

Copyright © 2000 by E. Michael Jones

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of St. Augustine's Press.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Jones, E. Michael.

Libido dominandi : sexual liberation and political control /

E. Michael Jones.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 1-890318-37-X

1. Pornography—United States. 2. Pornography—Political aspects—United States. 3. Sex—Political Aspects—United States.

4. Pornography—History. I. Title

HQ472.U6 J65 2000

363.477'0973—dc21

99-051925

∞ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Contents

Introduction: Internet in Gaza: Sexual Liberation as Political Control

1

Part I

1. Ingolstadt, 1776	7
2. Paris, 1787	19
3. London, 1790	33
4. Paris, 1792	43
5. London, 1797	64
6. London, 1812	73
7. Paris, 1821	92

Part II

1. Paris, 1885	99
2. Chicago, September 1900	104
3. Bremen, 1909	114
4. Greenwich Village, 1913	131
5. Zürich, 1914	136
6. New York, 1914	140
7. Baltimore, 1916	148
8. Paterson, New Jersey, 1916	153
9. New York, 1917	177
10. Versailles, 1919	185
11. Baltimore, 1919	189
12. Berlin, 1919	193
13. New York, 1921	202
14. New York, 1922	208
15. Moscow, 1922	222
16. Moscow, 1922	234
17. Moscow, 1926	243
18. Vienna, 1927	249
19. New York, 1929	254
	258

Confessions, a prohibition which caused him to rage at his wife, the person who arranged for the delivery of his food and his books.

Sade, however, did get to read all of Voltaire's novellas, which he grew to know by heart, as well as contemporary novels like Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* and philosophy texts like Baron d'Holbach's *System de la nature*, which was all but ubiquitous in the libraries of revolutionaries of the first sexual revolution from Weishaupt to Shelley. In addition to the usual Enlightenment texts, the Marquis de Sade also read the travel narratives of the time: Abbé de la Porte's *Le Voyageur français*, Cook's *Voyages*, and Diderot's *Voyages de Bougainville*. The latter book was part of the tradition of cultural relativism which Margaret Mead would make famous in the twentieth century with the 1927 publication of *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Common to these travel books was the not-so-veiled attempt to relativize morals geographically. Eventually the cultural relativism that was either the intention of the travel narratives or their effect in the minds of those already depraved and looking for a rationalization would find their way into works like *Justine*. "Virtue," Rodin tells one of his young victims in a moment of detumescence, "is not some kind of mode whose value is incontestable, it is simply a scheme of conduct, a way of getting along, which varies according to accidents of geography and climate and which, consequently, has no reality, the which alone exhibits its futility. . . . there is not upon the entire globe, two races which are virtuous in the same manner; hence, virtue is not in any sense real, nor in any wise intrinsically good and in no sort deserves our reverence."⁴

Sade's appropriation of the travel narratives for sexual purposes in *Justine* illuminates both the topography of sexual liberation and all of Sade's oeuvre as its first instantiation. It also allows us to give a tentative definition of sexual liberation, based on the historical circumstances of its progenitor — its inventor, so to speak. Sexual liberation is a conflation of Enlightenment thought, which is to say, rationalization based on "science," and masturbation. Masturbation was the logical outcome of Sade's incarceration. A man whose sexual activity was out of control when suddenly cut off from the objects of sexual pleasure will resort to the solitary vice. But there is more to Sade's attachment to masturbation than that, just as there is a more than coincidental connection between sexual liberation and masturbation. Sade's sexual activity had been essentially masturbatory from its inception. "All creatures are born isolated and with no need of one another," he wrote in *Juliette*. In a sexual world like this, where each sexual partner is simply an aid to orgasm, a sexual device, and an instrument for pleasure, masturbation is the theoretical essence of all sexual activity. That theory became practice when the Marquis de Sade was incarcerated in 1777. In the absence of the whores he would hire to stimulate his sexual fantasies, he was forced to create imaginary figures who would serve the same end as masturbation became his actual rather than just theoretical sexual outlet.

That combination of Enlightenment thought and masturbation would not only become the dialectic of Sade's life in prison, where he would read and masturbate and then read and masturbate some more. It would also become the structure of his fiction, and as a result of that it would also become the defining dialectic of sexual liberation. ~~Sexual liberation would become Enlightenment rationalization in the service of masturbation and implemented into later cultural expressions of sexual liberation like Playboy magazine, where the photos served as masturbatory aids and Playboy philosophy served as rationalization of that behavior.~~ When the texts which enabled this behavior became widespread enough, pornography would become an instrument of political domination as well as an instrument for financial gain. CUT

Sade's characters spout Enlightenment clichés on morals and physiology as the rationalization of the sexual crimes they have just committed and are about to commit as soon as they can talk themselves back into an erection again. Sade's writing, like most pornography, is an aid to masturbation, both his own and that of the reader. In creating texts like *Justine*, Sade set the pattern for all subsequent versions of sexual liberation and sexual revolution. Science, which is to say the world understood according to the *philosophes'* reading of Newton, makes morals and religion unnecessary. Taken in the context of Sade's writings, which is the correct context, Newtonian science becomes a justification for sexual pleasure, in fact, its only real attraction. "When the study of anatomy reaches perfection," Clermont tells Therese after debauching her in *Justine*,

they will without any trouble be able to demonstrate the relationship of the human constitution to the taste which it affects. Ah, you pedants, hangmen, turnkeys, lawmakers, you shavepate rabble, what do you do when we have arrived there? What is to become of your laws, your ethics, your religion, your gallows, your Gods and your Heavens and your Hell when it shall be proven that such a flow of liquids, this variety of fibers, that degree of pungency in the blood or in the animal spirits are sufficient to make a man the object of your givings and your takings away.

Morality, in other words, is really nothing more than fluid dynamics. Sade felt this would undoubtedly be proven true by some future breakthrough in materialist physiology. In the meantime, his readers can act as if the discovery were a foregone conclusion. Such was the hope of the Marquis de Sade, and it continued to be the hope of those who espouse the Enlightenment's project in the present. Taken in its context, however, the passage betrays the attraction Newtonian physics held for the devotee of the Enlightenment. Newtonian physics made morals unnecessary because it reduced the complexity of life, and all of its moral considerations, to some calculus of matter in motion. What used to be behavior that led to heaven or hell had been reduced by the Enlightenment into a few simple calculations involving fluid dynamics. In the context of both his fiction and the life he led while writing

it, the Enlightenment became for the Marquis de Sade an aid to masturbation, and to a great extent as a result of his texts, that is what it would remain for generations of sexual liberationists to come. By the time the Internet arrived as the primary delivery vehicle for pornography two hundred years later, masturbation was still the key to understanding sexual liberation because, as with Sade, the libertine invariably sees his sex partners as instruments, something which makes even sexual activity with other people essentially masturbatory. Perhaps this is why Sallie Tisdale in her book *Talk Dirty to Me* is so insistent on making masturbation synonymous with sex. For her, in fact, all sex is essentially masturbatory. "In this sense," she writes, "all sex is masturbation – the other person's body is an object by which we have intense but wholly internal pleasure, and our orgasm is a self-created and unshared universe. . . . This may be the best explanation for why the orgasms of masturbation can be more powerful and feel more physically whole than those shared. They are simply safer."⁶

sallie The ipsation of liberated sex is intensified by its abhorrence of procreation. "A pretty girl," Madame Sainte-Ange tells Eugenie in *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, "ought simply to concern herself with fucking, and never with engendering. No need to touch at greater length on what pertains to the dull business of population, from now on we shall address ourselves principally, nay, uniquely to those libertine lecheries whose spirit is in no wise reproductive." Here as elsewhere, Sade takes the lead by essentially staking out all of the available ground. His contempt for female genitalia is legendary, something which also explains his choice of sodomy as his preferred form of sexual activity. But sexual preference indicates other truths as well. Sade's misogyny may well be a disguised hatred of the mother whom he felt had abandoned him as a child, or it may have resulted from his undisguised hatred of the mother-in-law who had him imprisoned for thirteen years of his life, but it also bespoke hatred of nature, female nature especially because it was the vehicle for new life, which was, in its way, testimony to the author of life. When he wasn't confined to his cell and limited to masturbation as his only form of sexual expression, Sade invariably tended to engage in both sodomy and sexual blasphemy, typically involving the desecration of communion hosts. In both acts we see defiance of nature, which is to say, defiance of the connection between love and life as ordained by the Creator. Sade's frequent use of the term "Nature" in his pornography is equivocal, and use of the term amounts to what Nietzsche, an avid reader of Sade, would call the transvaluation of values. Nature in its traditional sense meaning purpose is replaced by Nature in its Enlightenment sense which means whatever is, which is to say the absence of purpose. Nature in the latter sense commands all activity, and since this is so, there is no such thing as free will, and as a result terms like *good* and *evil* are chimeras of a bygone age.

As a result, sexual liberation, becomes by its very nature a form of domi-

nation whereby the strong get to do what they want with the weak. Since strong is synonymous with male and weak with female in Sade's anthropology, "liberation" means the male domination of women. Sexual liberation is, therefore, always a form of control, according to which the idea of nature as rational purpose, implying good and evil as expressions of practical reason, is replaced by the idea of nature as brute force. This also means that any pancultural implementation of sexual liberation will call forth a feminist reaction, as women who are imbued with left-wing fantasies first succumb to unwitting domination and then react with inchoate rage when the outlines of their bondage to "liberation" begins to become clear to them. 2 b

Sexual liberation, as the foregoing 200-year trajectory indicates, always tends to masturbation by way of rationalization, and in this respect the Enlightenment was the crucial enabling device for sexual revolution, every bit as much as it was the enabling device for the political revolution in France. Sade played a crucial role in both events. Aldous Huxley, who was no stranger to explaining how sexual freedom could be exploited for political ends, traces the tendency back to the Marquis de Sade and his use of Enlightenment "philosophy." In *Justine*, the explication of the true physical nature of morals, as d'Holbach predicted, makes them nonfunctional, hence allowing "liberation" from moral constraint. In reality though, the attraction of Enlightenment physiology lay not so much in its truth as in its satisfaction of desire. Sade's fiction makes clear that materialism of the sort promoted by Baron d'Holbach and de la Mettrie is just another aid to masturbation.

"The real reason why the Marquis could see no meaning or value in the world," Huxley writes in *Ends and Means*, "is to be found in those descriptions of fornications, sodomies and tortures which alternate with the philosophizings of *Justine* and *Juliette*. . . . His philosophical disquisitions, which, like the pornographic day-dreams, were mostly written in prisons and asylums, were the theoretical justification of his erotic practices."⁸ like Kinky scientific justification

Unlike Huxley, Francine du Plessix Gray accepts Sade's masturbatory fantasies at face value by claiming that science, as expounded in de la Mettrie's tract *Man a Machine*, undermined morals coincidentally by revealing the truth about man. For Gray, who accepts the Enlightenment at face value as well, reason dictates behavior, which is to say that Sade first apprehended the truth of what de la Mettrie had to say and then put it into practice after he realized, like d'Holbach, the true nature of morals as physically derived:

Sade had also seized on the work of the philosopher La Mettrie, author of *L'Homme Machine*, published in 1748. La Mettrie's views were, in essence, simple and exercised considerable influence on the characters of Sade's fiction, if not directly on their creator. Man, according to La Mettrie, must be defined exclusively by scientific observation and experiment. The conclusion of this method can only be that a human creature is a

machine, as dependent on motion as the machinery and instruments of the new scientific age of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had proved to be.⁹

After defending both his masturbatory fantasies and the appropriation of the Enlightenment as masturbatory aid which they entailed, Gray is then forced to defend Sade's treatment of women, turning him into a twentieth-century liberal by claiming that he would not allow this materialist philosophy to be used as an excuse to mistreat people. "In short," she writes, "the materialist, convinced, in spite of the protests of his vanity, that he is but a machine or an animal, will not maltreat his kind, for he will know too well the nature of those actions, whose humanity is always in proportion to the degree of the analogy proved above."¹⁰ One wonders just what edition of Sade Gray had been reading. In *Justine* Sade takes de la Mettrie's idea of man as a machine to its logical sexual conclusion when he writes that "women, who are nothing but machines designed for voluptuousness, who ought to be nothing but the targets of lust, are untrustworthy authorities whenever one has got to construct an authentic doctrine upon this kind of pleasure."¹¹

This and other passages indicate that sexual liberation is a system in which behavior dictates reason, and once reason is no longer the light according to which man acts, force takes its place, and force – *pace* Ms. Gray and other feminists – means the sexual exploitation of women. As Sade makes perfectly clear, the inner logic of sexual liberation is always might makes right. The truth is the opinion of the powerful. The good is the desires of the powerful. Sexual liberation is, therefore, of its essence a form of control. In its nascent and crudest form, it is male control of women. Since women according to this view are essentially appliances who get neutered to prevent unwanted offspring from diminishing sexual pleasure, sexual liberation is also essentially masturbatory. In this regard, subsequent generations of sexual liberationists are like moths returning to the same flame, namely, the seminal texts of the Marquis de Sade. They are irrationally attracted to these texts, but they dare not get too close to them lest their attraction be destroyed by the burning logic of domination which lies at their heart.

"The philosopher," Sade writes using the contemporary term for the Enlightenment thinker, "sates his appetites without inquiring to know what his enjoyments may cost others, and without remorse."¹² In that one phrase, Sade gives us the essential definition of sexual liberation. It is the sating of passion without remorse according to the materialist philosophy which the philosophes derived from Newtonian physics. By transforming men into machines, de la Mettrie and Sade immediately transform all sex into masturbation, and once that transformation occurs, it is only a matter of time before some social engineer begins to figure out a way to put that newly "liberated" sexual energy to some extrinsic financial and political use. The minute after man gets liberated, he gets controlled.

Gray attempts to domesticate Sade – implicit in the title of her book *At Home with the Marquis de Sade* – but fails to do justice to the word "sadism" which derives from Sade's willingness to inflict pain and cruelty on his victims. Gray also fails to understand the essentially masturbatory nature of Sade's writings. Materialism is not attractive because it is true, it is true because it is attractive. Its appeal is essentially erotic. Huxley, in this regard, is a more sensitive critic than Gray because he is willing to admit just how readily reason succumbs to desire and the role that Enlightenment thought played in this reversal:

The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics. He is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves. The voluntary, as opposed to the intellectual, reasons for holding the doctrines of materialism, for example, may be predominantly erotic, as they were in the case of Lamettrie (see his lyrical account of the pleasures of the bed in *La Volupté* and at the end of *L'Homme Machine*), or predominantly political as they were in the case of Karl Marx.¹³

Taken on the literal level, texts like *Justine* celebrate characters like Dolmance and Rodin, who have liberated themselves from religion and morals and, as a result, engage in any and all sexual activity free from guilt. The libertine is the truly moral man, for, as Baron d'Holbach said, "The *moral man*, is he who acts by physical causes, with which our prejudices preclude us from becoming acquainted."¹⁴ Taken in context, however, the point of these effusions is masturbation. This brings us then to the duality at the heart of the sexual liberationist project, a duality which revolves around the issue of freedom and slavery. The exoteric text of the Enlightenment and sexual liberation is liberation; its esoteric text, however, is control. What appears on the surface to be brave Prometheans liberating themselves from the chains of superstition turns out on closer examination to be a masturbatory fantasy, which sooner or later was going to be exploited as a form of control. The Marquis de Sade pioneered both possibilities; he was simultaneously thrall and manipulator; he proposed sexual liberation as a way of exerting hegemony over the female sex in the interest of sexual pleasure. In this sense, the sexual liberator was also the controller. But he proposed this revolution by writing masturbatory fantasies, and in this sense the sexual liberator was being opened to external control himself, by the exploitation of his own passions to be sure, but also by anyone who knew how to manipulate those passions. By proposing sexual liberation as the overthrow of the moral law, then, the Marquis de Sade simultaneously opened up new vistas for domination for anyone who could manipulate passion. It was a discovery which would have far-reaching consequences. Those who attempted to follow in his footsteps, namely, the sexual liberationists of France, England, and the

ker
★

7
after 28
wife Mary Godwin, soon found that horror, more than pleasure, was the reward for those who sought to become masters of life and the life-force. Sade would learn too. He was both a masturbator and a pornographer who would become aware during the course of the French Revolution of the political implications of his work.

On the morning of July 2, 1789, Donatien Alphonse François de Sade flew into a rage when he was told that he would not be permitted to take his accustomed walk on the battlements of the Bastille that day. Sade had learned from his wife that the disorders in Paris had increased dramatically of late and getting confined to his cell was independent confirmation of what she had told him. Commandante de Launay, who considered Sade an incorrigible criminal and a political revolutionary, could not afford having someone of Sade's temperament coming in contact with the dangerously volatile crowds. In addition to that consideration, de Launay needed the battlements for their original purpose, namely, armament. The battlements were now occupied by canons and barrels of black powder. The Bastille, which had been built as a fortress and then converted into a prison, was in the process of reverting to its original purpose, now to defend not the city but the few remaining inmates – criminals, the insane, and the criminally insane – from the mob which threatened to liberate them.

Sade was in no mood to postpone his walk and so, confined to his cell, he did what he considered the next best thing. He took a white metal funnel normally used to convey the contents of his chamber pot into the Bastille moat and placing it to his lips began to harangue the crowd outside at the top of his lungs, claiming that the prisoner's throats were being cut by the murderous wardens and jailers and demanding the crowd's help.

Twelve days later the mob responded to his call, but the Marquis was not there to welcome them. At one in the morning in the night after his funnel outburst, Sade had been dragged out of bed by six armed guards and taken to the insane asylum at Charenton, where he would later achieve fame of sorts as a director of plays. What the mob found instead on the afternoon of July 14 when it burst into Liberty number six, his cell, was a comfortably furnished apartment with a library of 600 books, as well as prints and obscene tapestries, as well as the entire Sadean *oeuvre* to date, all of which got pillaged, which is to say either destroyed or stolen by the mob which he had hoped would liberate him. The fate of Commandant de Launay was less fortunate still. He along with Major de Losme-Salbray and his assistant Miray were dragged out of the Bastille onto the Place de Greve and murdered. A kitchen boy by the name of Desnot then cut off de Launay's head with a pocket knife and, sticking it on the head of a pike, carried it through the streets of Paris as the totem of the city's newfound liberty. It was in that respect an omen of some significance. The head severed from the body, symbolizing the

n ditzbani
disjunction between reason and the passions, would become the symbol of the revolution. Either that or the instrument of that disjunction, the guillotine.

For the next eight months, Sade would spend his time in the company of "madmen, imbeciles, debauchees and spendthrifts" in "a dark building, buried in dirt up to its roof." If this were liberty it was much more austere than the imprisonment he had endured in his by comparison luxurious apartment at the Bastille. "You will find," he wrote describing his cell in Charenton, "four bare, damp walls covered with insects, with a bed nailed to one wall, a haven for fleas and spiders that have laid undisturbed for a hundred years."¹⁵

Sade's stay at the madhouse in Charenton was a prelude to being released into a world that was about to go mad or it was an interlude between the private madness of the masturbatory fantasies of his writings and the public madness those writings would at least in part inspire in the public realm. "Without the mad extravagance represented by the name, the life and the truth of Sade," wrote Maurice Blanchot, "the Revolution would have been deprived of a part of its Reason."¹⁶ Or unreason. Whatever the case, Sade walked out of Charenton on Good Friday, which fell in the year 1790 on April 2. His wife, who had served him faithfully during his stay in prison, now refused to take him in. There were no half-way houses in Paris at the time, and so Sade was free to wander the streets with three mattresses, a black coat and one gold louis in his pocket.

Although he still owned the Sade family's ancestral lands in the south of France and the aristocratic title that went with them, Sade saw his newly acquired freedom as the chance to embark upon a new career, one more in keeping with the revolutionary age, namely, man of letters. Sade managed to salvage a few manuscripts from the sacking of the Bastille, and a little over one year after his release from Charenton in June 1791 the most marketable – because it was the most pornographic – was about to be published. That manuscript was *Justine*. The publisher, Sade wrote to Reinaud, asked for something "quite spicy," and Sade obligingly responded by returning a book "capable of corrupting the devil."¹⁷ Freedom in 1791 meant "*La Foutro-manie*," which could be translated freely as the freedom to fuck. Given the fact that passions drove the revolution, it was not surprising that the first expression of freedom the revolutionaries chose to exercise was freedom from sexual restraint. Nor was it surprising that the sexual passion freed from all restraint would quickly degenerate into passion of another bloodier sort. Sade, after all, had sketched out the trajectory in his now missing manuscript *The 120 Days of Sodom*.

But that was a lesson the French nation would have to learn the hard way in the expensive school of experience, as their idol Ben Franklin had once said. In the meantime, they devoted themselves to gratifying their newly liberated passions, and Sade looked forward to a best seller and the emolument

which would accrue therefrom. It seemed like a sure thing because of the *Zeitgeist*. Pornography, as Lever noted, was *a la mode*:

A veritable wave of licentious fiction had swept across France, mingling titillating visions with the imprecations of revolutionary orators and the *Ca ira!* of patriots. The erotic vein, though apparently so contrary to civic virtue, met with unheard of favor. Sex never sold so well. People went wild for lascivious scenes and lubricious bodies. It was impossible to find debauches outrageous enough, lovemaking furious enough, or perversions new enough to slake the public's lusty appetite. The erotic and the political had never meshed so tightly.¹⁸

Perhaps no novel since has contributed to the politicization of sex and the sexualization of politics. *Justine* became in effect the hieratic text for sexual liberationists throughout the nineteenth century. Byron owned a copy; as did Swinburne. In the 1920s he became the "Divine Marquis" to the French surrealists, who saw him as the vehicle to revolution. Perhaps because many found the book as appalling as appealing, some felt that interest in it would die out. They were wrong. In 1800 the editor of the *Tribunal d'Appollon* urged the police to seize and destroy the book. "You think that the work is not selling. You are in error."¹⁹

On June 20, 1791, at around the same time that *Justine* was arriving in the bookstalls, King Louis XVI fled from Paris, where he had been interred a year before after a mob of 30,000 women marched him and his family from Versailles with the heads of his guards on pikes. The king hoped to reach German-speaking lands with his family, where with the help of his brother-in-law, the emperor of Austria, he would return at the head of an avenging army. He got as far as the town of Varennes, where a government official fell on his knees after recognizing the king, betraying him to his revolutionary enemies in this unwitting act of homage. Four days later the royal family was brought back to Paris under armed escort. When the entourage reached the Place de la Revolution, a man burst from the crowd, leaped onto the king's carriage and tossed a letter onto his lap. The man who both wrote and delivered the letter was the Marquis de Sade, and the letter which was soon published under the title "Address of a Citizen of Paris to the King of the French," marked Sade's entry into the field of politics and political propaganda.

"If you wish to reign," Sade informed the doubtlessly grateful Louis XVI, "let it be over a free nation. It is the nation that installs you, that names you its leader. It is the nation that places you on its throne, and not the God of the universe, as people used to have the weakness to believe."²⁰

It was one more rant about atheism, a predilection that would eventually get him in trouble when Robespierre decided that the French needed a Supreme Being to keep them in line, one compatible, of course, with his revolutionary program. But all that was in the future. For the moment, Sade eagerly

traded in his first love, pornography, and devoted himself to writing political tracts. In his private correspondence, Sade would range from calling Louis XVI his beloved king to proclaiming the most republican of sentiments depending on how the political winds were blowing at the time. Often letters were written to be read by censors, who freely opened the mail of citizens suspected of disloyalty or were left lying around the house for the police when they came to search his lodgings for evidence of antirevolutionary sentiment. Sade was hardly adverse to the idea of revolution. "After dishonoring himself in so many crimes," wrote Michaud, "Sade could hardly fail to support a revolution that in some sense consecrated the principles of those crimes."²¹ To say though that Sade had a consistent political point of view during the days of the Revolution would be an exaggeration. It would also be an exaggeration to say that he renounced his sympathy toward his own class, even if he did drop the particle and adopt the ostentatiously republican name of Citizen Louis Sade. When on June 19, 1792, Condorcet ordered that all genealogical documents held in public archives were to be burned, Sade was appalled. Yet not appalled enough to cease calling himself Citizen Sade or to abandon what one would have to call his political opportunism. "As a man of letters," he wrote, "I find myself obliged to work one day for one party, one day for another, and this establishes certain mobility of opinion that is now without influence on my private thoughts."²²

Sade took up his residence in the Section de la Place Vendome and quickly became active in the section meetings, which functioned as revolutionary committees whose decisions had the force of law not only in Paris but throughout France. Gradually, over the summer of 1792 the *sans culottes* and other *enrage* operatives took over the meetings at what had once been the Church of the Capuchins and began agitating for more and more radical measures against the monarchy and the now captive king. Before long that agitation would have its effect in what would become known as the September massacres of 1792. For the next six weeks, "Citizen Sade" would write to Ripert, his deputy, ordering him to spirit off his estate books to a safe place so that he could safely prove his aristocratic lineage and his claims on this estates.

In the meantime, while Sade was simultaneously pandering to the mob in Paris and making sure his aristocratic titles were safe, the events of the Revolution had taken on a life of their own. On August 10, 1792, at three in the morning, the insurrectional Commune met at the city hall and then marched to the place du Carousel directly in front of the Tuileries, where the king was being held but guarded by a force of 4,000 men, mainly Swiss guards. The mob which had linked up at six in the morning with delegates from the Left Bank sections was intimidated by the force guarding the king and so decided to wait for reinforcements as word spread throughout Paris and the revolutionary forces began to converge on the palace. Eventually the

mob swelled to 10,000, emboldened by the defection of many gendarmes, who now marched with the mob with their hats on their bayonets. Eventually the mob burst through the gates of the palace and swarmed to the grand staircase where a confrontation ensued. When a shot was fired from a second story window, the Swiss took it as their signal and opened fire on the mob leaving 300 dead. At first the mob retreated, then the Swiss retreated; then, in order to avoid further carnage, the King ordered the Swiss to lay down their arms. What followed was even worse carnage as the enraged mob stripped, then castrated, then decapitated the helpless Swiss, then carried their heads through Paris on pikes.

Outrage seemed to fuel outrage in the aftermath of the August 10 assault on the Tuileries, when mobs roamed the street for the next month as rumor provoked reprisal on a massive scale. On August 26 the French forces were defeated at Longwy; on September 2 Verdun fell and the way to Paris was open to English and counter-revolutionary forces, an event which prompted Danton to give his famous speech calling for "*l'audace, encore l'audace, et toujours l'audace*" to rally the revolutionary forces. The immediate effect of the speech was audacious enough. On Sunday September 2, wagons carrying 115 defenseless priests bound for deportation were diverted by an enraged mob to the Abbaye and a Carmelite convent where their throats were slit. One day later on September 3 at the same Abbaye where the priests had been murdered, the mob seized the Princess de Lamballe, stabbed her in the stomach, and then, after cutting off her breasts and decapitating her, they then carried her head through the streets to the Temple where Marie Antoinette was being held. There they displayed the princess's head, whose locks a hairdresser curled after it had been removed from her body, for the queen's inspection, all the while chanting obscene slogans.

Sade recounted the events of September 3 the next day in a letter to Gaufridy, but he gives no indication that the sexual sadism of the outburst might have some connection to his writings. "All of the refractory priests," he wrote, "had their throats cut in the churches where they were being held, among them the archbishop of Arles, the most virtuous and respectable of men."²³ If Sade was moved to pity by the massacre, the movement was short-lived. "There is nothing equal to the horror of the massacres," he wrote on a fold of the same letter, "but they were just."²⁴ The last line may have been written for the benefit of the censors, who could and did inspect Sade's correspondence in search of counter-revolutionary ideas, but the striking fact remains. Sade had sketched out the trajectory which the revolution was taking as it progressed from sexual "liberation" to sexual sadism to murder. Sexual passion was the fuel which fed the revolutionary blaze and now that blaze would set the revolutionary house itself on fire in an orgy of bloodshed that demanded a totalitarian imposition of order from without in order to save the country from its own destructive passions.

Part I, Chapter 3

London, 1790

On November 4, 1789, the Rev. Richard Price, the noted dissenting divine, gave a sermon on the revolution in France at the meeting house in Old Jewry to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution [of 1688] in Great Britain. "We are met," Price said in a sermon that was republished as a tract in early 1790, "to thank God for that event in this country to which the name of The Revolution has been given; and for which, for more than a century, it has been usual for the friends of freedom, and more especially Protestant Dissenters, to celebrate with expressions of joy and exultation."

The reaction to the sermon was, as one might expect, various. Edmund Burke read the transcription of the talk in early 1790 and wrote his book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in response, a document which appeared on November 1, 1790, and was to become, according to Russell Kirk, the founding document of conservative political thought. Burke argued that Unitarianism was less a religion than it was a subversive political party and felt that it should be suppressed. As events in France proved Burke's predictions right, the idea of suppression eventually found fruition in the sedition trials of 1792, when Tom Paine fled England to be with his fellow revolutionaries in France.

Unlike Edmund Burke, William Godwin heard Dr. Price's sermon in person. Godwin came from one of the many dissenting families in East Anglia, where he was ordained a minister in 1778. Shortly after that, one of Godwin's colleagues, the Rev. Joseph Fawcett gave him a strange and disconcerting book entitled *Le Systeme de la Nature*, published in Holland to escape the censors but written by a Frenchman by the name of Baron d'Holbach. As it would with so many eighteenth century thinkers, *The System of Nature* precipitated a crisis in Godwin's Calvinist faith which would be aggravated by reading Rousseau and Helvétius and would only reach a resolution of sorts when he left the ministry in 1783 and then left the Christian faith behind completely in 1787. Godwin also read Priestley, but unlike Priestley did not settle for the half-way house to atheism known as Unitarianism. Godwin embraced total skepticism and, after another equally unsuccessful stint as a teacher, embarked on a literary career which would last for another fifty years.

In 1790 in the aftermath of Rev. Price's sermon, the world of Grub Street political journalism was alive with fantasies surrounding the revolution in

Part I, Chapter 5

London, 1797

On May 1, 1797, a little over a month after Mary Wollstonecraft married William Godwin and roughly three months before she died, Edmund Burke, the man who was the occasion of her rise to literary fame, wrote a letter to Abbé Augustin Barruel, a French émigré and priest, upon the publication of the first volume of his *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*. In terms of its breadth and scope, Barruel's *History of Jacobinism* was the book Mary probably hoped she would write; in terms of its politics, it was its antithesis. If there were ever a rout in the battle for the public mind, Barruel's *History of Jacobinism* accomplished it in the utter defeat of revolutionary sympathies in England. Less than ten years after Rev. Price's sermon at Old Jewry, the English radicals were driven from the field in ignominious defeat, and the name of Godwin, their leader, became synonymous with both personal vice and political discord, especially after he wrote the memoir of his deceased wife.

"I have known myself, personally," Burke wrote to Barruel, shortly before he died, "five of your principal conspirators, and I can undertake to say from my own certain knowledge, that so far back as the year 1773, they were busy in the plot you have so well described, and in the manner and on the principle you have so truly represented. To this I can speak as a witness."¹

The acclaim which followed the publication of Barruel's *History* was almost as passionate as the vehement denunciation which greeted Godwin's Wollstonecraft memoir. Born in 1741, Barruel entered the Society of Jesus in 1756 and was employed as a teacher in Vienna at the court of the Emperor when he received word in 1773 that the Jesuit order had been suppressed. After spending time as a teacher abroad, Barruel returned to France and immediately became embroiled in the *Kulturkampf* that would eventuate in the French Revolution. When Louis XVI ascended to the throne, Barruel wrote an ode in his honor which sold 12,000 copies and endeared his name to Royalist circles as much as it earned him the enmity of the *philosophes*. In 1781, their enmity deepened with the publication of Barruel's book *Les Helviennes*, his attack on Enlightenment thought. Barruel then turned on the clergy who thought some accommodation with the Enlightenment was possible, publishing *La Genese selon M. Soulavie*, which got Abbé Soulavie fired from his teaching post at the Sorbonne, and subsequently led to a law-

suit, which must have been successful since all extant copies of the book were destroyed. During the same period, Barruel became editor of the *Journal ecclésiastique*, a post from which he continued his attack on the revolution. By August of 1792, actions had become louder than words. On August 10, Barruel suspended publication of the journal and escaped into hiding in Paris when the September massacres broke out. From there he went to Normandy, whence the Vendée revolt would issue less than a year later, and from there he escaped to England in mid-September 1792.

The parallels with Mary Wollstonecraft's life are striking. Both emigrated in 1792. Wollstonecraft left England and went to Paris to write a book about the revolution which is now pretty much unread by anyone but scholars interested in the psychic details of Wollstonecraft's life. Barruel escaped with his life from the very revolution Wollstonecraft sought to embrace and, emigrating to England, where he was granted patronage by the Clifford family, one of England's most eminent recusant lines, Barruel wrote a book that was to become the classic counter-revolutionary text for the next two hundred years.

In a left-handed tribute to Barruel's book and its subsequent influence, Daniel Pipes dedicates an entire chapter to Barruel in his 1997 book *Conspiracy*, and in an act as audacious as it is dishonest tries to make Barruel responsible for both the Holocaust and the Gulag, failing to mention that the Soviet regime was the logical and historical extension of principles taken from the French Revolution, against which Barruel fought.

Pipes's attempt to link Barruel with the Nazi regime is even more fraught with dishonesty. While admitting at one point that the word *Jew* never appears in the almost 2,000 pages that comprise Barruel's *History of Jacobinism*, Pipes nevertheless accuses Barruel of anti-Semitism based on the alleged fact that he received a letter from an Italian by the name of Simonini who alleged that the Jews were behind the conspiracy which brought about the revolution in France. Pipes claims that Barruel "accepted and endorsed"² the notion that the Jews were behind the revolution; he then claims that it became public knowledge, although there is no evidence to support that claim. Pipes cites an obscure French journal as his source, when he got the idea from Nesta Webster's book *World Revolution*, which mentions the Simonini letter, but also claims that Barruel never accepted it. That is not hard to understand, since accepting that thesis would have meant the repudiation of the one he proposed in the *History of Jacobinism*, which attributed the revolution to philosophes, freemasons, and the Illuminati.

Barruel's history earned the ire of the heirs of the Enlightenment because it cut through the pseudo-Newtonian mumbo-jumbo which tried to describe human activity in terms of atoms bumping into each other, and resituated the locus of human responsibility in the human will, where August-

time, his namesake, had placed it 1500 years before. Revolutions were caused by human passions, which, when they got out of control, spread havoc through a culture. "It is undeniable," Barruel wrote

that virtue ought to be more particularly the principle of democracies than of any other form of government, they being the most turbulent and the most vicious of all, in which virtue is absolutely necessary to control the passions of men, to quell that spirit of cabal, anarchy, and faction inherent to the democratic form, and to chain down that ambition and rage of dominion over the people, which the weakness of the laws can scarcely withstand.³

Since the soul, according to the classical tradition, is the microcosm of the state, the French Revolution was the logical consequence of releasing passion on a nation-wide scale:

The French revolution is in its nature similar to our passions and vices: it is generally known, that misfortunes are the natural consequences of indulging them; and one would willingly avoid such consequences: but a faint-hearted resistance is made; our passions and our vices soon triumph, and man is hurried away by them.⁴

Godwin's rout in the battle of ideas came about primarily because the traditional psychology Barruel espoused as the best explication of political events in France seemed to be born out as true when placed up against the still-unrolling chain of events. Godwin's ideas, like calling Robespierre an "eminent benefactor of mankind," seemed to burst anytime they made contact with events.

The only thing that saved Godwin from total obscurity was the fact that people kept his name in print by attacking him. One of the more significant attacks came in June 1798 when Joseph Johnson published an anonymous book entitled *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society, with remarks on the speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet and other writers*. The author was a shy young Anglican pastor with a hare-lip, ten years Godwin's junior, by the name of Thomas Malthus. Malthus took exception to Godwin's idea of human perfectibility, and proposed as a counterexample the idea that man's procreation would always outstrip the available food supply. This was so because food increased in arithmetical progression, whereas human beings procreated in ratios which increased geometrically. Malthus had come by his philosophical credentials by something akin to birth right, in a family which revered philosophical discourse and had as guests in their home David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The story of Malthus's intellectual development, however, was the opposite of Godwin. Godwin was raised in a Calvinist home for a career in the ministry, which he threw over after coming in contact with the Enlightenment. Malthus was exposed to Enlightenment thought in the home and became, perhaps as a result, a minister in the Anglican church.

Malthus based his argument against Godwin's notion of moral perfectibility on two axioms: (1) that food is necessary to the existence of man and (2) "that the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state." Given these two facts, the only thing that will limit population to the available food supply is war, famine, and disease. Godwin, who subsequently met Malthus at a dinner party given by Johnson on August 14, 1798, suggested that if property were distributed more equitably, that everyone would have enough to live on. Like the earlier dispute between Burke and Wollstonecraft, the Godwin/Malthus dispute set the terms for what one would come to call left and right (in English-speaking lands, at least) for the next two hundred years. The liberal view was that human nature and therefore all human institutions, were completely malleable and therefore perfectible. The conservative view was that man was what he was as the result of immutable "iron" laws of nature, which could not be changed. Hence, according to the latter view, the less man did in terms of tinkering the better off he would be. According to the former view, the notion that man could be whatever he wanted to be — the idea of perfectibility, even to the point of conquering death — almost naturally led to revolution because the only explanation for evil lay in the arbitrary restrictions which the powerful imposed on society for their own benefit. In many ways, the debate was a resurrection in disguised form of the earlier theological debate on original sin. Godwin represented an extreme form of the Pelagian position, according to which nature was sufficient without grace; whereas Malthus represented, in spite of his position as an Anglican minister, the Calvinist position that any effort to ameliorate man's condition was pointless because of man's innate depravity.

Time would show that the crucial issue was "passion between the sexes." Malthus argued from numbers and claimed that sexual activity remained on that level a constant that would eventuate in births in a way that would invariably outstrip food supply. Godwin argued that late marriage and moral restraint would limit family size. Godwin, however, was prevented from making this argument effectively by the evidence from his own life and writings, which seemed to urge promiscuity, divorce, abortion, and anything but moral restraint. The more the two men pursued the argument, the more the argument got cast in terms that would never admit a solution. Malthus, like Burke before him, allowed the terms of the conservative argument to degenerate into the defense of a completely static status quo and an equally vehement defense of economic privilege if not ruthless exploitation of the weak. Godwin, for his part, proposed defenses that were ever more utopian, and the argument has pretty much run in the same ruts from ever since.

By 1801 Malthus's theory had already been widely adopted. Two years of poor harvests had led to widespread distress. Prices were up 300 percent from their 1793 level, and although wages had also risen, there had been a drastic fall in the income of the poor. Relieving starvation by public expendi-

"LEFT"

"RIGHT"

"LEFT"

ture, many taxpayers now believed, would make the situation worse, and the only answer was to reduce demand even further. In 1800 a law was passed to forbid bakers from selling bread for twenty-four hours after baking – it being well known that since new bread tasted better, the poor ate more of it.

What neither side could anticipate then is how attractive artificial contraception would appear to both sides in the dispute. As of the time of Malthus's book, contraception was technologically unfeasible and morally repugnant, but with the passage of time and the subsequent and simultaneous advance in technology and the erosion of morals, it would soon reassert its utility as a technological solution which allowed both sides to have their cake and eat it too. Birth control allowed the Malthusians to concentrate on fertility reduction to the detriment of higher wages and better working conditions, but it also allowed the Left to indulge its sexual passions and its utopian schemes for social engineering. The rapprochement which contraception enabled would have to wait for a hundred years, but eventually it would be symbolized by the collaboration of Margaret Sanger and John D. Rockefeller Jr. The two poles of the debate – liberation and control, as in sexual liberation and population control – would remain antinomies, but in a way in which the one invariably begat the other in a never ending cycle of more and more liberation eventuating in tighter and tighter social control. The one was always a function of the other, and the contraceptive was the key to both. In providing both liberation of the sexual sort for the Godwinians and control of the population sort for the Malthusians, it allowed the creation of a political system in which "liberation" from sexual restraint could be used as a form of control. The sexual act liberated from procreation was mobilized in ways congenial to those who wanted to make money off its exploitation. By convincing undesirable groups that they should limit their numbers rather than seek higher wages, these groups were deprived of demographic leverage, and political protest was defused by ever more besotting applications of sexual pleasure. All of that was far in the future, but all of it grew out of the dialectic of liberation and control which lay at the heart of the Godwin/Malthus debate.

Godwin at this point had other reasons to think about birth control and moral restraint. At the time of his debate with Malthus he became sexually involved with a certain Mrs. Clairmont, upon whom he was practicing once again the "chance-medley" system of birth control, which predictably led to a pregnancy, which eventuated in the birth in October of 1801 of one more half-sister, Jane or Claire or Clare, being added to the Godwin family ménage.

On March 6, 1801, seven months before the birth of Mary Godwin's half-sister Jane, the Marquis de Sade paid a visit to his publisher Nicholas Masse at his offices on the rue Helvétius. In 1797, the same year that

Barruel's *magnum opus* on the revolution had appeared in London, the Marquis de Sade produced a *magnum opus* of a different sort in Paris. Entitled *La Nouvelle Justine ou les Malheurs de la vertu, suivie de l'Histoire de Juliette sa soeur*, Sade's latest foray into pornography dwarfed anything he had had published up till that time. Its ten volumes of pornographic excess were illustrated with numerous obscene engravings earning it the dubious encomium of being "the most ambitious pornographic enterprise ever assembled."⁵ If Sade hoped to get rich from the book, he was once again disappointed. Three years after its publication, Sade was living from hand to mouth in the back room of a farmer's cottage with no residence of his own and not even a set of clothes to wear. Sade was in fact so down and out that the world took him for dead. On August 29, 1799, he read his obituary in the *L'Ami des Lois*, which shed few tears over his reputed passing away, referring to him as an "infamous writer" whose "mere name . . . breathes a cadaverous stench that kills virtue and inspires horror." "Not even the most depraved heart," the report continued, "the most bizarrely obscene imagination could conceive anything so offensive to reason, decency or humanity."⁶

A year and a half after the report appeared, Sade was at Masse, his publisher, hoping for a some of the royalties from his latest, most ambitious pornographic work when the police arrived and took him into custody. Masse cut a deal with the police by revealing the location of the warehouse where the copies of *Juliette* were stored and was released within twenty-four hours. Sade was taken to a jail known as the "Mousetrap" and left to stew in his own (and other people's) juices in a holding cell fifteen feet underground. Sade had been drawn into a trap by Masse and the police, who, according to Lever, suspected Sade as the author of *Zoloe*, a satire on Napoleon. Two years after his arrest, after bouncing from one dungeon to another, Sade finally ended up at Charenton, the famous asylum for the insane. It was there, under the direction of the defrocked priest François Simonet de Coulmier, who revitalized the hospital and made it, for a time, the social hub for Paris high society, that Sade finally made a name for himself in the theater as the asylum's new "artistic director." Coulmier not only arranged the performances, he actually joined with the Marquis de Sade and the inmates in performing them. Considering the fact that Sade nearly perished from hunger and exposure during the winter of 1800–1801, things could have been worse, especially since Sade's mistress Constance Quesnet was allowed to move in with him in August of 1804, and occupy the room next to his, where she passed as his illegitimate daughter.

There was of course constant tension with the civil authorities who were authorized to search his room periodically and confiscate any obscene material they found. These same authorities also insisted that Sade be confined to the grounds of the asylum, but Coulmier was lax in the enforcement of this