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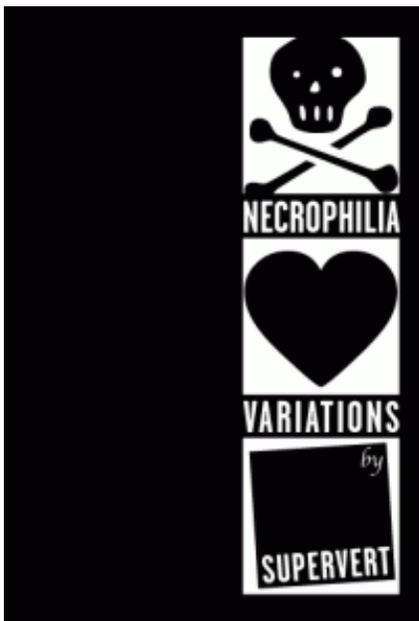
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SUPERVERT, Author of Necrophilia Variations

August 20th, 2010 Jessica Brown



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It's especially rare for me these days to be able to sit down and read a book entirely for pleasure, and even rarer to come into contact with the author afterwards. Suffice it to say, [Necrophilia Variations \(http://darkmarkets.com/2010/07/necrophilia-variations-by-supervert/\)](http://darkmarkets.com/2010/07/necrophilia-variations-by-supervert/) has earned a place near and dear to my goofy heart since I first dove into the book earlier this summer, and I'm incredibly fortunate to have been able to pick the brain, at least in some small capacity, of the responsible party.

In addition to *Necrophilia Variations*, Supervert has also written *Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish*, *Perversity Think Tank* and introductions to several works, including a new edition of Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*. The following conversation revolves around anonymity, art and the nature of perversion. Enjoy.

How did the name **Supervert** come about, and what does the

32C signify?

Prior to founding **Supervert** in 1999, I collaborated with my close friend Eric Swenson on an enterprise we had named **Necro Enema Amalgamated**. Together we produced a successful series of art CD-ROMs called **BLAM!**, the last of which was released in the fall of 1998.

As the collaboration neared its end, I realized that it had taught me a great deal. First, I learned that I liked working under a pseudonym. It was liberating because it prevented me from feeling any obligation to synthesize the various factions of my personality. Instead I could splinter them off, give them names, allow them to pursue their varied courses. Second, I learned that a pseudonym was useful as a brand name, an identifier, a hook. Third, I learned that I was ambivalent about fame. I didn't like being recognized on the street. I liked being anonymous because anonymity safeguards your freedom — disinvents interruption, surveillance, and self-consciousness. Fourth, I learned that it is practical to have a business structure behind one's creative endeavors. It helps with distributors, taxes, and so on.

For these reasons, I wanted to continue as an impersonal entity — a *nom de plume*, a brand, a business. I loved the name **Necro Enema Amalgamated**, but it would have been wrong to transform **NEA** into a vehicle for the things I wanted to do on my own. "**Supervert**" seemed like the perfect moniker and perhaps even a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What is your background?

I was born in 1967. I went to college at New York University then lived in Paris for a bit (on the *rue des Mauvais Garçons* — *Bad Boys Street*). I returned to attend graduate school at Yale, where I earned a master's degree in the history of art before dropping out of the PhD program. For a few years I wrote art criticism for the New York glossies. I cofounded **Necro Enema Amalgamated** in 1991 and then moved on to **Supervert**. My plan has been to write six **Supervert** books — I've now done three — then retire with my obsessions.

Have you always been interested in things that are generally seen as depraved?

Yes, always. When I was being pushed out the birth canal, I managed to lift my head and give my mother a chomp on the clitoris. Nothing has changed since.

How have your friends and family reacted to your work?

Friends have been very supportive — but this worries me and I privately wish that they would be more critical. A writer, like a criminal, should be wary of his accomplices. Their praise is likely to be exaggerated and their criticism softened. Their motives may be good for friendship but it's bad for art.

As for family, I imagine that few writers address their works to their parents, siblings, or children. Perhaps one function of writing is to serve as a line of flight from the nuclear family. Arthur Rimbaud wrote his way out of his mother's clutches, and Sylvia Plath abandoned her children not just through suicide but through poetry.

How much time do you spend researching a subject before writing your fiction?

I'm not sure I would call my work "fiction," but that's not an answer to your question.

The idea for *Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish* had germinated in my head for a long while. For years I would note references to alien life in the philosophy I was reading. Once I decided to write the book, I supplemented these notes with additional research. This was before the advent of tools such as Google Scholar and Amazon's "Look Inside the Book" functionality, so I had to read a lot and scan even more. Ultimately I was disappointed not to be able to include Nietzsche and Heidegger, but otherwise it was a decent roster of philosophers that I marshaled into the book.

Necrophilia Variations only required research of the heart. *Perversity Think Tank* springs from research that I performed

with no intent to gather it in a book. After a while, I realized that not just the research but the experience of blogging about sexual perversion on a daily basis demanded a synthesis or a broad view. I wasn't happy to remain mired in the details of individual acts of perversity. I wanted to understand perversity as such.

When and why did you come up with the idea of creating a compendium of unorthodox sexual acts as reported by news sources?

PervScan was born in 2003 when I realized that a blog could be something more than a personal diary. I had been reading technology blogs, and it occurred to me that I could dedicate a blog to sexual perversion. I envisioned it as running log of case studies, a work-in-progress psychopathia sexualis. At the time, this was a novel concept — there were few sex blogs — and I worried about finding enough content.

As it turned out, there was an overwhelming amount of content, hundreds of sex crimes a day. This became a problem in itself. First, it could be difficult to find “good” or novel stories among the common ones — rapes, indecent exposure, gays arrested for cruising in public places, and so forth. Second, there was a constant risk of desensitization — another guy arrested for fucking his neighbor's dog? Yawn. Third, it was dispiriting to see how much real human suffering lay behind so many sex crimes. Sometimes I would receive emails from people who had been involved in incidents I had written up. It was impossible not to be moved by these outpourings, which were often accompanied by pleas for names or entire posts to be removed from the site. Caught between desensitization and commiseration, I sometimes felt like the narrator of Nathanael West's brilliant novel *Miss Lonelyhearts*.

Of all unusual and unpopular practices, why did you choose exophilia and necrophilia?

It is difficult to articulate the “why” of a choice to write about something. A few nights ago I had a dream in which a friend confessed to some eccentricities in her sexuality. She was seeking some sort of approval, which I gave her. I then informed her about a sexual pathology called “anusitis diametes” — a made-up condition, fabricated in the workshop of sleep. When I woke up, I marveled that my brain had invented this scientific-sounding term without my having the slightest idea what it meant.

Writing is a similar process. Something appears in my head and a book is the record of my attempt to fathom it. This was especially true of *Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish*. I didn't choose the subject so much as it forced itself on me. I made up the term “exophilia,” but it was to describe something already flourishing like a tumor in my brain.

I saw an “alien” blow-up doll at Adult Mart one time. Do you think Mercury de Sade would have been happy with that, or would it not have been authentic enough for him?

Human or alien, a doll is a poor substitute — unless one has a fetish for dolls.

I also saw a blow-up sheep once, but decided that was just not something I wanted to ruminate on. Do you ever find yourself shying away from writing down a particular idea or utilizing a particular theme, and if so how do you get beyond that?

There are several types of ideas that are, so to speak, unthinkable. There are ideas that bore — we shy away from them because they offer nothing, like a blank canvas. There are ideas that repel — we shy away from them because they disgust, like snot or excrement. Then there are ideas that threaten. This is a special category because these ideas have a certain intensity, they seem to be personalized for us, speak directly to our fears, pose a danger to our beliefs, our self-conception, our sanity. These are the ideas that psychoanalysis confronts (“So you want to sleep with your mother or father, hm?”) and that writers and artists often tackle in their work. I presume this is the sort of idea to which your question refers — a dangerous idea.

No, I don't shy away from these. To be clear, though, my work does not attempt to shock (i.e. explore ideas that threaten society) or to plumb my own psychopathologies (i.e. explore ideas that threaten me). My work attempts to fathom ideas that force themselves on me. I can't shy away from them. I can only exorcise them.

Is there anything that does personally offend you?

Bad manners. Nietzsche defined philosophy as the ability to reverse perspectives, and the same could be said of courtesy. It is a matter of thinking the thoughts of others — the people around you, their needs, their movements, their reasons for doing what they do. A philosopher who lacks such an ability to get outside his own head can't be much of a thinker, thus courtesy is a good indicator of a genuinely philosophical temperament.

Supervert's books are extremely attractive in their simplicity, so much so that every design choice seems to have some sort of methodically chosen significance. Is that all done in-house, or are there editors, artists, etc brought in to pull everything together?

Yes, there is method to the madness, and everything is done in-house. Supervert's books are conceived, written, designed, funded, and distributed by a lone individual. For better or worse, this gives them a certain authenticity. No Supervert production has been compromised by editors, marketers, focus groups, or Hollywood backing. Each book represents the most I can possibly put into it — which is another way of saying that it's the only way I can empty myself, exorcise the impulse behind the book, arrive at a sort of serene blankness untroubled by ideas.

What do you think about the American culture of celebrity worship? Would that be classifiable as a perversion?

Celebrity worship is very much the norm. Perversity is to turn away from it, to eschew the spotlights in favor of the obscure and the shadowy.

While reading ETSF, I was impressed with how you applied mathematics to human sexuality. How did the idea of sexual preferences as sets come about, and should I feel dirty for having that null set tattoo, seeing as how I'm not actually a part of the set it represents within the context of the book?

That is a funny question, and you know that I'm enamored with the thought of your null set tattoo. You should send me a picture of it.

As for set theory and its function in *Extraterrestrial Sex Fetish*, I can only say that it seemed like a perfectly logical way to approach fetishism. It is unfortunate that the demands of scholarship discourage real mathematicians from examining the perversions from the unique vantage points of their specializations. I often think, for instance, that to contemplate perversion is like trying to determine the value of pi: no matter how far you carry the operation, you never quite reach the end of it. Henry Miller once wrote that "we are the last decimal point of sexual calculation" — but clearly he wasn't thinking of the perversions, which may well be incalculable.

What do you like to read for pleasure?

Over the years, my reading has been annexed by my writing. What I mean is that I have come to find it difficult to read in a disinterested way, with no object other than pleasure. The writer in me is always there, on the lookout for knowledge or inspiration. I do derive pleasure from texts, but I derive the most pleasure when I learn something or when I find myself roused to stop reading and start writing. It's sort of like reading is porn and writing is sex. The first can be fun, but it's a poor substitute for the second.

For fans of your work, what would you recommend as further reading?

I would recommend the authors from whom I have derived much inspiration: the Marquis de Sade, Charles Baudelaire, Gustave Flaubert, Arthur Rimbaud, and William Burroughs.

Among contemporaries, I would recommend my friend Carl Weissner's *Death in Paris*, which is freely available at RealityStudio.org, as well as the work of Savoy Books, particularly David Britton's *Motherfuckers: The Auschwitz of Oz*. Recently I also read Stéphane Velut's novel *Cadence*, which is an excellent book — Kafkian in its style and lurid in its

subject matter. Velut is a neurosurgeon who leaves one thinking that every writer should approach his words with the precision required to operate on the brain.

Supervert's main page can be found at [Supervert.com \(http://www.supervert.com\)](http://www.supervert.com), with links to his various works.



Posted By: Jessica Brown

Website: <http://alookatabook.blogspot.com/>

[\(http://alookatabook.blogspot.com/\)](http://alookatabook.blogspot.com/) Jessica Brown is a lifelong fan of horror film and fiction and resides near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, only a few short miles from Living Dead ground zero. Her short fiction has been featured in Pill Hill Press' Twisted Legends collection, Books of the Dead Press' Best New Zombie Tales anthology and in several Library of the Living Dead collections. Her first novel, In the Teahouse, is slated for publication through Library of Horror Press. Be on the lookout for it in the near future.

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