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(b) Preferred panel: no. 6; possibly no. 18.

(c) A 'THIRD SOPHISTIC'? – The Tradition of the Physis-Sophists in the Enlightenment Thought of de Sade and Nietzsche.

(d) 30 minutes

(e) Outline:

Contrary to a widely held view, not all of the ancient sophists treated the *nomos-physis* relation as an *antithesis*. Protagoras, for one, apparently treated it as the *nomos-physis distinction*, upholding the claims of *nomos* against the extreme ones made for *physis* by sophists such as Thrasymachos, Kritias, and Kallikles. It is therefore advisable to distinguish between the latter as the “*physis-sophists*” and such thinkers as Protagoras as the “*nomos-sophists*”. The “*nomos-sophists*” were siding with *nomos* on the grounds that human nature, *ajnrwpivnh fuvsi~*, was predicated on it. They held *nomos* and justice (*to; divkaion*) to be the true rulers in the civilized *koinwniva politikhv (tovn te novmon kai; to; divkaion ejmbasileuvein toi`~ ajnrwvpoi~*, Anon. *Iambl.*, DK 89 6.28). Theirs was a balanced view of the *nomos-physis* relation as opposed to the extremist view of the *physis-sophists* who, extolling *physis*, denigrated *nomos* as “the tyrant over *physis*”(Kritias).

Contrasting briefly both branches of the *prwvth sofistikhv*, the argument will then zero in on the *physis-sophists*, with the focus on the doctrines of Kallikles. These have, as E.R.Dodds has shown in the Appendix to his *Gorgias* commentary, informed many of Nietzsche’s basic doctrines; I shall add to Dodds’ observations how Nietzsche has given them a vitalist-Dionysiac spin, and how this accounts for his very complex, if not contorted, relation to the Enlightenment. My paper will further trace the Calliclean *physis*-discourse in the enlightenment thought of the Marquis de Sade who emerges as the Kallikles of the French Enlightenment, and then relate his *physis*-discourse to that of Nietzsche. As both thinkers have decisively shaped postmodernism, and in particular its philosophical wing, poststructuralism, the paper will end with a brief consideration of the signs that suggest that we might be in the midst of a “Third Sophistic”.

