



The Marquis de Sade: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

John Phillips

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This book introduces the Marquis de Sade as writer and philosopher to new readers, offering concise but comprehensive surveys of his most controversial works, based on contemporary theoretical approaches. The style is lively and accessible without sacrificing detail or depth.

An introductory chapter discusses Sade's life and the links between that and his work. Relying on the many letters he wrote to his wife and lawyer from prison and on other authentic, contemporary evidence, it attempts to disentangle this life from the various myths that Sade's demonic reputation has engendered throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This initial chapter also reviews the critical corpus or reception of the work since Sade's times up to the present, and reassesses his status as an extra-canonical writer. The following six chapters provide broad coverage of Sade's main intellectual and creative activities, showing how all can be seen as the expression of a veritable cult of the body, a veneration of the physical, and the sexual as channels of transcendence.

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