

Bou (Sarrasine) chardon
 Bouch- (Sarrasine) ardon
 Bou (~~ch~~- Sarrasine) ardon

Jane Gallop / "BS"

Roland Barthes weaves a tapestry with the many threads he finds in Balzac's story "Sarrasine." At the center of that tapestry he inscribes the sparsest of emblems, S/Z—not only center (47th of 93 chapters), but also title.¹ In all its simplicity, this emblem, as center and title, is the elegant illustration that the "truth" can be found synechdochically in the smallest fragments torn, imperiously and disrespectfully, from the text. Pruning the story down to the name of its protagonist, and reducing that name to one letter, Barthes elaborates a reading of that letter (the second S in Sarrasine).

That S is no mere empty form, single and available to any passing significance. It is already engaged by its distinction from the letter Z, since "in conformity with the traditions of French onomastics, one would expect the name 'SarraZine'" (S/Z, p. 113). The reader sees not only S, but also not-Z. The reader sees this S/Z, but does not hear it: "Sarrasine" is phonetically identical to "Sarrazine." We face an instance of pure visual signification, graphic expression.

Barthes toys briefly with associations suggested by the morphic differences between S and Z. Z slashes across the whiteness of the page, cutting and slicing "amidst the roundnesses of the alphabet" (p. 113). S is all roundness and sinuous curve: sensual, subtle, gradual swerve of

where his name simply cannot be caulked without precipitating a burst of laughter. Even with near-symmetrical expunction of *ch*(el) from both Michaelangelo and Bouchardon, Sarrasine is left first with an ephebic half-angel, a *mi-ange*, having no acceptable rung on a great ladder of being, and then with an end or residue in *bou* (*bout-boue*) leading to a worthless favor (*don*) reflected by the lack expressed in the first syllable of *Michel-Ange* and *Bouchardon*. The excised *che* can be interpreted as an Italian relative—a "who," "what" or demonstrative "that" revealing the artist's desire to mark the world with an X.

But this end of the onomastic plan reproduces the beginning, as Bou-chardon can only be the prickly spine of a thistle already stereotypical in chiastic humor.⁵ In question is also a *Bouche-art-don*, a mouth-art-gift that is in every sense a piece of residue. This play of the letter in Balzac's text finds itself reproduced in the proper names. *Sarrasine* is divided between a toponym and a palynym; the letters overtake the phonic echo of a castrative gesture [*arra-cheer*(r)], an angular *sine* erupting from a Latin sign while doubling an English *seen*; if *Ar-ra* is mirrored within the S-s framing it, the shape alternately affirms and denies a stable nominal status. And in the case of the *Zambinella*, the ambiguity of its sex—neither masculine nor feminine—in the first two syllables is reflected identically across itself in the last two, the shape of articles of opposite gender placed back-to-back: *el-la*. Symmetries of inclusion from the Latin *ambire*, to encircle, lead to the ambition of Sarrasine in the narrative.

One of the more obvious features of Balzac's tale telling of the artist's failure to see the graphic nature of things has its corrective in the reader's sight

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direction. Z is sharp angles: sudden, violent shift in direction. As Barthes says, repeatedly, in several different books, Z is the letter of deviance (*de-via*: away from the road): definitive breaks and switches in path as compared to S which reverses direction without ever knowing a moment of rupture. Not only distinction, but contaminating similarity. Bracketing momentarily the question of curvaceous versus angular, S and Z are in a "relation of graphic inversion"—mirror images.

This compact emblem portrays the story of Sarrasine. Invisibly inscribed in the heart of the protagonist ('s name) is a Z, the initial of Zambinella. In the play between difference (curve vs. angle) and similarity (mirror images) is the drama of Sarrasine's narcissistic love for Zambinella which culminates in Sarrasine's destruction. Zambinella is also already destroyed (literally castrated), bearing explicitly the letter of mutilation which covertly awaits Sarrasine.

So in this musing upon two shapes Barthes fashions a reading that is consonant with the entire book, where he is involved with more "serious" levels and systems (Meaning, Symbolism, Historical Context, Plot, and Hermeneutic Revelation).

The period of production of *S/Z* (seminar, 1968-69; publication, 1970) is encompassed by the

of words before they are heard. Everywhere the text insists on the visible, not simply audible contour of the substantive *voix*. The hero fails to hear it in the opera; but for the reader its letters are disseminated through the text in a way imposing a heavy irony impeding any possible narrative development. From the outset,

Les éclats de *voix* des joueurs, à chaque coup imprévu, le retentissement de l'or, se mêlaient à la musique, au murmure des conversations.
(p. 227)

The players' flashes of voice, each time unforeseen, the repercussion of gold, were mixed with the music, with the murmur of conversations.

The soprano Marianina's voice enchants those around her (p. 230), while the broken voice of the mysterious old man.

était concentrée sur les choses qu'il se trouvait au milieu du monde sans voir le monde.
(p. 232)

was concentrated on the things that he found himself in the middle of the world without seeing the world.

It resembles the plop of a stone falling in a well (p. 234). And this

aigre voix, si c'était une *voix*. (p. 236)

tart voice, if it were a voice,

striates the tale. The "young" voice of Marianina is congruent with that of the Zambinella (p. 238); and the sight of voices bursting and murmuring in the orgy (p. 247) where Sarrasine first meets the Zambinella is translated into a frenzy

dans tous les yeux, dans la musique, dans les coeurs et dans les *voix*.
(p. 249)

in everyone's eyes, in the music, in the hearts and in the voices,

an impression forcing the singer to admit,

"les orgies m'abiment la *voix*."
(p. 251)

"orgies ruin my voice."

Its "sweet and argentine voice" (p. 252) continues to seduce Sarrasine, and although it is "imprinted with weakness" (p. 252), he, as well as all at once the narrator, listener, and reader wonder if

cette *voix* d'ange, cette *voix* délicate
eût été un contresens. (p. 253)

this angelic voice, this delicate voice might have been a countersense.

And the beauty of the Zambinella before the inverted transformation into the old man at the beginning of the tale is due to the Cardinal's blackmailing of his voice with

cette tyrannie capricieuse qui, plus tard, ne le rendit pas moins célèbre que son talent et son immense fortune, due, dit-on, non moins à sa *voix* qu'à sa beauté. (p. 255)

this capricious tyranny which, later, made him no less famous than his talent and his immense fortune due, they say, no less to his voice than to his beauty.

At the instant before revelation of the sexual lack, Sarrasine must ask the fatal question in a muffled tone,

d'une *voix* sourde et altérée: "Tu es une femme?" (p. 256)

with a faded and mute voice, "Are you a woman?"

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writing of another book by Barthes: *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (first essay delivered as a paper on May 12, 1966; publication, 1971).² *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* is a double reading of Sade. The articles on Fourier and Loyola are surrounded by Sade I and Sade II; Sade is given the same space as the other two authors together. The Life of Sade appearing at the end of the book (an eclectic collection of points of fascination for Barthes) is nine pages; the Life of Fourier, two; Loyola has no Life. Having passed through the detours of Fourier and Loyola, Barthes's reading of Sade has swerved. Sade I (1966) is organized, logically centered around a thesis, continuous; Sade II (1971) is fragmentary, choppy, composed of unabashed sharp breaks. Temporally located between the two extremes of this double reading of Sade are not only the readings of Fourier and Loyola, but also the book *S/Z*—its title an elegant emblem for the distinction Sade I/Sade II.

The last paragraph of Sade II presents a hierarchized alternative of two ways of reading Sade: "Of course, Sade can be read according to a project of violence; but he can also be read (and this what he recommends we do) according to *un principe de délicatesse* [delicacy, tact, refinement, sensitivity]" (p. 174). In an attempt to be sensitive to the most delicate nuances of Barthes's suggestion, we propose to read Sade precisely according

Yet in the middle, the classical beauty of the Zambinella's voice resonates from the inner tale told by the narrator, at once to entice Sarrasine to cross the barriers of his sex, to erase the space between himself and the castrato, and finally to seduce the reader. The letter of the voice is unveiled by way of anagram:

Bien mieux, il n'existait pas de distance entre lui et la Zambinella, il la possédait, ses yeux, attachés sur elle, s'emparaient d'elle. Une puissance diabolique lui permettait de sentir *le vent de cette voile*, de respirer la poudre embaumée dont ses cheveux étaient imprégnés, de voir les méplats de ce visage, d'y compter les veines bleues qui en nuançaient la peau satinée. Enfin cette *voix agile*, fraîche et d'un timbre argenté, souple comme un fil auquel le moindre souffle d'air donne une forme, qu'il roule et déroule, développe et disperse, cette voix attaquait si vivement son âme, qu'il laissa plus d'une fois échapper de ces cris involontaires arrachés par les délices convulsives trop rarement données par les passions humaines. Bientôt il fut obligé de quitter le théâtre. (p. 244)

Better yet, there existed no distance between him and the Zambinella, he possessed her, his eyes, attached to her, took hold of her. An almost diabolical power allowed him to feel the wind of this voice, to breathe the embalmed powder of which the hair was impregnated, to see the planes building up this face, to count on it the blue veins nuancing the satiny skin. Finally, this voice *agi/e*, fresh and of a silver timber, supple as a thread to which the slightest breath of air gives a form, that it rolls and unrolls, un-

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others to refer to this text), as Barthes reduces the Balzac story

to a *principe de délicat-esse* (principle of the delicate S). What is more delicate (which is to say delicious and subtle) than the sinuous curves of the S? As Barthes states, following Jacques Lacan ("Kant avec Sade"), "the Sadian relationship (between two libertines) is not one of reciprocity but of revenge: revenge is a simple *turn*." Reciprocity produces wholes from halves () → O . The

circle is closed: the relationship stable, peaceful. Revenge implies a staggering in time—the complementary act comes later, too late to close the circle

∞ → S . The doubling (Sadian coupling) leaves us not with a whole, safe and closed, but with two open demands, two half circles, vulnerable to violence: the delicate (which is to say, fragile, overly sensitive) S.

The first item in Barthes's life of Sade is the information that the name Sade derives from the village of Saze. "What has been lost in this lineage is once again the bad letter" (p. 177). *SFL*³ retells ("once again") the story (to the letter) of S/Z: the suppression of the accursed letter avenged in violence. Sarrasine is a name composed by Balzac: it is reasonable to suppose that the contrary-to-expectations absence of the Z might possibly be intentional. But Sade is an historical name: the loss of the Z, an effect of historical contin-

ravels and disperses, this voice attacked his spirit so vividly that he let escape more than once some of these involuntary cries, ripped away by the convulsive delights given too rarely by human passions. Soon he had to leave the theatre.

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gency. If we do not wish to return to the Christian notion of the world as a book authored and rendered meaningful by God (and we do not), how can we justify interpreting external, contingent accidents?

We cannot. Interpretation is always a return to some version of a theological model of knowledge (guaranteeing an immutable truth behind signification). We do not wish to interpret Sade, to reach some final, stable truth about him, but merely to read him, to read with an eye to the S and to certain delicacies. Not because the findings will be "right," but because, out of the plurality of what is conveyed in "Sade" (the name given so that a voluminous multiplicity of signifiers—often captured by the word "text"—might become marketable, usable, discussible, manipulable), we choose to savor certain parts according to taste (the delicate S of the delicatessen).

Roland Barthes finds the individual peculiarities of taste of tremendous interest. In *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, he displays a fascination with simple enumerations of his likes and dislikes in their irreducibility to any meaning. "Thus out of this anarchic foam of tastes and distastes, sort of a distracted shading, gradually emerges the outline of a bodily enigma" (RB/rb, 121). The body—bedrock given, *a priori* to any

With all its parody of melodrama, the passage is visibly and stereotypically an image of its own textual veil. "Cette *voi(x)* (*agi*)*le*" leaves in the space of its folds the fantasy rather than the violence of a chiasm or libidinal exchange. This is why the *vent* of the voice alludes to one of the most classical puns in poetry—banal (hence productive) for poets as a *cheville*, like *encore*—meaning at once deferment and its opposite, entry into the body: from late-medieval times wind in the West has signified not just atmospheric movement caused by uneven heating of the earth's surface—a problem that nineteenth-century scientists and painters like Carnot and Turner would renew from the tradition of hydraulics—but also, as signifier, *vent* embodies an economy of corporal form by which *vent* is a masculine *vente*, its plastic shape a balloon of desire and vanity attached etymologically and visually to *ventouse*, the suction-cup at the edge and vain origin of exchange. As Montaigne had deflated it in a discussion of the mayor's office at Bordeaux in the pestilent winds of civic malady caused by a growing economy of capital, "Nous ne sommes que du vent" (We are all but wind). Balzac essays the same ambiguities in respect to Sarrasine's frustrated, always aggravated desire for sexual exchange which a Marxist reading might pinpoint as a cogent sign of an expansive textual economy. Unlike the instance of his work prior to 1968, Barthes does not dwell long enough on the word to unveil this dimension.

In disrobing the X within the text, Balzac insists on the half-presence of textile to represent and paradoxically, to be an absent organ displaced from the groins to the glottis. Upon exit from the opera, Sarrasine returns to his studio to copy her in clay, *sans voile* (p. 244), despite

les voiles, les jupes, les corsets et les
noeuds de rubans qui la lui dérobaient.
(p. 245)

the veils, the skirts, the corsets and
the knots of ribbons which stole her
from him.

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what Barthes does with those figures as signifiers in the center

imée dont ses cheveux é
ge, d'y compter les veines
in cette voix agile, fraîche
auquel le moindre souffl
, développe et disperse
qu'il laissa plus d'une

subjectivity—calls out for interpretation, hermeneutic solutions to its being-as-riddle. The subject (human being) cannot help but try to make sense out of his own idiosyncratic body shape (tall or short, fat or thin, male or female: to name but a few of the least subtle). Outside the theological model there is no possibility of verifying an interpretation: no author to have intended a sense in composing such a body. No guaranteed sense, but still there is a particular shape, intimating associations, molding and containing the “anarchic foam.” A shape which by being distinct and diacritically *not another shape* (tall, not short) is

Yet the veil must both cover and become the bust of a great *prima donna*. The text therefore releases a flurry of breasts. The narrator finds himself in the Oedipal condition of Parisian society where the corset is speculation of gold.

J'étais plongé dans une de ces rêveries
profondes qui saisissent tout le
monde, même un homme frivole, *au
sein des fêtes* les plus tumultueuses.
Minuit venait de sonner à l'horloge de
l'Elysée-Bourbon. (p. 227)

Photo:
Detail of text from Balzac, “Sarrasine,”
reprinted in *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 244.

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of S/Z, we tease out a similar dynamic in the diacritical relation

a signifier, the signifier as enigma, teasing allusion to a signification to-be-guessed, yet without a puzzle-master to pronounce the verdict of "correct divination."

Not just the physical envelope, but other puzzling and irreducible givens, arising from the "body" if that word means all that in the organism which exceeds and antedates consciousness or reason or interpretation. In such a way a taste for a certain food or a certain color, a distaste for another, are pieces of the bodily enigma. We can, *a posteriori*, form an esthetic, consistent system of values (rules for Good Taste) to rationalize our insistent, idiosyncratic tastes. But the system is a guess at the puzzle, a response to the inscrutable given. A taste for women, or men, little children, decrepit invalids; a predilection for legs, breasts, asses, hands, feet, panties; a repulsion for spiders, worms, blood: we can (and do) theorize endlessly about the peculiarities of individual taste/distaste. But the theorizing is precisely endless, an eternal reading of the "body" as authorless text, full of tempting, persuasive significance, but lacking a final guarantee or univocal truth.

Part of that "body" (as we understand it here: perceivable givens that the human being knows as "his" without knowing their significance to him) is the subject's name. This name, organ of the "body," is not merely a

I was plunged in one of these deep reveries which seize everyone, even a frivolous man, in the fold of the most tumultuous parties. Midnight had just rung at the bell tower of Elysée-Bourbon.

At the threshold of a cliché combining hot and cold and life and death, the voice is separated from the condensation of contraries by the ripples of a moire curtain. Snow-capped trees and dancing figures mix only on the surface of a glass veil.

Vus au sein de cette atmosphère fantastique, ils ressemblaient vaguement à des spectres mal enveloppés de leurs linceuls, image gigantesque de la fameuse *danse des morts*.

(p. 227, stress Balzac's)

Seen in the fold of this fantastic atmosphere, they looked vaguely like spectres poorly wrapped in their shrouds, a gigantic image of the notorious *dance of death*.

The text is a paginal curtain draped over the breast; as Latinist Balzac could not help playing on *sinus*, the pleat which is one with the contour of the female torso. With the homonymic *seing* and *sein* harking back to *signum*, the sign as X-like supplement of the signature (a paraph), the *sein* identifies a tattoo and sign of death in *tocsin* which the *danse macabre* took as task to ring in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶ The old version of the Zambinella in the center and margins of the spectacle is enveloped between the two breasts of the text:

La trop naïve Marianina jetait un regard de terreur sur le vieillard qu'elle surveillait *au sein des groupes*.

(p. 232)

The overly naive Marianina threw a glance of terror on the old man she was spying in the fold of the groups.

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sound; it is a visible shape. When a child learns "what his name looks like," he knows a second face, with its own traits, seemingly accidental, yet by dint of being "his," they beg for interpretation.

On the face of Barthes's double reading of Sade we see the marks S, F, and L. These three figures stand out from the greater mass of letters both because they form the left margin of the title and because they are the only upper-case letters. When Barthes has reason to refer back to the book, he uses the abbreviation SFL. Others have followed his lead, and SFL is generally the mark identifying this book. Like its twin *S/Z* (contemporaneous issue from the same author), *SFL* can be read as a compact, graphic emblem of the entire work. Reading the distinguishing lines on the face of this book according to our principle of the delicate S, we find a few remarkable features.

It would seem, at first glance, that *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* is simply an arbitrarily ordered list of the three writers Barthes studies. However, a perusal of the table of contents reveals an oddity. In this work, the order of the essays is Sade I, Loyola, Fourier, Sade II. The order of appearance of Fourier and Loyola has been inverted in the passage from cover to interior/interior to cover. The book's emblem is not merely SFL, it is (because it

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Anxiety aroused by the sight of a throbbing bodice is allayed by the cold reflection of a mirror and philosophical absorption in a cup of sherbert. The text is subject of its own comedy:

Mais, en ce moment, il y avait peut-être *au sein de* ces salons resplendissants des philosophes qui, tout en prenant une glace, un sorbet, ou en posant sur une console leur verre vide de punch, se disaient: "Ce vieux (...) m'a tout l'air d'un assassin."
(pp. 232-33)

But, at this time, there were perhaps in the folds of these dazzling salons some philosophers who, while taking an ice cream, a sherbet, or in placing their empty glass of punch on a console, were saying to themselves, "This old man looks to me just like an assassin."

Comedy of literal and figurative identities continues. Marianina kisses the zombie in a scene whose characters of theatre and typeface are congruent, where the young lady replicates the originary scene of castration by virtue of her kiss.

La jeune enfant baisa respectueusement le cadavre ambulante, et sa chaste caresse ne fut pas exempte de cette câlinerie gracieuse dont le secret appartient à quelques femmes privilégiées.
(p. 238)

With respect the young child kissed the walking cadaver, and her chaste caress was not exempt from this gracious wheedling whose secret belongs to a few privileged women.

The *chaste caresse* carries the license of the singer in the role of her near double as *Diane chasseresse*, but even more, following the cliché as depicted in renaissance art,⁷ the old man is obliged to mark contact with a ring between the singer's breasts, a

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disappoints expectation) not-SLF. The inversion taunts, a bodily enigma.

Still, the plot thickens. The first note following the preface informs us that “‘Loyola’ is just the name of a village. I know one should say ‘Ignatius’ or ‘Ignatius de Loyola,’ but I persist in speaking of this author as I have always named him to myself. The writer’s correct name is of small importance; he does not get his name from the rules of onomastics but from the community in which his work is inscribed” (p. 17). Although already disquieting by its defensive tone, this note becomes truly astonishing when the reader discovers that throughout the article entitled “Loyola,” the Jesuit is always referred to as either “Ignatius” or “Ignatius de Loyola.” Barthes’s dogged defense is totally gratuitous as he goes on to do precisely what the note justifies as his right *not* to do.

In *S/Z* (p. 113, see our discussion above) onomastics is given as the basis for reading the second S in *Sarrasine* as not-Z: in other words, as the very context for the paradigm *S/Z*. Yet in the note on *Loyola*’s name Barthes would deny the demands of onomastics. To be sure this denial nonetheless allows those demands to be heard, allows Barthes an opportunity to tell us he ought to say “Ignatius,” not “Loyola.” Just as onomastics produces *S/Z*; so it makes us see

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locus of exchange between body and letter. Once again curved and flat surfaces oppose one another, establish a chiasmus and let forth a burst of laughter:

Nous entendîmes alors, grâce à un profond silence, le soupir lourd qui sortit de sa poitrine; il tira la plus belle des bagues dont ses doigts de squelette étaient chargées et la plaça dans le sein de Marianina. La jeune se mit à rire. (p. 238)

We heard then, thanks to a profound silence, the heavy sigh which issued from the chest; he drew the prettiest rings of which his skeletal fingers were adorned and set it in the breast of Marianina. The young lady broke out laughing.

The ring is placed in an empty, imaginary intersection between two spheres. And laughter, like that which crowns the tale, is released from the cross-over mirrored in the double alliteration of *b* against *d*, always as if the letters were attempting to resolve globally the difference of orthogonal and circular lines.

The breast becomes a locus of castration predictably imagined as a loss of sight; it attracts the reader’s eye in a fashion allowing the characters to erase any meaning beyond the shape of the words. In idealizing the *Zambinella*’s body in his studio, *Sarrasine* finds himself in adoration of curves of images rather than the sensual platitude of letters.

Il admirait en ce moment la beauté idéale de laquelle il avait jusqu’alors cherché ça et là les perfections dans la nature, en demandant à un modèle, souvent ignoble, les rondeurs d’une jambe accomplie; à tel autre, les contours du sein.

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L/I When we see L, we see not- I. And the gratuitous note calls attention to the discrepancy between title and text.

SFL is explicitly not-

SFI, not to mention not-SIF, or even not-SIFS.

L stubbornly insists. Barthes specifies in the preface that, as opposed to the "consistency" implied by style, "writing, to borrow Lacanian terminology, knows only *insistances*" (p. 11). Inconsistent with Barthes's internal naming of the Jesuit, the persistent clinging of "Loyola" (L) is indeed a classic (Lacanian) *insistance*. Barthes owes to Lacan not only the dynamic of *insistance*, but also a remarkable figure structuring his reading of Loyola's *Exercices*. Commenting on the overlapping names of the four weeks of *Exercices* (1. *Deformata reformare*, 2. *Reformata conformare*, 3. *Confirmata confirmare*, 4. *Confirmata transformare*), Barthes writes: "Ignatian repetition is not mechanical; it serves the function of a closing, or more exactly a *chicane*: the repeated fragments are like the walls—or the notched joints—of a *redan*" (p. 66). The reader—sent scurrying to the dictionary by these two gems, "chicane" and "redan"—is dazzled by Barthes's lexical virtuosity. As Barthes says in *Le Plaisir du texte*, "the word can be erotic under two opposite conditions, both excessive: if it is extravagantly repeated,

At this time he was admiring the ideal beauty of the one of which he had sought here and there the perfections in nature, in asking of an often ignoble model the rotundities of a well wrought leg; or to another, the contours of the breast.

Unaware that the breast is carved in his own name, Sarrasine embodies the signatures of his desire in a language far more tactile than he is wont to figure; in his years of puberty, breasts were everywhere below his grasp.

Au lieu de chanter les louanges du Seigneur à l'église (. . .), il sculptait quelque figure de *sainte*; (. . .) il fut chassé pour avoir, en attendant son tour au confessionnel, un vendredi *saint*, sculpté une grosse buche en forme de *Christ*. (p. 240)

Instead of singing praises of the Lord at church (. . .), he sculpted some figure of a lady saint; (. . .) he was driven away for having, in waiting his turn at the confessional, on a saintly Friday, sculpted a fat log in the shape of Christ.

Even in sculpting a lettered cross, Sarrasine overlooks the cruciform difference between ideal and real. His myopia is translated into the chiasmic mark of the tale-teller below a copy of Girodet's version of "Sleeping Endymion" attributed to Vien, and whose voice is incapable of using representation in word to convey his desires to the female interlocutor so equivocally as the nineteenth-century painters displayed on the walls above him. In the company of Madame de Rochefide, the master Vien is replaced by the lettered mark of the woman's bosom next to a warm fire:

Le lendemain, nous étions devant un bon feu, dans un petit salon élégant, assis tous deux; elle sur une causeuse;

moi sur des coussins, presque à ses pieds, et mon oeil sous le sien.
(p. 239)

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letter marks our point of disruptive entry into Barthes's well-

or on the contrary, if it is unexpected, succulent in its novelty."⁴ "Chicane" and "redan" are not only novel; they are repeated together a mere eight pages later. In a discussion of the obsessively numerical structure of *Exercices*, Barthes cites Lacan: "Obsessional neurosis has been defined (Lacan) as a 'defensive decomposition comparable in its principles to that illustrated by the *redan* and the *chicane*'" (p. 74).

Accustomed to the commoner meanings of "chicane" as chicanery and quibbling, the reader seeks an explicit, technical term (cued in by Barthes's "more exactly a chicane"). The dictionary yields a narrow military meaning—"a zigzag trench"—corresponding to the function of closure and protection. "Redan," we find, is a name for several zigzag constructions, one of which is a firmly resilient, defensive wall, fortified by joining wall sections at salient angles. This *redan* is stronger than a straight, linear barrier. And reading according to our *principe de délicat-S*, we notice that the *redan* and the *chicane* are a series of L's, whereas the usual wall is an extended I.

Fragments d'un discours amoureux: here where Barthes orders his figures alphabetically, Ignatius de Loyola makes his sole appearance under the L. L for *loquèle* (two L's like Loyola):

The next day, we were in front of a good fire, both seated in a small, elegant salon; she on a settee; myself, on cushions nearly at her feet and my eye under hers.

Here the eye becomes one with the sex and breast, the narrator's orbit literally under that of his listeners, and appropriately so, for the almost enucleated sockets of the old castrato ("these globes incapable of reflecting a glimmer" [p. 236]) are elsewhere set in counterpoint to the bulbous forehead and corsage of the Marianina.

Dissemination of the globe of desire through the text, to which Barthes often alludes in commentary on its homosexual potency, depends on the coincidence of *toile* and *voile*, the voice and the painter's canvas, the cloth and folds of the screen. Mention circulates about the painting before giving onto the breasty presence of the Marianina. The narrator heaves a sigh when the listener's attention is divided between himself and the sight of the portrait of Adonis:

Oublié pour un portrait! En ce moment le bruit léger des pas d'une femme dont la robe frémissait retentit encore dans le silence. Nous vîmes entrer la jeune Marianina, plus brillante encore par son expression d'innocence que par sa grâce et par sa fraîche toilette, elle marchait alors lentement, et tenait avec un *soin maternel*, avec une filiale sollicitude, le spectre habillé. . . . (pp. 237-238)

Forgotten in favor of a portrait! At this moment the soft noise of a woman's steps whose dress was quivering still resounded in the silence. We saw the young Marianina

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"This word, borrowed from Ignatius de Loyola, designates the flow of words through which the subject relentlessly debates in his head the effects of a wound or the consequences of certain conduct: an emphatic form of amorous discourse."⁵

Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes: the author writes that this work "proceeds by the path of two movements: the *straight line* and the *zigzag*" (p.94).

Barthes refuses to choose between the **I** and the **L**

(Loyola in the title, Ignatius in the text). But the zigzag is, of course, also already the Z: Z pertinacious in the word zigzag, Z carrying the defensive⁶ pattern one turn further, and more acutely at that. So *SFL*, twin to *S/Z*, is also somewhat *SFZ*.

In the preface to *SFL*, Barthes claims that what grabs him from Loyola's life (from some sort of fragmentary materiality unrecuperated by the logical consistency of a history) are, exclusively, "his beautiful eyes always slightly filled with tears [*Jarmes*]." When, in the article on Loyola, Barthes does look at those tears, we learn that in Loyola's *Journal spirituel* there is a graphic code for tears. This *Journal* is precisely, according to Barthes, the place where Loyola inscribes his own bodily enigma. To be sure, Ignatius gives full credence to the theological model of knowledge.

enter, still more brilliant from her expression of innocence than from her grace and her fresh costume, she was walking slowly then, and was holding, with maternal care, with a filial solicitude, the spectre in clothes. . . .

Adjacent to the evidence of castration, the dress and fresh appearance displace the canvas through the visible convergence of two meanings in one word accumulating, then refracting, itself into those around it so acuitously that the maternal care veils the cliché of a *sein maternal*, an ever maternal breast, and the rustling *robe* into a more titillating *orbe*, another common metaphor of the bosom in standardized euphemistic tradition. When the curtain rises in the opera, displaying the first sight of the Zambinella, Sarrasine's visual faculties are arrested by the coincidence of designations on the paginal veil depicting them. When he ought to see, Sarrasine can only hear:

La toile se leva. Pour la première fois de sa vie, il entendit cette musique. . . .
(p. 242)

The veil rose. For the first time in his life, he heard this music. . . .

Crosshatchings of sounds and congruities of letters lead back and forth through the same names and repeated evocation of this *voi(x)/e*—the canvas veil paragrammatically beckoning us to see what is ostensibly not there. In the midst of the redundance, the apparently unspoken letter which Barthes never studies in his exegesis is the **X** between the S and Z,⁸ the ideogram cementing the two according to the form of the 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet. Numerically identical to the age of Sarrasine when the story begins ("A l'âge de vingt-deux ans, Sarrasine fut forcément soustrait. . ." [p. 241]) and to the fantasm of the old castrato before the Parisian public ("Elle avait à la fois cent ans et vingt-deux ans" [p. 233]), Balzac's *chi* condenses loss of money, sex, religion, and identity. An unknown

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Reading his body with a Barthesian fascination, Loyola wishes to interpret God's intention. Yet he cannot know God's meaning. The solution to his body-as-enigma is a question of faith; he cannot, as a mortal bereft of total immediate communion with the Godhead, be certain.

So his journal simply marks down the brute facts: the scribe copies God's text, ignorant of its sense. In a footnote, Barthes presents Loyola's tear-code: "A=tears before mass (*antes*); L=tears during mass (*lacrima*); D=tears after mass (*después*); L—=sparse tears, etc." (p. 79n).

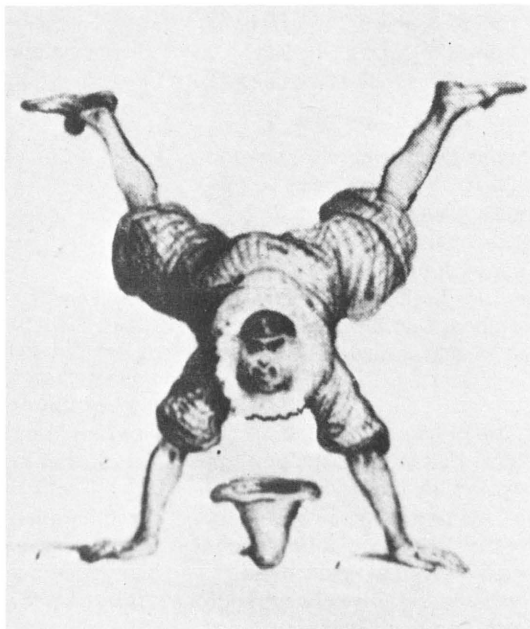
The stubborn, clinging **L** in Barthes's reading of Ignatius de Loyola leads us to the Jesuit's *lacrima* (his only true point of fascination for Barthes), and to a system which in fact inscribes the bodily enigma as initial letters: bare shapes in Loyola's writing which serve not to theorize/interpret but merely to mark the unexplained, irreducible phenomenon of tears.

Barthes's "etc.," ending the footnote, implies that there are other tear-code symbols, but that he has chosen to name only these four: three letters plus one of these (the persistent **L**) in its negative form, **┌**, not (enough) **L**. Closing the gap between the two components of

┌, making it one mark, a

quantity signifies an unknown quantity. In joining the frame of the narrative, Balzac makes the **X** the lowest common denominator and constant term for every character, whose form emanates from the *voix*, *voi(s)x*, or *vois-x*. Into the design he places alternate spellings of *chi*—that Barthes traduces into a rather innocuous rhetorical question, *qui parle?* (p. 48)—by means of a tissue of indeterminate voices composing the program of the story. But Balzac insists far more artificially on the unknown value in a volley of consonantal plosives stopping and releasing the force of passion from the body onto the page. The encoded

X transmutes the violence of the cadence of castration, where its cacographic[k] embodies the veiled voice arresting itself in the buccal palace at the instant of castration. Years before Mallarmé, we see *le chant du cygne*: even though he



l'aisa plus d'une fois échapper de ces cris involontaires arrachés par les délices convulsives, (p. 244)

Photo:

Scottish poster of 1865 in personal collection of Massin, illustrated in *La Lettre et l'Image*, p. 109. The ciasma of the letter X is excessive insofar as eyes, nostrils, mouth, and head are aligned with the clown's anus—and whose receptacle (for either end) is figured by the inverted hat below.

let go more than once one of these involuntary cries ripped away by convulsive delights,

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single grapheme, **L**, we find a flipped **F**, standing on its head. This kinship between **L** and **F**—by means of this not (enough) **L**, inverted **F**—leads us back to the traits on the face of the book. There, SFL is in the place of SLF; F is in the place of L. An axiom about the substitutability of F for L in this text would make the three letters from Loyola's tear-code D, A, and F. And those three letters are not without import for Barthes: for example, they are the initials of his most recent book *Fragments d'un Discours Amoureux*. But more important for SFL is their appearance in the name D.A.F. de Sade (who is referred to by his initials rather than by the names those letters represent).

The gratuitous inversion in the title of Barthes's book on Sade (recalled by the **F** implicit in

L) leads us to see Sade inscribed in Ignatius de Loyola's text. This appearance of Sade in Barthes's quotation from the Jesuit's journal (specifically in Loyola's transcription of the bodily enigma) is appropriate. Sade serves there as the mark of physical passion, of the pre-logical flow of corporal fluid, and as a monument to God's silence, God's refusal to resolve the enigma, which can only be traced, not interpreted.

Barthes's *consistent* argument in

the text designates the breastly sign in a spatial void framed by the coincidence of *ca*, *ch* and *ci*. The old Zambinella appears to the spectators in a mirror as

Ce vieux, qui se cache et n'apparaît qu'aux équinoxes ou aux solstices. (p. 233)

This old man, who hides and appears only at equinoxes and solstices.

Not only is he likened to a witch appearing at magic periods as Barthes emphasizes, (p. 54), but also as a figure incarnate only on the twenty-second day of December and June, at the coincidence of seasonal transformation. The hidden signs are already exposed in the words the narrator accentuates in speaking of his "réflexions mélangées de noir et de blanc" (reflections mixed with black and white [p. 233]), and in his portrayal of the old body: "Vous eussiez dit de deux os mis en croix sur une tombe" (You might have said of two bones crossed over a tomb [p. 234]), of an unlikely combination of straight and contoured lines, of twice a bony O with a median axis of **X**. All of a sudden the traditional attributes of excess accorded to Balzac's descriptions of physiognomy find themselves to be meager indeed. The corpulent beauty of the Marianina is revealed to be an impossible outcome branching from the letter to a demonstrative of lunar monstrosity.

Ah! c'était bien le mort et la vie, ma pensée, une arabesque imaginaire, une *chimère* hideuse à moitié, divinement femelle par le corsage. (p. 236)

Ah! It was surely life and death, my thought, an imaginary arabesque, a chimera half-hideous, divinely female in its bodice [docile body].

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SFL would disagree with our finding an enigmatic silence (sign of an impossible transcendence) marked in Barthes's text. According to the preface, Sade, Fourier, and Loyola are juxtaposed in order to dismiss their transcendent ideologies (which they do not share): sadism, revolution, religion. This reunion would rather emphasize their similar practices of writing ("same erotics of classification, same enumerative obsession" [p. 7]). Barthes reads the three as Logothetes, founders of languages, and thus producers of fortified, closed systems: "the reconstitution of a whole, for them, can only be an addition of intelligibles: nothing unspeakable, no irreducible quality of ecstasy, happiness, communication: nothing that is not spoken" (p. 9). In these obsessional, fortified systems (in reference not only to Loyola, but also to Sade, Barthes mentions a "defensive redan" [p. 183]), the articulation and the order work to keep out the pain, despair, and chaos caused by transcendent ineffables.

So at the conclusion of Sade I (the consistent reading of Sade—logical argument leading to a verdict—as opposed to the fragmentary Sade II), Barthes declares that "the function of discourse . . . is to conceive the inconceivable, that is, to leave nothing outside words and to allow the world no ineffables: this, it seems, is the keynote which repeats through the Sadian

Although Balzac is faithful to the image of the Greek chimera as a creature at once lion, goat, and serpent, the involutions of narrative demand that *chimère* be read as a Χ -mother and an unworldly who-mother cut from Greek and Roman alphabets to shape the interlace of their grotesque encasing the text in mannerist style. This is later translated into the "capricious beauty" (p. 248) of the Zambinella simply because of the etymon in *capra*, the she-goat who crosses the *chimère* with its "tyrannie capricieuse" (p. 255). This is what Barthes recoins in a clichè of *castration* struck from *castration*, by which hermeneutic and symbolic dimensions in literary cadres are illustrated by the blinding sameness of the letter, "the same by the same, making the *idea* of illustration derisory" (p. 169).

Analogous to the *repères* of *RB/rb*, the letters veil what they reveal in insistence on things half-hidden, "une porte cachée" (p. 258), "une malice cachée" (p. 248), all connoting the negative thrust of an *encastrement*, drawing outlines encasing and deepening the narrative frame. These border the discourse to hint at referential depth in order that each sentence be marginal to its horrendous excess. Balzac projects the narrative into an orgy, in part to designate the hollow plenitude of the word heard, all the more since meanings spin around homonymic echoes in the falsetto of the Zambinella. It says to Sarrasine, "Je ne suis pas assez forte pour supporter tous ces excès" (p. 251); that is to say its identity, *c'est Χ c'est*, the chiasm of an ecstasy forcing the character to admit, "Les orgies m'abîment la voix" (p. 251) in a bookish box. The reason is in part because the Dionysian sound of "le peraltra et le pedro-ximinès" and the frenzy inspired by stains of *Xérés sur la nappe* were each "un trait qui peignait l'excessive violence de son caractère" (p. 249). In painterly terms, Balzac's is a perspective in *trompe l'oeil*.

"Sarrasine" ends with reference to patrician figures of higher case, a capital cardinal, a mysterious "Roman" Prince *Chigi* and a flock of prelates whom Sarrasine describes as "les cardinaux, les évêques

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world, from the Bastille, where Sade existed only through words, to Silling Castle, not a sanctuary of debauchery, but of the 'story' (p. 42). The "story" (the triumph of consistency over enigmatic, disruptive, scrappy *insistances*) reigns supreme in the Sadian world. Or does it?

The center of Silling Castle,
scene of Sade's *120 Days of*

et les abbés qui sont ici" (p. 254). All the personified letters of the alphabet converge upon the two principal characters in order to bring them back to their beginning in the Orient, in Arabics and the A, B, C. The ultimate question girding Sarrasine's desire is framed in a double negation borrowed from a tradition of description where a copulative, because it must traditionally be an invisible term, valorizes that which surrounds it. Sarrasine asks bewilderingly why the singer is dressed "like" a man: "Elle/ qui elle?" (p. 254). Again the interrogative is no more than a quadruply doubled monogram and a paraph:

elle X elle

Each *elle* can be read backwards and forwards, with the difference designated only by opposition of the vertical stroke of the exclamation point contiguous to the sinuosities of the question mark,

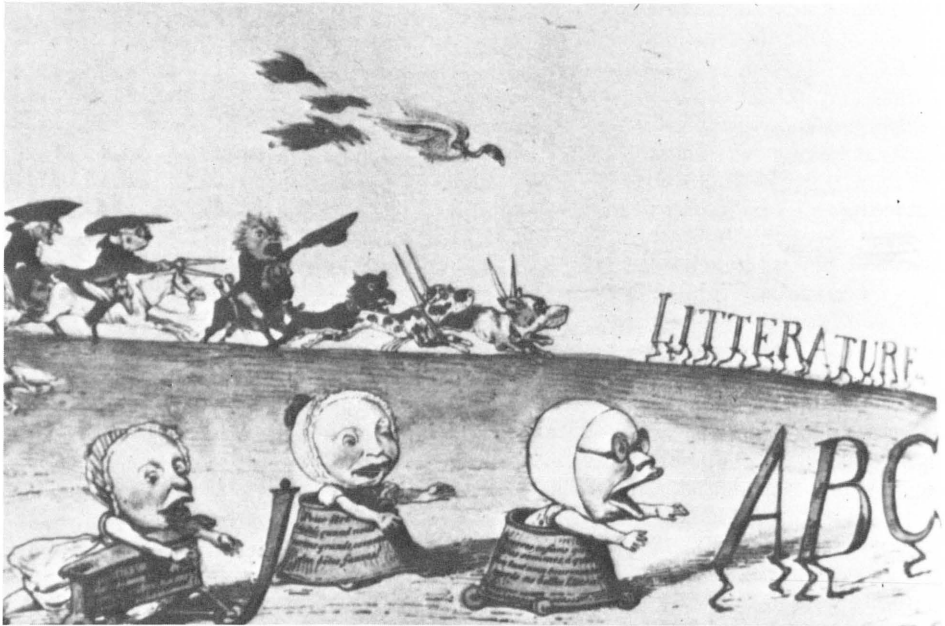


Photo:

Literature is overwhelmed—*abaisée*—under the foot of monstrous letters; From *La Chasse aux lettres, scène de l'ancienne histoire de France*. Lithograph, ca. 1836, illustrated in Massin, p. 108.

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Sodom, is an amphitheatre (imagined in the sole picture in *SFL*, [p. 151]) where, daily, a prostitute/storyteller recounts five scenes of sexual/criminal pleasure in lurid detail. The four libertines (friends who set this "scene" up for their own greater pleasure) are surrounded by various categories of objects for their desire: pretty young girls and boys; extraordinarily well-endowed young men; decrepit, old women; the friends' own wives and daughters. When moved by a story, a libertine can re-enact it using any of the objects he chooses.

Barthes presents this amphitheatre as the emblem of Sadian writing: a universe enclosed within the safe boundaries of the "story." "Practice follows the word and is absolutely determined by it: what is done has been said" (p. 40). Yet examining this scene of utopic adequation of word to act ("absolutely determined by it"), we find the narrator confessing that "it is certain that these gentlemen, behind-the-scenes and before it was quite exactly permitted, indulged in things which had not yet been recounted to them, and in that they were in violation of the conventions they had established." Having established conventions specifically for the regulation of violations (first penetrations—vaginal and anal), they turned around and violated those conventions. The narrator makes confessions similar to this over

that is, a breast which loses its nipple after the slicing effect of the exclamation point. So when the tale ends so comically in its underscoring of vacuous words known only by derivation from an apocopated X, it is because their doubling in the ear gives them the appearance of something they always possessed in plastic form, that is, their signified body.

"*Aimer, être aimé.*" sont désormais des mots vides de sens pour moi, (p. 256, stress his)

"*To love, to be loved*" are hereafter bereft of meaning for me,

means the artist in confession failure he must admit when trying to transgress the frame in which he is enclosed.

Another rereading of the tale in all of its acrylic resonance would reveal that the desire of Sarrasine for the Zambinella can only meet in the abysmal X between the S and Z which is dispersed everywhere beyond his grasp on the surface of the page. That Barthes erases, even castrates the *chi* from his analysis by means of a bar—as if to excise the curved member which would otherwise establish a closed dialectic of difference resolving the hill and the valley, the long and short of things, life and death, etc.—is no doubt part of a tactile, indeed sexist, strategy which intends to keep the chimerical female locked out of the study.

Better yet, his spineless bar exposes for a reader today a formerly uncanny feature of writing which our extended scrutiny might resolve: in no story in the French language, to our knowledge, does there fall such a shower of parallel letters reflecting one another, visibly excluding the presence of a happy volute which might mediate their specularly. Omnipresent in the passage describing the agile voice of the Zambinella (cited above), the doubled letters jump from the page exorbitantly to meet the bedazzled reader whose eyes are blinded by the opacity of printed characters in most metaphysical fiction:

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half a dozen times in the course of the book, and at the end of the existing manuscript (which is but a first draft), in his notes for revision, Sade chides himself: "Above all never have the four friends do anything that has not been narrated; you were not careful about that" (p. 526).

In order to emphasize his point about the absolute determination of action by story, Barthes adds a footnote: "Crime has exactly the same 'dimensions' as the word: when the storytellers reach the murderous passions, the harem will empty out" (p. 40n). The four libertines do wait until the fourth month (month of narrated murders) before they kill any of their victims. However, this deferral is a difficult sacrifice. On two separate occasions a couple of the libertines, carried away by passion (that is, inspired by something outside the daily storytelling) appeal for the right to annihilate a victim before that fourth month (see p. 448 and pp. 472-473). The order imposed by the story is not absolutely secure; these disruptions bespeak the force of what is suppressed. And although the libertines manage to kill no one until the fourth month, they actually kill only a small number of their victims during that fourth month; and none of the murders follows the blueprints offered in the storyteller-of-the-month's examples (cf. Barthes: "Practice follows the word and is absolutely determined by it"). In fact, the

Sur *te*lle feuille, la Zambinella se trouvait dans *ce*tte attitude, calme et froide en apparence, *affectionnée* par Raphaël, par le Georgian et par tous les grands peintres. Sur *te*lle autre, *e*lle tournait la tete avec finesse en achevant une roulade, *e*t semblait s'écouter *e*lle même. Sarrasine crayonna sa maîtresse dans toutes les poses. (p. 244, stress ours)

On such a sheet, the Zambinella was discovered in this attitude, in appearance calm and cold, having a fondness with Raphaël, Georgione and all the great painters. On such another, she turned her head with finesse in completing a roulade, and seemed to listen to herself. Sarrasine pencilled his mistress in every pose.

The glacial doubling of the text is resolved midway between the page and the reader's eyes.

If it is so evident that the self-reflective parallels and S-Z can only be recoiled in *chi*, we still must ask ourselves why Barthes prolongs his reading without insisting on this obvious element in the fiction. Is it because he too wants to leave a figure hidden in the Oriental carpet of his analysis? to repress the letter purloined from the tale? to displace the trivial so that it will remain monstrous, contrary to the formerly transparent, often boring prosody of Balzacian discourse? to stay away from the explosive chiasm of what Bataille called the *hétérogène*?⁹ On the one hand an answer might be found in the preface to *Le Bleu du ciel* from which Barthes's reading of "Sarrasine" was in effect inspired, where Bataille destroys the letter by plunging the eye of the reader into the sky of a marvelously excessive text denying the representative authority of the novel, and in a space where each word is at once a *rebus* and *rebut* dispersing the stereotype of the writing self. Barthes may well have placed the reader in the abyss of the preface at the end of *S/Z* (p. 271) in quotation of Bataille's

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majority of victims are killed after the 120th day, when the storytelling structure itself has disappeared. In exuberant excess of the framing "story" called *120 Days of Sodom*, the libertines stay a fifth month, until the snow melts.

Even when a libertine does faithfully re-enact a "passion" recounted by the storyteller, the fact that certain stories move him and others do not, as well as the choice of particular "objects" for his performance, reflect some taste or preference beyond the closed circuit of story (acting out recounted by the novel) repeating story (prostitutes' narration). The predilection indicates a bodily enigma; it points to an outside—beyond/before language.

Barthes chooses *not* to read Sade according to a "project of violence" (p. 174). Yet Sadian violence is not simply crimes of mutilation and violation. The really disconcerting violence in Sade disrupts the Sadian system itself. Sade's text is scarred by breaks in its obsessive structures, chinks in the fortifications that enclose this world and render it stable and orderly. The real, untamed violence in Sade is the persistence of a bodily enigma which never can be definitively interpreted. As Barthes says in the preface to *SFL*: "as style [consistency] becomes absorbed by writing [*insistances*], the system unravels into systematics" (p. 11). Sade's work is obses-

portuous notes; or he may have indicated the circularity of an endeavor that laboriously had to scrape away the crust of Balzac's diction as it had been consumed in French curricula before 1969. Barthes's repression of the crucial letter is necessary to keep alive the mythology of a generalized intertextuality. *S/Z* would have been a text cut from another, scarred and grafted upon Balzac and Bataille who are in turn cut from the cliché of hackneyed prose. In any case the distance Barthes marks between himself and the author of "Sarrasine" in the autobiography published six years later is all the more indicative.

Bataille en somme me touche peu; qu'ai-je à faire avec le rire, la dévotion, la poésie, la violence? Qu'ai-je à dire du sacré, de l'impossible? Cependant, il suffit que je fasse coïncider tout ce langage (étranger) avec un trouble qui a nom chez moi la *peur*, pour que Bataille me reconquière; tout ce qu'il écrit, alors, me décrit: ça colle. (RB/rb, p. 147)

In sum Bataille affects me little; what have I to do with laughter, devotion, violence? What have I to do with the sacred, with the impossible? Yet, it suffices that I make coincide all this (foreign) language with an affect that in me is named *fear*, in order then that Bataille conquer me again: all that he writes describes [unwrites, de-writes] me: that [also the id] sticks.

Thus the resinous intertextuality he heralded in the way Sarrasine, Bataille, Girodet, Vien and others traversed him might have been a sort of infratext where the emulsion of a visible letter is too much, too sticky for the strategies of interruptive analysis. His fear of Bataille replicates the fear of seeing words.

Or perhaps after the proto-revolution of May 1968,

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sively systematic, but, as excessively systematic as it might be, it never settles into a closed system.

As an emblem for this subtle (*délicat*) Sadian violence ("in violation of the conventions they had established," see above), we propose Justine's breaking out of the convent at Sainte-Marie-des-Bois. That convent is the ultimate closure: everyone and everything is arranged in categories. The convent is isolated, impregnable, surrounded by seven walls. We are even told that the seven walls are gratuitous since it is already impossible for a victim to get out of the building. Yet the obsessive proliferation of defensive structures is only the inadequate response to the inevitable, although impossible escape of Justine. Sade creates an inescapable closed system *and* a character who breaks out.

Barthes sees in Sade only the violence encompassed by the system—ordered, arranged violent acts. He ignores the violations *to* the system, thus dismissing Sadian violence as co-opted and uninteresting.

In the reading of Fourier which is part of Barthes's book on Sade (libraries classify *SFL* in the Sade section), Barthes writes: "Fourierist pleasure is free from evil: it does not include vexation, in the Sadian manner, but on the contrary dissipates it; his discourse is one of 'general well-

Barthes could not extenuate the tale so strongly as a reader in 1977 in the wake of eight volumes of Bataille's writings. But the cause for the effect is casually immaterial. Suffice that the contradiction Barthes's blindness disengages so diagonally between seeing and hearing is enough to permit reconsideration of the trajectory of the neuter, neutral letter from his pastiche of the *Crito* in 1933 to fragments of amorous discourse spoken at the Collège de France from a chair bearing an incongruous title of Semiology. When Barthes was Marxist in *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, Mythologies*, or *Sur Racine*, his attention was drawn to the specific sight and weight of the signifier in corporal economy, but when he revolved to a Lacanian stance from the pivotal moment of *S/Z*, his letter turns to a castrative fantasm and loses some of its materiality. In repressing such a zero degree or floating sign from the Balzacian text in which the

X is so obviously placed, Barthes tells us obliquely that his own gloss is a veil over visible language too fearful in its symmetries to be named as such in critical gesture. In repressing, paradoxically, Barthes comes closest to the explosive release of the *chi* that destroys the entire narrative tradition which conveys it. But, based as it is on castration, the model of the analysis will never permit Barthes to smash the Bar. And so, instead, he will leave the slash and bar the S: X S.

1. *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris: Seuil, Collection "Ecrivains de Toujours," 1975), p. 164, hereafter noted as *RB/rb*.
2. "Littérature et discontinu, à propos de Michel Butor," *Mobile: étude pour une représentation des Etats-Unis* (in *Critique* in 1962, then reprinted in *Essais critiques*, (Paris: Seuil, Collection "Tel Quel," 1964), p. 185.
3. *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, Collection "Points," 1976, reprinting original edition from Seuil, Collection "Tel Quel," 1970), p. 113. For sake of ease and copy, we refer to the smaller re-edition. All quotation will be cited in the body of the text above. Emphasis, unless indicated otherwise, will be ours.

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being': for example, in the war of love (game and theatre), out of *délicatesse*, so as not to upset, the flags and leaders are not captured" (p. 187). Fourierist pleasure is camped under the banner of *délicatesse* rather than that of violence. So when Barthes chooses to read Sade "according to a *principe de délicatesse*" rather than a "project of violence" (p. 174), he gives Sade a Fourierist reading. In fact, the very last sentence of the book (where the conclusion might be), which is actually the last item in the Life of Fourier, is "Fourier had read Sade" (p. 188).

Barthes's exposition of the Fourierist view of violence continues: "What if someone has a taste for vexation? Must he be allowed to do it? Pleasure in vexation is due to a congestion; so Harmony [Fourier's Utopia] will decongest the passions and sadism will be reabsorbed." Violence here is recuperated, and ultimately dismissed as a contingent malfunction. Fourier's Utopia, where no pleasure will be looked at askance, excludes sadism, denies it any status as a passion. If admitted, violence would threaten the entire stable system of Harmony. Echoing this Fourierist reduction of violence, Barthes (in his final biographeme on Sade), remarking on the fact that the Marquis in prison was denied both writing and exercise, declares that "with neither stroll nor pen, Sade *becomes congested*" (p. 186, Barthes's italics).

4. See "Strip-Tease" in *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, Collection "Pierres Vives," 1957), pp. 165-68; see also *RB/rb*, pp. 166-67. On the problematic of Barthes and the body, we refer the reader to Steven Ungar, "RB: The Third Degree," *Diacritics*, VII (Spring 1977), 67-77.
5. For example, the old spoonerism: "Un lieur de chardons est mort à Falaize" as "Un chieur de lardons est fort à malaise." In Estienne Tabourot des Accords, *Les Bigarrures* (Paris: Jehan Richer, 1583), f. 104.
6. See etymology in Bloch-Von Wartburg or Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Paris: Galilée, 1974), p. 16. For the sign of the X as explosive chiasm of a thing and idea, see Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), p. 31; *Positions* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), pp. 90-96, etc. The x-shape of the scythe is evident as a half-letter in the three best remains of the *danse macabre* found at La Chaise-Dieu (Auvergne), Kernaria (Côtes-du-Nord) and Kernascléden (Morbihan) dating from ca. 1470.
7. In, for example, the topical *femme entre deux âges* of the Fontainebleau style, a diaphanously robed damsel is between two lovers, one young and the other old. Reconciliation of the triangle is impossible, as the ring she takes from the older courtesan in the center of the tableau has an empty center—filled metonymically by the nipple which the younger suitor holds between his thumb and index finger. And the only response to the exchange is directed by her complicitous look with the viewer who is hence discovered outside of the picture. See the famous version hanging in the Musée de Rennes.
8. The X as crossover between the breasts is a stereotype in Western literature. The blason-genre to which Barthes alludes (p. 120) is based in part on an agglomeration of poetic attributes that evoke, then disperse, the body. In question is a parody of Platonic origins accomplished by use of a double unit twice doubled. "Du beau tetin" and "Du layd tetin" specularize the alphabetical distance between

the two spheres and the two ages they represent:

Tetin dur, non pas Tetin, voyre,
Mais petite boule d'ivoire

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Fourier can be used to domesticate Sadian violence. That violence is vulnerable inasmuch as it opens onto some radical exteriority. The insistent

marks such Sadian violence in Ignatius de Loyola's writing.

This **L**, which leads us to discover the wounds in Loyola's and Sade's logothesis, is the

L of the *redan* and the *chicanne*, thus it is somewhat a Z.

L *qua* Z gave us SFZ as an intermediate step between *SFL* and *S/Z*. What then is the kinship between Fourier (F) and the paradigmatic bar (/) in *S/Z*?

In *S/Z*, Barthes writes that "the bar (/) which opposes the S of SarraSine and the Z of Zambinella functions out of panic: it is the bar of censure, . . . the cutting-edge of antithesis, . . . the index of the paradigm, hence of meaning" (p. 113). Barthes frequently uses the expression "*avoir barre sur*" (literally "to have a bar over") which means "to have the advantage over, to dominate, to subdue." As he says in *Sade II*, "the paradigm is very moral" (p. 155). The paradigm (bar) suppresses scrappiness under the harmonic consistency of meaning, just as Fourier "reabsorbs" Sadian violence into Harmony.

Fourier serves Barthes as "a bar over" what is most disquieting in Sade. S, after all, far from being a closed system, is two half-circles,

or

Grande Tetine, longue Tetasse,
Tetin, doy je dire bezasse?

So asked Clément Marot in *Oeuvres poétiques*, (Paris: Garnier/Flammarion, 1973), pp. 402-03.

9. Bataille emblemizes this in other titles: "X Marks the Spot," in *Oeuvres complètes*, t. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 250-57; *L'Abbé C* in *Ibid.*, t. III (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), pp. 233-ff. ■

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desperately gaping open, as well as in contradiction to each other. Contradiction in Sade retains its intensity as disturbing conflict, as a rift in the mind's logical domination of the world. Sade is distressed over his transgressions of his own self-imposed order in writing *120 Days of Sodom*. "You were not careful about that," he tells himself. In order to tell himself, he uses a second person pronoun. The split (two half-circles facing opposite directions) is between a "you" that violated the system and an "I" (implied first person of second person usage) who is anxious to secure that system.

Barthes has a theory of contradictions to calm him. He chooses to write fragments, opts for ruptures and inconsistencies, and supports this choice with an ideology of writing (*insistances*) as opposed to style (consistency). Convinced that contradiction is inevitable, that fractured writing is "truer," more "authentic" than attempts to cloak the bodily enigma in meaning, rather than being vexed by persistent contradiction, Barthes can feel gratified at this verification of his theory. B, like S, is comprised of two half-circles which *do not* come together to form a circle. But in B, they face the same way, fragmentary but not in conflict; *and they are barred*.

RoI and bar the S.⁷