



Marquis de Sade: The Man And His Age: Studies In The History Of The Culture And Morals Of The Eighteenth Century

Dr Ivan Bloch

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Even those whose knowledge of De Sade is limited to knowing that the word 'sadism' is derived from his name, or perhaps have been introduced to some of the practices associated with that word through reading the EL James book 'Fifty Shades of Grey', may wonder who the heck was this French guy anyway? And still a controversial figure even 200 years after he died! Well, here is a brilliant introduction; a fascinating biographical and historical account of his life, his work and the times he lived in—written by the man who coined the word 'sadism'; his first biographer Dr Ivan Bloch. Now published for the first time for Kindle, 'Marquis de Sade: The Man And His Age', explores in detail the core themes and prevailing cultural climate of France in the eighteenth century. De Sade was an aristocrat, philosopher and politician, as well as a writer of 'extreme' pornography. He was born in 1740 and lived through the most tumultuous period in French history—the end of the 200-year-old Bourbon monarchy under Louis XVI, during the revolutionary years, through to the meteoric rise of Napoleon in the new republican era. As a point in time, 'The Enlightenment' or 'Age of Reason' the period roughly between 1600-1800, was a collision of the old world religious order, pitched up against a new world of Newtonian physics and other profound scientific discoveries which introduced new perspectives on nature and man's place within it, challenging the very idea of faith, religion and intolerance in society, as represented by the Catholic Church—which he despised. This shift towards a more secular society gave the avowed atheist De Sade, an opportunity to rewrite the rulebook to suit himself. His logic was that if there wasn't a God, there was no justification for setting any limitations on human actions, thus legitimising all forms of sexual experimentation. De Sade was in this sense an example of 'Enlightenment' philosophy taken to its absolute extreme, advocating total freedom and recognising pleasure alone as the goal of life. He rejected private property, morality, religion, laws and authority because he believed they were the opposite of what true freedom was all about; a devotion to the pursuit of pleasure—for its own sake. Still a controversial figure, his works have been banned at some point by many governments and leaders across the world—fearful of what they all perceived would be the toxic effect his writings would have on 'their' masses. Even eminent contemporary Rousseau warned that 'Justine', would damn any girl who read but a single page, while he was hailed by Apollinaire as "the freest spirit that has ever lived." Dr Bloch reveals with gripping detail the debaucheries, prostitution, pornography, perversity, crime and punishment of a France then awash with a coruscating amorality—a monarchy so corrupt and self-serving it almost single-handedly bankrupted the country; a clergy that was lining its pockets and engaging in the very 'unholy' sexual practices it purported to be against; and how Sade disseminated and satirized these events in his books, plays and writings, including 'Justine', 'Juliette' and 'Philosophy In The Boudoir.' From eye witness accounts of public executions to the most outrageous of Bacchanalian orgies, it is an unflinchingly depictive account of his life and times and (be warned!) will undoubtedly be, in parts an uncomfortable read for many because of the shocking level of detail it contains. Dr Bloch explains the satires and references the 'real life' scenarios his writings were alluding to—those he was attacking. Through the quickly circulated pamphlets and books and the subsequent public notoriety he gained in the process, his mockery of the monarchy and the church made him into an unlikely hero of the radical left and other critics of the Ancien Régime. Claimed as a precursor to Freud, The Surrealists, Baudelaire, The Existentialists, Nietzsche and Stimer, even today his influence ever pervasive.

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