

Sade's Lucretian Poem - "La Vérité" (The Truth), Translated w/ Article Attached

Post by "Charles" of December 16, 2020 at 2:55 PM

I've spent the better part of this last week finally getting to work and thus finishing my translation of Sade's Lucretian/Epicurean poem "La Vérité" (The Truth). I've just finished today, including Sade's own footnotes included at the bottom of the work. As far as I can tell, the poem has never been translated into English and subsequently published anywhere, indeed even Fleischmann, the author of the article I've attached that discusses the poem in greater depth than I can at the moment, merely pulls French excerpts of the text while describing its effects and meaning in English.

I'll post the poem & footnotes below as well as attaching them via PDF.

Oh, and if anyone here knows French ie [Martin](#) or etc. Please rate my translation in any capacity.

[Original French Version](#)

My Translation

What is this powerless and sterile chimera,
That divinity preaches to the fool
An odorous pack of imposterous priests?
Do they wish to place me among their sectators?
Ah! Never, I swear, and I will keep my word,
Never this strange and disgusting idol,
This child of delirium and derision
Will not make the slightest impression upon my heart.
Contented and glorious with my Epicureanism,
I pretend to expire within atheism
And the infamous god they wish to alarm me of

Only designed by me for blasphemy.
Yes, vain illusion, my soul detests you,
And to better convince you, I protest it here
I wish you could exist for one moment
To better enjoy the pleasure of insulting you.
What an effect that execrable ghost,
That fuck-John of God, that terrible being
That offers nothing to show the eyes or to the mind,
At which the fool dreads and the wise laugh,
Which does not paint the senses, none may understand,
Whose savage worship spreads at all times
More blood than war or an angry Themis
Could pour in a thousand years among us?[1]
I can analyze it, this deific rascal,
I can study it, my philosophical eye,
Does not see the pattern in your religions
One assembly impure of contradictions
Which surrenders to scrutiny as soon as we consider it,
That we insult with pleasure, with bravery, with outrage,
Produced by fear, born via hope,[2]
That our minds could never conceive,
Becoming turn in turn, the hands of who erected it,
An object of terror, of joy and of vertigo
That the clever impostor who announces it to humans
That reigns as he pleases over our sad destinies,

He'll paint sometimes wicked and sometimes good-natured,
Sometimes murdering us, or serving as father to us,
Always lending, his passions,
His manners, his character and his opinions:
Or the hand that forgives or the one that pierces us.
Here it is, the foolish God whose priest cradles us.
But by what right the one whose compelled by lies
Does he claim by subjecting me to the same error that befalls him?
Have I need of the God my wisdom has abjured
To render me aware of the laws of Nature?
Into her creative breast, everything moves
Acting in an instant without the aid of a motor[3]
Have I won anything from this double embarrassment?
Does this God of the Universe demonstrate the cause?
If he creates, he has created, and still here I am
Uncertain, as before, to adopt his recourse
Flee, flee from my heart, infernal deception;
Surrender, and disappear to the laws of nature
She alone did everything, you are nothing
From which her hand came out one day creating us
Faint then, you abysmal Chimera!
Flee, from these climates, and abandon the Earth
Where you will only see hardened hearts
In the lying jargon of your pitiful friends!
As for me, I agree, the horror I bear you is at the same time,

so fair, so tall, and strong,
That with pleasure, vile God, with tranquility
What do I say? With conveyance, even with pleasure.
I would be your executioner, if your frail existence
Could offer a point to my somber vengeance,
With charm my arm would reach your heart
From my disgust to rigorously prove you.
But it would be in vain to want to reach you,
And your essence escapes whoever compels it.
Unable to crush you, at least among us mortals,
I wish to overthrow your dangerous altars
And demonstrate to those that a God still captivates
That cowardly runt their weakness worships
Is not in fact meant to end passions.
O, sacred movements, proud impressions,
Exist forever as the object of our tributes,
The only ones that can provide worship to the true sages,
The only ones that delight their hearts at all times,
The only ones which nature offers happiness!
Surrender to their empire, and let their violence,
Subjugate our minds with zero resistance,
We make the laws of our pleasures with impunity
What their vote prescribes suffices our desires.[4]
Whatever the disorder their organ entails,
We must give in without any remorse and pain,

And, without examining our laws or consulting our morals,
We ardently indulge in any errors
Always dictated to us by nature.
Never respect his divine murmur;
What our vain laws strike in all lands!
His plans have always had a higher price.
What appears to man as an awful injustice
Is only the effect of his corrupt hand upon us,
And when, according to our morals, we dread failure
We only succeed in welcoming it better[5]
Those sweet actions what you call crimes,
These excesses fools believe illegitimate,
Are the only deviations which please his eyes,
These vices, the penchants which delight her better;
What she burns in us is never that sublime;
Counselling the horror, she offers the victim
Let us hit her without shuddering, and never fear
Having given in to it, committing some crimes
Let's examine the lightning in his bloody hands
It bursts out by chance, the sons and fathers,
The temples, brothels, the devout, the bandits.
Everything pleases nature: it needs crime.
We serve her even in committing crime
The further we extend our hand, the more she esteems it.[6]
Use the powerful rights she has exercised over us

By indulging without cessation the most monstrous tastes.[7]

None are defended by their laws of homicide,

Incest, violence, theft, parricide,

The pleasures of Sodom and Sapphic games,

Anything that harms a man or plunges him to the grave,

Is, let's be certain, only one way to please him.

By overthrowing the gods, let us steal their thunder

And destroy with this sparkling lightning

Everything that displeases us in a frightening world.

Let us spare nothing: especially his villainies

Serve as an example of our darkest prowesses.

There is nothing sacred: everything within this universe

Must bend under the yoke of our fiery breadth.[8]

The more we multiply, the infamy will vary,

The better we sense it in our strengthened soul,

Doubling down, encouraging our cynical trials,

Step by step, each day we drive towards crime.

After the many years, if her voice recalls us,

By mocking the gods, we return to her

To reward us his Crucible expects us;

What took his power, gives it back to us

There, everything reproduces, everything regenerates;

Big and small, the dirty woman is the mother,

And we are always so precious to her eyes,

Monsters and scoundrels that are good and virtuous.

Notes from the Author

[1] It's estimated that over fifty million individuals are casualties caused by religious wars or massacres. Is there a single one among them that is worth the blood of a bird? And should philosophy not arm itself from all places to exterminate a God in whose favor we immolate so many beings who are better than him, is there no assurance that nothing is more detestable than a God, no idea more stupid, more dangerous, and more extravagant?

[2] The idea of a God was never born in men only when they feared or hoped ; it is to this alone that we must attribute the almost unanimity of men on this chimera. Man, universally unhappy, had reasons for fear and hope in all places and at all times, and everywhere he invoked the cause that tormented him, everywhere he hoped for the end of his evils. By invoking the being that he supposed the cause of it, too ignorant or too gullible to feel that the misfortune inevitably annexed his existence had no other cause than the very nature of that existence, he created chimeras which he renounced as soon as study and experience had made him feel its uselessness. Fear made the gods and hope sustained them.

[3] The lightest study of nature convinces us of the eternity of movement in her, and this careful examination of her laws makes us see that nothing perishes in her and that she is constantly regenerated by the sole effect of what we believe that offends her or that seems to destroy her works. But if destruction is necessary, Death Becomes an empty word : there are only transmutations and no extinction. But the perpetuity of the movement in it annihilates any idea of an engine.

[4] Render us indiscriminate to whatever passions inspire us, and we will always be happy. Let us scorn the opinion of men : it is only the fruit of their prejudices. And as for our conscience, let us never dread its voice when we have been able to relax it: the habit readily reduces it to silence and soon metamorphoses pleasure into the most unpleasant memories. Consciousness is not the organ of nature; let us not deceive ourselves, it is only that of prejudices: let us overcome them, and consciousness will soon be at our order. Let us ask the savage, ask them if she is blaming him for anything. When he kills his fellow man and devours him, nature seems to speak in him ; consciousness is mute ; he conceives what fools call crime, he executes it ; everything is silent, everything is quiet, and he has served nature by the action that best pleases this bloodthirsty nature whose crime sustains the energy and which feeds only on crimes.

[5] And how could we be guilty when we are only obeying the impressions of nature ? Men, and the laws that are the work of men, may regard us as such, but nature never. Only by resisting her could we be guilty in her eyes. This is the only possible crime, the only one we should refrain from.

[6] As soon as it is shown that the crime pleases him, the man who will serve him best will necessarily be the one who will give the most extension or gravity to his crimes, observing that the extension pleases him even better than the gravity, because murder or parricide, whatever

difference men establish in it, are absolutely the same in his eyes. But the one who has committed the most disorder in the universe will always please him much more than the one who has stopped at the first step. May this truth put at ease those who let go of their passions, and may they convince themselves that they never serve nature better than by multiplying their crimes.

[7] These tastes are really useful and dear to nature only as much as they spread, as they spread what men call disorder. The more they cut, undermine, deteriorate, destroy, the more valuable they are to him. Her eternal need for destruction serves as evidence for this assertion, so let us destroy or prevent it from being born, if we are to be useful to her plans. Thus the masturbator, the murderer, the infanticide, the arsonist, the sodomite, are men according to his desires and those whom we must therefore imitate.

[8] To impose obstacles or barriers in the road of crime would be visibly outrageous the laws of nature that indiscriminately delivers us all the beings with which it surrounds us without ever motivating an exception, because it ignores our chains and our bonds, that all these so-called destructions are zero in its eyes, that the brother who sleeps with his sister does no more harm than the lover who sleeps with his mistress and that the father who immolates his son does no more outrage nature than the individual who murders a man unknown on the high road. None of these differences exist in her eyes : what she wants is crime ; no matter the hand that commits it or the breast on which it is committed.

Post by “Cassius” of December 16, 2020 at 4:03 PM

Thank you Charles! Maybe we should let a brief period go by to see if anyone has any suggestions or corrections but after that we ought to post this to Facebook, Reddit, etc if this is the only English translation available.

Post by “Joshua” of December 16, 2020 at 7:53 PM

I've only just read through it once Charles, but thank you for your hard work! I'll return to it in a day or two for rereading and comments.