help to consider that things could be very much worse. Steve Ballmer could have run, and been elected. Those

who have not seen the monkey dance (like myself until very recently)
can find it at <http://www.tarmo.fi/arc/monkeydance.mpeg>

It should be required viewing for anyone with doubts about Darwin.

AB

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Sun 11/7/2004 9:30 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Happiness vs Pleasure

A :

"A fruitful tangent might for discussion might lie in the eighteenth century distinction between "happiness" and "pleasure." As Ann Radcliffe puts it in *_A Sicilian Romance_*, "Happiness has this essential difference from what is commonly called pleasure, that virtue forms its basis, and virtue [is] the offspring of reason." Might it be that this alignment of happiness with reason, in contradistinction to pleasure, runs through Augustan and Enlightenment thinking, and that certain emergent cultural formations, perhaps including both sensibility and Sade, exhibit the risks of a culture that is losing track of that distinction?"

I would argue that Sade is not part of a culture that is losing track of this distinction. Sade's culture is that of libertinage, which he brings to completion in his works.

Libertinage, which was the true current of thought of the 17th-century with writers such as Bayle, Cyrano de Bergerac, La Fontaine, Molière, Théophile de Viau, etc... (see René Pintard's book about libertinage in the 17th-century), was a movement aiming at separating morals from religion to make it depend solely on social institutions.

So that the philosophes of the 18th-century are the true heirs of the 17th-century libertines. The movement continues in them and achieves victory by the mid-1700's. What we find in Sade (born 1740) is the continuation of this same movement, now aiming at separating morals from the social insitutions to make it depend solely on the individual.

The 17th-century libertines and the philosophes fought the law of God - the Bible. Sade fights the law of society - Laws. Happiness and pleasure will issue in the individual fully in command of his own moral universe, a result which can never be achieved by laws, that can regulate only society (the body social), but by knowledge of a superior law - that of Nature.

Norbert Sclippa

From: A
Sent: Sun 11/7/2004 9:07 PM

To: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: Sade on the side

Norbert,

Although I remain skeptical of some of your overarching theses, I have to pass you two compliments off list:

1. Your remarks have included, and generated, some good ideas about how strands of cultural history are woven together.
2. I admire your stamina. You're basically parrying thrusts from the other 976 of us on the list like Errol Flynn at the Nottingham castle. Where do you get the energy? Whatever you eat for breakfast, I want some.

A.

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Mon 11/8/2004 7:55 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Happiness vs Pleasure vs Libertinage

A writes :

"If "libertinage" culminates in the liberating us from external law so that "happiness and pleasure will issue in the individual fully in command of his own moral universe," how does one apply this philosophy to, say, Andrew Luster, the cosmetics heir who said of his victims

"Yes they were in an extreme state of inebriation ... But this -- as any actively sexual person (player) knows is not outside the grounds of ethical play." He has certainly jettisoned external law from his own moral universe. I suspect that, as the defender of libertinage here, you would not wish to claim

Luster as an acceptable exemplar of the libertine philosophy, but does that philosophy give us the wherewithal to pass any other judgment on someone like Luster?"

I would have to say that Andrew certainly added luster to his actions...

Jokes aside... it depends on what you understand by the "liberating us from the external law". The goal of "libertinage" is not in liberating us from the external law in the sense of giving us the right to violate it at will - and those who fear this only show what a poor opinion of man they have, that, left to his own devices, he will immediately go rape his neighbour and kill his wife... or the other way around... or whatever...

It is in liberating us from external law by opening to us to the world inside - where we are absolutely free, and therefore can commit NO crime. (I cited Saint Augustine here... *Noli foras exire, in te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas...*)

Sade's project is not in the did, but in the revealing this inner (natural) freedom.

That is why "La Philosophie doit tout dire" ["Philosophy must TELL everything"], is the conclusion of Juliette. "Tell" must be emphasized here, it is the point that Sade makes over and over :

"On n'est point criminel pour faire la peinture
Des bizarres penchants qu'inspire la Nature"
[(already cited). "One is not a criminal for depicting
The bizarre inclinations inspired by Nature"], etc...

Cheers,

Norbert

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 11/9/2004 7:09 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Happiness vs. Pleasure: Addendum

Pleasure and happiness do not contradict each other in epicurean philosophy. There is no "vs", but a simple transition, ("and"), a matter of degree. Pleasure could be counted by definition as being a small happiness, and happiness is sustained pleasure, in time, or intensity.

The Internet Encyclopedia of philosophy on Epicurus :

"Epicurus' ethics starts from the Aristotelian commonplace that the highest good is what is valued for its own sake, and not for the sake of anything else, and Epicurus agrees with Aristotle that happiness is the highest good. However, he disagrees with Aristotle by identifying happiness with pleasure. Epicurus gives two reasons for this. The main reason is that pleasure is the only thing that people do, as a matter of fact, value for its own sake; that is, Epicurus' ethical hedonism is based upon his psychological hedonism. Everything we do, claims Epicurus, we do for the sake ultimately of gaining pleasure for ourselves. This is supposedly confirmed by observing the behavior of infants, who, it is claimed, instinctively pursue pleasure and shun pain. This is also true of adults, thinks Epicurus, but in adults it is more difficult to see that this is true, since adults have much more complicated beliefs about what will bring them pleasure. But the Epicureans did spend a great deal of energy trying to make plausible the contention that all activity [my emphasis], even apparently self-

sacrificing activity or activity done solely for the sake of virtue or what is noble, is in fact directed toward obtaining pleasure for oneself.

And this would certainly also include the activity of writing. It is this point of view we find in Sade, expressed below through irony :

"De quelle punition, et dans ce monde et dans l'autre, n'est pas digne celui qui, sans aucune modération, se plairait, par exemple, à divulguer tous les caprices, tous les goûts, toutes les horreurs secrètes auxquels les hommes son sujets dans le feu de leur imagination ?" ["What punishment, and in this world and in the next, does not deserve the one who, with no moderation whatsoever, would find pleasure, for example, in divulging all the fantasies, all the tastes, all the secret horrors to which men are susceptible in the fire of their imagination ?"]. ("Les 120 Journées de Sodome", M. Delon/Gallimard edition, p. 236).

Sadeian pleasure is in representation, and happiness, in the sustained pleasure of representation.

From: Sclipa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 11/11/2004 10:25 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclipa, Norbert
Subject: RE: Happiness vs. Pleasure: Johnson's review of Jenyns's book and Sade

Monist materialism, atomistic or not - the school of thought Sade belongs to - is as ancient as philosophy itself. Parmenides, Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Gassendi, Robinet, Spinoza, La Mettrie, Sade, etc... all belong to that same school of thought. It would be a major misunderstanding to think that the purpose of that school is simply to justify evil, or delight in seeing others depressed.

There is in addition a strong parallel idealistic current running through the Enlightenment, in such major works as Leibnitz's Monadology, or Alexander Pope's poetry. The view that WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT does not endorse justifying evil.

Norbert Sclipa

From: Sclipa, Norbert
Sent: Wed 11/17/2004 8:29 PM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclipa, Norbert
Subject: "and" - the top

Further fodder to a Sade über Plato argument can be found in Michel Serres' "La Naissance de la physique dans le texte de Lucrèce" - Paris : Minuit, 1977, p. 40 :

"Platon passe un peu vite, à la page 436 de la *République*, sur le tourbillon du sabot. Il appelle subtil, mais badin, qui soutiendrait que les toupies sont, tout entières et dans le meme temps, stables et en mouvement, puisqu'il suffit de distinguer l'axe immobile et la circonférence en rotation pour etre délivré de la difficulté. Cette séparation des éléments élimine à ses yeux la contradiction. Cela est possible, ajoute-t-il, à condition que l'axe ne s'incline d'aucun coté (ουδαμη γαρ αποχλινειν). Si, en effet, il penche (εγγλινη), à droite, à gauche, en arriere, en avant, alors, c'est clair, la toupie n'est plus en repos. Platon manque ici la notion de repos dans et par le mouvement lui-meme : l'axe de la toupie balance autour d'une position d'équilibre, il existe une invariance par variations. Et l'interlocuteur, plus savant que badin, peut affirmer encore que cette distinction de l'axe et du pourtour n'apaise pas l'opposition ni la conjugaison du mouvement et de l'arret, que la toupie demeure tout entière, et dans le meme temps, tourbillonnante et stable. Il reste que ce petit modèle réduit réunit, en pratique, ce que le discours dit contradictoire. Il reste que Platon n'a pas pensé l'inclinaison, n'a pas évalué l'écart, meme sous l'angle de la mutation. Lucrèce, la physique atomiste, passent en ces lieux laissés par le géométrisme platonique, par l'inclinaison et le tourbillon temporairement métastables, par la contradiction posée dans le concret, par le *turbo* de la toupie, instable, immobile et mobile."

The difference is in this "and" that Lucretius, and atomism, and Sade, are able to establish. Plato divides, where the others unite.

NS

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 12/2/2004 7:03 AM
To: C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: In memoriam : Sade

In Memoriam : Donatien Aldonse François, Marquis de Sade, died on this day, December 2, 1814, 190 years ago, at the asylum of Charenton. He was jailed in 1801 at Sainte-Pélagie on the order of Napoléon - for the unspeakable crime of writing a novel ! -, later transferred to Bicêtre, and Charenton, in 1803. Who then, of the man who spent his time creating and directing plays for the inmates of Charenton - perhaps the first recorded example of an experience in speech-act therapy ! - and the one who sent legions to an early grave, was the madman ?

"Sade a voulu redonner à l'homme civilisé la force de ses instincts primitifs, il a voulu délivrer l'imagination amoureuse de ses propres objets. Il a cru que de là, et de là seulement, naîtrait la véritable égalité. La vertu portant son bonheur en elle, il s'est efforcé, au nom de tout ce qui souffre, de l'abaisser et de l'humilier, de lui imposer la loi suprême du malheur, contre toute illusion, contre tout mensonge, pour qu'elle puisse aider tous ceux qu'elle réproouve, à construire sur la terre un monde à la mesure immense de l'homme."

Paul Eluard

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Tue 12/7/2004 8:25 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Cc: Sclippa, Norbert
Subject: RE: clarissa

Yvonne Noble on **Clarissa** : "most influential work of the 18c"...

"C'est Richardson, c'est Fielding qui nous ont appris que l'étude profonde du coeur de l'homme, véritable dédale de la nature, peut seule inspirer le romancier, dont l'ouvrage doit nous faire voir l'homme, non pas seulement ce qu'il est, ou ce qu'il se montre, c'est le devoir de l'historien, mais tel qu'il peut être, tel que doivent le rendre les modifications du vice, et toutes les secousses des passions. Il faut donc les connaître toutes, il faut donc les employer toutes, si l'on veut travailler ce genre; là, nous apprîmes aussi que ce n'est pas toujours en faisant triompher la vertu qu'on intéresse; qu'il faut y tendre bien certainement autant qu'on le peut, mais que cette règle, ni dans la nature ni dans Aristote, mais seulement celle à laquelle nous voudrions que tous les hommes s'assujettissent pour notre bonheur, n'est nullement essentielle dans le roman, n'est pas même celle qui doit conduire à l'intérêt; car lorsque la vertu triomphe, les choses étant ce qu'elles doivent être, nos larmes sont taries avant que de couler; mais si, après les plus rudes épreuves, nous voyons enfin la vertu terrassée par le vice, indispensablement nos âmes se déchirent, et l'ouvrage nous ayant excessivement émus, ayant, comme disait Diderot, **ensanglanté nos coeurs au revers**, doit indubitablement produire l'intérêt, qui seul assure des lauriers.

Que l'on réponde : si, après douze ou quinze volumes, l'immortel Richardson eût **vertueusement** fini par convertir Lovelace, et par lui faire **paisiblement** épouser Clarisse, eût-on versé à la lecture de ce roman, pris dans le sens contraire, les larmes délicieuses, qu'il obtient de tous les êtres sensibles ?, etc..."

(Sade on **Clarissa** and the English novel. Oeuvres complètes Pauvert, vol. 10, p. 70-71.)

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Thu 1/6/2005 8:00 PM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion; C18-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU
Subject: RE: Et Voltaire dans tout ça?

"Et Dieu dans tout ça ?"

AB

Well worth reading in this context : Ambroise on physical and moral evil (in Sade's "La Nouvelle Justine", end of chap. VIII, if you work from english) :

"- Mon ami, dit Ambroise, la religion n'a d'empire que sur l'esprit de ceux qui ne peuvent rien expliquer sans elle ; c'est le NEC PLUS ULTRA de l'ignorance : mais, à nos yeux philosophes, la religion n'est qu'une fable absurde uniquement faite pour nos mépris : et quelles notions nous

donne-t-elle, en effet, cette religion sublime ? je voudrais bien qu'on me l'expliquât. Plus on l'examine, et plus l'on voit que ses chimères théologiques ne sont propres qu'à embrouiller toutes nos idées : métamorphosant tout en mystères, cette fantastique religion nous donne, pour cause de ce que nous ne comprenons pas, quelque chose que nous comprenons encore moins. Est-ce donc expliquer la nature que d'en attribuer les phénomènes à des agents inconnus, à des puissances invisibles, à des causes immatérielles ? L'esprit humain est-il bien satisfait, quand on lui dit de se rendre raison de ce qu'il n'entend pas, par l'idée plus incompréhensible encore d'un Dieu qui n'exista jamais ? La nature divine, à laquelle on ne conçoit rien, et qui répugne au bon sens et à la raison, peut-elle faire concevoir la nature de l'homme, que l'on trouve déjà si difficile à expliquer ? Demandez à un chrétien, c'est-à-dire à un imbécile parce qu'il n'appartient qu'à un imbécile d'être chrétien ; demandez-lui, dis-je, quelle est l'origine du monde ; il vous répondra que c'est Dieu qui a créé l'univers : demandez-lui maintenant ce que c'est que Dieu, il n'en sait rien ; ce que c'est que créer, il n'en a nulle idée ; quelle est la cause des pestes, des famines, des guerres, des sécheresses, des inondations, des tremblements de terre, il vous dira que c'est la colère de Dieu : demandez-lui quels remèdes il faut employer à tant de maux ; il vous dira des prières, des sacrifices, des processions, des offrandes, des cérémonies. Mais pourquoi le ciel est-il en courroux ? c'est que les hommes sont méchants : pourquoi les hommes sont-ils méchants ? c'est que leur nature est corrompue : quelle est la cause de cette corruption ? c'est, vous disent-ils, parce que le premier homme, séduit par la première femme, a mangé une pomme, à laquelle son Dieu lui avait défendu de toucher : qui est-ce qui engagea cette femme à faire une telle sottise ? c'est le diable : mais qui a créé le diable ? c'est Dieu : pourquoi Dieu a-t-il créé le diable, destiné à pervertir le genre humain ? on l'ignore ; c'est un mystère caché dans le sein de la Divinité, qui elle-même est un mystère. Poursuivrez-vous ? demanderez-vous à cet animal quel est le principe caché des actions et des mouvements du cœur humain ? il vous répondra que c'est l'âme : et qu'est-ce que l'âme ? c'est un esprit : qu'est-ce qu'un esprit ? c'est une substance, qui n'a ni forme, ni couleur, ni étendue, ni partie : comment une telle substance peut-elle se concevoir ? comment peut-elle mouvoir un corps ? on n'en sait rien, c'est un mystère : les bêtes ont-elles des âmes ? non : et pourquoi donc les voyons-nous agir, sentir, penser absolument comme des hommes ? Ici ils se taisent, parce qu'ils ne savent que dire. Et la raison de cela est simple : s'ils prêtent une âme aux hommes, c'est par l'intérêt qu'ils ont à en faire ce qu'ils veulent, au moyen de l'empire qu'ils s'arrogent sur ces âmes ; au lieu qu'ils n'ont pas le même intérêt avec celles des bêtes, et qu'un docteur en théologie serait trop humilié de la nécessité où l'on serait alors d'assimiler son âme à celle d'un cochon. Voilà pourtant les solutions puérides que l'on est obligé d'enfanter pour expliquer les problèmes du monde physique et moral."

N.S.

From: Sclippa, Norbert
Sent: Sun 1/16/2005 10:36 AM
To: 18th Century Interdisciplinary Discussion
Subject: RE: The entity

A Sun 1/16/2005 12:21 AM :

" St. Augustine actually dealt with this question in the seventh chapter of his *_Confessions_* -- it was the pregnant question to him as well. He would agree with you that evil does not "exist," but the rub here is linguistic -- the word "exist" is being used by you as an ontological category, while for St. Augustine this wasn't appropriate, because "evil is not a thing." It doesn't exist because it isn't an "it" that can exist. Evil is a deformation of an already good thing. Everything that exists, then, -was- good and participates in some small good, even if it's the good of existence, but can also become deformed. It is that deformation that we call "evil."

Twisted mirrors exist, but we can't say that the twist exists apart from the mirror. The twist is a quality of the mirror, and we only identify it as a deformation because it distorts the image we expect to see reflected. I think this is a pretty good analogy to the nature of evil.

So it is not necessary to accept the unacceptable notion that everything that currently exists is "good" in any absolute sense. I've known quite a number of people who have said this in various ways, but none that actually believed it.

A "

But it seems to me that we are furiously agreeing here. Here is St Augustine : "And to Thee is nothing whatsoever evil : yea, not only to Thee, but also to Thy creation as a whole, because there is nothing without, which may break in, and corrupt that order which Thou hast appointed it. But in the parts thereof some things, because unharmonising with other some, are accounted evil; whereas those very things harmonise with others, and are good; and in themselves are good. And all these things which harmonise not altogether, do yet with the inferior part, which we call Earth, having its own cloudy and windy sky harmonising with it. Far be it then that I should say, "These things should not be:" for should I see nought but these, I should indeed long for the better; but still must even for these alone praise Thee."

I meant "doesn't exist" in that sense - your sense too - of being a part of it all, and so necessarily a (smaller) good. It is also used here as an ontological category, but if you prefer, as a linguistic category it would also come to the same difference : what we call evil, is not "evil" in the eye of "God". It is a question of language. Everything participates in the Good. There is no evil. This is the traditional deistic approach, that of Pope, etc... to which conforms also Leibniz's Monadology (especially your image of "twisted mirrors - the same in Sade, by the way !), etc...

As opposed to Christianity, Man cannot be guilty in Deism -even evil is some part of the Good. A most pregnant metaphor of this is Voltaire's angel Jesrad, who assassinated a little boy, but we then find out that the cute little thing was going to become a great criminal.

Whomever would have crushed Hitler's head on the cement at birth would have been dubbed an HORRIBLE MONSTER, and properly hanged. And yet, what a service that person would have rendered the world...

NS

FINIS.....