

# A Feminist Genealogy of the Post-Enlightenment Subject

with the Marquis de Sade's *Juliette*

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## 1. Introduction

**In response to Immanuel Kant's** text "What is Enlightenment?" (*Was ist Aufklärung?*"), Michel Foucault focuses on the question of enlightenment for the philosophical present.<sup>1</sup> He departs from what he terms an "analytic philosophy of truth" to concentrate on a critical "ontology of the present."<sup>2</sup> According to Foucault, by explaining *Aufklärung* as an "exit" or a "way out" from immaturity, Kant provides new criteria for the philosophical present, which has both ethical and political dimensions.<sup>3</sup> It allows us to think about human subjectivity and its relation to knowledge more concretely, through the constellations of power relations that are operative and, in doing so, to develop a more reflective ethos. Integral to this inquiry is a critical approach that is "not transcendental" but "archaeological," because it focuses not on universal preconditions but looks to diverse forms of discourse and their historical impact, through genealogical investigation (E 315).

Who better to explore the post-Enlightenment attitude of the philosophical present than the Marquis de Sade's terrible *Juliette*? Written during the French Revolution and after the Reign of Terror when Sade was imprisoned for "moderantism," *Juliette* explores the instrumentalization, inversion, and perversion of Enlightenment ideals.<sup>4</sup> While the bloody horrors of this period may have inspired Sade's text, *Juliette* has relevance beyond the events of the Revolution. This text, along with others written by Sade, has given life to a body of diverse commentary by post-war French thinkers and critical theorists of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> A return to the story of *Juliette* now can help us to refocus Foucault's meditation on the philosophy of the present without abandoning the epistemic problem of truth.

As a dissonant exemplar of the more humanistic Kantian subject, Juliette employs a bourgeois notion of reason to embody a cold intentionality that supersedes experiential content. She places herself in an isolated position in which her rationalized sovereignty appears to provide her with autonomy. Juliette exports a subset of Enlightenment principles from the Kantian tradition to serve *her own way out* of the institutionalized forms of oppression that constrain her. In her, we recognize an exaggerated form of instrumentalized reason in the service of a capitalist perseverance that attempts to refuse the demand, whether large or small, of any other. Like the Kantian subject, Juliette is indifferent when it comes to her emotions and is categorical with her commitments. She rejects pity and maintains a distance from affect, whether hers or another's. She survives, she perseveres, she succeeds—but at what cost? What do her successes and failures reveal about the legacy of the Kantian subject?

I respond to these questions through two routes. The first is through a re-reading of Foucault's notion of the "exit" or "way out." I argue that Juliette employs the logic of the sovereign individual, initiated by Kant, and deconstructed by Friedrich Nietzsche, to willfully survive.<sup>6</sup> In the move to detach herself from mimetic inclination and, with this, the direction of others, Juliette becomes her own representation of the subject of *Aufklärung*.<sup>7</sup>

This essay follows a mimetic turn/re-turn in continental philosophy, which shifts the emphasis on mimesis as representation to mimesis as constitutive of the human condition. This turn posits the human as a *Homo mimeticus*, an imitative and immanent being, whose consciousness is structured by affects, forces, and relations and, as such, is already part of a larger genealogical investigation.<sup>8</sup> It builds upon two key suppositions of the *Homo Mimeticus* project and the connected *Gendered Mimesis* project associated with this larger mimetic return: that (1) Nietzsche's concept of the "pathos of distance" provides a key to understanding the pathologies of the modern subject (see, e.g., GM 219, 314); and that (2) re-reading the human condition as one that is fundamentally structured by mimesis, and its associated vulnerabilities, problematizes the autonomous subject of the Enlightenment.<sup>9</sup>

While Juliette's singular instantiation of the principles of sovereignty cannot be solely attributed to the Kantian philosophical system, the loveless character of Kant's anti-mimetic ideal does have consequence. As such, the second route responds to this concern: I propose that Juliette shares with Kant a problem of indifference. Following Simone de Beauvoir's reading of Sade and Adriana Cavarero's criticism of Kant, I show Juliette's sadism to be a problem distinctive to the denial of mimetic inclination. As one legacy of the Kantian subject, her dissonance

demands a response, one that takes seriously the material implications of a human ideal who is uninterested in love.

## **2. The Way Out: Distance, Sovereignty, and Juliette’s “Willful Splendor”**

In *Juliette*, we find a character who embraces the capitalistic principle of survival (“adapt at all costs”) with an admiration for rationalized mastery. As a young girl and woman, Juliette is possessed by a “mimetic pathos” (see PE 24): she looks up from below and imitates sovereignty so that she may grasp at it herself. As a function of her own position, her enactment involves an artistry that transforms. Juliette learns to personify the violence that is done to her, but with a higher level of intensity, usurping the laws of sovereignty and libertinage with the aim of becoming the law herself.

This section argues that Nietzsche’s notion of the pathos of distance and his critique of the sovereign individual helps us to better understand how Juliette’s transition from libertinage to sadism is continuous with the legacy of the Kantian subject. Although Juliette embraces violence, she also celebrates rectitude and indifference. Her bold and unwavering character evokes fascination in the reader. This is partially due to her sharing a collection of admirable attributes with the enlightened human. The other part of this has to do with what I call her “willful splendor,” a concept that requires an account of Jacques Lacan’s three registers, and additional commentary on Sade by feminist and critical theorists, such as Angela Carter, Simone de Beauvoir, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno, in order to be sufficiently understood.

### **2.1 Juliette’s pathos of distance**

In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche describes the pathos of distance (*Pathos der Distanz*) as “the lasting and dominating overall and basic feeling of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a ‘below’” (GM 219).<sup>10</sup> Here, the pathos of distance explains the separation and difference between two human types that he believes are predominant in the history of morality: the master and the slave (ibid.). The notion of pathos taken alone is an affect related to suffering and identification—for example, the unifying feeling one experiences when watching a sympathetic character in a play. Brought together with the notion of distance, it includes the sensations of being both pushed and pulled. The pathos of distance involves a push when it motivates one to seek greater height to avoid the suffering of others, and involves a pull when another’s suffering brings one toward it (BGE 167).

The slave morality has become victorious in modernity, according to Nietzsche, because it has been able to bridge the pathos of distance through a Judeo-Christian ethics, which has compassion (*Mitleid*) at its center (see, e.g., BGE 172–3; see also BGE 90; GM 225–31).<sup>11</sup> *Mitleid*, which literally means “suffering-with,” but is translated as pity or compassion, is distinguished by Nietzsche in §222 and §225 of *Beyond Good and Evil* as the affect that bridges distance most of all (see BGE 125, 128–9; see also BGE 133, 385n.6, 387n.22).<sup>12</sup> It can overcome the subject by pulling them toward the suffering person. The pathos of distance is thus framed by Nietzsche as an ability (of the master) to remain at a distance from the affects, emotional and ideological, of others, and specifically the slave.

Nietzsche uses the pathos of distance to distinguish between what appears to be the mimetic and the non-mimetic subject, or in simple terms, the one who is or is not prone to imitation and identification (BGE 167; GM 219). In Nidesh Lawtoo’s reading of Nietzsche, the non-mimetic subject is juxtaposed to the mimetic one and is presented as “the master *contra* the slave, the individual *contra* the herd,” the free spirit *contra* the fettered, the healthy *contra* the sick, etc. (PE 29). The non-mimetic subject is often characterized as standing above or apart from others and having a self-knowledge that the mimetic subject does not. This is consistent with §257 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which Nietzsche states that distance is a precondition for human “enhancement” and “self-overcoming” (BGE 167). Here, Nietzsche again claims that the development of human excellence requires that one can resist the pull of others.

Nietzsche spends considerable space speaking to the problems of becoming part of a herd mentality, as an imitative follower who fails to take part in critical self-reflection (BGE 92–8). This warning is voiced to all. To be clear, then, it is not that the master, the free spirit, and other admirable character types in Nietzsche’s works are not affected by mimesis, but rather that they insulate themselves from it more than their opposite types.<sup>13</sup>

Nietzsche is emphatic throughout his *œuvre* that solitude is necessary for creative thinking and making, and that those who assimilate themselves into the collective body too concretely are mimetically impelled to become like everyone else (see, e.g., BGE 28–9, 44, 46). Lawtoo writes, “Mimesis, for Nietzsche, is thus not simply understood as imitation or representation, but as a polymorphous phenomenon that troubles the boundaries of individuation” (PE 28). According to Nietzsche, we not only learn and communicate through imitation but also engage in “involuntary” or unconscious mimetic activities with others, and this is fundamental to the constitution of our subjectivities (see PE 41).<sup>14</sup> This

means that there are parts of ourselves which are very much unknown to us, as Nietzsche notes in the preface to his *Genealogy*, parts that are generated through our involuntary mimetic impulses (GM 207).

In *The Gay Science*, mimesis is described by Nietzsche as an art and creative strength when, as a skill of imitation and self-fashioning, it is employed as a tool of becoming (especially for those who lack power).<sup>15</sup> In §361 of that text, Nietzsche writes that people of the lower classes become great actors and learn to embody different kinds of roles to facilitate adaption to changing and challenging circumstances (GS 316–7). He links the ability to represent oneself in different ways, to take on variant forms as a skill of survival, with “the pre-history” of the “genius” (GS 317). Note that this treatment of mimesis is not specifically aligned with its voluntary status: as a mode of survival, acting can be both impulsive and purposeful.

Elsewhere in *The Gay Science* (§290), mimesis is aligned with a creative agency in which one can stylize their character to their own satisfactory ends (GS 232–3). Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of gaining awareness of one’s “strengths and weaknesses,” so that a selection can be made through a governing taste to shape oneself toward a particular kind of self-making that draws on resources both from within and outside of the self (GS 232). Here what characterizes mimesis as a strength is the notion of *distance*: the ability to cultivate a second-order awareness that observes the self. The pathos of distance allows one to separate oneself from those less desirable selves as well as from the emotions and ideas of others. Learning how to guard oneself against an unbecoming suffering, whether it be one’s own or another’s and, as such, to not be overcome by this pathos, is viewed as integral to self-preservation for Nietzsche.

The importance of the notions of distance and pathos in understanding Sade’s libertines, and Juliette in particular, cannot be overestimated. In Sade, we find two types, that of the libertine and the victim; integral to the logic of the libertine is that they are not affected by the feelings or ideas of the victim. The libertine knows how to use their faculties of sensibility, the victim does not. The libertine is active and willful, has a rationalized and objective comprehension of their emotional predispositions and a choreography for expressing them. They have cultivated a specific taste to guide the self. This is distinguished from the victim who lacks taste as well as the skills necessary for self-control. For Sade, this makes the victim ripe for exploitation (see, e.g., J 277–281).<sup>16</sup> Thus, libertines view themselves as superior to others, as members of a higher rank who have a greater understanding of their powers and potentials (J 53–4). They act to initiate acolytes into the practices of libertinism for their own enjoyment, and use and discard

those they consider inadequate. Juliette herself undergoes a series of initiations throughout the story, embarking on a process of maturation, both sexual and intellectual, which involves apprenticeships with those more experienced, in which she must prove herself to be a true libertine (see, e.g., J 281–2, 476).

The process of maturation, associated with Juliette's enlightenment, involves a change in her perspective, in how she views herself. As a young woman in a convent, in the care of Madame Delbène, she expresses admiration and desire for her teacher, looking up to her (J 3–5). However, when Juliette is sent away from her mentor and lover, due to a lack of funds, she decides that she must, to the best of her abilities, be self-reliant and take advantage of those situations given to her (J 101–3). Inspired by self-preservation and the encouragement of co-conspirators, she begins to see herself as shifting rank, from one who looks up to one who looks down. She changes her position in relation to the Nietzschean pathos of distance and moves from being a potential victim to becoming a libertine, and finally, at the end of *Juliette*, to the most destructive sadist of them all (see J 1187–8; see also J 1106, 1137, 1192).

Juliette's transition to sadism can be read as a bridging of the pathos of distance through an approach specific to libertinism. There is a technique of the self, concerned with acting, feeling, and thinking found in *Juliette* that outlines the libertine route (see, e.g., J 484, 640, 675). Initially, it may appear as if Sade simply inverts the Christian-Platonic model so that the practices of the libertine champion vice, lust, violence, and overall evil, encouraging all kinds of random debauchery simply for the experience itself. And if we turn to Nietzsche for guidance, it is tempting to view the libertine as taking up the position of the master with a heightened intensity, returning to what Nietzsche would call an older form of existence, a more "barbaric" time where the will to power is less restrained, prior to the emergence of the slave morality (BGE 38–40). But this is not the complete picture. To become a powerful libertine requires strategy and self-control; to take part in debauchery one must be adequately prepared, and this requires a well-trained relationship with one's faculties of sensibility (see, e.g., J 277–8, 640).

Angela Carter claims that Noircueil teaches Juliette that "to escape slavery, she must embrace tyranny," and that self-interest and egoism are what can bring happiness.<sup>17</sup> It appears that excess and depravity are Juliette's main interests, so much so that when Noircueil tells Juliette that he has murdered her parents, she calls him a monster and expresses her love for him (J 148–9). However, when Noircueil questions Juliette's affection for him, the murderer of her kin, what follows is more telling of her becoming sadistic: she states, "Can that matter to me? Sensations are my means for judging everything; none

were stimulated in me by those persons of whom your crimes have rid me forever” (J 149). Juliette’s first reaction to Noirceuil’s confession is described as a shudder, but she immediately transforms that feeling of horror to meet Noirceuil’s gaze with an “apathetic stare” before stating that she has no feeling about his violent deeds (ibid.).

The caution of being affected by passion, of being passively rather than actively engaged with one’s emotions and ideas, is constant throughout *Juliette*. Libertines are regularly testing each other to see if they are being taken over by the sensibilities, and especially if they are failing to sustain a pathos of distance by succumbing to pity or virtue (see J 261, 277, 283). The libertine must habituate the self away from the inclination to virtue, and this takes work; this work is done through committing evil acts, and in doing so, cultivating indifference to the deeds.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, at various points in the text, Juliette is cautioned by other libertines to be wary of enjoyment and pleasure, even if it is enjoyment of doing evil. For example, Clairwil tells Juliette that the greatest excellence of the libertine is to remain tranquil even at the height of lust and violence (J 475; see also J 282). She cautions Juliette about becoming too passionate with her deeds, stating that she must be careful of being taken over by her emotions and entering a passive state (J 475–6).<sup>19</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno explain that as Juliette becomes more “advanced,” she turns away from the enjoyment of sacrilege (DE 82). The transition into sadism from mere libertinage involves not only an inversion of the Christian-Platonic value system but also requires the domination of one’s faculties of sensibility, so that a reprioritization of pleasure can be made.

The libertine’s position is maintained through a pathos of distance that involves the training of one’s intellect, physique, and emotions. Juliette’s progressions toward becoming a more developed libertine requires she detach herself from sentiment, from Christianity, from the values of equality, and from any moral principles associated with virtue (see J 261, 283, 321). Her goal is to disassociate herself from a set of belief systems which are understood as common and inferior; she restructures herself through the laws of libertinism, found in the laws of the Society of the Friends of Crime, and expressed throughout the novel in the speeches of the libertines (see J 418–27). However, she does not do this to simply expend energy or take part in inversion. This restructuring occurs at every level of the self and requires that she habituate to the etiquette of sadism (see J 432–5). In doing so, she avoids the mimetic pull of the multitude by capitulating to the demands of an elite group whom she must imitate to gain acceptance.

This process shows Juliette's pathway toward her own sovereignty, at once providing a veiled critique of the bourgeois individual. In doing so, it has been argued that Juliette shows us what the concretization of the Kantian subject can look like—according to Horkheimer and Adorno, Juliette is “the bourgeois subject freed from all tutelage” (DE 68). However, this is not the complete picture. Juliette's subjectivity is structured by another ethos: she follows the guidance of a libertine ideology, which contains within it the seeds of its own destruction. Above all, Juliette's intent is focused on maintaining her pathos of distance and, with this, her singularity intact.

## **2.2 Juliette as her own sovereign individual**

What is Juliette's relationship with sovereignty? Certainly, the language of agency found in Juliette is easily aligned with the bourgeois individual, as is done by Horkheimer and Adorno. She can also be read as an early model of the neoliberal subject of late capitalism whose economic and social success is linked to being mobile and opportunist.<sup>20</sup> Her entrepreneurial spirit realizes that to survive, she must find the place where she can serve a function, and then work to mold herself to excel there. Her excellence requires that she be, in Nietzsche's words, “a great actor” (GS 316–7, 325), and style herself into different roles so that she can manipulate the situation and persons involved to her advantage. Although Juliette cultivates her own libertine system of operation, she is also bound by libertine rules, which are themselves in an agonistic relationship with European philosophical norms of modernity, one of which is the notion of the sovereign individual.

The complex position of the post-Enlightenment subject, whose gaze is set on exercising their agency, while being inescapably shaped by what Lawtoo calls a “mimetic pathos,” is best articulated in Nietzsche's critique of the sovereign individual (see, e.g., PE 3, 8, 24, 33). Nietzsche writes that the sovereign individual is as a product of customs, norms, and disciplinary institutions (GM 247–9). However, they are also someone who is “autonomous” and “supermoral” (GM 248). Distinguished by their ability to make promises and be responsible, they are “the ripest fruit” (ibid.) of the Enlightenment, the matured modern subject intact with a self-governing conscience (GM 249).

According to Nietzsche, the independent thinker of the Kantian legacy does not reason and reflect with a mind that is *uniquely their own* (GM 251; see also BGE 82, 84). Their self-perceived sovereignty is a result of being integrated into a collective system of morality unconsciously inherited through cultural and bodily memory and bred into the human being as conscience (GM 249–50). The making of the sovereign



individual has a long history of subjugation and indoctrination behind it. They have been systematically constructed not only through social convention but also a methodology of suffering and punishment (GM 249). Nietzsche explains that to be made responsible, one first had to be made “necessary,” “uniform,” and “predictable” (GM 247). This occurs through what he calls the “morality of custom” (collective obedience to traditional morality) and “the social straitjacket” (GM 248). The license of the sovereign individual to act autonomously is allowed because the very notion of what this entails is based upon compliance with the rules of the social contract. In Kant’s words, enlightenment requires that one consent to some restrictions to actualize their freedom.<sup>21</sup>

Nietzsche’s analysis of the sovereign individual suggests that Kant’s motto “*Sapere aude!*” or “dare to be wise,” as the call to independent thinking, is one that can only be taken up by the person who has first been *made into* a sovereign individual.<sup>22</sup> This making involves so many restrictions on one’s will that one wonders how being “sovereign” is an instantiation of freedom, and how simple it is then to truly think “without direction from another.”<sup>23</sup> Although the discourses of the libertines in *Juliette* prioritize a pathos of distance that emphasizes individuality, the libertine, like the sovereign individual of the Enlightenment, must prove worthy, and for that they undergo suffering to institute a conscience, albeit one that inverts most of the values of the Kantian model.

Nietzsche claims that the conscience that structures sovereignty was instituted into human consciousness through a culture of cruelty to make particular ideas unforgettable (GM 250). He gives an account of German mnemonic practices to describe the process underlying the formation of the sovereign individual. Nietzsche writes of stoning, breaking on the wheel, quartering, boiling one in oil, and other forms of torture used, he claims, to teach people five or six “I will nots” (GM 251). Nietzsche writes that it is “with the help of this kind of memory they finally came ‘to reason!’” (ibid.). By his lights, the modern subject is free and reasonable because they have inherited, both physiologically and culturally, an unconscious memory of the pains of transgression.

Thus, according to Nietzsche, the human subject has been bred through punishment and discipline into a being that is able to make promises (GM 246–73). The result of these harsh methods is the “autonomous,” “moral,” and “sovereign” individual (GM 248). Thus, at the ground of the sovereign individual is the formation of the conscience, which consists of that self-measuring voice that makes one human. This, in turn, is the result of ancient practices of control that have disciplined the human into a being that can make promises and that can be seen as living autonomously (GM 249). Nietzsche’s genealogical

analysis of the subject of Enlightenment proposes that the sovereign individual may appear as the master of free will, who sustains a pathos of distance, but that the will that they think of as their own is one that is mimetically formed.

The libertine undergoes a similar process, but at a rapid speed. Each stage of Juliette's maturation from being a girl in an orphanage, to a young sex worker in a brothel, and finally to a noble woman in an open market is defined by a progression toward sovereignty. This progression requires Juliette to submit to a series of painful encounters in which the ethos of the libertine is habituated into her being so that it can be taken on as her own. The values of libertinism that are taught to her are not the same as the sovereign individual's that Nietzsche critiques, yet they do share some attributes in common. They both esteem reason, autonomy, independence, and activity, and are *allowed* to make promises. Nietzsche describes the sovereign individual as

a human being of his own independent, long will who *is allowed to promise*—and in him a proud consciousness twitching in every muscle of *what* has been achieved and has become flesh in him, an actual consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of completion of the human being generally. . . . gazing out from himself upon others, he either honors or despises; and just as necessarily as he is honored by his peers, the strong and the reliable (those who are *allowed to promise*)—hence everyone who speaks like a sovereign . . . whose trust is *distinguishing*. (GM 248)

The libertine too is defined by their ability to view people as those to be honored or despised whether they be a libertine or a victim—the libertine being one who has a discourse to support their position, as well as a set of rules outlined by their membership in the Society of the Friends of Crime (J 418–27).

Both the 'free' human being of the Enlightenment, who is the sovereign individual, and the libertine, have, in Nietzsche's words, liberated themselves from "the morality of custom" (GM 247). What does this mean? They have reached the place where they are *allowed* to make promises and to be a "responsible" subject, which means they also have been placed in a position where they have the autonomy to not act responsibly, and the option to break promises. Both the sovereign individual and the libertine presume themselves free, yet this freedom is a gift afforded to them as enlightened members of their exclusive clubs. Within the gift of freedom is a memory of its history of violence. As such, those, like Juliette, who seek to be "supermoral" (GM 248), to no longer be beholden to a membership of norms, will return with an intensified force of will to that violence that shaped them.

### 2.3 Juliette's willful splendor

Simone de Beauvoir writes in "Must We Burn Sade?" that Sade gives women the most victorious roles because wickedness in them is more arresting, given what is perceived as the "traditional softness of their sex" (MBS 62). When they overcome their subjection through crime, the woman sadist is able to show with greater brilliance that "no situation could shackle the flight of a bold heart. But they become the most magnificent torturers in imagination, only because in reality they are born victims: servile, tearful, foolish and passive" (ibid.). Beauvoir suggests that a woman libertine holds greater sway on her spectator because she must surmount more resistance than her male counterpart. Horkheimer and Adorno make a similar point: they write that Juliette's hunger for destruction is stronger than other libertines because it hinges on her misfortune, which drives her forward to become the oppressor (who she cannot fully become due to her sex) (DE 87–9). Carter adds to this by aligning feminine inactivity and powerlessness with poverty, stating that Juliette is someone who exceeds her given position of woman (as a class), while concurrently exploiting the tropes of femininity for her own use (SW 86). The wonder of Juliette, and thus her splendor, rests partially on her sex, that she is an embodied woman, yet one who does not adhere to a functional role of "the female." As a speaking subject, she occupies multiple gender and class roles, and in doing so, disrupts the class expectations of being a woman. Juliette is the libertine who transcends the greatest distances (economically, sexually, culturally) and, as such, emanates a beauty that seduces the reader.

Yet, Sade's writing has also been described as boring, difficult to read, horrific, and even dull (see MBS 58, 73).<sup>24</sup> So why then has it been such a topic of interest in continental and radical thought? Lacan has some insight to offer on this. In *Juliette's* case, as has already been stated, it is due to the protagonist's splendor, her surpassing of the class and functions of womanhood. However, Juliette's popularity, if we dare call it so, can also be understood through her malleable and transgressive relationship with Lacan's three registers (the Imaginary, the Real, and the Symbolic).<sup>25</sup>

Lacan writes in "Kant with Sade" that there is enjoyment to be had with the libertine character of Juliette because she is the impossible object of fantasy (KS 63). Yet, at the same time, she causes discomfort to the reader by making the demand to "set yourself straight with respect to your desires" (KS 66). This dual movement in Sade's text occurs because he attempts to capture the realm of the Imaginary, which is the register of the fantastical, the simulated, and the virtual (see KS 62–3, 66). Yet, one cannot fully do so in text. While reading Sade, one is drawn into a

charged imagination of one's own egoic desires, then confronted with the failure to experience this fully in phenomenal and conceptual life. This failure creates an interruption that compels the reader to have an ethical reflection about their passionate fantasies (and the danger of desire without limits) (see KS 70, 72).

One becomes confronted with the Real, or what is impossible via phenomenal life (see KS 63). Yet, the appeal of Juliette can also be maintained because she does exactly what is not possible for the reader: she lives in the Real, in a full, unaffected physical being that appears to actualize fantasy without any interruption from the superego. Slavoj Žižek confronts this allure, and we can state his position as follows: Juliette and other Sadeian female libertines are enchanting because they are "undead."<sup>26</sup> Material bodies die, yet Juliette sustains much physical torture and remains beautiful with an "immortality of the body," a capacity to "sustain endless pain and humiliation."<sup>27</sup> In other words, she does not conform to the natural law that states life is finite and vulnerable. Juliette's monstrous beauty enchants us because she acts beyond what is possible at the human level. Only one who is "undead," who exists somewhere in between fantasy and reality could be so impervious to the demands of life.

The force of Juliette's willful splendor also has to do with her transgressions of the Symbolic register, her dialectical and exploitative relationships with the customs, laws, and mores of culture and society.<sup>28</sup> While Juliette defies some laws, she complies with others. For example, she utilizes her membership within the Society of the Friends of Crime to flout the common criminal laws to which regular members of society must adhere (J 429). She publicly follows customary practices of feminine etiquette to receive entrance into a home or a community where she then overturns all such habits through orgies and murder (J 431–5). Juliette teaches and practices a system of self-denial to control the sensibilities, employing techniques of asceticism, yet for the purpose of experiencing the sensations of violence with greater refinement and intensity (J 640–3). Especially as Juliette matures, the Symbolic register becomes a resource for her, a system of tools to serve her singular interest of sadism. She recognizes its significance, but not as a superego; she views herself as living horizontally in agonistic struggle with it (see, e.g., J 697, 748–57).

Arguably, Juliette becomes a master of the law herself: so skilled at the art of masking, she can perform at will whatever part is necessary for her to move on to the next stage of her development. In *Encore*, Lacan suggests that those who speak as women have a greater distance from the commands of the Symbolic (and are less compelled by its phallogocentric discourse) than those who speak as men.<sup>29</sup> Why might women have

the capacity to have a more critical and creative relationship with social laws as well as the ability to recognize the moveable character of meaning and values more easily than men? It has to do with the assumption that women are more skilled performers; the feminine position is characterized by Lacan as having a talent for the mimetic activity of masquerade.<sup>30</sup> Juliette, as an extreme personification of the feminine talent for masquerade, provides an example of this aptitude taken to the extreme.

Unlike her libertine companion Clairwil—the castrating woman who destroys men through exhausting their sexual capacities, believing that she obtains the phallus in doing so—, Juliette occupies a double position (J 920). She knows how to act in the place of the man, and she also knows how to exceed him through qualities that are very much connected to her sex. Carter characterizes Juliette as a terrorist, specifically a sexual terrorist who refuses her role as a procreative woman, as well as any reproductive-normative obligation to motherhood, deploying her sexuality instead as a tool for rationalized violence (SW 105). As Carter suggests, gender is displaced in Sade’s texts because the sexual act occurs among equals, beyond the heteronormative rules of traditional sex: “Now the woman, now the man, penetrates and is penetrated in turn; gender itself can become interchangeable” (SW 111). Juliette does not only employ the tropes of femininity to propel herself onward but also readily takes on manly roles, in life and in sex, if it serves her interests.

The instances in which Juliette can be seen to reject the expectations associated with the heteronormative procreative female are numerous and throughout the text. One particularly disturbing example is when Juliette takes part in a performance of a marriage ceremony with Noirceuil and their children. During this enactment, Juliette and Noirceuil dress themselves and their children in drag, perform multiple marriage ceremonies with one another, and murder all their children when the ceremonies are complete (J 1175–83).

By destroying the sanctity of the marriage ceremony, which is also a form of authoritative speech, Juliette places herself in a mimetic agon with the law. The “I do” of marriage, as an utterance, is a form of speech that normally, through its performance, exercises “a binding power.”<sup>31</sup> However, when Juliette enacts this performance with multiple people, some children, and between people who do not represent coherent genders, she initiates a parody that transforms into a calamity (J 1178–83). This parodic deployment of authoritative speech denies the importance of kinship and the laws and norms of procreative heterosexuality that undergird the institution of marriage. *Juliette* does not merely re-interpret the script by, for example, allowing same-sex marriage; she brings that which is most forbidden and

depraved—incest, orgy, and murder—into the sacred place of marriage. Her hijacking of the marriage ceremony robs it of its naturalizing and authoritative power, and, in a move of active nihilism, it becomes just another cultural convention, laid bare.

The striving of Juliette is ugly to the reader because it rejects the standard moral code. Yet, at the same time, she is also a perfect articulation of the dark feminine, a personification of the “whore” who inverts the Christian-Platonic order (see, e.g., J 178, 391, 492, 559, 953). It is important to note that the experience of disgust that Juliette evokes in the spectator is a piece of her splendor too. This is the uncanny in Juliette: she not only survives but flourishes as the undead who refuses to be subjected to the Symbolic register. Certainly, her transgressions of heteronormative sexuality and gender constructs are relevant for a feminist politics that challenges the norms and laws associated with these constructs. What is important to not overlook, however, is that these transgressions are only achievable because she is a member of a protected community, the Society of the Friends of Crime. And it is precisely this membership that allows her to move beyond the regular class restrictions of her sex/gender and utilize the ideologies of rational self-interest for her own advantage. Here, we can read this as Sade’s visionary critique: In a class-based system, sovereignty is only achievable through membership in a protected and privileged group.

Early on in her life, Olivier Delers writes, Juliette recognizes the world as having two classes: the mobile exploiters who are “adaptable and connected” (the libertines) and the trapped exploited who are doomed to “a life of suffering and vagabondage” (the victims) (see J 114–8).<sup>32</sup> Juliette learns the logic of commodification in the brothel where she becomes an object of sale, rebranded over and over as a virgin, sold repeatedly as the same product. As Delers notes, the experience of being sold as a lie teaches Juliette about the kind of economic (a)moral actor she must become to live.<sup>33</sup> In having to rely solely on herself, the drive to survive surpasses concern for the ethical community.

Juliette’s initial transcendence of her given situation occurs through economic gain, and she remains focused on the accumulation of wealth so that she can secure her freedom of movement. The quandary of her situation is described by Horkheimer and Adorno through the logic of the “free market,” where self-preservation “seems to offer the most plausible maxims for action” (DE 71). Since this “free market” is controlled by private individuals and groups, everyone’s impulse to survive becomes equally an impulse for self-destruction. One is willing to sell or exchange any quality they have until they can reach the upper echelons of control; there is no limit to what can be made available on the open market.

The splendor of Juliette's achievements as a sexual terrorist who attacks gender norms is mitigated by the conditions that move her toward these 'achievements.' The triumph of a character who habituates cruelty and indifference so profoundly points to the shattered world in which she lives. As such, a genealogical investigation of Juliette as one instantiation of the post-Enlightenment subject must ask: What are the conditions that allowed for a dissonant exemplar like Juliette to rise in the first place? The sadist is not only the surplus of a class system, the unintended result of the bourgeois economic actor's use of instrumentalized reason. This essay argues that Juliette is also a consequence of the loveless Kantian subject, whose focus on rectitude, respect, and duty repels affect and care for the other.

### **3. No Love: Kantian Reason and the Sadist's Indifference**

This section aims to further illustrate Juliette's continuity within the Kantian legacy. It will do so by providing a more concentrated analysis of the philosophical psychology of Sade and his favorite femme fatale, Juliette,<sup>34</sup> with the assistance of Beauvoir. This analysis will be integrated with Cavarero's critique of Kant and her insistence on the necessity of inclination in rebuilding the philosophical subject, one which, I argue, is necessary for re-evaluating the post-Enlightenment subject of today.

In *Inclinations*, Cavarero indicates that the comportment of Kant's ideal self, not only aesthetically but also ontologically, reifies an atomized typology of the human.<sup>35</sup> Kant's moral subject who is focused on self-legislation, consistency, balance, and neutrality is devoid of, and even seeks to avoid, the passionate side of human nature. As Cavarero explains, the Kantian subject is not only wary of inclination, but they can also lose their autonomy through it:

Encapsulated in its formal uprightness, straight within itself, the austere moral subject does not incline, not even in on itself. If it does incline, perhaps seduced by the representation of its own happiness, then it ceases to be a moral subject: because it is externally affected by a representation, it is no longer free and autonomous. (CR 33)

In other words, to be a moral subject, in Kant's philosophy, one must resist the mimetic call to incline, whether it comes from within or from without. What is of worth for the (moral) subject must be purified of feeling; they must follow duty alone and adhere to the law. This strikes a remarkable similarity with the ideology of libertinage, which seeks to clean the self from all inclination and resist the call of the other by rigorously training the sensibilities.

According to Beauvoir, a vital insight for understanding Sade's eroticism is his unique blend of fervent sexual tastes with his "isolationism" (MBS 69–70). Writing about Sade's character, Beauvoir notes that while he was well familiar with the obsessive temptations of sexual desire, he appeared to be uninterested in and even oblivious to "emotional intoxication" (MBS 59). Beauvoir argues that this disinterest filters through Sade's writing. The self-abandon in which one forgets the self in the arms of another is not found in the eroticism of Sade's libertines; there is no surrender to the flesh or to the other. Sade's libertine does not enjoy sensual voluptuousness, nor do they allow themselves to enter a reciprocal communication in which each comes to know the other's existence through a sharing of both "subjectivity and passivity" (MBS 59–60). As such, the self is not forgotten, and the other is not realized through the sexual act. They do not enter the "ecstatic effect" of erotic enjoyment (CR 7).

The mature and sadistic Juliette does not lean outside the self to relinquish her body or mind to the other, and sexual enjoyment is not connected to a self-forgetting or being overcome with emotive sensual intoxication, not even of an animal kind (MBS 59). Whereas masochism involves enchantment, sadism is rational (MBS 59, 64–5). In sadism, the focus is to maintain, in the back and forth of all sexual encounters, an intellectual acuity, free from mimetic inclination. What is given in the facticity of the situation does not overcome the enlightened libertine: this is because the meaning accorded to the situation comes from them (MBS 87).

The libertine remains focused on transcendence, and, like the Kantian subject, they are not swayed by the situation, by what is occurring around them, or from their inner affects. They allow themselves to enjoy the aesthetics of the spectacle and to be amused by the representations and choreographies of the sexual activities, but in doing so, they are never taken over by them (MBS 67). Excitement comes from the intellectualization of the moment or the philosophical discourse that precedes or proceeds from it. A mastery over the sensibilities achieved through the habituation of a libertine ethos is employed as guidance, and the concurrence of the interpretation of the given situation with that discourse, provides the libertine with a sense of satisfaction (in their own indifference). Beauvoir writes, "With a severity analogous to that of Kant and which has its source in the same puritanical tradition, Sade conceives of a free act only as one released of all sensitivity: if he obeyed affective motives, he would once again make us slaves of nature and not autonomous subjects" (MBS 87–8). As Beauvoir notes, Sade shares with Kant the presumption that allowing oneself to be motivated by affect relegates one to an animal state in which one becomes driven by appetites



rather than governed by reason, which facilitates human freedom. Thus, we return to the anti-mimetic Kantian ideal of autonomy and its grip on the post-Enlightenment subject.

In Kant's moral philosophy, the autonomy formula puts on display the source of human dignity and worth, and our shared status as free rational agents who are the source of the authority of our moral laws.<sup>36</sup> It grounds our status as legislators of our own destinies and allows for us to conform our behavior to principles that express this autonomy of the rational will—its status as a source of the very universal laws that oblige it. In Kant's words, the autonomy formula is “the idea of the will of every rational being, as a *universally legislating will*.”<sup>37</sup>

According to Cavarero, the strong conceptual link between reason and self-legislation in Kant's moral philosophy creates a self in which being righteous is determined by following one's own will and laws (CR 31). While Kant does write about moral subjects coming together to be concerned with the ends of a political community, it remains a community of self-legislators and is thus, according to Cavarero, an “autarchic” one composed of numerable homogenous selves that together demonstrate “the universality of the moral law” (CR 30–1). These many separate selves act to resist the pull of the pathos of distance; integral to their shared autonomy is a mode of existence that guards against the mimetic call to incline.

Cavarero explains Kant's moral philosophy and anthropology as extending the classical dualistic notion of the self as being part of two domains. The domain of reason grounds the subject in their freedom through an intelligence that exceeds the sensibilities (CR 27). The other domain, of the sensibilities, makes the subject vulnerable to natural laws, and “the mechanics of instincts and inclination” (ibid.). Cavarero claims that, for Kant, the second domain is dangerous to the human being because it threatens the autonomy of the individual if it cannot be controlled by reason (CR 27–8). She points out that the notion that reason is tested and that it struggles to regulate the passions (but should ultimately prevail) is not a new claim (CR 28). However, Kant does bring something new to the story, specifically a stronger link between reason and autonomy (ibid.). As such, the stability of the subject, as well as their freedom, is threatened by those things that can impair rationality. Any person or object that throws the self off-balance becomes a significant concern for Kant, as it is too for Sade.

In his *Lectures on Ethics* Kant notes the important role of indifference in keeping love from overcoming the self: “*Indifference*, as a moral quality, is the opposite of human love; but even by this cold-bloodedness I may understand a very good trait, if it holds the love inspired by sympathy in check, and gives it due measure.”<sup>38</sup> For Kant,

indifference has a moral import particularly because it can prevent love from overcoming the subject; it helps one to focus on the self and be motivated by an independent rationality. Love as “attraction” has the habit of decentering the self; it also threatens to impose upon the object of love.<sup>39</sup> As such, in friendship, Kant thinks it is important to maintain an adequate distance, and to limit intimacy (MM 585). Interestingly enough, when Kant does write about love as a moral virtue, he aligns it with rectitude and even states that it is not an affect.<sup>40</sup>

Yet is it not precisely love that Juliette lacks and that she cannot give to anyone, no matter how near they are to her? She has trained herself to limit intimacy, to practice the rigorous control of her emotions, and to exercise neutrality when it comes to the satisfaction of instincts, so that her deeds are governed by rational self-interest. Experience has taught her that to care for or rely on another brings one misery; she concedes this from her own experiences as a young woman and from witnessing that her sister Justine’s trust in and love for others brings her pain, suffering, and misfortune (see J 100, 104, 164, 466, 1189–90). Juliette has come to share with Kant the belief that indifference must be maintained as a ward against love so that one’s stability and autonomy are not threatened by the other (see J 467, 484, 636, 1054). She has attempted to become an anti-mimetic subject.

Juliette’s isolationism in which she guards against love, intimacy, tenderness, and reciprocity is built up through a series of mimetic responses, both reactive and purposeful, to the given conditions of her life. Yet, the goal of her becoming a sadist is to free the self from all mimetic inclination through rigorous commitment to a pathos of distance. According to Beauvoir, what Juliette, as a sadist, is unable to escape is the consequence of her isolationism: loneliness (MBS 70). Even if she views her position as a sovereign one, which is free of *Mitleid* and can resist the pull of others, Juliette is alone. She may conceive of herself as occupying a position of mastery in which she sits above the multitude and enjoys a rarefied kind of pleasure. But the tragedy remains: she cannot relinquish herself either to the emotional enjoyment of affective intimacy nor to the physical sensations of sensual embodiment. These deficits remain a problem for the sadist, and, as such, they look for ways to have their consciousness removed from solitude and their body from indifference (MBS 63). In other words, no matter how efficiently the ethos of the libertine is practiced, these absences that are connected to an anti-mimetic subject who does not love cannot be reconciled.

During her process of maturation, Juliette works to destroy any love she may have for the other through innumerable acts of violence. Not only does she participate in the murder of her daughter (J 1186–7)

and practice apathy toward the one who murdered her parents (J 149), Juliette turns violently on her libertine companions, easily abandoning even those with whom she appears to have a strong camaraderie (J 1016–7, 1029–30, 1035, 1040). Juliette practices a despotism of consumerism in which people are expended and then discarded irrespective of any tie they may have to her. Her acts of violence are not only techniques of the libertine self, employed to cultivate indifference and train the sensibilities. Following Beauvoir, they become, for the mature and sadistic Juliette, the only way for her to experience intimacy.

According to Beauvoir, the sadist seeks to alleviate their loneliness and indifference through inflicting pain on the other (MBS 63). The sadist as author of the other's pain, hears the yells and cries and watches the agonies of their victim, and, in doing so, has some access to the sensations of physical embodiment and emotive life that are otherwise no longer possible for them. As Beauvoir explains, the effects of the sadist's violence on the victim's body have the potential to move the sadist out of their indifference (ibid.). The pain of the other becomes a replacement for the lack of emotional intoxication (MBS 65). The perceptual experiences of the other's pain, including the visual horrors, the disgusting smells, and the auditory noise, pull the sadist downwards toward the other, to a place of co-suffering, even if it is only for a moment.

To become a sadist, Juliette has cultivated a libertine technique of the self in which she labors to progressively remove all feelings related to love and care for the other. As such, one can ask what reason she could have for potentially returning to the sensibilities that she worked with such persistence to overcome. The answer to this question can be explained through the notion of abstraction. Abstraction occurs when one ignores the unity of the perceptual object of experience and concentrates instead on a limited set of qualities. In conceiving of herself as a being who is free of her sensibilities, unaffected by the feelings of others, Juliette has denied herself a key part of human life (that she is, and remains, a mimetic subject even if she attempts to negate it). This move cannot be made without some experience of loss. As Peter Osborne notes, "conceptual abstraction . . . is accompanied by both a certain *melancholy* (loss of the real object) and a certain *shame* (complicity in the domination of the concept and hence repression of other, more vibrant, more creative aspects of existence)."<sup>41</sup> Juliette's violence, in this reading, is an attempt to respond to the melancholia of what she has denied to herself: love. By dividing her subjectivity and removing inclination from her life she does not escape this need but instead searches for ways to experience its related attributes from within her current terrain.

Instead of fragmenting the self as a response to the impossible demands of the Kantian subject, as Juliette does, Cavarero proposes a return to inclination. Cavarero's account of inclination differs from those provided by Kant and Juliette because it does not guard against relationality. Instead, Cavarero embraces it as fundamental to the human condition. Building upon Hannah Arendt's notion of natality, Cavarero explains that the shared experience of birth and maternity allow for the human subject to be defined by an original vulnerability: "birth holds vulnerability and relationality together in an inseparable ontological bond" (CR 122).<sup>42</sup> This acts as a corrective to the anti-mimetic Kantian self, and its dissonant exemplar Juliette, whose autonomous self-sufficiency allows for them only to rotate around their own upright axes. This corrective provides a relational model of existence in which human beings live along multiple axes of interdependence. The subject's tendency toward inclination does not impair or limit their abilities; instead, inclination is connected to the event of life, the pull of creation both in birth and art, and, overall, to a shared existence of mimetic vulnerability that requires love to be sustained.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

When Juliette is turned out from the convent, instead of becoming a victim of circumstance as her sister Justine does (see J 3, 100–2, 466; see also J 1190), she becomes a "whore" who uses her sex to gain power (see, e.g., J 846, 1036; see also J 492).<sup>44</sup> In addition to revealing to us, as Horkheimer and Adorno note, that reason has no necessary correlation with 'the good,' Juliette tells us that a woman's sexuality is the most fertile ground for sustenance in a phallic economy, so long as she can maintain a cold and calculating attitude toward it (DE 91–3). The result of Juliette's libertine ethics of the self is an isolated subject overdetermined by the pathos of distance. In Juliette we witness the post-Enlightenment subject who has, following the anti-mimetic ideal of *Aufklärung*, removed themselves from the direction of the other and, in doing so, has also lost the experience of love (see, e.g., J 502–16).

In the very best case, Juliette is an uneasy figure of resistance. Nevertheless, she does compel us to come to terms with that against which the Kantian project of Enlightenment fears and guards. She reveals to us how moral and social laws can be inverted, how fundamental principles of the modern self can be used for violence when its celebrated subject, the sovereign individual, learns to employ the methods of subjugation that structure their consciousness. The point is not only that reason has been instrumentalized. It is also that the liberal subject has risen out of a history of institutionalized cruelty

that has denied mimetic inclination and championed autonomy at the expense of relationality.

If the post-Enlightenment subject is to become more hospitable and inclusive, it is important to consider dissonant exemplars like Juliette whose stories of transgression expose the lacks within the normative ideals that structure human existence today. For a concept to change, it must have dissenters as well as those who play it out to its exhausting limits. It may seem surprising to turn to Nietzsche and Sade, those whom Adorno and Horkheimer call the dark thinkers of the bourgeoisie (DE 92). However, it is precisely their “dark thinking” that opens a critical space to challenge the rigidity of the anti-mimetic Kantian subject. Through the figure of Juliette, and the insightful literature about her in critical theory and feminist studies, we realize that the attempts to resolve human nature of its passionate inclinations through self-control and rationality have an inevitable remainder. This monstrous remainder is Juliette who, as a libertine precursor to the mobile exploiter of capitalism, shows sadism to be an inevitable legacy of the Kantian subject of *Aufklärung*, one which is very much alive today.

## NOTES

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1. Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?,” in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 15–22; “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?,” ed. Heinrich Maier, in *Abhandlungen nach 1781*, ed. Heinrich Maier, Max Frischeisen-Köhler, and Paul Menzer, vol. 8 of *Werke*, ed. Wilhelm Dilthey, vols 1–9 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Prussian Academy of the Sciences (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1923), pp. 33–42.
2. Michel Foucault, “The Art of Telling the Truth,” trans. Alan Sheridan, in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, trans. Alan Sheridan et al., ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 95.
3. Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?,” trans. Catherine Porter, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, trans. Robert Hurley et al., ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1 of *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984*, trans. Robert Hurley et al., ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: New York University Press, 1997) pp. 305–6; henceforth E, followed by page number.

4. Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968); henceforth J, followed by page number. This edition omits part of the full title in French, which translates to *Juliette, or Vice Amply Rewarded*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse [Pieralessandro Casavini, pseud.] (New York: Lancer Books, 1965); see also D.A.F. [Marquis] de Sade, *Juliette ou les prospérités du vice*, ed. Michel Delon, in *La philosophie dans le boudoir and L'histoire de Juliette*, vol. 3 of *Œuvres*, ed. Michel Delon and Jean Deprun (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), pp. 181–1262. On Sade's arrest for moderantism, see, for example, Geoffrey Gorer, *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis de Sade* (London: Wishart & Co, 1934), p. 57; and John Phillips, *The Marquis de Sade: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 8, 27, 51.
5. See, for example, Simone de Beauvoir, "Must We Burn Sade?," trans. Kim Allen Glead, Marilyn Gaddis Rose, and Virginia Preston, ed. Lauren Guilmette, in *Political Writings*, ed. Margaret A. Simons and Marybeth Timmermann (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), pp. 44–101; henceforth MBS, followed by page number; and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); henceforth DE, followed by page number. In Horkheimer and Adorno's text, see especially "Excursus II: Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality" (DE 63–93). See also Georges Bataille, "De Sade's sovereign man" and "De Sade and the normal man," chaps. 2 and 3, respectively, of "Some Aspects of Eroticism," pt. 2 of *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986), pp. 164–76, 177–96; Maurice Blanchot, "Sade's Reason," in *Lautréamont and Sade*, trans. Stuart Kendall and Michelle Kendall (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 7–41; Gilles Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil, pt. 1 of Gilles Deleuze and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), pp. 7–138; and Pierre Klossowski, *Sade my Neighbour*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991).
6. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A German-English Edition*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 91–7; *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 378; henceforth MM, followed by page number; and Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic*, in *Beyond Good and Evil/On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Adrian Del Caro, vol. 8 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 219, 314; henceforth GM, followed by page number.
7. Building on the thinking of Adriana Cavarero, Nidesh Lawtoo claims that we are constituted by mimetic inclination. From birth onward we are mimetic beings: "bodily affective experiences such as facial expressions, touch, voice" shape us, and this makes relationships foundational to subjectivity (see Adriana Cavarero and Nidesh Lawtoo, "Mimetic Inclinations: A Dialogue with Adriana Cavarero," in *Contemporary Italian Women Philosophers: Stretching the Art of Thinking*, ed. Silvia Benso and Elvira Roncalli [New York: SUNY Press, 2021], p. 195).

8. See Nidesh Lawtoo, "The Project: Homo Mimeticus; Theory and Criticism (HOM)," *Homo Mimeticus: ERC Project*, <http://www.homomimeticus.eu/the-project/> (accessed November 5, 2021).
9. See Lawtoo, "The Project: Homo Mimeticus," <http://www.homomimeticus.eu/the-project/> (accessed November 5, 2021); and "Gendered Mimesis (C1)," <http://www.homomimeticus.eu/gendered-mimesis-c1/> (accessed November 5, 2021); both projects are hosted by the Institute of Philosophy at KU Leuven (see *Homo Mimeticus: ERC Project*, "Home," <http://www.homomimeticus.eu/home/> [accessed December 20, 2021]). See also Nidesh Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and The Mimetic Unconscious* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 1–4; henceforth PE, followed by page number. For "pathos of distance," see also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, in *Beyond Good and Evil/On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 167; henceforth BGE, followed by page number.
10. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse and Zur Genealogie der Moral*, vol. 5 of *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, ed. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), p. 259.
11. See, for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse and Zur Genealogie der Moral*, pp. 211–2.
12. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, pp. 156, 160–1; see also 166.
13. In particular, the free spirit, who is qualified by Nietzsche as having an intellectual conscience that engages in self-critique, is afforded with the ability to engage in self-judgment and exercise a higher degree of agency in self-becoming (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p. 108).
14. See also Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, pp. 99–100.
15. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 316–7; henceforth GS, followed by page number.
16. For a general summation of the Sadeian worldview, see, for example, Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Bedroom (1795)*, in Justine, *Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, trans. Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 177–367, esp. 185, 208, 245, 267, 273, 288, 350.
17. Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography: An Exercise in Cultural History* (New York: Penguin, 1979), p. 84; henceforth SW, followed by page number.
18. Sean Quinlan, "Shocked Sensibility: The Nerves, the Will, and Altered States in Sade's *L'Histoire de Juliette*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25:3 (2013), p. 547.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 547.

20. See, for example, Olivier M. Delers, "The Prostitute as Neo-Manager: Sade's *Juliette* and the New Spirit of Capitalism," in *Prostitution and Eighteenth-Century Culture: Sex, Commerce and Morality*, ed. Ann Lewis and Markman Ellis (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 127–39.
21. Kant, "What is Enlightenment?," p. 18.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 17
23. *Ibid.*
24. Jacques Lacan, for example, calls Sade's work "boring" (Jacques Lacan, "Kant with Sade," trans. James B. Swenson Jr., *October* 51 [Winter 1989], p. 66; henceforth KS, followed by page number). See also Andrea Dworkin, "The Marquis de Sade (1740–1814)," chap. 3 of *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (New York: Penguin, 1981), pp. 70–100.
25. These three stages or registers appear throughout Jacques Lacan's works; for a helpful guide to this system, see Jacques-Alain Miller, "The Supremacy of the Signifier," pt. a of "The Symbolic Order," pt. 1 of "Classified Index of the Major Concepts," in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete English Edition*, trans. Bruce Fink, Héloïse Fink, and Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), p. 853n. 3. See also Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits*, pp. 75–81; "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" in *Écrits*, pp. 6–48; and *Freud's Papers on Technique (1953–1954)*, trans. and ed. John Forrester, bk. 1 of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), esp. pp. 73–88.
26. Slavoj Žižek, "Kant and Sade: The Ideal Couple," *Lacanian ink* 13 (1998), ed. Josefina Ayerza, <https://www.lacan.com/zizlacan4.htm> (accessed December 21, 2021), §1.
27. *Ibid.*
28. See Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" in *Écrits*, p. 40; and "The Situation of Psychoanalysis and the Training of Psychoanalysts in 1956," in *Écrits*, p. 388.
29. See Jacques Lacan, *Encore: On Feminine Sexuality*, and *The Limits of Love and Knowledge (1972–1973)*, trans. and ed. Bruce Fink, bk. 20 of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), esp. pp. 78–81.
30. See Lacan's lecture, "The Signification of the Phallus," in *Écrits*, pp. 575–84.
31. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 171.
32. Delers, "The Prostitute as Neo-Manager," p. 127.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 130–1.
34. See, for example, John Phillips, "Femmes Fatales and Phallic Women: *L'Histoire de Juliette*," in *Sade: The Libertine Novels* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 120.



35. Adriana Cavarero, *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*, trans. Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); henceforth CR, followed by page number. See especially chap. 2 of *Inclinations*, “Kant and the Newborn” (CR 25–33).
36. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 91–7.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 93; see also p. 91.
38. Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Peter Heath, ed. Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 24.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 13. Elsewhere, Kant writes, “For love can be regarded as attraction and respect as repulsion” (MM 585).
40. In *The Metaphysics of Morals* he writes, “But in any case the love in friendship cannot be an affect” (MM 586). In his *Lectures on Ethics*, he says: “*True love* is . . . rectitude: It is the love we have by nature, the fundamental love, for it is founded upon a living feeling of *equality*” (Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 30).
41. Peter Osborne, “The Reproach of Abstraction,” *Radical Philosophy* 127 (September/October 2004), p. 21.
42. For “natality,” see, for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 8–9, 247; and *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1965), p. 211.
43. Cavarero discusses artworks of Artemisia Gentileschi and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as the cosmology of ancient Greece, to illustrate the association of inclination with the pull of artistic talent, stories of creation, and the “ethical density” of the maternal role (see, e.g., CR 99).
44. See also Marquis de Sade, *Justine, or Good Conduct Well Chastised (1791)*, in *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, pp. 453–753.