"Adorno avec Sade ... "

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My interest was piqued by the apparently fortuitous proximity between the second excursus on "Juliette, or Enlightenment and Morality," in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) and Lacan's startling if elliptical juxtaposition of Kantian ethics with Sadean practice in the 1959–60 seminar on the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* and in the slightly later essay "Kant avec Sade" (in *Écrits*).[1] I am not sure if a wholesale confrontation between critical theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis is necessarily implied here, so I will restrict myself to a fairly modest comparison, the stakes of which will become apparent at the end.

While Adorno/Horkheimer[2] and Lacan concur in seeing in Sade the ambiguous "truth" of Kantian morality, the superficial parallel only serves to show up the gaping distance between the two writers. Let me split the difference crudely. Slavoj Žižek's formulation is inviting: can we understand the tension between the two readings in terms of an opposition between a "sadist" Kant and a "Kantian" Sade?[3] Adorno finds in the cruel perfection of the moral law the essential mechanism of the dialectic of enlightenment: reason consummates and consumes itself in its regression to barbarous unreason. The law subverts itself through its success. Orgiastic in its demands, the law draws its energy from its defeat, provokes what it punishes and finds provocation in punishment. In its raging unconcern for the object the moral will shows its most sullen attachment; it revels in what it denies itself and turns denial itself into delirium. The truth of Kant is Sade—the ascetic priest's dirty little secret.

Lacan's reading scans almost in reverse. The truth of Kant is, again, Sade. But truth no longer has the significance of the unmasking of a symptom; it no longer indicates the return of the repressed but points to the secret unthought animating Kant's entire system. Far from highlighting the law's logical failure, Sade rather forces us to imagine its possible success. Sade takes literally the premise that for Kant remains a whisper: a desire so pure that it goes beyond the calculus of the pleasure principle—beyond the narrow circuit of self-preservation to which, in the end, despite himself, Kant still clings. Sadean *jouissance* expresses the death-driven desire—he takes desire beyond desire—inherent in the strictly moral suspension of the pressures of pathological self-preservation. Whereas Adorno's Sade expresses the dialectical truth (as the final untruth) of Kantian morality, its failure to coincide with itself and thus its relapse or regression to pathological aggression, Lacan's Sade supplies a truth which Kant himself, through whatever failure of nerve,

falls short of saying. A small distinction perhaps, but one on which the fate of the dialectic of enlightenment perhaps nonetheless hangs.

Let me expand. For Adorno, Sade serves to expose the logic of reason's ultimate short-circuit: the relapse of autonomy into heteronomy, purity into pathology, the law's sanguine indifference to nature exposed as a raging contempt for the object that it suspends, subsumes, flattens, and ultimately destroys (but thereby provokes, reinstates, reaffirms in its terrifying proximity) in the autotelic circle of its self-affirmation. The inherent cruelty of the law—as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Freud equally remind us—rewrites Kant's success as his deepest failure. In its self-aggrandizement the moral subject only proves itself to be enmeshed in the coils of narcissistic self-preservation; the very recoil from nature both signals and elicits the latter's panic resurgence in the form of pathological self-interest. Thus Sade delivers Kant's truth: he reveals the pathological kernel infecting the law precisely through its elevation beyond sensuous desire. It is not just that in its abstract neutrality the moral law is unable to specify its content, thus leaving open the door for any and every perversion (the usual argument against ethical formalism). It is rather that the neutralization as such is the evil: the form is the content. The will's obsession with purity is not only a reaction formation to but the essential prototype and occasion for its own self-besmirching.

Although—another twist—what Sade offers, for Adorno, is not even good smut—nothing fascinating, nothing shocking, nothing disgusting, nothing virulent (and we may wonder at Adorno's own imperturbability) —but merely the tedious administration of routine piled upon routine, bleached out, neutralized, antiseptic: sodomy, incest, mutilation, torture, coprophragy, whatever, everything reduced to business as usual, Juliette as gym coach, the bedroom as boardroom, boardroom as boredom, boredom as the congealment of the always-the-same: the return of mythical stasis in and through the most strenuous efforts of disenchantment. Boredom, for Adorno, brooks no other possibilities. If Adorno and Horkheimer draw a direct line from here to the administrative rationality of fascism (the stakes are always high), this is not to invoke some sort of theologically inflected radical evil, the "foul stain" of a fallen humanity, but rather to invoke something like a banality of evil (Arendt's account of Eichmann similarly stressed his "Kantianism": his dispassionate commitment to duty for its own sake, devoid of anything so motivated as hatred, fear, or ressentiment)—except that, as it turns out, banality (duty for the sake of duty) and radical evil may prove to be two sides of the same coin.

For Lacan, Sade brings out just what is at stake in the supposed formality of the law. If his writing draws out the shocking truth of the categorical imperative, this is not due to the latter's inherent regression

to pathology but just the reverse. The libertine theater of cruelty—evil for its own sake, without utilitarian considerations, without motive, without consequences—demonstrates a strictly moral purity to which Kant's own formulation is in the end inadequate. Sade supplies a truth occluded by Kant himself. This blindspot arises not only because of the residual consequentialism lurking in the criterion of universalizability (the "what if everybody...?" thought experiment which furnishes the acid test of normative validity). It is not only a function of some kind of bourgeois attachment to the compulsory patriarchal norms of his day (the notorious pronouncements in the *Metaphysics of Morals* regarding the "crimes against nature"—homosexuality, bestiality, masturbation, etc.—or the frequently mocked sexual contracts regulating spousal ownership of genitalia, and so on).[4] That is, the problem arises not only because of the residual, historically determined heteronomies contaminating the notion of autonomous self-regulation. Lacan insists that the blindness arises rather from Kant's ultimate hesitation to follow through his own thought: his dreaded rigorism is in the end not so rigorous. For Kant stops short of the point where an ethics of pure desire must yield to an ethics of *jouissance*—an encounter with the real whose pressure introduces a kernel of singularity strictly impossible within the limits of experience. (This non-experience has nothing to do with what we have been accustomed to theorize as the decline or atrophy of *Erfahrung*; we are here tracing the very limits of the phenomenal.) Kant shrinks back from this eventuality in his own appeal to the plenitude of the *summum bonum:* instrumental reason creeps back through the back door in the compensatory thought of otherworldly gratification. The postulate of happiness plugs the void carved open by the force of pure desire, reinstates positivity at the very site of the law's most virulent negativity and, in its retrenchment of the self-preserving ego, reinstates the pleasure principle precisely where Kant, by his own criteria, ought to have moved beyond it.

Adorno and Lacan are both noticeably Hegelian in their approach here. Both "dialectize" Kant by showing how the presuppositions of morality lead to seemingly immoral conclusions. But two different Hegels appear to be ghostwriting their conclusions: two different versions of the dialectic, two different modalities of negation. The difference might be understood in terms of the difference between the young Hegel of the so-called early theological writings and the mature Hegel of the Jena period. Whereas Adorno more or less recycles the approach of the *Spirit of Christianity* (the tyranny of the abstract law—Jewish, Kantian, etc.—is seen to be symptomatic of an unresolved relationship to a nature that is humiliated, destroyed, and ultimately therefore reinstated in all its bloody terror), Lacan appears to rework the rather more complicated argument of the *Phenomenology*.[5]

It is not only a question, in this latter text, about some kind of "neurotic" return of the repressed, the upsurge of appetite in the voraciousness of reason's animus against appetite, and so on. Although Hegel also makes this point—brusquely, impatiently, with a cruelty verging on (what he takes to be) Kant's—his eye is caught by a slightly different current rippling through Kant's thought. Disavowal, not repression, seems to carry the greater weight. Hegel pauses at a "perverse" moment in Kant whereby a certain jouissance constitutive of the law is simultaneously ejected by the law, delegated to an agency which assumes the impossible burden of my enjoyment. Lack is simultaneously affirmed and denied in my insistence on an ultimate fulfillment which nonetheless remains chronically outstanding. This is fetishism: the epistemic split between knowledge and belief by which the subject sustains while trivializing the unbearable thought of its own castration: "I know, but, nonetheless ..."[6]. This foreclosure betrays itself in the traumatic blind-spots or "dissemblances" [*Verstellungen*] which both stain and sustain the transparent purity of the moral worldview. Jouissance is tolerated but only in some kind of perpetually inaccessible, unthinkable "beyond." Fulfilment is thus both affirmed and undermined: it is maintained under erasure in being chronically postponed or siphoned off to a (big) Other—God—who is ultimately enlisted to legitimate or "sanctify" the specific local instances of the law and thus to underwrite our autonomy (which thereby manages to undermine it). At the limit I assert myself in proxy or "through the agency of [an]other consciousness" (§607); God exercises my freedom for me, and some holy will who is both me and not me eventually reaps the benefits. Psychoanalytically, this exemplifies the structure of perversion: I act for and through the enjoyment of the Other, just as God himself is reduced to the instrument of my own prohibited enjoyment. In the postulates of pure practical reason, argues Hegel, reason itself dissembles its own split—the split between its own emptiness and its desperate measures to find filling, between the infinite deferral of desire and the latter's preemptive shortcircuit—a dissemblance whereby the subject both affirms and disavows the castrating nothingness at its core.

Is the opposition, then, between the return of the repressed and the persistence of what is foreclosed? Compelling as it might seem, any such symmetry would be slightly misleading, if only because it might suggest an opposition between a repressive morality and some kind of liberatory transgression. The Lacanian Sade does not exactly furnish delicious opportunities for transgression to which Adorno, stodgily, would be immune. Despite Lacan's debts, this is decidedly not the "French Sade" of Breton, Bataille, or even Blanchot, for the simple reason that for Lacan, Sade too has his blind-spots. Like Kant, he ultimately recoils from the

possibilities that his thought logically entails, and indeed for the very same reason: perversion. It is in the end the Other's jouissance I am servicing, and this constant deferral or referral of enjoyment provides the surest alibi for "giving up on one's desire"—my retreat from the ethical act to the defensive fantasy which simultaneously sustains and preempts it. The various other paradoxes of the Sadean scenario—the recipes, the contracts, the preachiness, and so on—collect here (it goes without saying that there are other ways of interpreting these, Barthes's perhaps most interestingly[7]). Sade thus recoils from the radicality of his own thought; he systematically fills the void he opens up just as surely as the libertines set out to plug up the open orifice of Eugénie's mother at the end of *Philosophy in the Bedroom* (in a not unrelated move). The collapse of jouissance into desire, of desire into pleasure, and of pleasure into the tightly regulated manoeuvres of group sex as a kind of group therapy (the harmonious consensual community of libertines) sustains and ultimately contains the Sadean fantasy. More precisely, it determines it precisely as fantasy, that is, as defence: a mechanism to channel and preempt what strictly remains unthinkable within the terms of homeostatic (self-frustrating, self-enhancing) desire.

It is arguable that had Adorno read Sade differently—as Benjamin started to do, for example in the interstices of the *Passagenwerk*—he might have come up with a rather different take on fetishism, mechanical reproduction, surrealism, and indeed beyond this on the culture industry writ large. Boredom, repetition, the prosthetic accumulation of body parts, the uncanny production of simulacra, the magical procession of automata, the hallucinatory murmur of the assembly-line: all these take on a slightly different hue when viewed through the prism of the Sadean bedroom—a dimension which would lead back to the Baroque theater of cruelty (to which Benjamin indeed, for a while, attempted to relate them) and forward, perhaps, to the Beckett and Kafka whom Adorno thought he loved so well. It is worth noting here that Beckett himself was slated to translate *120 Days of Sodom*—a work he found to be "as rigorous as Dante's" and which filled him with a "metaphysical ecstasy"—though he eventually declined to deliver (comically enough for reasons of careerism).[8] A consideration of Beckett's own rigorous transcription of Sade—in *Watt*, for example[9]—might introduce new textures into Adorno's now canonical reading of Beckett.[10]. There is equally a "Sadean" side to Kafka which Adorno's reading almost but does not quite touch on. (In his remarks on *Amerika* he does allude, for example, to the Justine-like repetitiveness of Karl Rossman's itinerary—mishap piled upon mishap, the eternal return of the same calamity—but without reflecting on the cumulative impact of this repetition, nor how repetition as such, even boredom, might come to assume a disruptive power.)

I am not rehearsing the standard reproach that Adorno just does not know how, does not want us, to have fun, that he only knows how to say fun in German—"das Fun ..."[11]. The issue is ultimately whether Adorno himself in his preoccupation with the banalities of the "steel bath" of pleasure may be blind to that which runs beyond the pleasure principle so as to undermine the restricted calculus of exchangeable goods to which Adorno's Sade (and of course his Kant) are ultimately both consigned. Had Adorno read Sade differently—had he actually *read* him so as to work through the theatrical, parodic, at times even quasi-Brechtian layers of the Sadean mise-en-scène, that is, had he explored the syncopation, in Sade, of fantasy with its own self-interruption or self-alienation: a machine forever jerking to a standstill in order to start again—he might have inflected fascism itself in a slightly different fashion. Benjamin, who identified fascism's appeal as generated by the subject's own fantasy of self-destruction, was more attuned to the "enjoyable" aspects of the fascist imaginary, or rather the defensive short-circuiting of enjoyment precisely by way of the fantasy thereof: *jouissance* is vicariously projected on to the Leader (as putative subject of enjoyment) and inflicted on the victim (as object of murderous desire). Pasolini's last film, *Salò*, which stages with "crystalline" precision the *120 Days of Sodom* set in the last days of Mussolini's Salò republic, perhaps comes closest to Adorno's analysis, but the superficial proximity here only shows how far Pasolini's elaboration outstrips Adorno's own in sophistication. A Brechtian insistence on artifice and staging punctuates the narrative and reveals the redoubling of technological manipulation within the medium of film itself; this culminates in the final binocular vision wherein the viewer's own voyeurist complicity is simultaneously signalled and undermined. Spectatorial distance is here at once underlined and erased; it ultimately makes no difference through which end the libertine (the spectator?) looks through the binoculars; in a strange reinscription of aesthetic aura, distance and closeness coincide, just as the emphatic inscription of proximity within the flickering succession of images points to a singularity generated from within the field of repetition.[12] So too the insistent voice-overs, the layered citations of (French) commentaries upon commentaries on Sade, serve as a constant reminder of the literary status of the work: writing as, literally, ob-scene, unstageable within the limits of dramaturgical or cinematic convention.

With such a reminder Pasolini also problematizes the apparent ease of the transition from Sade to Salò—the transfer from literature to history as indeed from literature to philosophy and back again—while insisting on the necessity of such a passage. To say that Adorno failed to "read" Sade is not to make a tiresome point invoking some kind of reified notion of the literary, although it is striking indeed that the only two extended

discussions of a literary work in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—Sade and Homer—are confined to appendices, and that the readings offered in both cases are almost entirely thematic (and indeed more or less equivalent). This simultaneous marginalization and colonization of literature by philosophy stands in curious contrast to what we find in Sade himself, whose own writing is textured by the periodic intrusion of philosophy into a mise-en-scène which seems superficially to want to dispense with it. Thus the noisy punctuation of pornographic depiction by endless philosophical manifesto, diatribe, and disquisition; this intrusive theoretical apparatus both prolongs and suspends the aggressivity of the sexual performance staged (not least by way of the tyrannical boredom both inflict on the weary reader). The binge of theory simultaneously distracts from and reinforces the cruelty of the orgy just as it simultaneously reinstates and collapses the Cartesian dualism of mind and body: philosophy stakes out its place "in" (and of) the bedroom while visibly claiming for thought itself the vociferous energy of bodily desire.

But Lacan's reading raises questions that open up pathways back to and out of Adorno's own project. I will indicate briefly the general directions.

1. Might an ethics beyond the pleasure principle show an opportunity for reason beyond the static circuit of self-preservation—the vicious circle of myth and enlightenment as such? Sade in this sense might present not only a parody or *reductio* of enlightenment subjectivity (which he certainly also does) but a subversion of its essential principles. Such a perspective might just flush out the residual pleasure principle lurking in Adorno's own critical apparatus: does Adorno's reduction of Kant to Sade and of Sade to the vagaries of instrumental reason betray an uncritical immersion in the categories he would suspect? One might here entertain a grain of suspicion regarding Adorno's recycling of the Stendhalian *promesse de bonheur* and the horizon of a politics of happiness (nowhere more palpable perhaps than in the melancholic tenacity of Adorno's refusal). Does Adorno's stringent critique of the pleasure principle as a culinary compromise with the existent extend far enough to problematize his own captivation by a happiness whose mythic power remains perhaps uncontested? This is not to reiterate a Habermasian-style complaint regarding the residual theological attachments of Adorno and company.

2. This might lead us to wonder whether Lacan's elaboration of a split subject of desire—split by virtue of the constitutive gap between desire and fulfilment—might not shift the terms of Adorno's discussion (Adorno rather speaks of the irreversible, historically inflicted erosion of a subject whose resuscitation, however impossible, is nonetheless politically required). This is not to reify or ontologize loss (that move would only provide some kind of ideological buffer or consolation for the loss

acknowledged). Might we one day displace the opposition between historicism and ontology? Adorno's aporia might conceal an undialectical shortcircuit: the historicization of lack may be matched here only by an implicit hypostatization of utopia.

3. Pure desire forges an intrinsic link with the aesthetic. The constitutive negativity of the subject grounds the possibility of a radical *creatio ex nihilo*; ethics is inseparably bound up with sublimation. This implies a break not only with a history reified as second nature or immutable tradition but with (the fantasy of) nature itself in its immediacy—nature posited as history's retroactive presupposition and precedent—and hence perhaps with the dialectical nexus of nature and history as critically conceived. Might this challenge Adorno's idea of art as reconciliation with nature, however non-identical this latter might appear? My other questions spin off from here.

4. Sade makes clear that such a radical origin does not preclude repetition; indeed it takes this as its condition. Hence Justine's perpetual virginal beauty (her body remains unmarked, despite repeated tortures and mutilations), and hence too Eugénie's chronic, unflagging surprise as she undergoes initiation again and then again (every time is as shocking, as revelatory, as the first time, however unvarying the theme and variations). This repetitive construction of innocence ravished—a mystic writing pad forever ready for inscription—suggests the incessant construction of a tabula rasa through the desecrations which would most violate it; the blank or void here takes on an actively pulsating dimension. Justine's interminable sexual apprenticeship (always a novice, the *Bildungsroman* always and forever just beginning) has as its counterpart the infinite text of Sade himself (each page written as if it were the first page, a romantic fragment forever underway).[13] For Scheherezade the night is long, the story forever just beginning.

5. In Sade, repetition—for Adorno the domain of mythical monotony—connects the superficially opposed domains of ritual and mechanical reproduction (it is ultimately the mechanicity of the death-drive that is the hinge). Might this help us rephrase the habitual terms in which the "disenchantment of aura" is to be conceived?

6. With his notion of a second death—a death beyond biological fatality—Sade points to an interruption of the natural cycle of generation and destruction, a negativity exceeding not only the destructive energy of nature but perhaps even the negativity of the negative dialectic. This might lead us again to reconsider precisely what nature and the reconciliation therewith might be. Does Adorno reify nature as the ultimate horizon of reconciliation? Pierre Klossowski points to a monstrosity in Sade which oscillates between sensuous nature and a kernel of radical anti-nature. (Hence the particular prestige in Sade of sodomy—and particularly female sodomy—as breaking through the cycle of reproduction.) For Adorno, the very thought of anti-nature raises the specter of some kind of "Malthusian" program (Eugenie's name, in the *Philosophie dans la boudoir*, is indeed a little chilling). Benjamin entertained the thought with greater stamina in his extended reading of Baudelaire; consider his fascination with the figures of the lesbian, the prostitute, the infertile woman. What might repetition mean beyond the reproduction of the same (or species)?

7. For Kant, as for Sade, the very problem of creation (*ex nihilo*) implies that something like "revolution" is at stake. Revolution in Kant has a double meaning: both the radical self-creation at work in every act and at every instant of my moral freedom (a "new man" is born at every moment) and the attempt to found a radical new beginning within a history defined as continuous, evolutionary advance (the self-invention or regeneration of the nation from the ashes of the ancien regime). While describing these events in more or less identical fashion (both mark the traumatic birth or rebirth of freedom from the abyss of anarchic nature—a kind of "permanent revolution"), Kant manages to assign them opposite values. He more or less simultaneously proscribes revolution within the sphere of politics—an overturning of the entire rational order (a return to the abyss of *status naturalis* and to the Sisyphean repetition of what is chronically the same)—and, within the realm of morality, prescribes a revolution of the mind (the rupture with the phenomenal existent has to be perpetually renewed). In *Religion Within the Limits of Mere Reason*, Kant speaks, Biblically, of moral revolution as a kind of rebirth which marks the self-fashioning of the created self:

> If man is to become not merely *legally* but *morally* a good man ... this cannot be brought about through gradual *reformation* ... but must be effected through a *revolution* in the man's disposition.... He can become a new man only through a kind of rebirth, as it were, through a new creation.[14]

Does Sade's own vindication of *ex nihilo* creation—the "revolutionary" truth of Kant—force us to inspect a residual aestheticism lurking in Adorno's problematic of the missed revolution? Adorno famously generalizes Marx's earlier pungent formulation regarding the specific "misery" of German philosophy (for Marx, Germany enjoys the dubious privilege of suffering a restoration without having undergone its own revolution, and therefore finds itself in the uncanny situation of being at a funeral without a corpse to bury: "we ... found ourselves in the society of freedom only once, on the day of its burial"[15]): Adorno's well-known variation reads as follows: "philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on

because the moment of its realization has been missed."[16] Reason's privilege is wrested from the very anachronism that marks its defeat. Does the missed moment function as preemptive utopian horizon? Is there a hint here of an ethics of postponement? Does Adorno reinstate the regime of fantasy (as the apotropaic desire to desire) and eventually find consolation in delay? In his insistence on the moment of precipitation inherent in all enjoyment, Sade (avec Marx) might just block this last move.

8. Something like all this may finally help address Adorno's own question, addressed officially to the pragmatism of his day, but directed more generally to every reformism of the "next step." Hence the contrast between dialectics and pragmatism, like every distinction in philosophy, is reduced to a nuance, namely, to the conception of the "next step."

> The pragmatist ... defines it as adjustment, and this perpetuates the domination of what is always the same. Were dialectics to sanction this, it would renounce itself in renouncing the idea of potentiality. But how is potentiality to be conceived, if it is not to be abstract and arbitrary, like the utopias dialectical philosophers proscribed? Conversely, how can the next step assume direction and aim without the subject knowing more than what is already given? If one chose to reformulate Kant's question, one could ask today: *how is anything new possible at all?*[17]

We might actually choose here to rephrase Adorno's last question. What if we sidestep the very dialectic of actuality and potentiality—together with its undialectical shortcircuit (unrealized projects, extorted reconciliations)? Rather than containing or explaining Sade as just one more item in the inexhaustible inventory of reason, could the hyperbolic thrust of reason—the "excessive measures" of its project[18]—point towards something like an unthinkable, indeed impossible, excess?

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Notes

1. See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002) (henceforth DE); Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960* (New York: Norton, 1992), Jacques Lacan, "Kant avec Sade," trans. James Swenson in *October* 51 (1989).

2. In the preface to the 1969 edition of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer claim joint responsibility for the entire manuscript. "No one who was not involved in the writing could easily understand to what extent we both feel responsible for every sentence" (DE, xi). The claim is amplified by an (unpublished) attestation from 1949 in which Adorno imagines a collaborative fusion of identities which would even retrospectively come to subsume independently authored texts. "As our entire scholarly work, both theoretical and empirical, has been for years so fused together that our contributions cannot be separated, it seems timely for us to declare publically that all our philosophical, sociological, and psychological publications should be regarded as composed by us jointly and that we share responsibility for them. This also applies to work signed by us individually" (cited in Gunzelin Schmid Noer's editorial notes to DE, 220). The stakes are high: it is the division of labor of the entire academic culture industry and beyond that is under fire. This aside, it must be conceded that by all accounts (Habermas, Tiedemann, etc.), and according to the manuscript evidence, the chapter on Sade appears to have been largely authored by Horkheimer (just as the chapter on Odysseus seems to have been primarily Adorno's creation). See DE, 222. If I take Adorno at his word, then, and for the duration of this essay let the name "Adorno" stand alone, it is not merely for stylistic simplicity but because the repercussions seem unexpectedly rich and relevant, as we shall see, for Adorno's own rather ambivalent engagement with both literature (from Baudelaire to Beckett) and Benjamin.

3. See, among other places, Slavoj Žižek, "Kant and Sade: The Ideal Couple."

4. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 426–8 and 548–50.

5. G. W. F. Hegel, "Spirit of Christianity," in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), especially 182–224. Hegel's point is most fully argued in the opening 20-odd pages on the "fury and fanaticism"—terrified, murderous, abject, embroiled—of the Jews, but the connection with the Kantian moral law is explicit and developed in the pages that follow. Compare this to his later critique of Kantian morality (and what he takes to be its Fichtean and Romantic derivatives) in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §§596–671. See the section on "dissemblance" at §§616–31. (Paragraph numbers cited henceforth.)

6. See Octave Mannoni, "Je sais bien, mais quandmême...," in *Clefs p l'imaginaire ou l'autre scène* (Paris: Seuil, 1969).

7. Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New Yc Hill and Wang, 1976).

8. Samuel Beckett, letter to Arland Usher of May 4 1938, cited in Antl ny Cronin, *Samuel Beckett: The Last Modernist*.

9. Jean-Michel Rabaté, "Watt/Sade: Beckett et l'humain à l'envers," *L'inhumain* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2000).

10. Adorno, "Trying to Understand Endgame," in *Notes to Literature*, \ 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

11. See Adorno on the "enjoyment industry": "Es ist das Echo der Ma als unentrinnbarer. Fun ist ein Stahlbad." Dialektik der Aufkläru Gesammelte Schriften (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp), Bd. 3, 162.

12. See Joan Copjec. "The Body as Viewing Instrument or the Strut Vision," in *Lacan in America*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté (New York: Otl Press, 2000), 304–8.

13. See Pierre Klossowski, *Sade my Neighbor* (Evanston: Northweste University Press, 1991), 30–3.

14. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason Religion* and *Rational Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pre 1996), 42.

15. Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Contribution to a Critique of Hege *Philosophy of Right*," in *Early Writings*, trans. T B. Bottomore (New Yo McGraw Hill, 1964), 45.

16. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Contir um, 1973).

17. Adorno, "Veblen's Attack on Culture," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel a Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT, 1967), 92f.

18. "... outrierten Veranstaltung": see Negative Dialektik, Gesamme Schriften, Bd. 6, 33. Many thanks to Wendy Brown and Jay Bernstein very incisive comments and discussion.