

La Surjouissance

The Marquis de Sade's Method to Overcome Reduced Space

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## ABSTRACT

Reduced space is an important theme in the works of the Marquis de Sade including his epic novel *The New Justine* and his pornographic performance piece *Philosophy in the Bedroom* including the political/social treatise "Frenchmen, yet another effort is needed if you want to be a Republic". Through out his life Sade attempted to overcome reduction of space with writing. Tragically, his writing often prolonged the reduction of his space by sending him to or keeping him in prison. It is my theory that his violent, pornographic writing style is "une écriture de surjouissance" or "a writing of over-coming". Surjouissance is my theory for Sade's method, based on textual analysis of Sade's main works, that he combines through his syntactic structure, narrative voice, and semantic themes the orgasm of the mind represented by philosophical discourse with the orgasm of the body represented textually by orgiastic scenes and the language of orgasm to reach an ultimate state of complete freedom. In the political pamphlet "Frenchmen yet another effort..." Sade attempts to set this theory of surjouissance, or this transcendent state reached through the combination of physical and philosophical orgasm, as the political foundation for a new republic. Does he succeed in creating a viable political formula for a sustainable republic? My argument states absolutely not. His aristocratic elitism narrows his voice. But he does propose the combination of sexual, literary, and intellectual freedoms as a possible polemic against any form of reduced space.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Pharoahe and to the Marquis

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## CHAPTER 1

### FAUT-IL ENSEIGNER SADE?

Simone de Beauvoir asked the question “Faut-il brûler Sade?”. I will ask the question, “Faut-il enseigner Sade?” Is there an academic purpose to his violent pornography? Is there a worthwhile literary message to eating hearts, fucking bodies broken on racks hidden in secret vaults in the cavernous dungeons of abbeys buried within forests where wild desire shouts and runs from the light? Yes there is a purpose: a message of revolt inspired by the disgust of a 1000 years of tyranny. I hope to enlighten this message hidden behind the darkest imagery ever written.

To answer the question raised by Simone de Beauvoir, no Sade was not burned, anymore. François Ost in his book *Sade et La Loi* confirms that “Sade, n’a pas été brûlé, et on le lit. Sade est en libre accès et à la portée de tous en collection de poche”<sup>1</sup>. After the destruction of his works and their subsequent banning throughout the 19th century, after the case of J.J. Pauvert in the 1950’s who was fined for publishing Sade, in 2004 I could walk into the Samaritaine and buy *Les 120 Journées de Sodome*.

This is where I empathize with Sade. I believe as an artist the best emotion one can provoke in the audience is disgust. Admiration or acceptance can be

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<sup>1</sup> Ost 59

feigned or bought. Disgust is always pure and never fake. When one evokes disgust, one has succeeded in moving the audience. The best response the audience can give is to get up and scream or get up and leave. When that happens you know you have succeeded in creating an emotion.

My purpose for writing this thesis is clear. I want to publish and teach a class on Sade. I feel his work is so rich. After progressing through the shit, the blood, and the cum, one finds an important social message of revolution. Coupled with this message is a method that is above simple pornography; a method that could achieve complete freedom through revolution; a method of *surjouissance*.

After reading the voluminous critical literature associated with his works I realize I am not the only scholar who has found an interest in Sade and his universe full of contradictions, full of desires, full of crimes, and full of shit, literally.

The most influential minds of the 19th and 20th centuries like Baudelaire, Freud, Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Hitler et al., these minds who shaped our modern world, one can find the “Charogne” of Baudelaire, the “Eros/Thanatos” drives of Freud, the “natural selection” of Darwin, the noble hierarchy necessary for Nietzsche’s “overman”, the class struggle of Marx, and for Hitler “je ne propose cependant ni massacres ni exportations; toutes ces horreurs sont trop loin de mon âme pour oser les concevoir une minute”<sup>2</sup>. One can find many of the most

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<sup>2</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 202

important theories of the modern era already proposed by Sade. Therefore his works are worth analyzing . One must have the courage to enter into his world of “déraison” in order to enlighten the truths hiding in the darker corners.

The popular image of Sade is very negative. When I say I am writing my thesis on the Marquis de Sade, the public usually responds with ignorance or disgust. Ignorance is forgivable because they simply have never heard of him. The disgust demonstrates his misunderstood legacy. The word “sadism”, defined by Krafft-Ebbing in his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, has become too restrictive of a term to represent the Marquis’ revolutionary style.

The term “sadism” leads the public to shun his work. In his *Psychopathia Sexualis*, psychologist Richard von Krafft-Ebbing defines sadism as:

Named from the notorious Marquis de Sade whose obscene novels treat of lust and cruelty. In French literature the expression “sadism” has been applied to this perversion. Sadism is the experience of sexually pleasureable sensations (including orgasm) produced by acts of cruelty and bodily punishment. It may also consist of an innate desire to humiliate, hurt, wound, or even destroy others in order to create sexual pleasure in oneself.<sup>3</sup>

This summary of his literary purpose and method is too literal. “Sadism” promotes pleasure as the ultimate goal for Sade’s pornographic violence. With this thesis I hope to prove that this characterization of the Marquis de Sade’s literature is too restrained. The term “surjouissance” better represents his work because there is a message beyond the “experience of sexually pleasurable sensations” and that his method of writing actually represents a political and sexual revolt, an

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<sup>3</sup> Krafft-Ebbing 79



overcoming against reduced space: “avec du courage et de la patience on surmonte les plus grands obstacles”<sup>4</sup>.

The term “sadism” is misleading as it causes the public and academia to denounce his work based on a counter productive image. The public says he loved the fetish of S&M bondage sex. He loved torturing and abducting young girls for orgies in his castle. He wrote pornographic violence without intellectual merit.

I respond that these accusations are justified. All these characteristics of him, the man, are correct to some extent. However I do believe that beyond the pornography, beyond the shit eating, the corpse fucking, the child immolation, the repetitive narration, the absurd escalation of pornographic invention, beyond all this is a message worth uncovering, analyzing, liberating, and ultimately publishing for the purpose of enlightening and educating.

Education is central within his works. As Philippe Roger says “*La philosophie dans le boudoir, les Cent Vingts Journées, Justine, Juliette...*présentent ce trait en commun: on n’y cesse d’y faire la leçon”<sup>5</sup>. His heros are young girls being taught the ways of freedom by his gods, these nearly divine libertine instructors who seem to exist outside of social law, because they control the divine power of creating and maintaining social law.

So the popular image of Sade is negative, whereas the critical reception of his work is one of respectful honor. Krafft-Ebbing named a whole level of

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<sup>4</sup> Sade, *ibid.*, 140

<sup>5</sup> Roger, 72

psychological neurosis after his style. Critics, writers, and artists of modernity refer to Sade as an important influence on the development of modern arts and writing. Jules Janin “le prince des critiques”<sup>6</sup> said in *La Revue de Paris* in 1834 “Voilà un nom que tout le monde sait et que personne ne prononce : la main tremble en l’écrivant”<sup>7</sup>. Phillippe Roger relates the story of a friend of Janin who came across “chez son oncle, un ouvrage de Sade: “en une nuit de cette lecture, [il] avait vieilli de vingt ans.””<sup>8</sup>

In 1843 perhaps the most influential literary critic of the era, Saint-Beuve, said of Sade “J’oserais affirmer que Byron et Sade ont peut-etre été les deux plus inspirateurs de nos modernes, l’un affiché, l’autre clandestine.”<sup>9</sup> In 1854, the writer Flaubert said of Sade’s impact on history that he was “le dernier mot du Catholicisme...”<sup>10</sup>

Among the critical literature related to his work, Sade is often associated with other writers for a comparative approach. Such critical essays or books as *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* by Deleuze, *Sade et Lautréamont* by Blanchot, *Kant avec Sade* by Lacan, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* by Roland Barthes and Foucault’s analysis of Sade’s writing in the context of the artistic expression of Goya in *Histoire de la Folie et la déraison à l’age classique* demonstrate Sade’s

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<sup>6</sup> Ost, 74

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* 74

<sup>8</sup> Roger, 70

<sup>9</sup> Ost, 75

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* 75

importance through this comparative approach. Literary critics use Sade's work to compare for analysis other philosophers, artists, and writers of various movements.

The most telling truth is that those who are compared to Sade are not just writers. Sade is being compared to painters, philosophers, and other theorists. To describe *Les Fleurs du Mal* by Charles Baudelaire the poet Paul Verlaine wrote "je compare ces vers étranges/aux étranges vers que ferait/un Marquis de Sade discret/qui saurait la langue."<sup>11</sup>

In 1909 Guillaume Apollinaire, in the preface to the first publication of Sade's works in the 20th century *L'œuvre du Marquis de Sade*, spoke of Sade as "l'esprit le plus libre qui ait encore existé."<sup>12</sup> In 1938 the surrealists honored Sade when André Breton included Sade in his *Anthologie de l'humour noir* with a text from *Juliette*. Breton, who searched to transcend reality through the juxtaposition of opposites, describes a method attributed to Sade in which "le réel, le plausible sont délibérément transgressés."<sup>13</sup> Surrealist poet Paul Eluard said that Sade "a voulu redonner à l'homme civilisé la force de ses instincts primitifs [...] de là [...] naîtrait la véritable égalité."<sup>14</sup>

In 1938 Surrealist painter and photographer Man Ray painted "Portrait Imaginaire de Sade":

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 75

<sup>12</sup> Apollinaire 17

<sup>13</sup> Breton 53

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* 55



We see a fierce obese visage as the apex of a pyramid juxtaposed against a citadel under construction as the masses cross a winding path between two figures.

In 1956 J.J. Pauvert was put on trial by the French government for publishing works by the Marquis de Sade. The defense wanted to prove that Sade, despite the pornographic style and negative public image was worthwhile artistically. Jean Cocteau, George Bataille, and André Breton were among those who testified to support the freedom to publish works of creative expression. According to Jean Paulhan, who testified at the trial, “presque tous les écrivains représentatifs du XIXeme siècle sont sortis de Sade : Lamartine, Baudelaire, Nietzsche.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ost 78

The court ruled that Sade should remain a clandestine figure, barely for academic purpose. The destruction of his works was decreed and Pauvert was fined 120,000 francs<sup>16</sup>. The court decreed that “l’oeuvre publiée par Pauvert traduit les manifestations les plus dégradantes de la dépravation humaine.”<sup>17</sup>

At the trial of Pauvert Jean Cocteau said of Sade “il est ennuyeux, le style est faible.”<sup>18</sup> In 1971 the influential semiotic critic Roland Barthes contradicts Cocteau’s opinion of Sade’s style describing his work by saying that “Sade n’est ennuyeux que si nous fixons notre regard sur les crimes rapportés et non sur les performances du discours [...] “les monstrueuses turpitudes” d’un “auteur abominable”[...]à interdire Sade pour les raisons morales c’est parce qu’on refuse d’entrer dans le seul univers sadien, qui est l’univers du discours.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore according to Barthes, there is something worthwhile to analyze behind the violent, pornographic, criminal imagery, but one must choose to go there.

In 2005 François Ost, in his book *Sade et la Loi*, speaks of Sade in the context of French literature in the following way “la force de Sade consiste à faire fond de tout cet héritage (les Lumières, la littérature libertine, la langue classique, dix-huit siècles de tradition chrétienne...) en le faisant muter en un monstrueux et fascinant objet littéraire.”<sup>20</sup> These quotes and contributions from the most well

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.* 81

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* 81

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* 80

<sup>19</sup> Barthes, 41

<sup>20</sup> Ost 91

known and influential artists, writers and critics confirm the importance of Sade's work for the development of modern literature and artistic expression.

I agree with Roland Barthes when he says that Sade is boring if we only see crimes. Therefore the actual obscenity, pornography, blasphemy and crimes presented in his work are not interesting to me. For this thesis, the freedom behind the crimes is the message that I find important to analyze.

Through analyzing the text, the life, and the critical canon related to Sade's work, a scholar could understand that his writing is not just simple, base porno, or the lowest form of artistic expression to satisfy the lowest level of human desire. His pornographic form provides us with a key to understand his important message that orgasm is an extremely important function that civilization, religion, morality, and the fundamental laws of our society have wanted to control and often suppress throughout human history.

Sade celebrates orgasm for men and women. Orgasmic pleasure is the will of the narrative voice in his writing: "comme j'ai du plaisir" (Dolmancé), "vous me faites mourir de plaisir" (Eugénie), "je crois que de mes jours je n'eus tant de plaisir."<sup>21</sup> (Mme. De Saint-Ange)

Orgasm is the vagina wet with juices like French society was wet with blood during the revolution of 89 while Sade was the ultimate voyeur behind his Bastille prison window. Orgasm is the secret in the body, in the bedroom, in the

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<sup>21</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 66

château, the forest, the unconscious where his libertines take their pleasures to extreme levels of sense intoxication. Sade presents orgasm as a possible utopia to unify family and country during the pleasurable release of the orgy. Orgasm is the natural law, the purest imperative that runs the cycle of energy inherent in nature.

The female orgasm was the most restrained human action during the Christian era. Why? Because orgasm, similar to Sade's writing, is dangerous for those who want to control society in order to maintain power. Sade's work is a critique on power. Orgasm is the power of the free individual self expressing itself. Orgasm is against the Christian law which makes priests and nuns vow celibacy. Therefore orgasm is related to sin, a religious term, thus related to crime, a social term.

There is an interesting link between orgasm, freedom, and crime. Contrary to the diagnosis of Krafft-Ebbing based on Sade's themes of sexual violence, Sade was not looking for crime and violence as the means and pleasure as the end. He was in search of freedom as the end through the ways of crime. In his writing he uses crime as a way to reach liberty, especially for women. "Je ne veux pas faire aimer le vice...Je veux au contraire que les femmes le détestent...Jamais je ne peindrai le crime que sous les couleurs de l'enfer."<sup>22</sup>

Sade's purpose was not to commit crime. His purpose is the ultimate expression of free will: the freedom to fuck, to write, to live, and to "jouir" as he

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<sup>22</sup> Sade, *Idée sur les romans*, 62

wished. He wanted to make everything erotic. In doing so he makes his libertines search every corner for pleasure, for “la jouissance” defined as “1. plaisir que l’on goûte pleinement 2. Action de se servir d’une chose, d’en tirer les satisfactions qu’elle est capable de procurer.” (Le Robert Micro).

Does Sade want to stop at pleasure? Is pleasure or jouissance the end? My argument states that sexual pleasure is not the main goal for Sade’s method. Pleasure, like crime, is the means to achieve something greater. For Sade, the something greater to will to achieve was freedom, which he lived for, but ultimately rarely knew.

My thesis will prove, based on his writing, that Sade’s goal was surjouissance: “sur-: élément qui signifie plus haut, au-dessus, par dessus ou indique un degré élevé dans un classement” (Le Robert Micro). Sade wanted something above pleasure. His style was not about fetish or hedonistic pleasure. He wanted free will for an overcoming of reduced space.

Surjouissance is my term for his literary method that combines themes of orgasm, philosophy, politics, and violence in writing to free a society controlled, dominated, and caged in a reduced space.

To better understand this neologism of surjouissance, one must analyze his life and his writing. The relation between crime as a way to achieve liberty, is similar to the relation between the life of Sade and the development of his writing. This thesis will analyze the theme of reduced space in his life, his oeuvre to show



how reduced space influences his writing and his method of surjouissance to transcend reduction of space to achieve complete freedom.

## CHAPTER 2

### LA VIE DU MARQUIS: A REVOLT AGAINST REDUCED SPACE

For a better idea of how reduced space influences his writing, we should first analyze the influence of reduction of space on his life. Donatien-Alphonse François de Sade was born in Paris in 1740 in the hôtel de Condé and subsequently baptized in St. Sulpice. Sade was from “ancienne noblesse[...]apparenté aux Condés, princes du sang[...]uni[ ...]par mariage aux Cordier de Montreuil, une famille de noblesse de robe[...]fortuné et très en cour.”<sup>23</sup>

Sade’s noble blood would be a source of triumph and trouble throughout his life, but he would always hold the noble, an allusion to Antiquity, as the ultimate form to lead a society: “imitons celui des Romains: les passions, les actions, les héros, voila quels en étaient les respectables objets.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ost, 63

<sup>24</sup> Sade, *ibid.*, 191

Sade is never a socialist. He never believes that we are all equal: “tous les individus étant égaux aux yeux de la nature [...] impossible.”<sup>25</sup> In the Sadeian universe, society is a hierarchy where the noble are at the top and the bourgeois and the worker are a slave to the will of the master.

Family honor, which conflicted with his libertine lifestyle, was the first form of reduced space he would meet. This reduction of moral space would bring reduction of his physical space. He searched for sexual liberty and satisfaction of his libertine desires. However the law would place boundaries on his search for complete sexual freedom. The young Marquis was confined in the first of the eleven prisons that he would know throughout his life at the age of 23.

In October 1763, Sade “a entraîné une jeune prostituée, Jeanne Testard dans une petite maison et l’a forcée à commettre une série d’actes sacrilèges.”<sup>26</sup> He was imprisoned in the Château de Vincennes near Paris. Soon, though, he was released by order of the king Louis XV in order to avoid “un scandale en demeurant en prison” for his powerful family<sup>27</sup>.

April 1768, Sade “a entraîné une mendicante, Rose Keller, dans une petite maison...il la maltraîte, la fustige, lui incise les chairs [...] et verse des gouttes de cire dans ses plaies.”<sup>28</sup> This act demonstrates the sadistic sexual perversion classified by Krafft-Ebbing. His mother in law, la Présidente de Montreuil, “le vrai

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* 169

<sup>26</sup> Ost, 99

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 99

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 100

chef de famille”<sup>29</sup> obtained a “lettre de cachet” signed by Louis XV. The “lettre de cachet” was a form of restraining order during the Ancien Régime.

What was the result? Once again confinement in prison, this time in the Château de Saumur. Once again there was scandal for the family followed by a passive law and the grace of the king. Although now further restrictions were placed on Sade. He would have to “se retirer dans son château de La Coste”<sup>30</sup> en Provence.

June 1772, his libertine lifestyle and his sexual promiscuity would not be stopped. This time, there was the episode in Marseille. Sade and his valet hire “des filles qu’on entraîne dans une partie de débauche.”<sup>31</sup> Sade gave the girls Spanish fly or la cantharide, “aphrodisiaque connu depuis l’antiquité [...] mais toxique à dose massive”<sup>32</sup>. The prostitutes told the police that they were poisoned by the Marquis. Sade and his valet were condemned to a double execution: “la décollation pour crime d’empoisonnement et le bûcher pour crime de sodomie.”<sup>33</sup>

Sade subsequently escaped to Italy. During his exile he was burned in effigy in Marseille. He returned from Italy to his chateau in La Coste where he isolated himself to continue his sexual licentiousness through obtaining servant girls from the local villages.

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<sup>29</sup> Ost, 100

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* 101

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* 102

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 102

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 102

To describe the apathy of the law to his escapades Francois Ost believes “il s’agissait de couvrir les passe-droits des familles nobles”. His nobility was his saving grace in regards to the response of the law, but his noble family would soon turn against him.

The family had had enough of this “incontrôlable gendre” and they wanted him finally “durablement sous les verrous”. Therefore la Présidente de Montreuil obtained a second lettre de cachet from the new king Louis XVI. The second lettre de cachet was the final judgement of the Ancien Regime towards Sade. He was imprisoned in 1778. He would remain incarcerated for nearly twelve years until after the Revolution of 1789: “sous la pression constante des Montreuil, Sade demeurera prisonnier de Vincennes et puis de la Bastille jusqu’à ce jour de 1789 où ce sera la fonction royale elle-même qui sera renversée”<sup>34</sup>.

In the royal prisons Sade would focus on writing. He began writing theater with *Le Philosophe soi-disant* and *Le Mariage du siècle* (both written in 1772). “By the 1780’s he was regularly sending his comedies and tragedies to the leading theaters of Paris. Among these the comedies *L’Inconstant* and *Le prévaricateur*, and the tragedy *Jeanne Laisné*”<sup>35</sup>. After being transferred to the Bastille in 1784, this taste for libertine theater would deform into something more monstrous, but

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<sup>34</sup> Ost, 106

<sup>35</sup> Burwick, 89

also something more modern represented by the “inside/outside narrative”<sup>36</sup> of *Les Cent Vingts Journées*.

According to the book *Sade : Philosophie dans le Pressoir* by Philippe Roger, an in depth analysis of Sade’s memoirs shows how his actual life under the pressure of enclosed prison shaped his writing. Roger describes how Sade was morally wounded by his imprisonment. His family were the ones that sent him away. He wanted to exact vengeance upon them, especially his mother in law, through the only way he could, through writing.

This anger led to the development of the *120 Journées de Sodome* written in 1784. He describes this work in his memoirs as follows “...ce seront vraisemblablement mes dernières réflexions et mes dernières prières. Qu’on les lise sous ce sens-là et non sous celui de loi, sachant bien que je suis assez malheureux pour n’en pouvoir faire et vous certifiant bien que si j’en pouvais faire, la première serait celle de faire brûler la Présidente (de Montreuil) à petit feu”<sup>37</sup>. One can see the desperation, the anger, and the violence brewing in his voice. One can also deduce a sense of a non-literal interpretation for his work. His writing is an emotional metaphor, a symbol of anger and revolt against the reduced space of prison and the lettre de cachet.

“Sade’s play *La Tour Enchantée* had already been adapted for the London stage as *The Haunted Tower* and had been welcomed with stunning box office

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 89

<sup>37</sup> O.C., XII, 312

success.”<sup>38</sup> This change in form, from theater for financial gain to a more modern, prose storytelling demonstrates a shift in his writing.

His writing now took on a greater purpose than just trying to fund his life or stroke his ego. It was now a metaphysical expression of his torment. He would destroy his persecutors through developing a well structured system of torture. He would invent six hundred different “passions” for his victims to suffer. *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* marks the beginning of his violent pornographic style. *Les 120 Journées* is without a doubt a sadistic book; an escalating account of perversions with no hopeful revolutionary message rather an apocalyptic view of power out of control, beyond the law isolated in Château de Silling.

This “sadistic” aesthetic would change into the method of surjouissance following the revolution and Sade’s career in politics. Therefore his post-Terror publications transcend his vengeance represented in the *120 Journées* into something greater and more worthwhile for society.

16 Mars 1790, the lettre de cachet was finally abolished after the execution of the king Louis XVI. Sade was set free and he would find a unique choice to make. He was a noble of ancient blood, but the nobility had fallen out of favor. Most had fled while some who stayed were executed. Sade saw the trouble for the nobility and chose to perform a different role for the new society.

He wanted to become a “citoyen actif” : “Sade sera successivement

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<sup>38</sup> Burwick, 88

secrétaire, puis vice-président, et enfin président de la section des Piques.”<sup>39</sup>

During his time as a civil servant active in politics he wrote several political essays like *Pétition de la Section des Piques aux représentants du peuple français* and *Discours aux mânes de Marat et de Le Peletier*. He wrote political essays in order to “donner lecture devant la Convention nationale de pétitions flamboyantes dont il est l’auteur.”<sup>40</sup>

Soon Sade would meet a new enemy resulting in more prison time. The new enemy for Sade, and for many during the Terror, was Robespierre. In his writings Robespierre defended the freedom of the press but he anticipated “beaucoup d’écrivains dangereux.”<sup>41</sup> During this post revolution era, Sade also gained infamy for the publication, at Librairie Girourard in 1791, of his novel, *Justine ou les Malheurs de la Vertu*.

In 1792 the periodical *Petites Affiches* described *Justine* as “l’imagination la plus déréglée, indécent, de dégoûtant même, se trouve dans ce roman bizarre dont le titre pourrait intéresser et tromper même les âmes sensibles et honnêtes.” One would read the book only “pour voir jusqu’où peut aller le délire de l’imagination humaine, mais après jetez-le au feu.”

Voilà “l’écrivain dangereux” whom Robespierre, the great incorruptible and virtuous statesman, had feared. Sade was therefore added to the list of

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<sup>39</sup> Ost 108

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 108

<sup>41</sup> Ost 108

suspects because “Sade, ex-comte, n’a cessé de combattre le gouvernement républicain en soutenant dans sa section que le gouvernement était impraticable”<sup>42</sup>. Again there would be imprisonment for Sade, this time in the maison de santé Picpus.

From his hospice window, he would witness the horrors of a system out of control. The Jacobin government had moved the guillotine from place de la Révolution to only a hundred or so meters from his window.

There is an interesting analysis of the influence of the guillotine on his writing in the article “La Machine: Sade, the guillotine, and eroticism” in the book *Sade: la scientia and techne of eroticism*. In a letter to his lawyer Gaspard Gaufridy, Sade claims “1,800 victims of the guillotine were swiftly interred in the Picpus gardens in 35 days.”<sup>43</sup> In another letter Sade describes his experience in the Picpus prison as follows “I am not well, my stay in the prisons of the Republic, the guillotine before my eyes, has done me a hundred times more harm than ever had done all the Bastilles imaginable.”<sup>44</sup>

In his own words we see how the reality of his life in the prisons of the Ancien Régime and the Terror demented his emotions and his imagination soon to manifest in his writing. After the Terror, his sexually violent style would not symbolize the erotic pleasure of revenge as in the *120 Journées*. The violence of

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, 112

<sup>43</sup> McCallam 55

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, 55



his post-Terror works would represent a determination attached to a hope that this display of state controlled horror and murder would never happen again in a free republic: “mes concitoyens, le chemin que nous avons fait depuis 89 était bien plus difficile que celui qui nous reste à faire.”<sup>45</sup>

The 9 Thermidor, Sade was waiting execution by guillotine, but was accidentally marked as absent on the list of those who were to be beheaded. The 10 Thermidor, Robespierre was executed and the Terror was finished.

Sade was free again and during this time in the middle to the late 1790's Sade “connaît une intense période d'écriture”<sup>46</sup>. Sade published his greatest works *La philosophie dans le Boudoir* (1795) and *la Nouvelle Justine suivie de l'histoire de Juliette sa soeur* (1797). This epic work of over 4000 pages included a third, expanded version of *Justine* coupled with the narrative of her sister Juliette de Lorsange, which would include the subtitle “Les prospérités du vice”.

In 1801 Sade would again meet another despotic enemy. The Ancien Régime of the Bourbon kings became the Terror of the Jacobins and then the empire of Napoleon Bonaparte. For the newest despotic regime Sade and his popular works represented “des abus de la presse.”<sup>47</sup> Sade was seized despite his false proclamation of innocence. Hundreds of copies of *La Nouvelle Justine* were destroyed and Sade was sent to prison again because “le Consulat puis l'Empire

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<sup>45</sup> Sade, *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, 198

<sup>46</sup> Ost, 112

<sup>47</sup> Ost, 114

préféraient maintenir le gêneur à l'ombre sans lui offrir la dangereuse publicité d'une tribune judiciaire."<sup>48</sup> The prefect Dubois described Sade: "cet homme incorrigible est dans un état perpétuel de démence libertine."

Sade was imprisoned in the Charenton asylum, une maison de santé for the "aliénés" who suffered from mental illness classified by the new, developing system of "psychiatisation". He would remain in Charenton during thirteen years until the end of his life. He was buried in the Charenton cemetery. His burial wishes were that "les traces de ma tombe disparaissent de dessus la surface de la terre, comme je me flatte que ma mémoire s'effacera de l'esprit des hommes" (le 30 Janvier 1806).

In 1809 Sade tried one final time to clear his name, end his damnation, and get one more chance of freedom but the ruling minister decided to "interdire tout usage de crayons, d'encre, de plume et de papier" because of his continued behavior and his negatively perceived image: "le redoutable marquis n'a donc pas cessé de représenter une menace pour l'ordre établi."<sup>49</sup>

Those are the facts of his life. These facts are essential to understand surjouissance, my theory of his method that mixes orgasm, politics, philosophy, and violence to overcome reduced space to achieve complete freedom. The proof is in his writing as well as his life. His crimes, his books, and the continually

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, 115

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* 117

disturbed social environment in which he lived shows a man affected by multiple forms of reduced space.

The pleasures of his works all pass in reduced spaces like boudoirs, secret subterranean locations, dark, ominous forests, dungeons, levels within the darkest regions of wild human desire. Sade makes the enclosed space erotic as Roland Barthes describes “la solitude libertine n’est pas seulement une précaution d’ordre pratique; elle est une qualité d’existence, une volupté d’être.”<sup>50</sup> These enclosed spaces come from his life enclosed in prisons.

He was affected by reduced physical space represented by his over thirty years in various prisons, hospices and asylums. He was also affected by reduction of moral space, represented by the two lettres de cachet, by his addition to the list of suspects, and under the censor of the empire.

Sade felt the pressure of this reduced space, and his only way to alleviate the pressure was through writing. Therefore my argument is that his writing was a revolt against reduced space.

This theme of reduced space is very important in his works, notably the erotic dialogues in *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* which contain the political treatise *Français encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains* and his epic novel *La Nouvelle Justine*. During his life Sade tried to overcome reduced space with

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<sup>50</sup> Barthes, 22

writing. As we have seen through his biography, tragically his writing was often the cause of his reduction of space.

The term “Sadism” is a psychological word too restrained to fully describe his work. My mission is to prove that the word “surjouissance” is a better way to define his method and purpose for writing. Surjouissance is a method, based on his text, through which Sade expresses in his grammatical structure, his narrative voice, and his pornographic form, a means to overcome reduced space. Surjouissance is combination of the pleasures of the mind represented by philosophical discourse with the pleasures of the body signified through language in scenes of orgy and orgasmic expression to achieve a superior level of nature characterizing complete freedom for a society restrained.

### CHAPTER 3

#### “DÉPUCELAGE” , SYNTAX, AND TRANSITION BETWEEN STATES OF BEING

The best textual representations of the themes of surjouissance including orgasmic release, narrative transition between object and subject, philosophical discourse, and the ultimate message of social and political transcendence of reduced space are the scenes of “dépuelage”. Throughout this thesis I will

analyze scenes of “dépuçelage” in the books *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, *Justine*, and *Juliette* to support my theory of surjouissance.

The action of “dépuçelage” is important because it represents a change for the individual. This change is necessary to understand how surjouissance represents a change for society. Sade wrote during a time of change after the revolution and the Terror. These post-Terror works: *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, *La Nouvelle Justine*, and *Juliette*, represent his method of surjouissance that combines through writing orgasm, philosophy, and violence for the purpose of critiquing society, educating the youth, and attempting to establish a new moral for a new republic.

In the pamphlet, “Français encore un effort...” Sade attempts to set surjouissance, or his transcendent method achieved by combining physical orgasm and philosophy, as the political foundation for a new republic. Does he succeed in creating a viable political formula for a sustainable society? Certainly not. His aristocratic elitism narrows his voice and his sexual law is fit only for the secret society of the orgy represented in *Juliette* by the Société des Amis du Crime.

His political theory cannot sustain a complete multi-leveled society. However Sade through this method of surjouissance does raise the standard of sexual, intellectual, and literary freedom as a possible polemic against reduced space. His style will continue to influence artists, philosophers, writers and critics to this day. Revolution continues to influence the world. Sade’s method of

surjouissance shows the scholar what a revolution feels like through violent style, through orgasmic release and a possibility for an expression of freedom achieved through literature.

This method of revolt against reduced space is well represented in the book *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. Sade published this work in 1795 in London with the subtitle “Ouvrage posthume de l’auteur de Justine”. Why would he include this subtitle? Perhaps he was afraid of the unstable political conditions. Such a radical work could mean more jail time. In 1795 he was finally free after 312 days in prison during the Terror of the Jacobins. Sade was definitely arrogant but he knew the moment and he new self-preservation, an important theme throughout his oeuvre.

The book is uniquely structured. There are 7 dialogues of instruction for a young girl aged 15, Eugénie, by three libertine instructors: Dolmancé, Mme de Saint-Ange, and her brother the Chevalier. The dialogues are intended to negate Eugenie’s previous beliefs derived from her noble family to instill in her through her participation in scenes of orgy and philosophical discourse the libertine agenda for the creation of a new individual for a new republic. The dialogues are instruction of surjouissance.

The young student is taught that sense pleasure, philosophical reason, and denunciation of the old moral will bring her to a new state of consciousness overcoming reduced space: “jeunes filles trop longtemps contenues dans les liens

absurdes et dangereux d'une vertu fantastique et d'une religion dégoûtante, imitez Eugénie.”<sup>51</sup>

If surjouissance is a revolt against reduced space, do we find reduced space represented in this text? From the title of the book we see “dans le boudoir”. The title establishes the reduced space where in Sade's method will take shape. The title is not philosophy for the world, but philosophy in the bedroom. The boudoir is a place of pleasure. As Philippe Roger says “le boudoir usine la jouissance.”<sup>52</sup>

A reduced space is the frequent place of pleasure in Sade's universe. Many of the reduced spaces, such as cavernous vaults in the convent of St. Marie des Bois in *Justine*, are used negatively by Sade to add an element of fear or sadistic violence. *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* is a more hopeful book. The evidence of this hope is in the title of the political pamphlet *Français encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains*.

“Encore un effort” symbolizes the hope Sade had for this post terror publication. He saw the possibility of complete freedom after the revolution of 89 deform into the despotism of the Terror. Through this political treatise he hoped to inform French society to not miss this second opportunity at complete freedom

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<sup>51</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 37

<sup>52</sup> Roger, 62

“c’est avec inquiétude que je sens que nous sommes à la veille de manquer encore une fois.”<sup>53</sup>

He is hopeful that this pamphlet (which in the narrative of the story within the book, Dolmancé “a acheté au palais de l’Egalité”) can continue the tradition of philosophical freedom of expression started by the Enlightenment: “je viens offrir de grandes idées... j’aurai contribué en quelque chose au progrès des Lumières.”<sup>54</sup>

This idea of hope is also represented by a positive form of reduced space. The reduced space of the bedroom or “boudoir” has a more positive connotation contrasting the usual “cité sadienne”, to borrow a term from Roland Barthes, which is more of an enclosed vault like the Château of Silling in *Les 120 Journées*.

This distant, isolated, enclosed space is more representative of the prisons in which Sade lived. However, the boudoir is a more hopeful place where perhaps an individual could achieve freedom as an equal member of the orgy instead of being an object for libertine destructive desire caged in isolation.

The boudoir is a space for free, comfortable expression; a space where the aristocracy could entertain their fantasies without judgement. Throughout the work there are other references to reduced space, signified by the preposition “dans”.

This preposition is important to understand the nature of a reduced space. Le Robert Micro defines the preposition “dans” as such: “indiquant la situation d’une

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<sup>53</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 187

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 187



personne, d'une chose par rapport à ce qui la contient". This preposition is used frequently to characterize the reduced spaces within the work.

From the title the reader knows that the philosophy is contained within the bedroom which is a positive space for pleasure and intimacy. This theme of a positive element to reduced spaces, characterized by the preposition "dans", adds an erotic element to reduced space. For example "dans la plus douce ivresse", "dans les plus divins excès de libertinage", "dans cette jolie petite tête", "dans le cul", "dans le con", "dans les lieux secrets", "dans un gouvernement républicain". All these spaces wherein the individual is contained are positive places where pleasure can be created and maintained without fear of judgment by the law.

Contrarily, reduced space is often a source for negative criticism in Sade's work. Social critique is an essential part of his narrative. Often examples of reduced space are attached to this critique. He uses reduced space as a sign for the social objects he criticizes. For example "Dans les liens absurdes" to criticize the reduced moral space of marriage, "dans un morceau de pain" to satirize the body of Christ, a representation of an infinite god in the reduced space of a piece of bread symbolized by the catholic ritual of the divine host. "Dans votre bourse" criticizes economic reduced space which has a profound influence on French society reduced "dans une population trop nombreuse". "Dans des tourments pires", "dans les rues" criticizes contemporary french society. "Dans les ténébres

du christianisme” characterizes a critique on restrained christian dogma, and “dans une monarchie” alludes to Sade’s original enemy.

For these negative reduced spaces wherein the individual is contained, the erotic comes from the antithetical. Pleasure is derived within these negative reduced spaces as a revolt against them. Pleasure is the delivering factor which would allow one to transcend these reduced spaces.

Sade’s narrative structure, contained within the reduced space of the page, has a uniformity throughout his work. His tales are a perpetual cycle of erotic scene followed by philosophical and critical discourse which ignites the passions in his characters to complete another erotic scene. His narrative structure demonstrates his method of *surjouissance* by combining orgasmic language with philosophical discourse. “*Jouissance*” is the main theme around which the narrative turns.

So if “*jouissance*” is the liberating factor enabling transcendence from reduced space, it is important to analyze how “*jouissance*” is represented textually. My argument states that Sade offers two forms of “*jouissance*” in his work. The “*jouissance du corps*” represented through language describing physical pleasure and orgasm combined with “*jouissance d’esprit*” represented by philosophical discourse.

As represented by his narrative structure, the pleasure of orgasm is followed by the “jouissance d’esprit” of philosophical discourse. Both are sources of inspiration for pleasure and documented textually.

How is jouissance du corps or physical orgasm represented textually? Sade associates the word “foutre” with this action. Le Robert Micro defines “foutre” as “1. Vx. Posséder sexuellement”. Sade, through the character of Mme. De Saint-Ange, one of the libertine instructors, tells the young “prosélyte” Eugénie : “une jolie fille ne doit s’occuper que de foutre et jamais d’engendrer”<sup>55</sup>, “nous sommes nés pour foutre”<sup>56</sup>, “fouts, en un mot, fouts : c’est pour cela que tu es mise au monde.”<sup>57</sup>

The word foutre is important because Sade uses it as both a noun and a verb. “Foutre” as verb is used for the action of any form of sexual stimulation, as Eugénie tells her instructor “Foutez-moi”. “Foutre” as noun is used as a symbol for the product of ejaculation. Eugénie tells the orgy: “j’ai le derrière et la bouche pleine de foutre”.

The action of foutre precedes the equally important action of “décharger” which causes one to “exhaler une liqueur dont l’écoulement plonge la femme dans le transport le plus délicieux.”<sup>58</sup> Therefore orgasmic pleasure necessary to achieve

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<sup>55</sup> Sade *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 57

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, 93

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 83

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 62

the level of surjouissance is defined by the two actions “foutre” and “décharger” .

The word “transport”, which Mme. de Saint-Ange relates to the action of “décharger” is important to analyze to show the movement and transition between states of consciousness inherent in the Sadeian orgasm. This movement or transition is vital to understand “surjouissance” which takes the actions of “foutre” and “décharger” to achieve movement between states: “son état immoral (that is the actions of “foutre” and “décharger”) est un état de mouvement perpétuel qui le rapproche de l’insurrection nécessaire”<sup>59</sup>.

One can see how Sade attempts to apply this orgasmic movement to social transcendence brought on by the revolution. Politically speaking “foutre” becomes the act of revolt for the individual or the collective against despotism and “décharger” is the achievement of political freedom “dans laquelle il faut que le républicain tienne toujours le gouvernement dont il est membre.”<sup>60</sup>

Movement is essential to maintain freedom and essential to continue the orgy. Sade loves to move the scene. As Barthes describes “Sade l’indique d’un mot: la scène marche, le tableau s’arrange.”<sup>61</sup> Dolmancé, the voice of Sade as instructor for the youth, describes the movement as “Nous varierons le tableau”. The actions of “foutre” and “décharger”, essential to Sade’s message of social

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 216

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* 216

<sup>61</sup> Barthes 33

transcendence, remain uniform throughout the narrative while the places, characters, and postures variate to augment either the pleasure or the violence in the scene. In *Philosophie dans le boudoir* the movement of the orgy augments the pleasure whereas in *Justine* the movement of the orgy augments her suffering. A more detailed comparison of these two works will occur later in this thesis.

Transition between states of consciousness is also represented by the image of death in language. Often in achieving the state of discharging, or orgasmic release, the characters invoke death to represent their passage between states. During the scene of orgy Dolmancé describes his pleasure as “je suis mort”, “je me meurs...j’expire.” It is very interesting to analyze why the characters use the expression “je me meurs”. By combining the subject “je” with the reflexive object “me” the characters exist in dual states of subject and object.

This reality accomplishment of dual states through the orgy is essential to understand surjouissance. Sade is looking to create free thinking, enlightened, noble beings with his literary method: “ce sont des hommes libres que nous voulons former.”<sup>62</sup> Sade also wants to free women as well: “sexe charmant, vous serez libre; vous jouirez comme les hommes de tous les plaisirs dont la nature vous fait un devoir.”<sup>63</sup> Eugénie represents the development of this noble being. In order to achieve the level of the noble, one must transcend the dialectic, one must go “beyond good and evil” in the Nietzschean sense, beyond opposite states. The

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<sup>62</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 199

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 227

expression “je me meurs” represents this transcendence syntactically by combining the subject “je” and the object pronoun “me”.

Therefore this transition to a higher state of freedom through physical orgasm is uniquely represented through his grammatical structure. In order to become a superior enlightened being, according to Sade one must transcend subject/object relation through performing both actions of sexual subject, therefore the one who “fucks”, and sexual object therefore the one who is “fucked”. Often this state occurs at the same time to achieve the greatest pinnacle pleasure for the individual. Barthes agrees “tout le monde peut et doit être tour à tour agent et patient. Cette règle est capitale...”<sup>64</sup>

Through language Sade achieves this transition of sexual roles by making his characters into sexual subjects and objects. The narrative voice dictating the scene uses a form of active and passive expression within the syntax: “je la baise pendant qu’on me suce.”<sup>65</sup> Dolmancé best represents this Sadeian higher state of being who is both sexual subject and object. This is the reason why he is the primary instructor for Eugenie. Through his ability to sodomize and be sodomized, therefore his ability to perform the active and passive sexual roles, he achieves this transcendent state beyond the dialectic.

Women, through the use of the dildo, a Sadeian sign for feminine empowerment, have the possibility to achieve this state as well. This androgyne

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<sup>64</sup> Barthes 35

<sup>65</sup> Sade, *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, 112

figure representing an evolved being who is capable of being both sexual subject and object is important in Sade's theory of political transcendence beyond the dialectic, the old moral separation of good and evil which has been the foundation of civilization. Sade looks to transcend the old moral instilled in Eugénie by destroying it and replacing his new libertine moral through his education system to mold her as a prototype of an individual in a new government which "va nécessiter de nouvelles moeurs."<sup>66</sup> This evolved sign will manifest in the form of Juliette. She represents the prototype for the new evolved being for Sade's new society.

During the scene of dépuçelage in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* we see the young student achieve this higher level. Eugénie becomes the object and subject of her sexual experience while achieving orgasm. (To achieve "deux réalités en présence" was the ideal of the surrealists. One can see why they idolized Sade, as well as for their desire to provoke and their love of bad taste.)

During the dépuçelage scene, the physical actions of "déchire-moi", "baise-moi", "inondez-moi", "il me crève"<sup>67</sup> Eugénie speaks as object. As the physical action of being penetrated brings her closer to orgasm, her narrative voice changes from one of object "-moi" to one of subject "je". Her narrative expression changes when she expresses actions of will, more abstract and subjective actions of desire such as "je t'adore", "je suis" et "je décharge".

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, 203

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 182

Therefore the action of “décharger” transcends the bestial, physical actions of “déchirer”, “baiser”, “inonder”. The action of discharging is not one for the object but for the sujet. Sade never writes “décharge-moi” during the orgy, rather “je décharge”. Through this action the feminine subject expresses itself. The feminine will only becomes free to express through spiritual love, through physical orgasm, and through philosophical thought. If Sade had his way the expression for the foundation of rationalism for women would be “fouts-moi, donc je suis”.

Sade loves movement and he loves to augment the scene. Augmentation in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* leads to increased pleasure. The Sadeian hierarchy of pleasure can be developed through his systematic narrative structure. In *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, as in his other works, especially *Les 120 Journées*, he begins with simple pleasures of masturbation and oral sex. In *La philosophie dans le boudoir* he places sodomy first and then vaginal sex. Sade interestingly criticizes vaginal sex in his works for its relation to menstruation, child birth, and family, which he detested because of his family’s denunciation of his libertine lifestyle.

He sees sodomy as the utopian act shared by all; one which would unify and protect society because there is less chance for pregnancy and less of a detriment to the health of women while still achieving orgasmic pleasure. In *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* Dolmancé describes how sodomy is important for



nature and thus for civilization by regulating population control while still providing a means to “jouissance”. “loin d’outrager la nature [...] le sodomite la servent [...] cette propogation ne fut jamais une de ses lois [...] que lui importe que la race des hommes s’éteigne ou s’anéantisse sur la terre.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore according to Sade sodomy could never stop or continue the propagation of the human species. Sodomy would thus maintain an equilibrium which is a characteristic necessary for utopia. Sade revolts against sodomy’s interpretation as a crime: “peut-il être une extravagance pareille à celle d’imaginer qu’un homme doit être un monstre digne de perdre la vie parce qu’il a préféré le trou d’un cul à celui d’un con.”<sup>69</sup> Sodomy is an important act for Sade to continue pleasure while maintaining a natural balance for the population.

Vaginal sex is also important. Vaginal sex is symbolic of the feminine identity which Sade uses as a sign of his noble hero: “ce n’est pas au hasard que le marquis a choisi des héroïnes et non pas des héros”<sup>70</sup>. Eugénie is the noble hero because she represents the future for the new Sadeian republic. Dolmancé and Mme. De Saint-Ange are the gods of Antiquity who create the heroes in mythology. Sade always looks back at Antiquity as a model for his new republic. He relates “ce prétendu crime de sodomie”, an essential factor in his social method, to antiquity to prove it’s necessity in a new republic. “Les Grecs, qui en

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<sup>68</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 160

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 161

<sup>70</sup> Apollinaire 18

faisaient pour ainsi dire une vertu” and also “Rome envoya chercher des lois à Athènes, et elle en rapporta ce goût divin.”<sup>71</sup>

Sodomy is a social law to unify society while vaginal sex represents development, of the hero from the child, through the destruction of the hymen, therefore the passage to another state of consciousness. The hymen represents a barrier of reduced space, and only through breaking it and shedding blood, symbolic of the revolution, will women be free to achieve a higher level of consciousness and thus become through “jouissance”, a noble enlightened being.

Since Sade loves to augment the scene, why not combine the two forms of sexuality in women? After Eugénie is penetrated vaginally by one penis, Sade, in typical fashion, augments and extends the scene by bringing in another, this time belonging to Augustin, who is more representative of a dildo than a libertine instructor sharing in the achievement of surjouissance.

Augustin has an important role in the work. He represents the working class. One who can serve a sexual purpose, but one who is absent during the philosophical discourse. Therefore surjouissance is not a theory to unite a class structured society since it is not for everyone. Surjouissance is rather a Sadeian method to free the individual.

During her scene of double penetration Eugénie, representing the Sadeian student and also the reader, the prosélyte being informed, therefore the audience,

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<sup>71</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 161

describes her state as “je suis anéantie”. She has passed into the limbo between this reality of sense and a higher plane representing her augmented orgasm by combining the pleasures of sodomy and vaginal sex at the same time. After experiencing this transcendent state her body and her mind are prepared to engage in higher concepts. When this state is reached, then the reader is introduced to Sade’s philosophical and political concepts to “décharger de tête”.

#### CHAPTER 4

##### "NOUS ALLONS ANALYSER AVEC LA FLAMBEAU DE LA PHILOSOPHIE"

Directly following this scene of double jouissance where the orgasmic pleasure is pushed to its highest form by combining anal and vaginal sex, Sade places here within the structure of the book, as a “mise en abîme politique”, the philosophical and moral pamphlet, “Français encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains”. The student has reached a superior state and now can engage in social commentary. The members of the orgy become like gods on Olympus, who control and analyze the fate of society and discuss the necessary morality for a new republic. The role of creation is god-like.

Criticism is important to creation. The path to achievement of a new ideal begins with the criticism of the old order. Sade criticizes marriage, the existence of God, sexuality, theft, and all crimes imaginable. The pamphlet attempts to follow his critique with a logical answer to create a new order. The critique questions

philosophically the moral foundation of western society. This pamphlet is the answer to the question “where do we go in this post-revolution post-Terror political state?” The pamphlet represents “des grandes idées”.

The structure of the *La philosophie dans le boudoir* is very important to understand the message. This pamphlet is not placed at the beginning during an introductory scene or during another previous scene when Eugenie is being instructed on anatomy, philosophy, or science. It is not listed at the end of the book when the dialogues break. It is centered in the work right after her dépuçelage, the moment of her passage between young girl controlled by her parents to free thinking, free fucking woman.

All the scenes of sexual stimulation have just been foreplay and now the bodies and minds of the libertines have been sufficiently prepared to handle this information to its greatest extent “il faut qu’un peu de théorie succède à la pratique.” The orgy continues after discussion because in typical Sadeian sense, the narrative, whether extended philosophical text or truncated expression of orgasm, is erotic: “l’imagination est l’aiguillon des plaisirs”<sup>72</sup>.

Philosophy is very important for Sade. He inherited the importance of philosophy from his Enlightenment predecessors of the 18th century. In his preface to his collection of stories *Les Crimes de l’amour* entitled *Idée sur les Romans* Sade discusses the influence of Voltaire and Rousseau on philosophy in

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<sup>72</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 101

writing. Of Voltaire he states “n’ayant d’autre dessein que de placer la philosophie dans ses romans, il abandonna tout pour ce projet. Avec quelle adresse il y réussit; et malgré toutes les critiques, *Candide et Zadig* ne seront-ils pas toujours des chefs-d’oeuvre?”<sup>73</sup>

Sade also honors Rousseau in his essay. He describes Rousseau’s writing as “que de vigueur, que d’énergie dans l’Héloïse”<sup>74</sup>. Sade continues “il faut une âme de feu comme celle de Rousseau, un esprit philosophe comme le sien, deux choses que la nature ne réunit pas deux fois dans le même siècle.”<sup>75</sup> Sade sees these two writers and philosophers as his main inspiration and often cites them or bases his critique on their methods.

Philosophy is essential to surjouissance. Philosophy is the other element achieved with orgasm. In the Sadeian narrative one inspires the other and vice-versa. Surjouissance is a continual cycle of bodily orgasm and philosophy in order to achieve liberty.

Philosophy is just another form of jouissance because it gives pleasure like the sensation of orgasm. We see the pleasure inspired by philosophy in the language of Eugenie when she speaks of her lessons and the libertine method. She speaks of the lessons that “enflamme ma tête”, “comme vos leçons

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<sup>73</sup> Sade, *Idée sur les romans*, 47

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 47

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* 47

m'enflamment”, “comme votre morale me séduit”, causing her instructors to remark “comme elle décharge de tête.”

Philosophy is also a physical and erotic substance. Mme de Saint-Ange tells the orgy, “dissertez sur moi autant que vous voudrez.”<sup>76</sup> Sade mixes the philosophical discourse and discussion with the female body to characterize an erotic element to philosophy.

Sade calls prostitutes “les seules véritablement philosophes.”<sup>77</sup> He describes the “foutre” within Eugénie as “ton foutre est au fond de mes entrailles.”<sup>78</sup> “Foutre” can mean sperm but since Sade links the sex act with philosophy and education, “foutre” could also signify ideas: “dans quel état voila votre élève[...]voila l'effet de vos foutus propos.”<sup>79</sup>

Sade always unites philosophy, as with revolt and sexual stimulation, with the action of “foutre”:

“Dans cette jolie petite tête[...] nous l'alimenterons de notre philosophie, nous lui inspirerons nos désirs[...] Comme je veux joindre un peu de pratique à la théorie[...] je t'ai destiné à la moisson des myrtes de Cythère, Dolmancé, à celle des roses de Sodome[...] J'aurai deux plaisirs à la fois, celui de jouir[...] et celui

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<sup>76</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir* 54

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, 66

<sup>78</sup> *ibid* 136

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 134

d'en donner des leçons.”<sup>80</sup> Education, philosophy, and sex are all erotic functions necessary to bring pleasure to achieve surjouissance.

Therefore the sex act and the discourse are linked. An intertext is evident with Plato's *Symposium*, where a link is set between philosophical discourse and sexuality. Sade's hope for his work was to continue the philosophical tradition from antiquity represented by the intertext with Plato, through the Enlightenment of his literary heroes like Voltaire and Rousseau, to his contemporary post-Terror society. Sade also cites Alcibiade, another symbol of Antiquity for Sade's noble model, one of the main characters in the *Symposium*, as a model for the appropriate behavior in Sade's new republic: “d'impiété, de sacrilège, de blasphème, d'athéisme [...] tous ceux qu'Athènes punit avec tant d'injustice dans Alcibiade”<sup>81</sup>.

For the method of surjouissance, pleasure from “foutre” and “décharger” is the factor which liberates the individual from a reduced space. Philosophy becomes the discourse to develop new morals and new laws fit for a new republic. As Sade sees in Alcibiade, crime will be the new law that maintains order.

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 45

<sup>81</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 205

## CHAPTER 5

### LE CRIME: LA LOI LA PLUS NATURELLE POUR FAIRE DE L'ORDRE

Another important element to analyze in Sade's literature to determine his method of surjouissance is his use of crime and violence. Crime is an integral aspect of Sade's method, one that tends to discourage the audience and lessen his credibility as a philosopher. His violent aesthetic no doubt is derived from the bloody era during which he lived and more importantly wrote. The visual perception of the aesthetic of the Revolution and the Terror are well represented in his style: bloody, violent, destructive.

Nature, history and humanity are violent criminals and Sade does not shy away from this fact. Instead he celebrates, glorifies, and romanticizes crime and violence by making it erotic: "plus nous désirerons nous émouvoir avec violence [...] notre jouissance [...] s'améliorera en raison du chemin."<sup>82</sup> Violence, just like orgasm and philosophy, is eroticized but also carries a political message that is important to differentiate from the sexual violence as fetish defined by Kraft-Ebbing's "sadism".

The origin of violence and destruction in humankind is nature: "la destruction étant une des premières lois de la nature."<sup>83</sup> Nature is libertinage; the satisfaction of instinctual drives, that are sexual, passionate, and intestinal, without

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<sup>82</sup>*ibid.*, 104

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, 107



guilt, judgement, remorse or pity for the other object. Therefore violence is a crucial part to the ordering of nature. Sade always looks to nature as the foundation for all human moral. If it is not in nature it is not acceptable. If it is perceived in nature, then it passes as human law.

This is a contradiction and annihilation of religion. Sade is the ultimate materialist: “l’homme ne doit son existence qu’aux plans irrésistibles de la nature”<sup>84</sup>. Sade believes the ultimate is all around us in nature and inside of us, and if it is not material it simply does not exist, is an illusion: “n’ayez plus d’autres lois que vos seul désirs, d’autre morale que celle de la nature.”<sup>85</sup>

Throughout the political pamphlet Sade attempts to theorize how crimes of incest, murder, theft, adultery and sodomy could be used to regulate social order. Crime is the law that Sade seeks to keep his society in order. “Le vol [...] il est certain qu’il entretient le courage, la force, l’adresse [...] utiles à un gouvernement républicain”, “la prostitution, l’adultère, l’inceste, le viol, et la sodomie [...] voila l’unique morale d’un gouvernement républicain.”<sup>86</sup>

If crime is the law, then cruelty is the force to maintain the law. Cruelty can regulate society just as it is the regulating factor in nature “la cruauté, bien loin d’être un vice, est le premier sentiment qu’imprime en nous la nature.”<sup>87</sup> Cruelty is the most natural feeling for Sade who prescribes it as a new governing force: “La

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, 68

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, 227

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, 215

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, 130

cruauté n'est autre chose que l'énergie de l'homme que la civilisation n'a point corrompue.”<sup>88</sup> Violence maintains liberty “N'est-ce pas à force de meurtres que la France est libre aujourd'hui?”<sup>89</sup>

This idea of cruelty as a basis for social organization is a complete antithesis and critique on Rousseau's perfectibility of man theory outlined in his doctrine *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. In his essay Rousseau declares that the first sentiment inspired by nature in humankind is pity and good will:

“Il est donc bien certain que la pitié est un sentiment naturel qui modérant dans chaque individu l'activité de l'amour de soi même concourt à la conservation mutuelle de toute l'espèce.”<sup>90</sup>

For Rousseau pity and self-esteem are what regulate nature. Order is preserved by a feeling of “amour de soi” felt in the individual to assist his fellow being in times of trouble. This is the complete basis for modern socialism. The state should manifest pity and goodwill in reforms and social programs.

Sade would hate modern socialism for he would recognize it as the death of the noble. A society regulated by natural violence would strengthen the noble spirit to lead the people. Through cruelty and violence the strong would rise to the

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, 130

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, 241

<sup>90</sup> Rousseau 77

top and the weak would occupy the slave caste. Similar to the victims of his libertines, the slave caste is a necessary function in an ordered society.

Violence is an important aspect to his political and social message that I name *surjouissance* because, just like philosophy and sexual desire, Sade makes violence erotic. The erotic is the stimulant to achieve the pleasure or *jouissance* necessary in the transition between states of consciousness needed to reach that higher level.

Once again we see the theme of movement and transition in Sade along the subject of pain “*la femme souffre, mais sans aucun égard des douleurs qui vont bientôt se changer en plaisirs.*”<sup>91</sup> Transition is essential to revolution and to Sade’s writing.

We see how violence, pain, and transition influence the orgy scene during the dehyphenization of Eugenie. If one wants to achieve the higher level implied in his writing, then pain must be accepted as a means to achieve the change necessary for transcendence.

As opposed to Augustin who is muted and serves only the function of a dildo in the orgy, Eugenie is the voice of the new republic because she is the student. She is the blank page soon to be imprinted with the philosophy. Eugénie speaks of transition. Violence of the *dépucelage* leads to pain which changes to pleasure for Sade “*la douleur cède au plaisir*”. The destruction of her hymen

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<sup>91</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 99

represents the destruction and violence which regulates nature and is necessary to obtain and maintain transition.

## CHAPTER 6

### JUSTINE ET JULIETTE

Transition is the main theme for Sade's method of surjouissance. Transition is well represented by the development of Eugénie in *Philosophie dans le boudoir*. Perhaps an analysis of Sade's other works could further enlighten the method of surjouissance, this ultimate state reached through physical orgasm, philosophical discourse, violent revolt, education, and transition.

Once again the scene in Sade's work that best represents surjouissance is the scene of dépuçelage. Therefore let's see if there is any correlation or contrast to scenes of dépuçelage in *La Nouvelle Justine* and *Juliette, ou Les Prospérités du Vice*.

In comparison to *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, Sade describes two young girls as the central figures in the narrative. They are the center around which all postures and scenes take place. They are also the center of the social commentary and critique, these three "prosélytes". Apollinaire said that Sade purposefully

chooses heroines over heroes. What is the significance of these 15 year old girls, who are the main focus of his major works?

Perhaps he could identify with the struggle of young girls. Sade's writing style is a revolt against reduced space. Young girls in this era were often victims of reduced space represented by convents, honor, marriage, sexual repression, or economic situations that forced them into prostitution or arranged marriages.

We see this theme of reduction of space well represented in the image of the persecuted, trapped, and stifled young women throughout 18th century literature like Suzanne in *La Religieuse* trapped in the convent and restricted by perverse, "sadistic" religious ritual, the harem women in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* restricted in the seraglio to the control of the eunuchs, and the women in *Liaisons Dangereuses* restricted in their letters to conform to a socially defined identity contrasting their natural passions and sentiments.

Sade's women each represent an aspect of his social critique. These young women represent the future of French society. They can continue to be controlled by the restrictive morals of the Ancien regime or they can transition into a new woman, a woman of a higher, evolved nature; an over-woman or a "surfemme".

First though they must transcend the old moral instilled within them by their parents. Mme. De Mistival, the mother of Eugénie, describes the old moral as "les soins que j'ai eus d'elle, l'éducation que je lui ai donnée"<sup>92</sup>. The Sadeian

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, 272

women must break away from their parents, a symbol of the old order, in order to be completely free to reach the evolved state of the noble through the method of surjouissance.

Justine and Juliette, the daughters of a ruined banker, are not noble. They are the most ignoble character of French society, the poor orphan. Yet through their narrative we experience their transition.

Justine and Juliette differ from Eugénie in this structural element. In the dialogues of *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, Eugénie represents the woman in the present moment, voicing her pleasure as it erupts. Her words are exact signs of her pleasures. Both Justine and Juliette recount their tales after the fact. Sade uses both characters as signs in their own way to teach what is proactive or contrary to the development of women based on his method.

Justine is contrary to the development of women. She represents the old christian virtue and socially defined innocence offended by sexuality. She is the modest, chaste woman of the christian god. Throughout her story she never feels pleasure. She is fucked, raped, gagged, and sodomized every which way, but she morally chooses suffering over pleasure. She views all this activity perpetrated against her as a rape which actually brings her closer to god. She is a metaphor of Christ, the martyr who suffers to preserve their moral belief. Her scene of dépuçelage reflects her negation of jouissance because she is not conscious during it.

There are striking similarities and complete differences between the scenes of dépucelage in *Justine* and *La philosophie dans le boudoir* that absolutely confirm the idea that Sade's work is not pornography. His writing is developed, planned, and repeated to make his message clear.

Both scenes of dépucelage take place in a reduced space. In *La philosophie dans le boudoir* the scene of dépucelage occurs "dans le boudoir". In *Justine* we have the scene "dans la forêt". In spite of the natural openness of the forest I do believe the forest represents a reduced space because the wilderness forces the voyager to adhere to the path or the road.

There is an interesting difference between the spaces of dépucelage, the boudoir and the forest. As detailed above, the boudoir is a place of comfort, of stimulation, of seclusion in the positive sense where the naked body is protected from the outside world. The forest represents the complete opposite. The naked body is subject to destruction in the forest. It is not a place of comfort but rather a space of mystery, fear, rape, and destructive, wild nature.

The contrast between the positive and negative aspects of the reduced spaces wherein the dehyemenization takes place creates different atmospheres necessary to analyze to get the message. The forest is much more sinister than the boudoir. We see this in the "champ sémantique" of the language describing the scene in *Justine*: "les ombres de la nuit", "l'horreur religieuse", "la crainte", "projet du crime".

Obviously in a scene of dépuçelage there needs to be the sexual subject who breaks the hymen. The other male agent is a young man of quality: le Chevalier in *La philosophie dans le Boudoir* and Saint-Florent, “un jeune négociant”, in *Justine*.

We see similar language used by the two men. Saint Florent tells Justine before the rape “Nous y sommes putain”. The chevalier, as he pushes inside of Eugénie, says “petite coquine il y est”. As Roland Barthes says, to differentiate who controls the power during the sex act in Sade’s work, “le maître est celui qui parle, l’objet est celui qui se tait.”<sup>93</sup>

The contrast between these scenes highlights the transition necessary for surjouissance. Both men show their dominance by saying “here it is” and using vernacular to show a lower level for the women as “putain” or “coquine”. However it is how the women being penetrated respond that is important to surjouissance. In accordance with Barthes’ argument, those who control the spoken word are those in power, therefore those who are able to transcend states of being to become noble.

In *Philosophie dans le Boudoir* the Chevalier passes the word to Eugénie who expresses her state in her own voice. Here we see the important transition discussed earlier between sexual object and subject represented in the narrative voice. As she is being penetrated she is the object, she speaks as such, but we

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<sup>93</sup> Barthes 36



witness her transition to another state: “Va tigre...déchire moi...baise-moi...il est dedans...toutes les douleurs sont oubliées...je décharge”<sup>94</sup>. She starts as the concubine of an animal searching for natural violence causing pain which changes to pleasure. Then she is able to discharge and change her level to the “je”. She becomes her self through orgasm and expresses this transition between object and subject, this liberation of the “Je”.

For surjouissance, this method which seeks a transition out of reduced space to complete freedom and expression for the self, this is an important scene. We have a complete contrast in *Justine* which assists us in discerning Sade’s message.

Eugénie can speak. *Justine* cannot. The one who chooses pleasure achieves a higher state and release. The one who chooses virtue, achieves nothing represented in her narrative: “Je ne sais plus ni ce que dit...”. She has lost the consciousness of her self. In the narrative she lost consciousness because Saint Florent pushed her “à terre d’un coup de canne”. The phallic imagery of the cane is interesting to note.

The masculin orgasm dominates the narrative of *Justine*. She is only an object for the masculin orgasm and she never expresses her self as subject of her own will. She associates herself with the will of virtue until she is silenced by the

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<sup>94</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 182

master's "cock", to continue the power dominance of the male as described by the formula of Barthes.

On the contrary, in *La philosophie dans le Boudoir* we have the expression of the female orgasm. We do not see in Sade's work a primary masculine character who undergoes the transitions similar to Eugénie or Juliette. The masculine characters are more utilitarian except for Dolmancé who is the androgyne mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics. He is the prototype of the supreme Sadeian being. This is the reason why he is the primary instructor for Eugénie.

Eugénie shouts her pleasure, while Justine laments her dishonor: "quand je repris mes sens...j'étais...ensanglantée...deshonorée."<sup>95</sup> We see an interesting correlation between expression in these two scenes. An intertext of similar expressions links the two scenes for evidence to support my argument that comparing the two texts can discern Sade's method: "déchire-moi", "il avait déchirée mes vêtements", "regarder son sang", "ensanglantée", "va, tigre", "des tigres", "si tu veux", "il avait voulu".

This link is important to create a parallel scene. The language is the same. The aggressive style of the scene is the same. But the choice between pleasure and dishonor is different. The common elements highlight this one important

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<sup>95</sup> Sade, *Justine*, 82

difference. Both actions are scenes of young girls being “depucelated”. But the moral choice between dishonor and pleasure is different.

Eugénie chooses her pleasure and reaches a transcendent state, while Justine loses consciousness and thus is negated. Eugénie transitions from pain to pleasure: “la douleur cède au plaisir”. Justine transitions to nothing. She is: “sans ressources, sans honneur, sans espoir”. Eugénie accepts her orgasm to achieve a state of jouissance “vous m’avez mise dans un état...dans une agitation...dans l’ivresse”. Justine suppresses her pleasure, her jouissance, and she remains “dans le torrent des larmes et dans l’abîme des douleurs.”<sup>96</sup>

Through the contrast of character Sade hammers home his message, essential to his method of surjouissance, that pleasure is a moral choice. The scenes of “dépucelage” are similar, both in reduced spaces signified by “dans”, both with similar agents, similar language, but different results based on choice. Eugénie chooses transition, Justine chooses repression. Morality is a relative choice for Sade: “ces mots de vice et de vertu ne nous donnent que des idées purement locales.”<sup>97</sup> Sade sees the proof of this moral relativism in nature and through a cross cultural perspective he often cites to defend his arguments: “les vertus d’un autre hémisphère pourraient bien réversiblement être des crimes pour nous.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, 83

<sup>97</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 79

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, 79

The main message for society is that if the individual seeks deliverance from reduced space, one must make a choice. One must choose “vice” or “jouissance”. To choose virtue is the way of silence, ignorance, and loss of faculty represented in the “dépuçelage” scene in *Justine*.

We see this silence and loss of faculty represented by the character of Mme. De Mistival, the mother of Eugénie, who is brutally raped and has her vagina infected and then sewn up in a typical Sadeian scene of sexual violence at the end of *Philosophie dans le Boudoir*. Mme. de Mistival is described as “tu es pour nous une victime.”<sup>99</sup> The victim of Sade’s rage is the mother who represents the doctrines of the old order.

Sade wants to destroy the method of the old order and replace it with his own method. As early stated “décharger” could represent the culmination of a violent revolution in a new state of being. Dolmancé describes what he wants for the mother, representing the old order, perhaps also representing Sade’s real mother in law, la Présidente de Montreuil, who placed him in prison under the lettre de cachet. Dolmancé, Sade, wants that “tu souffres, ma chère, tu pleures, et moi je décharge.”<sup>100</sup> The old order, the parent must suffer and be overthrown so the youth, the individual can be free to evolve through the method of surjouissance. Through sewing up her vagina, Sade strips the mother of her faculty to feel “jouissance” and also to produce more offspring. In line with *Justine*, Mme.

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<sup>99</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir* 275

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, 277

De Mistival, representing the old order, is negated. She cannot evolve through “jouissance” and she cannot produce.

In the story of Justine’s sister, Juliette, we see a clear expression of the feminine will. While Justine is a silent slave to virtue, never giving herself freely to pleasure or expressing her pleasure, Juliette is a master of her will and seeks pleasure through orgasmic release, crime, economic gain, and traveling. She seeks to overcome every form of reduction of space presented to her. She is the ultimate expression of surjouissance in the Sadeian canon.

Apollinaire describes Juliette as a new form for the modern woman: “Juliette représente la femme nouvelle qu’il entrevoyait, un être dont on n’a pas encore idée, qui se dégage de l’humanité, qui aura des ailes et qui renouvellera l’univers”<sup>101</sup>. Therefore feminine freedom for Sade and Apollinaire is important to bring about a change, a social transition to “renew the universe”.

Through the method of surjouissance, this woman could achieve a new noble state. Just as in *La philosophie dans le boudoir* and *Justine*, the “dépuçelage” scene in *Juliette* shines more light on the theory of surjouissance and how it affects the individual in a transition between states. The dépuçelage scene in *Juliette* confirms this theme of Sade, that in order to achieve a transcendent state the individual must become object and subject at the same time thus overcoming the dialectic rationalism of western civilization. In order to

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<sup>101</sup> Apollinaire 18

become an evolved being, one must go beyond good and evil to reach a more natural state necessary for a new free republic.

Juliette's scene is very different from the other two and allows a further analysis of Sade's message. This scene of "dépuçelage" is in line with Eugénie's, in that we have an instructor, Delbene, and a student, Juliette. However Delbene is female, armed with a dildo representing the transcendent Sadeian figure. The one who can be both sexual subject and object. Delbene states "puisque tu veux être dépuçelée, je vais te satisfaire à l'instant."<sup>102</sup>

Juliette wants it. Although she is an orphan in a convent, she wants, she wills to express her sexual nature and pass through the Sadeian transition unlike her sister Justine who denounces sexuality in favor of virtue and thus never evolves.

Similar to Eugénie who chooses her pleasure, Juliette's pains of dépuçelage "coups si terribles", pass through the Sadeian transcendence from pain to pleasure: "aux douleurs...succédèrent bientôt les plus doux plaisirs."<sup>103</sup> The transition continues as the two members switch roles. Juliette describes the transition as "de maîtresse chérie je devins bientôt l'amant le plus passionné". Notice the masculine form of "l'amant" juxtaposed against the feminine form of "maîtresse". So with this text Sade confirms the significance of changing roles and transition between object and subject, between master and slave.

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<sup>102</sup> Sade, O.C. VIII 61

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 61

After both women have reached orgasm, Sade, in typical fashion, augments the scene. He adds more female characters and two male characters to expand the orgy. Once again Sade emphasizes a reduced space as location for the orgy. Therefore the orgy is almost a critique on reduced space and adds an erotic component to reduced space. Sade will not allow his characters to perform an orgy in a massive cathedral or in a garden or an amphitheater. The orgy takes place purposefully “dans l’asile des morts”, “dans les souterrains”, “dans le couvent” because what would be the purpose of the orgy without the reduced space to transcend?

When Juliette shows signs of fear caused by the reduced dungeon, the leader Delbene, a parallel figure to Dolmancé, says “apprends, jeune innocente, nous ne nous réunissons ici que pour foutre.”<sup>104</sup> She continues to explain the Sadeian message that “quand on est libertins, aussi dépravés, aussi scélérats, on voudrait être dans les entrailles de la terre, afin de mieux fuir les hommes et leurs absurdes lois.”<sup>105</sup>

No other quote sums up surjouissance better than this one. “Apprends” gives the message of education. “foutre”, “Libertin”, “dépravés” give the message of existence for pleasure and eroticism as the path to orgasmic transcendence. With “Dans les entrailles de la terre” we see a representation of reduced space, but in this case one of nature wherein we find truth. To become that which they strive

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 63

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, 63

for, one must penetrate deep within the reduced space, “fuir...les absurdes lois” gives the final purpose of surjouissance which is a way to transcend the critique of the contemporary political state.

The orgy moves with similar language as we have seen in *La philosophie dans le boudoir*: “il y pénètre”, “enfile mon con”, “il faut la faire recommencer”, “foutre mon con”, “toutes les scènes de fouterie”. A transcendent state has been reached “tenaient mes sens dans un délire ou j’aurais voulu vivre éternellement”. So after orgasm what comes next? “C’est philosophie...”<sup>106</sup> A lengthy discussion occurs on topics of marriage, nature, the existence of the christian god, family hierarchy, cross cultural mythology as the evidence for moral relativism, and social commentary. Cocteau said “son style est ennuyeux”. Yet the proof of Sade’s transcendent message is in his redundancy: this common language, structure, and imagery between the scenes of Juliette and Eugénie.

After the philosophical discussion there needs to be sex: “mais, foutre, ils bandent”. Sade augments the orgy by throwing in a victim “Laurette”, this time using violence to augment the scene and move the orgy to a higher level of sense. Juliette becomes the subject of the sex act “destinée à jouer le rôle de grand prêtre, on me revêt d’un membre postiche”<sup>107</sup> In order to achieve the superior state of the high priest(ess), Sade empowers the young woman with an artificial phallus.

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, 66

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, 96



The use of the dildo is important in the narrative of Juliette as a symbol of technology and economic power that women are able to wield. Only through technology can women become the transcendent Sadeian figure. This is a foreshadowing of the modern woman, changed by the industrial revolution and world wars into an important being in the socio-economic domain.

In her book *The Sadeian woman*, an analysis of Sade's influence on modern feminism, Angela Carter describes Juliette's ability to transcend social roles through technology as such "for these women the living prick and the manufactured dildo are interchangeable. Both are simply sources of pleasure; the body itself is no more than a machine for the production of pleasure. The world of Juliette is a mechanistic one."<sup>108</sup> The dildo is a semiotic sign of the modernization and empowerment of women through technology. Juliette can manufacture her own pleasure. She learns that in doing so she can also sell her pleasure for an extremely high price in order to achieve the highest state of luxury and social standing beyond the law. As Carter says "Her femininity is part of the armoury of self interest"<sup>109</sup>.

## CHAPTER 7

### A NEW WOMAN FOR A NEW REPUBLIC

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<sup>108</sup> Carter 104

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 102

The three scenes of dépuçelage are very important to understand the Sadeian message of surjouissance. Each scene gives a characterization to the Sadeian individual necessary to bring about a new republic. This is the main message of my thesis: orgasm, transition, violence, language, and education developed through his writing are all for a purpose beyond fetishism. Sade passed beyond the anger release of the *120 Journées*. These facets of his style represent a political message; a way to form a new republic through the creation of new free individuals based on teaching his method through literature: “Français vous frapperez les premiers coups: votre éducation nationale fera le reste.”<sup>110</sup>

Therefore the new individual can be created through a combination of sexual freedom manifested in orgasmic release and philosophical discourse. This individual can be replicated through education transmitted in the form of pamphlet writing, narrative, and dialogue. And this collection of free individuals can overcome any form of despotic reduced space through violence.

For Sade, it starts with women. This is why, in accordance with Apollinaire, Sade chooses females as the protagonists of his tales. Women are the most in need of liberation. For Sade their liberation begins with their choice to “jouir”. Through dépuçelage, characterized in scenes by language concerning pain, destruction, and blood, a young woman first achieves a transition leading to an evolved state.

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<sup>110</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir* 198

For this state to be reached, first she must willingly and morally choose her pleasure. This choice is what separates Justine from Eugénie and Juliette. Justine refuses to accept “jouissance” therefore she is condemned by Sade to a wandering life of suffering. Through acceptance of pleasure, Sade always confirms that suffering and pain transform into pleasure. Based on the narratives of Justine and Eugénie/Juliette, the difference between the sensations of pain and pleasure is a moral choice.

Juliette and Eugénie represent the women who have passed beyond this moral choice. They will accept everything as pleasure. Eugénie is the spirit of freedom contained in a moment’s time in the boudoir. Juliette is the same spirit of free will let loose upon the world. Sade could not keep this new feminine “esprit” contained within the boudoir, so he set her free to travel the world as Juliette does.

In order to be free according to Sade, the young girl must choose her pleasure and speak it. Language is extremely important. As Roland Barthes says, the factor that separates the libertines from their victims during the orgy scene is the control of the language. We see this represented by the dialogues in which Eugénie is free to express her will through both the reduced syntax of the language of orgasm and the larger philosophical discourse.

Juliette controls the narrative throughout her story. Interestingly so does Justine. However, Justine uses the alias Thérèse throughout the narration of her story. Because she denounces pleasure in favor of pious virtue, Sade strips her of

her individuality, her real name, thus making her a mask where the free feminine spirit is captive behind the mask of virtue and modesty representing the morals of the Ancien regime.

For women, their power only exists in their right to choose. Women, in order to be free must choose their pleasure, choose their words, and choose their will if they want to achieve the naturally ordained level of an enlightened being.

According to Sade, humanity can populate the world with free thinking individuals through education. Sade stresses the importance of education in both his works *La philosophie dans le Boudoir* and *Juliette*. Education is the process through which the libertines instruct the youth through orgies and discourse. Education is essential to bring about a new society. “Une si longue habitude du despotisme avait totalement énérvé notre courage [...] on va bientôt voir de quelles actions sublimes est capable le génie, le caractère français quand il est libre.”<sup>111</sup>

The libertines try to educate Justine, but she will not listen so they beat and rape her continually. Ironically, her ordeal brings her closer to god which is what she wants. So once again, for Sade, enlightenment and achievement of will starts with a choice.

If a woman chooses pleasure then she can achieve the higher state of a master whereas Justine remains a slave in the reduced space of the old order. After the choice, one can be educated. Education is an important factor in creating a new

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<sup>111</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 250-251

republic, which was Sade's goal in his post Terror publications. Education is the process to inform individuals of his method for complete freedom. In order to have a free society we must first have free thinking individuals: "ce sont des hommes libres que nous voulons former et non de vils adorateurs d'un dieu."<sup>112</sup> Sade's free society starts with Eugénie who represents the youth of France. This is why the first edition of the book from 1795 contained the subtitle "La mère en prescrira la lecture à sa fille".

The thesis has analyzed the individual, represented by three young girls, created by the method of surjouissance. Now can this method of liberation work as the foundation for a collective society? Sade's works, although they often contain madness and sexual déraison, are mathematically ordered and reasoned. He always states, the collective must have maintain order within the orgy: "raisonnons avec ordre", "mettons un peu d'ordre a ces orgies, il en faut même au sein du délire et de l'infamie."<sup>113</sup>

Based on Sade's post-revolution political writing, he wanted a voice in the government. He took it upon himself to create a new way for a free society. He blatantly details out this plan for a new republic in his pamphlet "Français encore un effort..."

Within the pamphlet there lies a society based on surjouissance. Where orgasm is the imperative, violence is the force, crime is the law, philosophy is the

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<sup>112</sup>*ibid*, 199

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 111

voice asking questions and education is the continuation; all to create a new politic to govern a new free society. Sex, and it's taboo forms of sodomy, incest, and rape, are allowed in this society because property is abolished, family hierarchy is dissolved, and the sex act or the orgy is the utopian union.

For Sade, orgy brings utopia. When all libertine members, that is all members of the orgy who freely choose their pleasure, reach the state of orgasmic release, they become higher beings. Sade wants this transition for society. He wants society to evolve. Just as he brought the new libertine spirit growing in Eugénie in the boudoir out to the world in the form of Juliette, Sade wants to bring the orgy outside of the boudoir and into French society to see “le génie et le caractère français” that I alluded to above.

However, the orgy is meant for inside the boudoir. This idea of complete freedom only exists if all hierarchy is dissolved. However Sade, contradictorily clings to hierarchy. One class, that is the working class, is not allowed to share in the experience of the new politic of the new republic. Sade does not want a republic where everyone is equal “c'est une injustice effrayante que des hommes de caractères inégaux se plient à des lois égales.”<sup>114</sup>

He wants a republic where the noble rules. And the noble cannot exist in a society without hierarchy where everyone is equal because the noble is the hero, the noble is the stronger one, the noble is unique and cannot be leveled.

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 208

Sade wants to create a new society, but not a democratic one where everyone has a voice. Only the noble, enlightened beings may communicate and lead the discourse. This is why Augustin is an important sign in *Ph...Boudoir*. He represents the ignoble for he is sent out during the discourse on the new republic: “Sors, Augustin, ceci n’est pas fait pour toi”. He is not included in the philosophical orgy, only in the sexual orgy: “nous sonnerons dès qu’il faudra que tu reparaisse”.

Augustin, described by Mme. De Saint-Ange as “ce gros cochon” is a gardener of brute strength and virility represented by his enormous penis “treize pouces de long sur huit pouces de circonférence” (Sade always gets mathematical with his descriptions) and the amount of sperm he ejaculates “ce bougre-là m’a rempli le cul”. So sexual virility and physical strength are not measures of nobility. He may pleasure the nobles, but he cannot think like one.

Would the libertines want to educate Augustin in the way of Eugénie? No, because the main difference separating the noble from the common is birth for Sade. Here is where Sade contradicts himself, prevents surjouissance from delivering everyone, and falls back into the aristocratic elitism of the Ancien Regime to miss an influential point. If he educated Augustin, that is if he wanted libertine education for everyone, then he would write that his method of surjouissance, the achievement of complete freedom of the mind through

philosophical discourse and body through free sexual stimulation, is the path to enlightenment and nobility.

Sade misses this point because he is blinded by his own noble blood. We have seen in his biography that his nobility was always a crutch for him: a saving grace during his sexually licentious youth and a stigmata of humiliation during the post 1789 era when the nobility was hunted and hated.

In Sade's universe the noble is the individual who chooses to achieve a transcendent state; who overcomes object/subject relation to be free to choose their own will. So perhaps Augustin should have beaten Dolmancé and demanded to stay and listen to the political discourse. However, Augustin is merely a dildo, a silent object to serve a purpose, like Justine. For Sade there needs to be slaves and there needs to be masters. There needs to be subjects and objects in order to reach pleasure. But to transition between both is the path to enlightenment.

Sade wanted to change the game. He was sick of the reduction of space surrounding him. He felt persecuted like a woman. He identified with the persecution and reduction of space women suffered during the ancien regime. Like the philosophers and writers of his era he saw female identity as a representation of slavery for the individual. He wanted to liberate women to change society. So I think Sade succeeds in delivering a message to women that through choosing pleasure and through achieving orgasm and sexual freedom, one can triumph and overcome any form of reduced space.



I think Sade fails when trying to achieve a foundation for society. Sade sees the paradox inherent in law. To protect freedom laws restrict freedom: “les lois, bonnes pour la société sont très mauvaises pour l’individu qui la compose, elles le gênent et le captivent”<sup>115</sup>. So Sade sees the futility in trying to organize a complete society. So he says make crime the law, laughing in his reduced space of his cell or his page.

Yet Sade always preferred the secret society of the orgy: “les lois ne sont pas faites pour le particulier mais pour le général”. Sade detests the “général” and upholds the “particulier”, the free thinking, free fucking individual.

Sade’s orgy ethics are more fit for a secret society, along the lines of the freemasons. Philippe Roger agrees when he describes “la conspiration libertine [...] succède à celles des Templiers, des Jésuites, et des Maçons”<sup>116</sup>. Sade’s Société des Amis du Crime in *Juliette* represents a political orgy, a “pornocratie [...] une République des corps voués à la jouissance”<sup>117</sup>, where surjouissance is the political model which blends philosophy, orgasm, and violence to create a collective of free individuals.

Sade’s ultimate legacy is represented by Juliette. A free thinking woman who is in control of her economic, moral, and physical space. She does not feel the walls of reduction surrounding her. She is limitless. Like the modern woman,

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<sup>115</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 177

<sup>116</sup> Roger 69

<sup>117</sup> Ost 131

transformed by the industrial revolution and set free to vote, work, and live as she pleases, she is aided in her discovery by technology.

This is why Sade is the most influential writer of modernity because he saw our era coming after the horizon. He saw the death of God and the decay of the noble through socialism and democracy trying to make everyone the same, everyone common and equal.

He saw the coming of the modern woman. He saw the importance of clandestine groups like the surrealists or the freemasons. He saw complete freedom and he wrote it.

Sex, destruction, and nature are associated during the orgy to become the method of surjouissance. His style matched his vision. He lived the horrors of revolution, prison, and perversion. He speaks of the broken hymen as of the broken order of society during the 1790's: "regardez son sang comme il coule".

He saw hope beyond the bloodshed. He saw a new day. Beyond his prison walls he saw free, unreduced space that the revolution of 89 had created by bringing down a millenia of tyranny. He was a prisoner in the Bastille which through an orgy of destruction was demolished. Within this free space brought on by the influence of individuals who had had enough, he wanted to establish a new republic. "Il nous faut un culte [...] fait pour le caractere d'un républicain."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Sade, *La philosophie dans le boudoir*, 187

His method that I call surjouissance represents the morals of a new system. The combination of orgasm, philosophy, violence, and writing to achieve liberty for “...en élevant l’âme, la tenir à la hauteur de cette liberté précieuse.”

His theories and writings are the most radical. They are not for everyone. But he never intended them to be for everyone “je ne m’adresse qu’à des gens capables de m’entendre et ceux-là me liront sans danger.”<sup>119</sup> His method is meant only for the orgy, secluded, private, personal, and positive for the willing and enlightened and deadly for the unwilling, repressive or virtuous.

He was misunderstood. He gave the world a perversion in the form of sadism; a word that implies no hope for the object. A word that is subject dominated. Domination is not his true purpose. He was dominated by reduced space his entire life.

The new word to define his unique literary method is surjouissance, “the continual self overcoming of man.”<sup>120</sup> Just like his writing, this word contains hope that complete freedom for the individual, searched for through the Enlightenment, can be achieved. According to Sade and demonstrated by his literature, surjouissance is a possible path to freedom where orgasm and philosophy lead the way to discover new truths. Along this path one travels through many dark places. Yet within the darkest shadow, a truth will enlighten.

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 210

<sup>120</sup> Nietzsche 201

And those who choose freedom beyond all else can keep trying to experience the unknown of something higher.

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