

first time, but escaped a long prison sentence thanks to his influential parents-in-law. On similar future occasions, they were less inclined to help him out of trouble. Before this, the young couple had two sons and a daughter.

In 1768, Sade snatched the seamstress Rosa Keller from the streets, took her to his house and asked her to beat him up and spit on the cross. When she refused to do so, he set the example and himself spat on the image of Christ and whipped the young woman. She escaped and filed a complaint. Sade ended up for the second time in prison, and was banished to his castle in La Coste. He was, however, soon allowed to come back to Paris, and until 1772 he lived a rather quiet family life divided between his different homes. In that year, he visited a bordello in Marseille, gave the prostitutes some aphrodisiacs they thought were poison, and had his man-servant sodomise him. For these crimes the fugitive Sade and his man-servant were sentenced to death, and were burned 'in effigy' (their portraits were burned). This made Sade the most famous victim of the sodomy laws. In 1777 he was arrested after he had come back to Paris to visit his dying mother. He was held in prison until 1790 by means of a *lettre de cachet* requested by his family, after his capital punishment had been revoked. In prison in Vincennes and at the Bastille, he started to write the books that established his fame. His wife remained faithful to him nearly until the end of his prison term.

Sade claims to have called the people of Paris to arms from inside his prison on 2 July 1789, shouting that the prisoners in the Bastille were beaten mercilessly. He was transferred to Charenton, and 12 days later the destruction of his former jail would announce the beginning of the French Revolution. Sade served another year in his cell before he could arrive on the scene of the revolution in which he participated actively until the radical Jacobins took over. As a count of the

Ancien Régime, his life was now in real danger, and indeed he was arrested and condemned to death for a second time, now for treason. But two days after the judgement, the Jacobins lost power and themselves perished on the guillotine. Sade was again a free man. He found a new lover with whom he lived in poverty. Some of his books were published and his plays staged. But his freedom would not last for long. Soon after Napoleon took power, Sade was again arrested, now because of the obscenity of his work, and once more put in the Charenton institution, which had become an asylum. There he died, barely surviving Napoleon's reign. He had lived during five different regimes, and all of them had condemned him to prison. No picture of Sade has survived, and his grave has been lost, but his texts miraculously survived all efforts of destruction. And his words made his fame.

Sade's work is notorious because of its endless stories of atrocities and extreme sexual pleasures. He is unsurpassed for violence and depravity. No sexual variation escaped his attention. As in most erotic literature of his time, the sexual scenes are interrupted by political and philosophical discourses that denounce religion and state. He subverted the dichotomy of good and bad, underlining that the devout people will always suffer because of wickedness, while the amoral will enjoy bad and good equally. It is in human nature to enjoy all pleasures and not to care about victims of violence. Space is a central theme in his sexual utopia. Lust needs an architecture with castles and monasteries. Boudoirs and bordellos are ideal places for pleasure as they disrupt the dichotomy of public and private.

Sade was not a sadist, but a passive sodomite who wanted to be whipped. He became a sadist when his anger was aroused by pious people who opposed his sexual pleasures and blasphemous behaviour. He wanted to teach them the lessons of abjection: one had to go through hell to know heaven.

His most famous books are *The 120 Days of Sodom* (first published in 1904), *Justine* (1791), *Philosophy in the Boudoir* (which is not a bedroom), *Aline et Valcour* (both 1795) and *Juliette* (1797). There exist many translations as well as new editions in French.

L. L. Bongie, *Sade: A Biographical Essay*, Chicago, 1998; F. du Plessix Gray, *At Home with the Marquis de Sade: A Life*, New York, 1998; N. Schaeffer, *The Marquis de Sade: A Life*, New York, 1999.

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Sade, Donatien Alphonse François, Marquis de (1740–1814), French writer. The Marquis de Sade was born into one of the oldest noble families of Provence. At the time he was born, however, the family belonged to the poorer nobility. To counter a further downfall, his parents applied different strategies for upward mobility. The young Sade grew up in the house of the illustrious de Condé family and received his education with its son. Later his parents married him to Pélagie de Montreuil, daughter of a family whose nobility was recent but whose fortune was large. He started a military career and participated in the battle of Cleves. In his youth, Sade developed a reputation as a libertine, following in the steps of his uncle, an abbot, and his father, who was once arrested for cruising men. Shortly after his marriage, he was arrested for the