Since the 1980’s French underground feminists such as Janic Grillerez-Dionnet, creator of the feminist comic-strip Ah! Nana!, and more recent pro-sex feminists like Virginie Despentes and Morgane Merteuil  engage in an intellectual debate that recalls Sadean topics, like gender-bending, a sex-positive attitude, and subversions of hetero-normativity.

This talk focuses on ways to teach firstly artistic and scholarly productions (comics, movies, documentaries, and manifestos) of feminist writers (Grillerez-Dionnet, Despentes, Merteuil) that are often marginalized. Secondly, to incorporate into classwork transnational relationships between French and Anglo-American punk-porn-feminists, such as Lydia Lunch and Kathy Acker who influenced Virginie Despentes’s work, and the use of widely accessible social media, such as youtube videos. In my graduate class The Marquis de Sade: From materialist philosophy to popular culture and feminist theory, I created with my Tech TA a website called sadeandradicalism in collaboration with the Michigan State Library Special Collection and SIRO (Studies in Radicalism Online) that features a data-base on Sade, radicalist movements and feminism. Furthermore, students visit the Special Collection and examine various feminist comic books and writings for their final essay.

Through the study of underground feminist (art)-work in dialogue with radicalist thoughts, I hope to create more awareness of the richness of contemporary feminist topics, as well as their link to a Sadean philosophy that does not stand in contradiction to feminism.