

Masochism



Coldness and Cruelty

Gilles Deleuze

Venus in Furs

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch



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syndromes and symptoms, a symptom being the specific sign of an illness, and a syndrome the meeting-place or crossing-point of manifestations issuing from very different origins and arising within variable contexts. We would like to suggest that sado-masochism is a syndrome that ought to be split up into irreducible causal chains. It has been stated so often that sadism and masochism are found in the same person that we have come to believe it. We need to go back to the beginning and read Sade and Masoch. Because the judgment of the clinician is prejudiced, we must take an entirely different approach, the *literary approach*, since it is from literature that stem the original definitions of sadism and masochism. It is no accident that the names of two writers were used as labels for these two perversions. The critical (in the literary sense) and the clinical (in the medical sense) may be destined to enter into a new relationship of mutual learning. Symptomatology is always a question of art; the clinical specificities of sadism and masochism are not separable from the literary values peculiar to Sade and Masoch. In place of a dialectic which all too readily perceives the link between opposites, we should aim for a critical and clinical appraisal able to reveal the truly differential mechanisms as well as the artistic originalities.

The Language of Sade and Masoch

"It is too idealistic . . . and therefore cruel."

Doestoevsky, *The Insulted and Injured*

What are the uses of literature? The names of Sade and Masoch have been used to denote two basic perversions, and as such they are outstanding examples of the efficiency of literature. Illnesses are sometimes named after typical patients, but more often it is the doctor's name that is given to the disease (Roger's disease, Parkinson's disease, etc.). The principles behind this labeling deserve closer analysis. The doctor does not invent the illness, he dissociates symptoms that were previously grouped together, and links up others that were dissociated. In short he builds up a profoundly original clinical picture. The history of medicine can therefore be regarded under at least two aspects. The first is the history of illnesses, which may disappear, become less frequent, reappear or alter their form according to the state of the society and the development of therapeutic methods. Intertwined with this history is the history of symptomatology, which sometimes precedes and sometimes follows changes in therapy or in the nature of diseases: symptoms are named, renamed and regrouped in various ways. Progress from this point of view generally means

a tendency toward greater specificity, and indicates a refinement of symptomatology. (Thus the plague and leprosy were more common in the past not only for historical and social reasons but because one tended to group under these headings various types of diseases now classified separately.) Great clinicians are the greatest doctors: when a doctor gives his name to an illness this is a major linguistic and semiological step, inasmuch as a proper name is linked to a given group of signs, that is, *a proper name is made to connote signs*.

Should we therefore class Sade and Masoch among the great clinicians? It is difficult to treat sadism and masochism on a level with the plague, leprosy and Parkinson's disease; the word disease is clearly inappropriate. Nevertheless, Sade and Masoch present unparalleled configurations of symptoms and signs. In coining the term masochism, Krafft-Ebing was giving Masoch credit for having redefined a clinical entity not merely in terms of the link between pain and sexual pleasure, but in terms of something more fundamental connected with bondage and humiliation (there are limiting cases of masochism without algolagnia and even algolagnia without masochism).¹ Another question we should ask is whether Masoch does not present a symptomatology that is more refined than Sade's in that it enables us to discriminate between disturbances which were previously regarded as identical. In any case whether Sade and Masoch are "patients" or clinicians or both, they are also great anthropologists, of the type whose work succeeds in embracing a whole conception of man, culture and nature; they are also great artists in that they discovered new forms of expression, new ways of thinking and feeling and an entirely original language.

In principle, violence is something that does not speak, or speaks but little, while sexuality is something that is little spoken about. Sexual modesty cannot be related to biological fear, oth-

erwise it would not be formulated as it is: "I am less afraid of being touched and even of being seen than of being put into words." What is the meaning of the meeting of violence and sexuality in such excessive and abundant language as that of Sade and Masoch? How are we to account for the violent language linked with eroticism? In a text that ought to invalidate all theories relating Sade to Nazism, Georges Bataille explains that the language of Sade is paradoxical *because it is essentially that of a victim*. Only the victim can describe torture; the torturer necessarily uses the hypocritical language of established order and power. "As a general rule the torturer does not use the language of the violence exerted by him in the name of an established authority; he uses the language of the authority. . . . The violent man is willing to keep quiet and connives at cheating. . . . Thus Sade's attitude is diametrically opposed to that of the torturer. When Sade writes he refuses to cheat, but he attributes his own attitude to people who in real life could only have been silent and uses them to make self-contradictory statements to other people."²

Ought we to conclude that the language of Masoch is equally paradoxical in this instance because the victim speaks the language of the torturer he is to himself, with all the hypocrisy of the torturer?

What is known as pornographic literature is a literature reduced to a few imperatives (do this, do that) followed by obscene descriptions. Violence and eroticism do meet, but in a rudimentary fashion. Imperatives abound in the work of Sade and Masoch; they are issued by the cruel libertine or by despotic woman. Descriptions also abound (although the function of the descriptions as well as the nature of their obscenity are strikingly different in the two authors). It would appear that both for Sade and for Masoch language reaches its full significance when it acts directly on the senses. Sade's *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of*

Sodom hinges on tales told to the libertines by “women chroniclers,” and in principle the heroes may not take any initiative in anticipation of these tales. Words are at their most powerful when they compel the body to repeat the movements they suggest, and “the sensations communicated by the ear are the most enjoyable and have the keenest impact.” In Masoch’s life as well as in his fiction, love affairs are always set in motion by anonymous letters, by the use of pseudonyms or by advertisements in newspapers. They must be regulated by contracts that formalize and verbalize the behavior of the partners. Everything must be stated, promised, announced and carefully described before being accomplished. However, the work of Sade and Masoch cannot be regarded as pornography; it merits the more exalted title of “pornology” because its erotic language cannot be reduced to the elementary functions of ordering and describing.

With Sade we witness an astonishing development of the demonstrative use of language. Demonstration as a higher function of language makes its appearance between sequences of description, while the libertines are resting, or in the interval between two commands. One of the libertines will read out a severe pamphlet, or expound inexhaustible theories, or draft a constitution. Alternatively he may agree to hold a conversation or a discussion with his victim. Such moments are frequent, particularly in *Justine*, where each of the heroine’s torturers uses her as a listener and confidante. The libertine may put on an act of trying to convince and persuade; he may even proselytize and gain new recruits (as in *Philosophy in the Bedroom*). But the intention to convince is merely apparent, for nothing is in fact more alien to the sadist than the wish to convince, to persuade, in short to educate. He is interested in something quite different, namely to demonstrate that reasoning itself is a form of violence, and that he is on the side of violence, however calm and logical he may

be. He is not even attempting to prove anything to anyone, but to perform a demonstration related essentially to the solitude and omnipotence of its author. The point of the exercise is to show that the demonstration is identical to violence. It follows that the reasoning does not have to be shared by the person to whom it is addressed any more than pleasure is meant to be shared by the object from which it is derived. The acts of violence inflicted on the victims are a mere reflection of a higher form of violence to which the demonstration testifies. Whether he is among his accomplices or among his victims, each libertine, while engaged in reasoning, is caught in the hermetic circle of his own solitude and uniqueness – even if the argumentation is the same for all the libertines. In every respect, as we shall see, the sadistic “instructor” stands in contrast to the masochistic “educator.”

Here, again, Bataille says of Sade: “It is a language which repudiates any relationship between speaker and audience.” Now if it is true that this language is the supreme realization of a demonstrative function to be found in the relation between violence and eroticism, then the other aspect, the language of imperatives and descriptions, appears in a new light. It still remains, but in an entirely dependent role, steeped in the demonstrative element, as it were, floating in it. The descriptions, the attitudes of the bodies, are merely living diagrams illustrating the abominable descriptions; similarly the imperatives uttered by the libertines are like the statements of problems referring back to the more fundamental chain of sadistic theorems: “I have demonstrated it theoretically,” says Noirceuil, “let us now put it to the test of practice.”

We have therefore to distinguish two factors constituting a dual language. The first, the imperative and descriptive factor, represents the *personal* element; it directs and describes the personal violence of the sadist as well as his individual tastes; the second and higher factor represents the *impersonal* element in sad-

ism and identifies the impersonal violence with an Idea of pure reason, with a terrifying demonstration capable of subordinating the first element. In Sade we discover a surprising affinity with Spinoza — a naturalistic and mechanistic approach imbued with the mathematical spirit. This accounts for the endless repetitions, the reiterated quantitative process of multiplying illustrations and adding victim upon victim, again and again retracing the thousand circles of an irreducibly solitary argument. Krafft-Ebing sensed the essential nature of such a process: "In certain cases the personal element is almost entirely absent. The subject gets sexual enjoyment from beating boys and girls, but the purely impersonal element of his perversion is much more in evidence.... While in most individuals of this type the feelings of power are experienced in relation to specific persons, we are dealing here with a pronounced form of sadism operating to a great extent in geographical and mathematical patterns."³

In the work of Masoch there is a similar transcendence of the imperative and the descriptive toward a higher function. But in this case it is all persuasion and education. We are no longer in the presence of a torturer seizing upon a victim and enjoying her all the more because she is unconsenting and unpersuaded. We are dealing instead with a victim in search of a torturer and who needs to educate, persuade and conclude an alliance with the torturer in order to realize the strangest of schemes. This is why advertisements are part of the language of masochism while they have no place in true sadism, and why the masochist draws up contracts while the sadist abominates and destroys them. The sadist is in need of institutions, the masochist of contractual relations. The middle ages distinguished with considerable insight between two types of commerce with the devil: the first resulted from possession, the second from a pact of alliance. The sadist thinks in terms of institutionalized possession, the masochist in

terms of contracted alliance. Possession is the sadist's particular form of madness just as the pact is the masochist's. It is essential to the masochist that he should fashion the woman into a despot, that he should persuade her to cooperate and get her to "sign." He is essentially an educator and thus runs the risk inherent in educational undertakings. In all Masoch's novels, the woman, although persuaded, is still basically doubting, as though she were afraid: she is forced to commit herself to a role to which she may prove inadequate, either by overplaying or by falling short of expectations. In *The Divorced Woman*, the heroine complains: "Julian's ideal was a cruel woman, a woman like Catherine the Great, but alas, I was cowardly and weak..." In *Venus*, Wanda says: "I am afraid of not being capable of it, but for you, my beloved, I am willing to try." Or again: "Beware, I might grow to enjoy it."

The educational undertaking of Masoch's heroes, their submission to a woman, the torments they undergo, are so many steps in their climb toward the Ideal. *The Divorced Woman* is subtitled *The Calvary of an Idealist*. Severin, the hero of *Venus*, takes as a motto for his doctrine of "supersensualism" the words of Mephistopheles to Faust: "Thou sensual, supersensual libertine, a little girl can lead thee by the nose." (*Ubersinnlich* in Goethe's text does not mean "supersensitive" but "supersensual," "supercarnal," in conformity with theological tradition, where *Sinnlichkeit* denotes the *flesh, sensualitas*). It is therefore not surprising that masochism should seek historical and cultural confirmation in mystical or idealistic initiation rites. The naked body of a woman can only be contemplated in a mystical frame of mind, as is the case in *Venus*. This fact is illustrated more clearly still in *The Divorced Woman*, where the hero, Julian, under the disturbing influence of a friend, desires for the first time to see his mistress naked. He begins by invoking a "need" to "observe," but finds that he is overcome by a religious feeling "without anything

sensual about it" (we have here the two basic stages of fetishism). The ascent from the human body to the work of art and from the work of art to the Idea must take place under the shadow of the whip. Masoch is animated by a dialectical spirit. In *Venus* the story is set in motion by a dream that occurs during an interrupted reading of Hegel. But the primary influence is that of Plato. While Sade is spinozistic and employs demonstrative reason, Masoch is platonic and proceeds by dialectical imagination. One of Masoch's stories is entitled *The Love of Plato* and was at the origin of his adventure with Ludwig II.⁴ Masoch's relation to Plato is evidenced not only by the ascent to the realm of the intelligible, but by the whole technique of dialectical reversal, disguise and reduplication. In the adventure with Ludwig II Masoch does not know at first whether his correspondent is a man or a woman; he is not sure at the end whether he is one or two people, nor does he know during the episode what part his wife will play, but he is prepared for anything, a true dialectician who knows the opportune moment and seizes it. Plato showed that Socrates appeared to be the lover but that fundamentally he was the loved one. Likewise the masochistic hero appears to be educated and fashioned by the authoritarian woman whereas basically it is he who forms her, dresses her for the part and prompts the harsh words she addresses to him. It is the victim who speaks through the mouth of his torturer, without sparing himself. Dialectic does not simply mean the free interchange of discourse, but implies transpositions or displacements of this kind, resulting in a scene being enacted simultaneously on several levels with reversals and reduplications in the allocation of roles and discourse.

Pornological literature is aimed above all at confronting language with its own limits, with what is in a sense a "nonlanguage" (violence that does not speak, eroticism that remains unspoken). However this task can only be accomplished by an internal split-

ting of language: the imperative and descriptive function must transcend itself toward a higher function, the personal element turning by reflection upon itself into the impersonal. When Sade invokes a universal analytical Reason to explain that which is most particular in desire, we must not merely take this as evidence that he is a man of the eighteenth century; particularity and the corresponding delusion must also represent an Idea of pure reason. Similarly when Masoch invokes the dialectical spirit, the spirit of Mephistopheles and that of Plato in one, this must not merely be taken as proof of his romanticism; here too particularity is seen reflectively in the impersonal Ideal of the dialectical spirit. In Sade the imperative and descriptive function of language transcends itself toward a pure demonstrative, instituting function, and in Masoch toward a dialectical, mythical and persuasive function. These two transcendent functions essentially characterize the two perversions, they are twin ways in which the monstrous exhibits itself in reflection.

The Role of Descriptions

Since the transcendent function in Sade is demonstrative and in Masoch dialectical, the role and the significance of descriptions are very different in each case. Although Sade's descriptions are basically related to the function of demonstration, they are nevertheless relatively independent creations; they are obscene in themselves. Sade cannot do without this provocative element. The same cannot be said of Masoch, for while the greatest obscenity may undoubtedly be present in threats, advertisements or contracts, it is not a necessary condition. Indeed, the work of Masoch is on the whole commendable for its unusual decency. The most vigilant censor could hardly take exception to *Venus*, unless he were to question a certain atmosphere of suffocation and suspense which is a feature of all Masoch's novels. In many of his stories he has no difficulty in presenting masochistic fantasies as though they were instances of national custom and folklore, or the innocent games of children, or the frolics of a loving woman, or even the demands of morality and patriotism. Thus in the excitement of a banquet, the men, following an ancient custom, drink out of the women's shoes (*Sappho's Slipper*); young maidens ask their sweethearts to play at being bears or dogs, and harness them to little carts (*The Fisher of Souls*); a woman in love teasingly pretends

to use a document signed in blank by her lover (*The Blank Paper*). In a more serious vein, a woman patriot, in order to save her town, asks to be brought before the Turks, surrenders her husband to them as a slave and gives herself to the Pasha (*The Judith of Bialopol*). Undoubtedly in all these cases the man derives from his humiliation a "secondary gain" which is specifically masochistic. Nevertheless, Masoch succeeds in presenting a great part of his work on a "reassuring" note and finds justification for masochistic behavior in the most varied motivations or in the demands of fateful and agonizing situations. (Sade, on the other hand, could fool nobody when he tried this method.) Consequently Masoch was not a condemned author but a fêted and honored one. Even the blatantly masochistic elements in his work gained acceptance as the expression of Slavonic folklore or of the spirit of Little Russia. He was known as the Turgenev of Little Russia: he could equally well have been compared to the Comtesse de Ségur! Masoch did of course produce a somber counterpart to these works: *Venus*, *The Mother of God*, *The Fountain of Youth*, *The Hyena of the Poussta*, restore the original rigor and purity of the masochistic motivation. But whether the descriptions are rosy or somber, they always bear the stamp of decency. We never see the naked body of the woman torturer; it is always wrapped in furs. The body of the victim remains in a strange state of indeterminacy except where it receives the blows.

How can we account for these two kinds of "displacement" in Masoch's descriptions? We are led back to the question: why does the demonstrative function of language in Sade imply obscene descriptions, while Masoch's dialectical function seems to exclude them or at least not to treat them as essential elements?

Underlying the work of Sade is negation in its broadest and deepest sense. Here we must distinguish between two levels of negation: negation (the negative) as a partial process and pure

negation as a totalizing Idea. These two levels correspond to Sade's distinction between two *natures*, the importance of which was shown by Klossowski. Secondary nature is bound by its own rules and its own laws; it is pervaded by the negative, but not everything in it is negation. Destruction is merely the reverse of creation and change, disorder is another form of order, and the decomposition of death is equally the composition of life. The negative is all-pervasive, but the process of death and destruction that it represents is only a partial process. Hence the disappointment of the sadistic hero, faced with a nature which seems to prove to him that the perfect crime is impossible: "Yes, I abhor Nature." Even the thought that other people's pain gives him pleasure does not comfort him, for this ego-satisfaction merely means that the negative can be achieved only as the reverse of positivity. Individuation, no less than the preservation of a reign or a species are processes that testify to the narrow limits of secondary nature. In opposition to this we find the notion of primary nature and pure negation that override all reigns and all laws, free even from the necessity to create, preserve or individuate. Pure negation needs no foundation and is beyond all foundation, a primal delirium, an original and timeless chaos solely composed of wild and lacerating molecules. In the words of the Pope: "The criminal capable of overthrowing the three realms at once by annihilating them along with their productive capabilities, is the one who will have served Nature best." But in point of fact this original nature cannot be *given*: secondary nature alone makes up the world of experience, and negation is only ever given in the partial processes of the negative. Therefore original nature is necessarily the object of an Idea, and pure negation is a delusion; but it is a delusion of reason itself. Rationalism is not grafted onto the work of Sade; it is rather by an internal necessity that he evolves the idea of a delusion, an exorbitance specific to reason.

It is important to note that the distinction between the two natures corresponds to and is the foundation of the distinction between the two elements, the personal element which embodies the power of negativity and represents the way in which the sadistic ego still participates in secondary nature and reproduces its acts of violence, and the impersonal element which relates to primary nature and the delusional idea of negation, and represents the way in which the sadist negates secondary nature *along with his own ego*.

In *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom* the libertine states that he finds excitement not in "what is here," but in "what is not here," the absent Object, "the idea of evil." The idea of that which is not, the idea of the No or of negation which is not given and cannot be given in experience must necessarily be the object of a demonstration (in the sense that a mathematical truth holds good even when we are asleep and even if it does not exist in nature). Hence the rage and despair of the sadistic hero when he realizes how paltry his own crimes are in relation to the idea which he can only reach through the omnipotence of reasoning. He dreams of a universal, impersonal crime, or as Clairwil puts it, a crime "which is perpetually effective, even when I myself cease to be effective, so that there will not be a single moment of my life, even when I am asleep, when I shall not be the cause of some disturbance." The task of the libertine is to bridge the gulf between the two elements, the element at his actual disposal and the element in his mind, the derivative and the original, the personal and the impersonal. The system expounded by Saint-Fond (where Sade develops most fully the idea of a pure delirium of reason) asks under what conditions "a particular pain, *B*" produced in secondary nature *would necessarily reverberate and reproduce itself ad infinitum* in primary nature. This is the clue to the meaning of repetitiveness in Sade's writing and of the monotony

of sadism. In practice, however, the libertine is confined to illustrating his total demonstration with partial inductive processes borrowed from secondary nature. He cannot do more than accelerate and condense the motions of partial violence. He achieves the acceleration by multiplying the number of his victims and their sufferings. The condensation on the other hand implies that violence must not be dissipated under the sway of inspiration or impulse, or even be governed by the pleasures it might afford, since those pleasures would still bind him to secondary nature, but it must be exercised in cold blood, and condensed by this very coldness, the coldness of demonstrative reason. Hence the well-known *apathy* of the libertine, the self-control of the pornologist, with which Sade contrasts the deplorable "enthusiasm" of the pornographer. Enthusiasm is precisely what he dislikes in Rétif, and he could rightly say (as he always did when justifying himself publicly) that he at least had not depicted vice as pleasant or gay but as apathetic. This apathy does of course produce intense pleasure, but ultimately it is not the pleasure of an ego participating in secondary nature (even of a criminal ego participating in a criminal nature), but on the contrary the pleasure of negating nature within the ego and outside the ego, and negating the ego itself. It is in short the pleasure of demonstrative reason.

If we consider the means available to the sadist for conducting his demonstration, it appears that the demonstrative function subordinates the descriptive function, accelerates and condenses it in a controlled manner, but cannot by any means dispense with it. The descriptions must be precise both qualitatively and quantitatively and must bear on two areas: cruel actions and disgusting actions, both of which are for the cold-blooded libertine equal sources of pleasure. In the words of the monk Clement in *Justine*: "You have been arrested by two irregularities you have noticed in us: you are astonished that some of our companions should be

pleasantly stimulated by matters commonly held to be fetid or impure, and you are similarly surprised that our voluptuous faculties can be powerfully excited by actions which, in your view, bear none but the emblem of ferocity. . . ." In both cases it is through the intermediary of description and the accelerating and condensing effect of repetition that the demonstrative function achieves its strongest impact. Hence it would appear that the obscenity of the descriptions in Sade is grounded in his whole conception of the negative and of negation.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud distinguished between the life instincts and the death instincts, Eros and Thanatos. But in order to understand this distinction we must make a further and more profound distinction between the death or destructive instincts and the Death Instinct. The former are actually given or exhibited in the unconscious, but always in combination with the life instincts; this combination of the death instincts with Eros is as it were the precondition of the "presentation" of Thanatos. So that destruction, and the negative at work in destruction, always manifests itself as the other face of construction and unification as governed by the pleasure principle. This is the sense in which Freud is able to state that we do not find a No (pure negation) in the unconscious, since all opposites coincide there. By contrast when we speak of the Death Instinct, we refer to Thanatos, the absolute negation. Thanatos as such cannot be *given* in psychic life, even in the unconscious: it is, as Freud pointed out in his admirable text, essentially silent. And yet we must speak of it for it is a determinable principle, the foundation and even more of psychic life. Everything depends on it, though as Freud points out, we can only speak of it in speculative or mythical terms.

The distinction between the death or destructive instincts and the Death Instinct seems in fact to correspond to Sade's distinc-

tion between the two natures or the two elements. The sadistic hero appears to have set himself the task of thinking out the Death Instinct (pure negation) in a demonstrative form, and is only able to achieve this by multiplying and condensing the activities of component negative or destructive instincts. But the question now arises whether there is not yet another "method" besides the speculative sadistic one.

Freud has analyzed forms of resistance which in various ways imply a process of disavowal (*Verneinung*, *Verwerfung*, *Verleugnung*: Lacan has shown the significance of each of these terms). It might seem that a disavowal is, generally speaking, much more superficial than a negation or even a partial destruction. But this is not so, for it represents an entirely different operation. Disavowal should perhaps be understood as the point of departure of an operation that consists neither in negating nor even destroying, but rather in radically contesting the validity of that which is: it suspends belief in and neutralizes the given in such a way that a new horizon opens up beyond the given and in place of it. The clearest example given by Freud is fetishism: the fetish is the image or substitute of the female phallus, that is the means by which we deny that the woman lacks a penis. The fetishist's choice of a fetish is determined by the last object he saw as a child before becoming aware of the missing penis (a shoe, for example, in the case of a glance directed from the feet upward). The constant return to this object, this point of departure, enables him to validate the existence of the organ that is in dispute. The fetish is therefore not a symbol at all, but as it were a frozen, arrested, two-dimensional image, a photograph to which one returns repeatedly to exorcise the dangerous consequences of movement, the harmful discoveries that result from exploration; it represents the last point at which it was still possible to believe. . . . Thus it appears that fetishism is first of all a disavowal ("No, the woman does not

lack a penis"); secondly it is a defensive neutralization (since, contrary to what happens with negation, the knowledge of the situation as it is persists, but in a suspended, neutralized form); in the third place it is a protective and idealizing neutralization (for the belief in a female phallus is itself experienced as a protest of the ideal against the real; it remains suspended or neutralized in the ideal, the better to shield itself against the painful awareness of reality).

Fetishism, as defined by the process of disavowal and suspension of belief belongs essentially to masochism. Whether it also has a place in sadism is a very complex question. There is no doubt that many sadistic murders are accompanied by rituals, as when the victim's clothes are torn without any evidence of a struggle. But it is a mistake to think of the relation of the fetishist to the fetish in terms of sadomasochistic ambivalence; it leads too easily to the creation of a sadomasochistic entity. We should not confuse, as is so often done, two very different types of violence, a potential violence toward the fetish itself, and a violence which arises only in connection with the choice and constitution of the fetish (as in hair despoiling).⁵ In our opinion fetishism only occurs in sadism in a secondary and distorted sense. It is divested of its essential relation to disavowal and suspense and passes into the totally different context of negativity and negation, where it becomes an agent in the sadistic process of condensation.

On the other hand there can be no masochism without fetishism in the primary sense. The way in which Masoch defines his idealism or "supersensualism" seems at first sight rather trivial. Why believe in the idea of a perfect world? asks Masoch in *The Divorced Woman*. What we need to do is to "put on wings" and escape into the world of dreams. He does not believe in negating or destroying the world nor in idealizing it: what he does is to disavow and thus to suspend it, in order to secure an ideal

which is itself suspended in fantasy. He questions the validity of existing reality in order to create a pure ideal reality, an operation which is perfectly in line with the judicial spirit of masochism. It is not surprising that this process should lead straight into fetishism. The main objects of fetishism in Masoch's life and work are furs, shoes, the whip, the strange helmets that he liked to adorn women with, or the various disguises such as we find in *Venus*. The scene mentioned earlier from *The Divorced Woman* illustrates the split that occurs in fetishism and the corresponding double "suspension": on the one hand the subject is aware of reality but suspends this awareness; on the other the subject clings to his ideal. There is a desire for scientific observation, and subsequently a state of mystical contemplation. The masochistic process of disavowal is so extensive that it affects sexual pleasure itself; pleasure is postponed for as long as possible and is thus disavowed. The masochist is therefore able to deny the reality of pleasure at the very point of experiencing it, in order to identify with the "new sexless man."

In Masoch's novels, it is the moments of suspense that are the climactic moments. It is no exaggeration to say that Masoch was the first novelist to make use of suspense as an essential ingredient of romantic fiction. This is partly because the masochistic rites of torture and suffering imply actual physical suspension (the hero is hung up, crucified or suspended), but also because the woman torturer freezes into postures that identify her with a statue, a painting or a photograph. She suspends her gestures in the act of bringing down the whip or removing her furs; her movement is arrested as she turns to look at herself in a mirror. As we shall see, these "photographic" scenes, these reflected and arrested images are of the greatest significance both from the general point of view of masochism and from the particular point of view of the art of Masoch. They are one of his creative contribu-

tions to the novel. The same scenes are reenacted at various levels in a sort of frozen progression. Thus in *Venus* the key scene of the woman torturer is imagined, staged and enacted in earnest, the roles shifting from one character to another. The aesthetic and dramatic suspense of Masoch contrasts with the mechanical, cumulative repetition of Sade. We should note here that the art of suspense always places us on the side of the victim and forces us to identify with him, whereas the gathering momentum of repetition tends to force us onto the side of the torturer and make us identify with the sadistic hero. Repetition does occur in masochism, but it is totally different from sadistic repetition: in Sade it is a function of acceleration and condensation and in Masoch it is characterized by the "frozen" quality and the suspense.

We are now in a position to account for the absence of obscene descriptions in the work of Masoch. The function of the descriptions subsists, but any potential obscenity is disavowed or suspended, by displacing the descriptions either from the object itself to the fetish, or from one part of the object to another part, or again from one aspect of the subject to another. What remains is a strange and oppressive atmosphere, like a sickly perfume permeating the suspense and resisting all displacements. Of Masoch it can be said, as it cannot be of Sade, that no one has ever been so far with so little offense to decency. This leads us to another aspect of Masoch's art: he is a master of the atmospheric novel and the art of suggestion. The settings in Sade, the castles inhabited by his heroes are subject to the brutal laws of darkness and light that accelerate the gestures of their cruel occupants. The settings in Masoch, with their heavy tapestries, their cluttered intimacy, their boudoirs and closets, create a chiaroscuro where the only things that emerge are suspended gestures and suspended suffering. Both in their art and in their language Masoch and Sade are totally different. Let us try to summarize the differences so

far: in the work of Sade, imperatives and descriptions transcend themselves toward the higher function of demonstration: the demonstrative function is based on universal negativity as an active process, and on universal negation as an Idea of pure reason; it operates by conserving and accelerating the descriptions, which are overlaid with obscenity. In the work of Masoch, imperatives and descriptions also achieve a transcendent function, but it is of a mythical and dialectical order. It rests on universal disavowal as a reactive process and on universal suspension as an Ideal of pure imagination; the descriptions remain, but they are displaced or frozen, suggestive but free from obscenity. The fundamental distinction between sadism and masochism can be summarized *in the contrasting processes of the negative and negation on the one hand, and of disavowal and suspense on the other*. The first represents a speculative and analytical manner of apprehending the Death Instinct – which, as we have seen, can never be given – while the second pursues the same object in a totally different way, mythically, dialectically and in the imaginary.

by the respective disguises. In masochism the masculine impulse is embodied in the role of the son, while the feminine impulse is projected in the role of the mother; but in point of fact the two impulses constitute one single figure; femininity is posited as lacking in nothing and placed alongside a virility suspended in disavowal (just as the absence of a penis need not indicate lack of the phallus, its presence likewise need not indicate possession of the phallus). Hence in masochism a girl has no difficulty in assuming the role of son in relation to the beating mother who possesses the ideal phallus and on whom rebirth depends. Similarly, in sadism, it becomes possible for the boy to play the role of a girl in relation to a projection of the father. We might say that the masochist is hermaphrodite and the sadist androgynous. . . . They represent parallel worlds, each complete in itself, and it is both unnecessary and impossible for either to enter the other's world. We cannot at any rate say that they are exact opposites, except insofar as opposites avoid each other and must either do so or perish. This very opposition tends unfortunately to suggest possibilities of transformation, reversal and combination. Yet there is between sadism and masochism an irreducible dissymmetry: sadism stands for the active negation of the mother and the inflation of the father (who is placed above the law); masochism proceeds by a twofold disavowal, a positive, idealizing disavowal of the mother (who is identified with the law) and an invalidating disavowal of the father (who is expelled from the symbolic order).

The Art of Masoch

There is a fundamental aesthetic or plastic element in the art of Masoch. It has been said that the senses become "theoreticians" and that the eye, for example, becomes a human eye when its object itself has been transformed into a human or cultural object, fashioned by and intended solely for man. Animal nature is profoundly hurt when this transmutation of its organs from the animal to the human takes place, and it is the experience of this painful process that the art of Masoch aims to represent. He calls his doctrine "supersensualism" to indicate this cultural state of transmuted sensuality; this explains why he finds in works of art the source and the inspiration of his loves. The lover embraces a marble woman by way of initiation; women become exciting when they are indistinguishable from cold statues in the moonlight or paintings in darkened rooms. *Venus* is set under the sign of Titian, with its mystical play of flesh, fur and mirror, and the conjunction of cold, cruelty and sentiment. The scenes in Masoch have of necessity a frozen quality, like statues or portraits; they are replicas of works of art, or else they duplicate themselves in mirrors (as when Severin catches sight of his own reflection in the mirror).

Sade's heroes, by contrast, are not art lovers, still less collec-

tors. In *Juliette*, Sade explains why: "Ah, if only an engraver could record for posterity this divine and voluptuous scene! But lust, which all too quickly crowns our actors, might not have allowed the artist time to portray them. It is not easy for art, which is motionless, to depict an activity the essence of which is movement." Sensuality is movement. In order to convey the immediacy of this action of one soul against another, Sade chooses to rely on the quantitative techniques of accumulation and acceleration, mechanically grounded in a materialistic theory: reiteration and internal multiplication of the scenes, precipitation, overdetermination. (The subject is at once parricide, incestuous, murderer, prostitute and sodomite.) We have seen why number, quantity and quantitative precipitation were the specific obsessions of sadism. Masoch, on the contrary, has every reason to rely on art and the immobile and reflective quality of culture. In his view the plastic arts confer an eternal character on their subject because they suspend gestures and attitudes. The whip or the sword that never strikes, the fur that never discloses the flesh, the heel that is forever descending on the victim, are the expression, beyond all movement, of a profound state of waiting closer to the sources of life and death. The novels of Masoch display the most intense preoccupation with arrested movement; his scenes are frozen, as though photographed, stereotyped or painted. In *Venus* it is a painter who says: "Woman, goddess...do you not know what it is to love, to be consumed by longing and passion?" And Wanda looms with her furs and her whip, adopting a suspended posture, like a *tableau vivant*: "I want to show you another portrait of me, one that I painted myself. You shall copy it." "You shall copy it" suggests both the sternness of the order and the reflection in the mirror.

Waiting and suspense are essential characteristics of the masochistic experience. Hence the ritual scenes of hanging, cruci-

fixion and other forms of physical suspension in Masoch's novels. The masochist is morose: but his moroseness should be related to the experience of waiting and delay. It has often been pointed out that the pleasure-pain complex is insufficient to define masochism; but humiliation, expiation, punishment and guilt are not sufficient either. It is argued, justifiably, that the masochist is not a strange being who finds pleasure in pain, but that he is like everyone else, and finds pleasure where others do, the simple difference being that for him pain, punishment or humiliation are necessary prerequisites to obtaining gratification. However, this mechanism remains incomprehensible if it is not related to the form and in particular to the temporal form that makes it possible. Thus it is a mistake to treat the pleasure-pain complex as a raw material able intrinsically to lend itself to any transformation, beginning with the alleged transformation of sadism into masochism. Formally speaking, masochism is a state of waiting; the masochist experiences waiting in its pure form. Pure waiting divides naturally into two simultaneous currents, the first representing what is awaited, something essentially tardy, always late and always postponed, the second representing something that is expected and on which depends the speeding up of the awaited object. It is inevitable that such a form, such a rhythmic division of time into two streams, should be "filled" by the particular combination of pleasure and pain. For at the same time as pain fulfills what is expected, it becomes possible for pleasure to fulfill what is awaited. The masochist waits for pleasure as something that is bound to be late, and expects pain as the condition that will finally ensure (both physically and morally) the advent of pleasure. He therefore postpones pleasure in expectation of the pain which will make gratification possible. The anxiety of the masochist divides therefore into an indefinite awaiting of pleasure and an intense expectation of pain.

Disavowal, suspense, waiting, fetishism and fantasy together make up the specific constellation of masochism. Reality, as we have seen, is affected not by negation but by a disavowal that transposes it into fantasy. Suspense performs the same function in relation to the ideal, which is also relegated to fantasy. Waiting represents the unity of the ideal and the real, the form or temporality of the fantasy. The fetish is the object of the fantasy, the fantasized object par excellence. Consider the following masochistic fantasy: a woman in shorts is pedaling energetically on a stationary bicycle; the subject is lying under the bicycle, the whirring pedals almost brushing him, his palms pressed against the woman's calves. All the elements are conjoined in this image, from the fetishism of the woman's calf to the twofold waiting represented by the motion of the pedals and the immobility of the bicycle. We should say, however, that there is no such thing as a specifically masochistic kind of waiting, but rather that the masochist is morose, by which we mean that he experiences waiting in its pure form. For example, Masoch arranged to have a healthy tooth pulled out while his wife, dressed in furs, stood before him with a threatening air. What is true of masochistic writing is equally true of masochistic fantasy: there is no specifically masochistic fantasy, but rather a masochistic art of fantasy.

The masochist needs to believe that he is dreaming even when he is not; sadism offers no such discipline in the art of the fantasy. Maurice Blanchot has given an excellent analysis of the position of Sade (and of his characters) in relation to fantasy: "His own erotic dream consists in projecting the unreal dynamic of his sensuous enjoyment on to characters who are not dreaming but acting. . . . Therefore the more this eroticism is *dreamt*, the more it requires a fiction from which dreams are excluded and where debauchery is fully actualized."²¹ In other words, Sade needs to believe that he is not dreaming even when he is. In sad-

ism a powerful force of paranoid projection transforms the fantasy into the instrument of a fundamental and sudden change in the objective world. Clairwil dreams that her wickedness never ceases to impinge on the world even while she is asleep. Hence the pleasure-pain potential characteristic of the fantasy requires for its realization that real characters should experience actual pain, while pleasure accrues to the sadist inasmuch as he can continue to dream that he is not dreaming.

Juliette gives the following advice: "For a whole fortnight abstain from all lustful behavior; distract and entertain yourselves with other things. . . . Then lie down in the dark and little by little imagine different wanton acts. One of these will affect you more powerfully and become like an obsession, and you must then note it down and promptly put it into action." In this way the fantasy acquires maximum aggressive power, systematization and capacity of intervention in the real world: the Idea is projected with extraordinary violence. The masochistic use of fantasy is totally different: it consists in neutralizing the real and containing the ideal within the fantasy. In our opinion the difference in the use of the fantasy determines to a certain extent the difference in content. The sadist's destructive relation to the fetish must be interpreted in the light of his projective use of fantasy. To say that the destruction of the fetish implies a belief in the fetish (as profanation is said to imply a belief in the sacred) is to indulge in meaningless generalities. The destruction of the fetish is a measure of the speed with which projection takes place, and of the way in which the dream as such is eliminated and the Idea erupts into the real waking world. By contrast, the constitution of the fetish in masochism points to the inner force of the fantasy, its characteristic of patient waiting, its suspended and static power, and the way in which the ideal and the real are together absorbed by it.

It would seem that the contents of sadism and masochism are each intended to fulfill a form. Variations in the distribution of the pleasure-pain complex as well as variations in the content of the fantasy (whether the mother or the father is the determinant image) depend on the specific requirements of the form. If we take the material content as our starting point, we solve everything and we arrive besides at the supposed unity of sadism and masochism, but at the price of total confusion. Any given formula for the association of pleasure and pain must take into account certain specific formal conditions (e.g., the form of waiting, the form of projection). "Material" definitions of masochism based on the pleasure-pain complex are insufficient: as the logician would say, they are purely nominal, they do not indicate the possibility of what they define, they do not show that particular conditions must follow. But worse still, they lack distinctive features, and open up the way to all sorts of confusions between sadism and masochism such as the possibility of their reversing into each other. "Moral" definitions based on the concepts of guilt and expiation are no better, since they are based on the alleged communication between sadism and masochism (in this sense they are even more moral than they seem). Fundamentally, masochism is neither material nor moral, but essentially formal. We need, for the understanding of the world of perversions in general, a genuinely formal, almost deductive psychoanalysis which would attend first of all to the formal patterns underlying the processes, viewed as formal elements of fictional art.

In the field of formal psychoanalysis as applied to masochism, the work of Theodore Reik deserves special credit. He distinguished four basic characteristics of masochism:

1. The "special significance of fantasy," that is the form of the fantasy (the fantasy experienced for its own sake, or the scene

which is dreamed, dramatized, ritualized and which is an indispensable element of masochism).

2. The "suspense factor" (the waiting, the delay, expressing the way in which anxiety affects sexual tension and inhibits its discharge).

3. The "demonstrative" or, more accurately, the persuasive feature (the particular way in which the masochist exhibits his suffering, embarrassment and humiliation).

4. The "provocative fear" (the masochist aggressively demands punishment since it resolves anxiety and allows him to enjoy the forbidden pleasure).²²

It is curious that Reik, no less than other analysts, neglects a fifth factor which is very important: the form of the contract in the masochistic relationship. In Masoch's personal adventures as well as in his fiction, and in his particular case as well as in the structure of masochism in general, the contract represents the ideal form of the love-relationship and its necessary precondition. A contract is drawn up between the subject and the torturer, giving a new application to the idea of the jurists of antiquity that slavery itself is based on a contract. The masochist appears to be held by real chains, but in fact he is bound by his word alone. The masochistic contract implies not only the necessity of the victim's consent, but his ability to persuade, and his pedagogical and judicial efforts to train his torturer. In the two contracts of Masoch reproduced here (see Appendix II) it is interesting to note how the conditions alter from the first to the second contract in the direction of greater strictness: the first contract retains a degree of reciprocity of duties, a time limit, a preservation of inalienable rights (the right of work or the subject's honor); the second confers more and more rights on the woman at the expense of the subject, who loses the right to his name, his honor and his life.²³ (The contract in *Venus* changes Severin's name.) The

tightening of the contractual bond indicates that the function of the contract is to lay down the law, which, once established, becomes increasingly cruel and restrictive toward one of the parties (in this case the initiator of the contract). The function of the masochistic contract is to invest the mother-image with the symbolic power of the law. The question remains why a contract is necessary, and why it develops as it does toward extreme severity. In any case there is no doubt that masochism cannot do without a contract, either actual or in the mind of the masochist (as in the phenomenon of *pagisme*²⁴).

We have now seen the two aspects of the "culturalism" of Masoch, the aesthetic aspect which is expressed in the model of art and suspense, and the juridical aspect which is expressed in the model of the contract and of submission. By contrast, Sade is not only supremely indifferent to the resources of the work of art, but he regards the contract and any appeal to its authority, or indeed any idea or theory connected with it, with the deepest hostility. The sadist heaps derision on the principle of the contract. But having said this, we should not simply oppose the culturalism of Masoch to the naturalism of Sade. Both authors exhibit a form of naturalism and both distinguish between two natures, but they do not make the same kind of distinction, and above all they have very different views on how the passage from one nature to the other is accomplished. According to Masoch, it is essentially the work of art and the contract that makes possible the transition from a lower nature to the great Nature, which is sentimental and self-conscious. For Sade, on the contrary, the transition from secondary nature to primary nature implies no suspense or system of aesthetics, but an attempt to establish a *mechanism* of perpetual motion, and with it *institutions* of perpetual motion. Sade's secret societies, his societies of libertines, are institutional societies; in a word, Sade thinks in terms of "institu-

tions," Masoch in terms of "the contract." The juridical distinction between contract and institution is well known: the contract presupposes in principle the free consent of the contracting parties and determines between them a system of reciprocal rights and duties; it cannot affect a third party and is valid for a limited period. Institutions, by contrast, determine a long-term state of affairs which is both involuntary and inalienable; it establishes a power or an authority which takes effect against a third party. But even more significant is the difference between the contract and the institution with respect to what is known as a *law*: the contract actually generates a law, even if this law oversteps and contravenes the conditions which made it possible; the institution is of a very different order in that it tends to render laws unnecessary, to replace the system of rights and duties by a dynamic model of action, authority and power. Saint-Just accordingly demanded that there should be many institutions and few laws, and proclaimed that the Republic could not be a republic so long as laws had the supremacy over institutions. . . .²⁵ In short, the specific impulse underlying the contract is toward the creation of a law, even if in the end the law should take over and impose its authority upon the contract itself; whereas the corresponding impulse at work in the case of the institution is toward the degradation of all laws and the establishment of a superior power that sets itself above them.

The affinity of Sade's theorizing with the theme of the institution (as well as with certain aspects of Saint-Just's thinking) has often been pointed out. But it is not enough to say that Sade's heroes put institutions at the service of their abnormality, or need them as the limits that give full value to their transgressions. Sade's conception of institutions is more positive and profound, and his relation to revolutionary ideology is accordingly a complex one: he rejects any contractual conception of the republican regime

and is even more strongly against the idea of the law. He found in the Revolution what he hated most: the law and the contract, which he regards as the two main obstacles that still prevent the French from achieving a true republic. The crux of Sade's political thinking is the contrast he draws between the institution and the law, between a republic based on institutions and one based on contractual relations. Saint-Just pointed out the following inverse relation: the fewer institutions, the greater the number of laws (as in monarchy and despotism); the fewer laws, the greater the number of institutions (the republic). Sade seems to have developed this idea to its ironic and perhaps also its most serious conclusion; he asked which institutions would require the fewest possible laws, and ultimately no laws at all (laws "so lenient and so few..."). Laws bind actions; they immobilize and moralize them. Pure institutions without laws would by definition be models of free, anarchic action, in perpetual motion, in permanent revolution, in a constant state of immorality. "Insurrection... is not a moral state of affairs; it has nevertheless to be the permanent condition in a republic. It would be both absurd and dangerous to require that those who are to ensure the perpetual subversion of the established machinery should be moral, for the state of a moral man is one of peace and tranquillity, while the state of immorality is one of perpetual unrest resembling the necessary state of insurrection in which the republican must always keep the government of which he is a member." It would be a mistake to regard the famous text from *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, "Yet another effort, Frenchmen, if you wish to become Republicans," merely as a paradoxical application of sadian fantasies in the field of politics. The problem that it raises, both on the formal and on the political level, is far more serious and original. It is this: Granted that both the contract and the law are in the nature of mystifications, the law being used by despotism for its own

purposes, and granted that the institution is the only form of political organization that differs essentially from both law and contract, where should we look to for the perfect institution — the one that banishes contracts and allows only the barest minimum of laws? In reply, Sade points to the ironic possibility, under these conditions, of making atheism, calumny, theft, prostitution, incest and sodomy — even murder — into institutions, and shows furthermore that they are necessarily the types of the ideal institution, the institution in perpetual motion. He stresses in particular the possibility of *instituting* universal prostitution and he attempts to refute the "contractual" objection to such "universalization."

In any case those who contrast Sade's extreme theoretical pronouncements with his very moderate personal stand during the Revolution fail to do justice to his political thought. The opposition that he established between the institution and the contract and its corollary, the opposition between institutions and laws, have become juridical platitudes of positivist thinking. But this is because their original significance and their revolutionary character have been obscured by uneasy compromises. If we wish to recover the original meaning of these oppositions and of the choices and directions they imply, we must return to Sade (and to Saint-Just, who does not give quite the same answers as Sade). There is a profound political insight in Sade's conception of the revolutionary republic as an institution based on opposition to both law and contract; but this conception is ironic through and through because it is sexual and sexualized, as if deliberately to challenge any attempt to think of politics in legalistic or contractual terms. We should expect to find in Masoch a comparable tour de force, the *humorous* converse of Sade's. As against the latter's *ironic* conception of the institution based on the rejection of law and contract, and in the context of the Revolution of 1789, we have to consider the *humorous* contribution of Masoch and his

conception of the relationship between the contract and the law, in the context of the 1848 Revolution. As a result, fundamental problems of rights begin to emerge in their true light even as they become perverted in the work of Sade and Masoch and turned into literary elements in a parody of the philosophy of history.

Humor, Irony and the Law

The classical conception of the law found its perfect expression in Plato and in that form gained universal acceptance throughout the Christian world. According to this conception, the law may be viewed either in the light of its underlying principles or in the light of its consequences. From the first point of view, the law itself is not a primary but only a secondary or delegated power dependent on a supreme principle which is the Good. If men knew what the Good was, or knew how to conform to it, they would not need laws: the law is only a representative of the Good in a world that the Good has more or less forsaken. Hence, from the point of view of its consequences, obedience to the law is "best," the best being in the image of the Good. The righteous man obeys the laws of the country of his birth or residence, and in so doing acts for the best, even though he retains his freedom of thought, freedom to think of the Good and for the sake of the Good.

This conception, which is seemingly so conventional, nevertheless conceals elements of irony and humor which made political philosophy possible, for it allows the free play of thought at the upper and lower limits of the scale of the law. The death of Socrates is an exemplary illustration of this: the laws place their

turbance, or uniting very different disturbances under a misbegotten name, in a whole arbitrarily defined by nonspecific causes.

Sadomasochism is one of these misbegotten names, a semiological howler. We found in every case that what appeared to be a common "sign" linking the two perversions together turned out on investigation to be in the nature of a mere syndrome which could be further broken down into irreducibly specific symptoms of the one or the other perversion. Let us now try to summarize the results of our inquiry. (1) Sadism is speculative-demonstrative, masochism dialectical-imaginative; (2) sadism operates with the negative and pure negation, masochism with disavowal and suspension; (3) sadism operates by means of quantitative reiteration, masochism by means of qualitative suspense; (4) there is a masochism specific to the sadist and equally a sadism specific to the masochist, the one never combining with the other; (5) sadism negates the mother and inflates the father, masochism disavows the mother and abolishes the father; (6) the role and significance of the fetish, and the function of the fantasy are totally different in each case; (7) there is an aestheticism in masochism, while sadism is hostile to the aesthetic attitude; (8) sadism is institutional, masochism contractual; (9) in sadism the superego and the process of identification play the primary role, masochism gives primacy to the ego and to the process of idealization; (10) sadism and masochism exhibit totally different forms of desexualization and resexualization; (11) finally, summing up all these differences, there is the most radical difference between sadistic *apathy* and masochistic *coldness*.

These eleven propositions taken together should account not only for the differences between sadism and masochism, but equally for the differences in the literary techniques and in the art of Sade and Masoch.

Notes

1. Krafft-Ebing himself points out the existence of "passive flagellation" independently from masochism. Cf. *Psychopathia Sexualis* (revised by Moll, 1963).
2. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, Engl. tr. M. Dalwood (Calderbooks, 1965), pp. 187, 188, 189.
3. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, pp. 208-9.
4. Cf. Appendix III.
5. To cut off a pigtail would not seem in this instance to imply any hostility toward the fetish; it is merely the necessary condition of its constitution. We cannot allude to hair despoilers without drawing attention to a psychiatric problem of historical importance. Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, revised by Moll, is a compendium of cases of the most abominable perversions for the use of doctors and jurists, as the subtitle indicates. Assault, crime, bestiality, disembowelling, necrophilia, etc., are all treated with the appropriate scientific detachment, without passion or value-judgment. With case 396, however, the tone changes abruptly: "a dangerous pigtail fetishist was spreading anxiety in Berlin. . . ." And this comment follows: "These people are so dangerous that they ought definitely to be subject to long-term confinement in an asylum until their eventual recovery. They do not by any means deserve unqualified leniency. . . . When I think of the immense sorrow caused to a family in which a young girl is thus deprived of her beautiful hair, I find it quite impossible to understand that such people are not confined indefinitely in an asy-

lum.... Let us hope that the new penal law will remedy this situation." Such an indignant explosion against a relatively harmless perversion seems to indicate that powerful personal motivations lay behind the author's departure from his usual scientific objectivity. When he reached case 396, the psychiatrist allowed his feelings to get the better of him — let this be a lesson to us all.

6. Letter to his brother Charles on 5th January 1869 (quoted by Wanda).
7. Maurice Blanchot, *Lautréamont et Sade* (Minuit, Collection "Arguments," 1963), p. 30.
8. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, The Complete Psychological Works (Hogarth, 1955-64), Vol. VII, p. 159.
9. "The instincts and their vicissitudes," in *Papers on Metapsychology*, Collected Papers (1946), Vol. IV, p. 71.
10. Cf. Appendix I.
11. Cf. Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht* (1861). An example of a work owing much to Bachofen's ideas is the excellent book *L'initiation sexuelle et l'évolution religieuse*, by Pierre Gordon (P.U.F., 1946).
12. Cf. Appendix I.
13. E. Bergler, *The Basic Neurosis* (New York: Grune, 1949).
14. Theodore Reik, *Masochism in Sex and Society*, Engl. tr. M.H. Beigel and G.M. Kurth (Grove Press, 1962), pp. 21, 209.
15. Pierre Klossowski, "Elements d'une étude psychanalytique sur le Marquis de Sade," *Revue de Psychanalyse*, 1933.
16. An illustration of the difference in nature between the two prostitution fantasies, the sadistic and the masochistic, may be found in Klossowski's tale *Le Souffleur*: cf. the contrast between "L'Hôtel de Longchamp" and "les lois de l'hospitalité."
17. The author's use of "the symbolic (order)" or (the order of) *the real* should be understood in the context of the fundamental distinction established by Jacques Lacan between three "orders" or dimensions: the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. (Translators' note.)
18. Cf. Jacques Lacan, *La Psychanalyse*, I, pp. 48 ff. As defined by Lacan, the mechanism of repudiation or foreclosure, *Verwerfung*, operates in the sym-

- bolic dimension and in connection with the father, more specifically "the name of the father." Lacan appears to look upon this as a primary and irreducible operation which is independent of all maternal influence; the distortion of the mother's role would on the contrary arise *as a result* of the symbolic "repudiation" of the father. Cf. however the article by a follower of Lacan, Piera Aulagnier, "Remarques sur la structure psychotique," *La Psychanalyse*, VIII, which would seem to restore to some extent to the mother an active role as symbolic agent.
19. Reik, *Masochism*, p. 18.
 20. Cf. Appendix III.
 21. Maurice Blanchot, *Lautréamont et Sade*, p. 35.
 22. Reik, *Masochism*, pp. 44-91.
 23. Cf. Appendix II.
 24. *Pagisme*: form of masochism where the subject imagines he is a page-boy attending the woman.
 25. This is the essential thesis of *Institutions Republicaines*.
 26. On the elusive character of the object of the law, cf. J. Lacan's commentaries relating both to Kant and to Sade: *Kant avec Sade* (Critique, 1963).
 27. *Civilization and its Discontents*, Complete Psychological Works, Vol. XXI, pp. 125, 128.
 28. Theodore Reik, *Masochism*. "The masochist exhibits the punishment but also its failure. He shows his submission certainly, but he also shows his invincible rebellion, demonstrating that he gains pleasure despite the discomfort.... He cannot be broken from outside. He has an inexhaustible capacity for taking a beating and yet knows unconsciously he is not licked" (pp. 145, 163).
 29. *Revue Bleue*, 1888.
 30. On the link between agrarian and incestuous themes and the role of the plough, cf. Salvador Dali's brilliant text in *Mythe tragique de l'Angélus de Millet*, Pauvert.
 31. Masoch's tale is a relatively accurate account of the life of Sabbatai Zwi. Another account may be found in Grätz, *History of the Jews*, where the hero's historical importance is emphasized.
 32. Letter to his brother Charles on January 8, 1869.

33. B. Grunberger, in "Esquisse d'une théorie psychodynamique du masochisme," *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* (1954), disagrees with Oedipal interpretations of masochism, but he replaces the "murder of the Oedipal father" by a pre-genital wish to castrate the father, regarded as the true source of masochism. In any case, he does not accept the maternal-oral etiology.

34. "The instincts and their vicissitudes" in *Papers on Metapsychology*.

35. This second explanation, which was offered by Grunberger, traces masochism back to a pre-Oedipal source.

36. These three aspects are formally distinguished in an article written in 1924, "The economic problem of masochism," but they are already indicated in the first interpretation.

37. Reik, p. 186.

38. Musil, *The Man without Qualities*. (Translator's note: this passage does not seem to be included in the English translation of this work.)

39. Klossowski, *Un si funeste désir* (N.R.F.), p. 127, and *La révolution de l'Edit de Nantes* (Minuit), p. 15.

40. *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, Complete Psychological Works, Vol. VIII.

41. Cf. Daniel Lagache, "La psychanalyse et la structure de la personnalité," *La Psychanalyse*, 6, pp. 36-47.