

WRITING SADO-MASOCHISTIC PORNOGRAPHY:

A WOMAN'S DEFENCE

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I am a writer: my sexual preference is masochism. I write books about sado-masochism because I enjoy doing it and writing about it, and because my readers enjoy reading about it. I am liberated because I do my own thing, though it paradoxically involves being the opposite of liberated for the duration of the session. Everyone needs a retreat into fantasy; this safety-valve makes him/her more competent in the real world and drastically reduces the chances that he (or she) would seek to translate the fantasy into reality.

We hear of the criminal who pleads "pornography drove me to it". He has been caught. His advisers are seeking to mitigate his sentence. Offer the Establishment a different target (a target which they are delighted to attack) and reduce the offender's culpability at the same time. Neither the accusers nor the accused enquire into the validity of the excuse because neither wants its fallacy exposed.

If a person is going to rape and/or kill, the problem was in his head long before he read a book or saw a video. But some of us take on Society's hang-ups and feel guilty about our own desires. I did not choose to be a masochist; just as people did not choose to be gay or any other variation from the normal (whatever "normal" is). Not that it would be "wrong" if one had decided to be different, but very few people can make a conscious choice about their sexual preferences.

WHAT CAUSES SADO-MASOCHISM?

There is an old theory that inclinations are formed by outside events during early life; in fact, childhood experiences seem to have little relevance. Corporal punishment, for instance, has declined, whilst the numbers of sadists and masochists increase - though it may be more accurate to say that the number of sadists and masochists prepared to acknowledge their inclinations has increased.

The only childhood factor which may be relevant in my own case (so it probably applies to many other people) is that my parents never punished me because they did not care what I did. Although I had all the material possessions that I wanted (enough to arouse the envy of my schoolfriends), I saw that more stable families insisted on certain standards of behaviour and punished flagrant transgressions. Perhaps I subconsciously associated punishment with caring. I am aware that I have always had an obsessive need for security. Yet this does not explain the sexual arousal caused by humiliation; in most cases this is far more important than pain.

I believe that our enjoyment is triggered in this way because of some individual connections in our brains, some mysterious neurons which make these people called sado-masochists find their delight in the infliction and/or receiving of pain and humiliation (in a sexual context - that *proviso* is all-important).

FUNDAMENTALISTS AND FEMINISTS

The orthodox anti-porn campaigners, motivated by religion and/or politics, have found common cause with a certain type of feminist who rigidly follows the dogma that pornography represents men exploiting women. Feminists have bound themselves into a straitjacket of their own party line orthodoxy which has become more restrictive than a Victorian whalebone corset. They insist on perpetuating the outdated view of women as victims (I have been called a traitor to my sex because I am a masochist), and these "feminists" are in effect attempting to hold back true liberation, because an admission that women are no longer oppressed would destroy their own *raison d'être*. Women producing pornography threaten the old-fashioned (but still highly vocal) feminism because female pornographers are more liberated than any feminist could contemplate (or would dare to contemplate).

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It has been suggested that feminism is a creed as obsolete as communism or fascism, and no amount of re-thinking could breathe new life into the cadaver. But it still has many supporters, so perhaps we should examine more closely the motivations of its automaton-like fanatics. Although a detailed study is beyond the terms of reference of this article, the one most obvious factor in all life-denying theologies is fear. Fear of the entity or system of belief which they see as their enemy. Feminists fear men. Naturally they decry this thing which they vituperatively label pornography because it represents men and women achieving intense pleasure by whatever mode of interaction appeals to them.

Another potent factor is envy. Trapped in their own drabness, feminists envy those who have the courage to enjoy life.

Of course there are commercial interests in all forms of sexual behaviour. There is exploitation. There would be far less of these drawbacks in a free society where sex could be openly acknowledged instead of being forced to operate in the limbo-land of public opprobrium and legal restrictions.

SADO-MASOCHISM IS NOT THE SAME AS FASCISM

Yet there is a more serious objection to sado-masochism. This is the contention that the practitioners of sado-masochistic sex, especially the dominant member of the partnership, must be of fascist inclination. I thought that the point had been dealt with when it was ascertained that people who have unusual sexual interests are likely to be of above average intelligence and therefore would not be prone to the "loser mentality" of fascism. "Fascist" is an obvious (too obvious?) classification for someone who likes to inflict pain and humiliation ... but in our scene, he/she is doing it for pleasure and also because the other party derives an intense sexual satisfaction from receiving it. Still this accusation keeps recurring.

It is an uncomfortable fact of life that people fantasise about the Nazis. Personally, I do not see how they can be considered dominant, since they created one of the most famous catch-phrases of all time: "I was only obeying orders." I do acknowledge the potency of jackboots, though I prefer to think of them as riding boots (which brings us to another type of "fascist", the Lord of the Manor indulging in blood-sports). Leather is a fetish item, but it is only one of many, and most of those articles or substances bear no unsavoury connotations.

However, fantasies have no resemblance to real life. Whatever props or costumes are used, the participants know that afterwards they are going home to tea, or to the office in the morning. In real life, the Master's power is based solely on the needs and desires of his slaves, as some of them are aware; though that power is real and can force them to extremes of pain and humiliation, perhaps even more intense because there are no threats, coercion or blackmail. The coercion is in the slaves' own natures. The only threat which the Master need ever use is the threat to free a slave.

And a successful sado-masochistic relationship has to contain a greater element of trust than any other form of human association.

THE CHOSEN ROLE

Exponents of sado-masochism claim that our practices are the most misunderstood of all. Many misconceptions exist, even in the open minds of those libertarians who feel no per-

sonal interest in SM and have not studied it. Sado-masochism has nothing to do with such standard types as the battered wife or the henpecked husband. Sado-masochism involves two or more people *choosing* to behave in a certain way which gives happiness to both/all. I emphasise the fact that every participant has chosen to be there. Compulsion, as in the standard fictional scenario of abduction, is, to say the least, impractical. A more subtle form of compulsion, as epitomised in the Trilby/Svengali mythos, may in some cases exist but it could reasonably be argued that the enthralled one gains more than she or he loses by the relationship.

The chosen role, whether dominant or submissive, is not necessarily carried over into everyday life. Outside of the sexual scene, I am not submissive; quite the opposite. Trading in pornographic books in repressive Britain is not for the faint-hearted. Yet I cannot get turned on to sex unless a cane or some other instrument of punishment figures in the encounter. Stop asking "WHY?", just lie back and enjoy it (or in my case, bend over and enjoy it).

Yet lives have been ruined by guilt. We feel guilty because Society tells us that it is wrong to be different. Our conscious mind recognises the illogicality, but the precept is embedded in the subconscious and is therefore dangerous.

GOOD SEX AND A BETTER WORLD

Psychologists discovered that people who have unusual sexual interests are likely to be of above average intelligence. So we must be able to deal with our own hang-ups. Submerge the wayward subconscious in logic. The fact that my lover, my Master, canes me does not contribute to the ills of the world, it has the reverse effect. It makes us both happier and so we are better able to do whatever individuals can do to help solve the problems of the world.

Having a good sex life (in whatever mode of expression fulfils one's needs) contributes to the development of a better balanced person. Consider the villains of the past, sublimating their frustration in conquest and genocide. If Hitler had had a real woman instead of the dimwitted and avaricious Eva, maybe the Holocaust would not have happened. I am not trivialising the worst horror in the bloodstained history of this world, but I read somewhere that, at pre-war parties, Hitler always tried to chat up Jewesses, preferring them to the insipid Aryan blondes. One can imagine how those ladies reacted to the insignificant, ill-educated man. But looking back and saying "if only ..." is an unproductive exercise.

As pointless is asking why I want to be hurt and humiliated by the man I love. I can only say that it is my greatest thrill and, when I am unable to find that fulfilment, I do not function optimally in other aspects of life. Sex is important, but it becomes the be-all and end-all of life when it is frustrated or denied; and there the trouble starts.

However, we must still be secretive. Gays came out, but sado-masochism never attained that illusory acceptance. Regularly, the gutter press prints "exposées" of "sick" sado-masochists. We shall never achieve general acceptance because ordinary folk are incapable of understanding refinements of erotica. "It is far too good for them." We are the lucky ones because we have found what turns us on, and contentment in that direction sets us free to pursue other aims.

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