

Glossary of Terms, Phrases, and References made in Weiss's *Marat/Sade*

(Compiled by Joanna Maselli, August 2007; last revised September 2007)

NOTE: This list is ordered by appearance in text, and terms, phrases, or references are grouped according to the scene in which they appear in the original uncut version of the script.

THE ASYLUM OF CHARENTON

An asylum located outside the borders of Paris. In the 18th century, asylums did not house strictly those who were labeled as mentally insane; the asylum was also a place to house political prisoners, criminals, or people with long term illnesses -- generally those whom society would rather forget about. One could also check oneself into an asylum voluntarily in order to escape from "normal" society.

1808

In 1808, the Napoleonic wars were raging in various parts of Europe. There was a Franco-Spanish alliance during the years between 1796-1808, but in 1808 the Spanish began to revolt against the French, who were currently ruling Spain. During this time, Sade was still imprisoned in Charenton, and there is evidence that he staged plays with the inmates during his stay there.

1.2

the Declaration of Human Rights

One of the many anachronisms scattered throughout Weiss's play in order to link the events and historical/political climate of the French Revolution to a more contemporary time period (specifically WWII). The Declaration of Human Rights did not come into existence until 1948, and is concerned with protecting the rights and freedoms of all humans, regardless of sex, ethnicity, or religion. The Declaration of Human Rights became the basis for many international laws, and are meant to be applied universally to all human beings. No declaration like it had ever been created before. It is likely that Columrier "mistakenly" mentions the Declaration of Human Rights when he means to speak of The Declaration of the Rights of Man (created during the French Revolution and explained in 1.15 below).

1.4

Caen

A city located in a region of France called "Normandy" (famous site of "D-Day" battle of WWII). During the French Revolution, Caen was one of the major sites in the anti-Parisian "Federalist revolt". On June 30, 1793, Caen was declared as headquarters for the "Central Assembly of Resistance to Oppression" after several Girondist leaders (Buzot, Louvet, and Petion) escaped to the city of Caen after escaping house arrest. Caen was a site of division and disagreement, with many different political groups struggling against one another for power and control of the city.

Girondist (a.k.a. "Girondin")

A member of the political "party" known as the "Girondists"; broadly described as moderate republicans. The Girondists (like all other political "parties" of the French Revolution) were not a clearly defined or cohesive group -- they were aligned with and opposed to many other parties throughout the duration of the Revolution, and these alignments and oppositions changed often, flowing into one another. The Girondists were among those parties generally grouped together and referred to as leaders in the "Federalist revolt." Their main point of contention with the political parties emerging from Paris stem from the different values of the "rural" populations (versus those of the "urban" population of Paris).

1.5

the Revolution

Refers to a period in French history and the events that took place in that period: 1789-1815. This period includes the storming of the Bastille (1789), the period of "Terror" during which a republic was

established and the royal family was executed (1792-1794), the fall of the Revolutionary leader Robespierre (1794), and the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte (1799), the beginning of Napoleon's empire (1804) and his fall from power in (1815). Generally seen as a response to an a result of Enlightenment period (18th century) philosophy.

the old king's execution

The “old king” is Louis XVI, who was tried for treason and executed by guillotine in 1793 (after attempting to escape with his wife Marie Antoinette, who was also executed) as a conspirator against the Revolution.

aristocrat

A term referring specifically to a social class made up strictly of nobles (those who were born into or had bought a court title). The word literally means “rule by the best.”

the Bastille

A 14th century prison built into the city wall of Paris; used to house criminals and political prisoners in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Bastille fell on July 14, 1789, which is now a celebrated French holiday. See “the Revolution” (under 1.5) above.

1.6

Rousseau

An important figure in the European “Enlightenment” period (18th century), which was a period of intellectual exploration in many fields of human knowledge. Rousseau is grouped in with other intellectuals (including Voltaire) collectively referred to as “the *philosophes*” who were concerned with discovering what they believed to be universal laws which governed all creation, including human society. Rousseau’s theories led to a questioning of the major institutions of Western Europe, namely the church, the monarchy, and the aristocracy. Rousseau was a writer rather than an activist, but his writings were and are still credited as a major influence on Revolutionary theory and action, particularly The Declaration of the Rights of Man.

1.8

Tumbrel

This is a term given broadly to any kind of open cart, but it also has specific connotations which relate to the executions of the French Revolution, as it was used to carry condemned persons to the guillotine.

1.11

bourgeois

A term often used as a synonym for “middle-class”; this is a social group who are distinct from both the peasantry and the gentry, usually from a city or “burgh” (the origin of the word).

1.12

Damiens

Attempted to assassinate Louis XV in January 1757 during the period of civil strife between two opposing sects of French Catholicism: the Jesuits and the Jansenists (Damiens was part of latter group).

Louis the Fifteenth

Grandfather to doomed king Louis XVI, and often blamed for the decline of the monarchy’s popularity and authority due to the financial crises caused by various wars and a steady loss of French colonies.

"Citizen" a.k.a Citoyen(ne)

A term which is meant to connote both the privileges and responsibilities of a member of community; evokes the term “Comrade” as used in Communist discourse.

last September (1792)

Reference to The September Massacres, and *les septembriseurs*. After the fall of the monarchy in August 1792, the prisons became full with counter-revolutionary conspirators. Fearing a prisoner uprising, these people were executed in September of 1792, mainly over the course of 5 days. The terms “September Massacres” and *les septembriseurs* have come to connote merciless bloodlust in counter-revolutionary discourse.

1.13

centime

One hundredth of one franc (the currency used in France at this time).

1.15

the declaration of the rights of man

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen is an important document created during the French Revolution by the National Assembly (the provisional governing body at the time). It shares some common ground with the American Declaration of Independence, and posits the sovereign authority of the people and their will. This document is where the famous principles of the French Revolution -- “liberty, equality, and fraternity” -- were established as paramount to any government or legal system in France.

1.17

Marat's to be tribune and dictator

“Tribune” refers to an elected official with power to vote on or propose legislation. “Dictator” refers to someone with more absolute power, and in many ways this concept of rule was opposed to the ideals of the Revolution, and the idea of Marat as dictator is meant to cause unease.

a layabout from Corsica sorry I mean Sardinia

Corsica is the birthplace of Napoleon.

Barbaroux and Buzot

See explanations of “Caen” and “Girondist” (in 1.4) above.

“Already the English lie off Dunkirk and Toulon / The Prussians / [...] / The Spaniards have occupied Roussillon / Paris / [...] / Mayence is surrounded by the Prussians / Conde and Valenciennes have fallen to the English / [...] / To the Austrians / The Vendee is up in arms”

Many other European powers saw the French Revolution as an opportunity to invade or overtake France, or at least some regions of France, and hence many battles between the French and other European nations broke out during this time. Duperret's "confusion" has him make mix-ups which link various battles of the French Revolution with others from the Napoleonic Wars and from WWII: another anachronism in Weiss's play which links historical references with more contemporary situations (contemporary for Sade's 1808 audience and for Weiss's 1964 audience).

1.18

Napoleon

Emperor of France from 1804 to 1814, he reorganized the legal system and was responsible for the Napoleonic Wars, which were not popular with all French citizens, and made France the enemy of many other European nations at this time. He began to take power over France when elected in 1799. He was eventually abdicated in 1814, was exiled, returned briefly, and then was exiled a final time.

franc notes

Reference to paper money, which was introduced to France during the Revolution.

1.21**Bas**

It is not clear if “Bas” is supposed to refer to the name of an actual person who worked with/for Marat, or if Marat's call for “Bas” is simply a call to an assistant of some sort, since the word “bas” in French means “base” or “low.”

1.26**charged thirty-six livres**

A “livre” is an old French monetary unit, equal to the value of one pound in silver.

Candide

Published by Voltaire in 1759, this philosophical story follows the young, innocent heroin, Candide, as she ventures optimistically into a world of cruel misfortunes. A satire of the Church, the state, philosophy, and the professions, this tale ends happily when the now impoverished Candide and her equally unfortunate long-lost lover settle down and join a modest group of friends who become small communal estate owners and workers.

2.27**the National Assembly**

Elective legislative body of during the French Revolution in the years 1789 to 1791. See “the declaration of the rights of man” (in 1.15) and “franc notes” (in 1.18) above. A new assembly was elected in 1792 to serve as provisional governing body, but their function became nearly null in 1799 when Napoleon Bonaparte took power.

the “Jacobites” a.k.a Jacobins

The Jacobins have gained a reputation over time as ruthless radicals, the name was given to a Parisian political club which was established in 1789 who met at the church of St. Jacques to extoll their radical ideals of extreme democratic and egalitarian reform. Before the King’s escape to Varennes in 1791, the Jacobins were liberal constitutional monarchists, but the monarchists (and their values) fled the group in 1791. This group included the Revolutionary leader Robespierre. The Jacobins were strongly opposed by the Girondists (see 1.4).

Robespierre

See “Jacobites” above. Robespierre was also a major figure in the National Assembly and helped shape the Declaration of 1791 (see “the declaration of the rights of man” in 1.15 above). Robespierre was an advocate for the ideals of Rousseauvian democracy (see “Rousseau” in 1.6 above) and a self-declared supporter of Enlightenment ideals, he also promoted standards of equality which extended beyond religion and ethnicity (not just class). His popularity declined after reaching the peak of his popularity as a leader of the “republican revolution” of 1792 and as a member of the Committee of Public Safety in 1793 (and as such, many of the executions carried out during the “Terror” are credited to him); in 1794 he was arrested and executed by his enemies.

Danton

Elected to the provisional government as Minister of Justice in 1792, he encouraged the capture and arrest of anti-revolutionists, which led to the September Massacres. He was removed from a position on the Committee of Public Safety in July 1793 because he advocated peaceful negotiations with the countries

currently attacking France; his motives for advocating such a solution were questioned, and he was met with suspicion by other Revolutionary leaders and activists. Danton was murdered by the guillotine in 1794 at the wish of the Committee of Public Safety, due to fears that he could stir up an oppositional party in response to his recent exile from the provisional government.

the emigres

This term, when used in the context of the French Revolution, refers specifically to members of the aristocracy who fled sites of Revolutionary uprising and violence, fearing imprisonment and/ or execution. Some emigres were eventually found and executed, and they were generally despised by all Revolutionary groups, who regarded them as cowards and traitors.

Necker Lafayette Talleyrand

Three major figures in and around the time of the French Revolution. Necker's dismissal from his post of Director General of French Finances is credited as one of the main causes of the riot which resulted in the storming of the Bastille, and the Revolutionists forced Louis XVI to reinstate Necker during the early days of the Revolution. Lafayette was a French soldier who participated in the American Revolution, but became a defender of the aristocracy during the French Revolution (as part of the National Guard) and fled France for fear of prosecution when he was tried for treason after the monarchy was defeated. Talleyrand was instrumental in the coup which brought Napoleon to power, but he eventually resigned from his post as Foreign Minister in order to negotiate for Napoleon's deposition, only to become the leader of the government afterwards in 1814 and restore the monarchy of France.

2.28

a slow Carmagnole

A dance which was popular in France in the 18th century, and became a celebratory dance of the French Revolution -- more notably, it was often danced in celebration of an execution, particularly during the Terror.

2.30

Petion, Louvet, Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonne

See "Caen" and "Girondist" (in 1.4 above)

Bibliography

Cobb, Richard, ed. Voices of the French Revolution. Topsfield: Salem House, 1988.

Furet, Francois, and Mona Ozouf. A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard U, 1989.

Doyle, William. The Oxford History of the French Revolution. New York: Oxford U, 1989.

Carlyle, Thomas. The French Revolution: a history. London: Chapman and Hall, 1837.

Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Brock University. 17 September 2007 <<http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.catalogue.library.brocku.ca:80/views/GLOBAL.html?authstatuscode=200>>

Assemblée nationale. 16 September 2007 <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr>>.