

HEGEL, SADE, AND GNOSTIC INFINITIES

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Slavoj Žižek not only made the impossible possible when he articulated an inner relation between Kant and de Sade, but showed that the impossible was necessary.¹ The impossibility is necessary because of the temporal contiguity of thinkers who articulate two very different versions of the Enlightenment, who variously support autonomy, and who feel called upon to take a stance with respect to Christian discourse and practice. As the demand for articulation is pressed within a horizon of questioning, proximally defined by the Lacanian problematic of self-presentation and horizontally by Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectic of the Enlightenment, Žižek would be the first to agree that his investigation is probative. One could press much more the issue of whether the logic of Kant's view on radical evil is in fact that of the demonic, while much more could be said about the Enlightenment's inversion in the 'mad' discourse of Sade and the relationship between both discourses and the Christian discourses that are objects of critique. However important it would be to complete this task, it seems even more necessary to engage the question of the relation between Hegel and Sade. More necessary, since not only is such a relation left unexplored while hinted at

¹ See Žižek's essay 'On Radical Evil and Other Matters,' in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 83-124, esp. pp. 95-101. The author makes it clear that the entire topic is inspired by Lacan's essay 'Kant avec Sade' (p. 85).

in the common 'dialectic of Enlightenment' fare, but one can isolate a particular brand of 20th century French thought that is constituted in a significant way by the problematic of this relation. Necessarily impossible, yet impossibly necessary, I wish to pursue this question.

Allowing then a French conversation that is both halting and self-censuring to provide the context for reflection, it is important to insist on its hermeneutical conditions: One such condition is that all of Hegelian discourse, even the most logical, gets defined by the categories of work and mastery. This interpretive regime was essentially set down by Kojève who, focusing on the *Phenomenology*, encouraged a reading of Hegel that privileged the practical and political,² even as it acknowledged both the complex relation between Hegelian dialectic and Christianity and the theoretical and speculative thrust of a form of thought in which human being and the divine blended into the figure of the sage. The other condition was the discovery of and emergent prestige of the works of Sade, whose universe was even more focused on the dialectic of master and slave, and who, nonetheless, posed questions about the nature of knowledge, language, and representation, as well as indicating the attitude the 'enlightened' self should take towards Christianity. If Pierre Klossowski became the foremost apologist for Sade as the crown jewel of the French Enlightenment, precisely as the dark jewel of its disenlightenment,³ much of the credit for Sade's cultural prestige has to be given to Georges Bataille and to some extent to Maurice Blanchot.⁴ It is they

² See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James Nichols (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967). Incomplete translation of *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947). Of course, although much more scholarly in style and orientation, Jean Hyppolite also supported this orientation, which in one fundamental respect reads Hegel through his relation to Marx.

³ While Pierre Klossowski considered his own literary oeuvre to be very much in line with that of Sade, the work for which he is most famous is his *Sade, mon prochain* (Paris: du Seuil, 1947). This text, which exercised an influence on figures such as Blanchot and Bataille, has been translated into English as *Sade My Neighbor*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1991). An alternative translation to *Sade, mon prochain* – the one that I prefer – is *Sade My Contemporary*.

⁴ This is not only for the reason that, in line with Klossowski, both Blanchot and Sade thought of Sade as their "neighbor," but in the strict sense as their contemporary. If there are Sadean elements in both writers, this is more obviously so in the case of Bataille, who was fascinated in a way that Blanchot was not, with cruelty. At the same time, both wrote explicitly on Sade. Blanchot wrote the important *Lautréamont et Sade* in 1949. There is now an English translation of the 1963 edition. See *Lautréamont and Sade*, trans. Stuart Kendall and

who figure Sade as the provocateur of singularity, as the thinker of death, and as the dramatically isolated individual who contributes to the problematization of writing in a production of discourse that bespeaks interminability. Of course, this granting of prestige also obliges a particular history of effects in which the work of these non-contemporaneous contemporaries of Sade is inscribed or inscribable in a 'sacred history' that include Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and, of course, the nineteenth century Romantic repetition of Sade provided by Lautréamont in *Les Chants de Maldoror*.⁵

Importantly for our particular purposes, Bataille and Blanchot do more than give a certain kind of literary and cultural authority to Sade. They suggest a complex discursive relation to Hegelian thought. Although in principle these discourses cannot speak to each other, the Sadean configuration of transgression,

Michelle Kendall (Stanford: Sanford University Press, 2004). Sade is referred to frequently throughout Bataille's work. His most explicit account is to be found in an essay on Sade which formed part of *La Littérature et le mal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957). For an English translation of this, see *Literature and Evil*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (New York and London: Marion Boyars, 1985), pp. 103-29.

⁵ Again both Blanchot and Bataille ascribe to this 'sacred history' and are agents in establishing it. Bataille's *Literature and Evil* has essays on Baudelaire and Genet, and in the preface he points to the absence of his essay on *Les Chants de Maldoror*, which he opines belongs to any valid treatment of the thematic of evil in modern literature. Throughout Bataille's work Rimbaud remains of fundamental importance. Blanchot's primary interest is the individual figures of Lautréamont and Sade and their relation, but has no compunction about linking Lautréamont and Baudelaire. Perhaps the essay that most nearly sets the agenda for Derrida is Bataille's essay 'The Use-Value of D. A. F. de Sade (An Open Letter to My Current Comrades)' in *Visions of Excess: selected writings, 1927-39*, ed. Allan Stoeckl, trans. Allan Stoeck with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 91-102. This essay, best known for its elaboration of heterology on the other side of production, is focused on excretion as a signifier of transgression and thus transcendence. Related to the orgy, excrement is the opposite of communion as well as consumption. The latter connection is very important in *Glas*, and guides Derrida's interpretation of the eucharist in general and the eucharist in Hegel in particular. Outside of Blanchot and Bataille, who are major influences, Derrida shows some familiarity with most of the major figures in the line. Although due to the emphasis upon the problematic of naming, Mallarmé is more important to Derrida than either Baudelaire and Rimbaud, nonetheless, both are part of the Derridian canon. But Derrida also indicates more than passing awareness of Anton Artaud, who's 'Theater of Cruelty' belongs firmly in the Sadean tradition. See Derrida's important essay, 'The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation,' in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Allan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 232-50. Neither, however, is Derrida unfamiliar with Lautréamont. This connoisseur of evil is cited in Derrida's important essay 'White Mythology.' See *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 258-59.

sovereignty, the inviolability of death, and what might be called the irritability and iteration of writing, always and everywhere linked to self-consciousness, is regarded as the non-sublatable other to Western discourse summed up by the Hegelian encyclopedia. To the degree to which there are Sadean elements in the texts of Derrida, then in line with the Blanchot-Bataille legacy, they also seem to be lined up against Hegel. And continuous with the way in which the lining up occurs in the proximate French literary tradition, Derrida's exposure of Hegel to the otherness of Sade's erotics, necrotics, and nonsense is oblique rather than direct. At the same time Derrida also takes account of Sartre's analysis of Genet as a writer in the Sadean tradition,⁶ a writer who, just as with Bataille, can stand proxy for Sade, and thus can function as a substitute or a "supplement" in Derrida's sense of the term, and thus at no disadvantage vis-à-vis the would-be original. The crucial text of Derrida is, of course, *Glas*,⁷ which opposes Hegel and Genet, although it is necessary always to keep in mind Derrida's powerful essay on Bataille, 'From Restricted to General Economy.'⁸

Focusing my attention on the construction of the Hegel-Sade opposition in Derrida as both summarizing and exceeding the peculiarly French construction of their relation, I examine what is at stake in the interpretation of Hegel given the pressure the Sadean tradition brings to bear on Hegelian discourse commonly thought to be logocentric all the way through. At the very least the pressure validates the suspicion that the fundamental aim of Hegelian discourse is its commitment to absolute transparency. Any number of interpretations, indeed, different kinds of interpretations, either could be called on to question or deployed to refute the result. For the purpose of this paper, however, I am prepared to stipulate that Hegelian thought is a system of the bringing to presence of the absolute. Heidegger will suffice for Derrida as for many others

⁶ See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952). While Sartre's strong reading provoked in Genet a gesture of surrender, it provoked a different response in Bataille who took issue with its psychologization. See Bataille's essay on Genet in *Literature and Evil*, 173-208.

⁷ See *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavy, Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).

⁸ See *Writing and Difference*, 251-77.

without any necessity to appeal to a figural Sade.⁹ Arguably, even a plain reading of such texts as the *Phenomenology*, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right* and the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* has such a reading as its natural default.¹⁰ What I am interested in is the way in which in the topographical space of *Glas* Hegel's discourse is indissolubly linked to the discourse of Christianity such that the exposé of the logocentrism of the one is the exposé of the logocentrism of the other. But this exposé at the same time represents the exposure of the violence of these discourses which, under the banner of truth as an absolutely inclusive whole and an infinity that does not leave the finite outside itself, represses and violates all singularities. While, like early interpreters such as Feuerbach and Marx,¹¹ as much as later interpreters such as Kojève and Bataille,¹² Derrida effects – while also presupposing – an extraordinarily 'theological' reading of Hegel, he never raises the critical question as to whether the discontinuities between Christianity and Hegelian thought are as superficial as Hegel suggests. In contradistinction to both Hegel and Derrida I argue here that they are more significant than either allows, and that the gap is such that

⁹ The works of Heidegger that are determinative for French interpretation of Hegel include *Hegel's Concept of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Parvis Mead and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); and 'The Onto-Theological Nature of Metaphysics,' in *Essays in Metaphysics: Identity and Difference*, trans. Kurt F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1960).

¹⁰ Arguably, these are the three most often cited texts by Derrida in *Glas*. Other texts that are cited include the *Differenzschrift* (1802), *Glauben und Wissen* (1802), 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate' (1795, 1799).

¹¹ Marx is not cited very often in *Glas* (see 232-33), but it is not accidental that it is his *Theses on Feuerbach* that get mentioned. For this indicates that Derrida not only accepts Feuerbach's 'transformational criticism' in which the bringing down to earth of Hegelianism implies the bringing down to earth of Christianity which it is supposed to sum up, but that Derrida also takes Marx's 'step beyond' which radically historicizes the human essence or human subject. *Glas* should be read in tandem with Derrida's somewhat later reflections on the perennial relevance of Marx despite the announcement of his death alongside the announcements of the death of man and the death of God.

¹² There can be no denying that Bataille either supposes or presupposes a theological reading of Hegel precisely as the summation of the mainline Christian tradition, whose reflection he opposes by an atheology and whose asceticism he opposes with excess. *L'Expérience Intérieure* (1954) represents a particularly sharp attack on Hegel. See *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 43, 80-1, 108-11. 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve,' which represents Derrida's most developed reflection on Bataille, suggests that the true importance of Bataille's work can be summed up in its attempts to outbid Hegelian dialectic. See *Writing and Difference*, 251-77.

Christianity can defend itself not only against the charge of logocentrism (and the implied charge of theodicy), but also against the charge of violence and repression. Obviously, a crucial issue for the impossible encounter between Hegel and Sade, however effected, is what price the critical-diagnostic discourse pays for being in dialogue with a discourse that represents the indistinction of power and truth. Although Derrida is prepared to rule quite formally that all criticism itself is affected by the logocentric tendency of discourse, he does not pay attention to the larger context of the Sadean discourse that he deploys to such devastating effect. This blindspot encourages him to ignore the form of violence, which is not simply a function of the aim to interrupt the logocentric mechanics of Hegelian dialectic, but, as marked by a particular lexicon, is regulated by a particular grammar. This is to say more rather than less than what Camus said in *The Rebel*,¹³ when in contrast to the Bataille and Blanchot line of conjugation, he saw the shocking unity between Hegelian speculation and the logically controlled mania of Sadean erotic excess. These reversals of direction intentionally disarticulate the conditions which, in the French tradition to which Derrida is the heir, alone seem to have made the impossible conversation between Hegel and Sade possible, and suggest in effect new conditions. As an effect of double reversal I explore another line of inquiry opened up by Klossowski: Sade (and presumably his tradition) differs from other French naturalists, which he extends and recalls, in that his counterproposal to the optimistic Enlightenment exhibits an anti-Christian and antinomian code, whose template is Gnosticism of the first centuries of the common era.¹⁴ I pose the question of the potential mirroring relation between Hegelian and Sadean

¹³ Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (London: Penguin, 1962) (Translation of *L'Homme révolté* first published by Hamish Hamilton 1953). While the axis of the book has to do with the correspondence between irrational terror and rational terror, the underpinning of the latter being provided by Hegel, the former mainly by Nietzsche, in his section on "The Sons of Cain" (pp. 32-49), Camus points to Sade as the source of a French literary form of irrationalism, which has its own history of effects including Baudelaire and his figuration of the satanic figure as "saint." Of course, Camus also thinks that as Hegel leads to Marxist praxis and its legitimation of violence, Sade leads to fascism, a position that was rejected by proponents of the Sadean tradition such as Sartre and Bataille.

¹⁴ See his essay 'Nature as Destructive Principle,' in *The 120 Days of Sodom and other Writings*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse & Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 65-86. This essay serves as the introduction to the Précieux Edition of *Les 120 Journées de Sodom*, and is to be found in somewhat expanded form in *Sade, mon prochain*.

discourse as a relation between two different species of Gnosticism, despite the fact that Sadean discourse is more practical than speculative, and more nearly provides an example of the 'spurious infinite' (*die schlechte Unendlichkeit*) than a Hegelian infinity that demands closure, and in the terms provided by the *Phenomenology*, the coincidence of certitude (*Gewissheit*) and truth (*Wahrheit*).

SADEAN RINGING OF THE BELL

I begin, however, with an introduction to *Glas*, which in Derrida's oeuvre provides the main space of the encounter between Sade and Hegel, however mediated this encounter has to be regarded. Looked at frontally, the left and right hand columns of *Glas* describe or better inscribe a battle between Hegel's speculative philosophy and the fragmentary discourses of Genet,¹⁵ which precisely are not stories, but levers that unhinge the working Hegelian speculation and its exhaustive hermeneutic, confessions intended to wring from Hegelian thought that not everything is transparent, that speculation has secrets, indeed, dirty secrets. Yet this battle it is not the kind of conflict of forces (*polemos*) of which Heraclitus speaks and which, *pace* Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger presume to be generative but irresolvable. Nor do these left and right hand columns constitute something like a Kabbalistic sephirotic tree in which the hardness of the former is balanced by the softness of the latter.¹⁶ At the same

¹⁵ Or rather the discourses of Genet in fragments. Again, as with Hegel, Derrida moves easily across the canon of this writer, who is not only an outsider in that the *demi-monde* of the homosexual is his subject, but who defies providing the homosexual with any of the noble virtues typical of the counter-heroic. *Our Lady of the Flowers* and *The Miracle of the Rose*, together with *The Thief's Journal* are the most often cited novels, but plays such as *The Maids*, *The Balcony*, and *Funeral Rites* also are mentioned.

¹⁶ Whatever the Jewishness of Derrida, it must avoid at all costs speculative forms of narrative, for such narratives necessarily would bring the 'deconstructive' discourse into the orbit of the deconstructed. Indeed, subscription to the Kabbalah would not only generally but quite specifically bring Derrida's discourse into the orbit of Hegel, given both Hegel's very affirmative relation to the Kabbalah and the way it gets inscribed in his discourse, but precisely as a Christian expropriation. See Cyril O'Regan, 'Hegel and anti-Judaism: Hegel and the Inner Circulation of the Kabbalah,' in *The Owl of Minerva*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Spring) 1997, 141-82.

time, however midrashic the topography appears to be, there is, nonetheless, a non-midrashic inequality between the left and the right column which puts the right hand Genet column in the role of the aggressor, constituting 'Genet' as the proper name for a set of guerilla tactics against the self-authorizing force of Hegelian dialectic that both expresses and has its term in a concrete, that is, inclusive infinite. Hegelian speculation, its political commitments, as well as its infolding of Christian narrative and the theologoumena that give it shape and justification, are the object of the kind of episodic attack that the retreating army of Napoleon was subject to on that return journey from Russia that eclipsed the high noon of its march through Jena in 1806, which coincides with the completion of the *Phenomenology*. 'Genet' is a series of detonations that wounds the integrity of the Hegelian system as it casts light on its darkness, a series of screams intended to make us hear the screams that have been muffled by dialectic, noise intended to scramble the musical rhythm of dialectical resolution,¹⁷ a discrete series of recalls that presses the Hegelian system to remember what Recollection (*Erinnerung*),¹⁸ which joins end to beginning, forgets. Still, the violence of the tactics towards the system that forces it to acknowledge its secret violence should be noted, as well as the aim, which is nothing less than a cathexis in which the 'remains' that are unrecollected, and maybe even unrecollectable, are put into view. The 'remains' are the dialectically unprocessed singularities or particularities that do not and cannot give way to the metaphysical, semantic and alethic redemption of the whole. The 'remains' are nothing more than refuse, garbage, and most dramatically 'shit' and 'excrement.'

The scatological rhetoric, which is effectively cosigned by Derrida, both echoes and escalates the rhetoric to which Bataille submits the Hegelian system, as this is laid bare in 'Restricted and General Economy.'¹⁹ Derrida "writes over"

¹⁷ Noise and its discordancy is intended to disrupt the 'rhythm' (*Glas*, 105-06) and music in general (*Glas*, 248).

¹⁸ Hegelian 'recollection' (*Erinnerung*) ensures that nothing is left outside the system, that there can be no point of criticism outside the circle of self-knowing. A condition of the possibility of recollection in all of Hegel's works, the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia* in particular, is that the whole is anticipated. For Derrida's illuminating account of the anticipatory and recollective features of Hegelian *Geist*, see *Glas*, 106-09.

¹⁹ In 'From Restricted to a General Economy' Derrida works mainly with Bataille's notions of sacrifice and expenditure to critique Hegel's view of the dialectical system always yielding a

Bataille's unveiling of the arch-economy of Hegelian 'speculation' in which no matter what the apparent loss the concept always reaps dividends.²⁰ In a text that with its columns resembles a ledger that should be submitted to an audit, the rhetoric of 'remains' suggests that the gains made by speculation are in the literal sense 'speculative,' reflections in a mirror which there is no reason to trust. In fact, speculation invests in the specular rather than the real; thus all its profits are in a sense unreal or in the sense Husserl gave the term in *Ideas I*, unreal. The intra-textual echoing, which makes Bataille – as well as Genet – a presence in the right-hand column, cannot stop here. If Hegel has his tradition – more Christian than philosophical according to *Glas* – so also do the pair Genet and Bataille. This is the tradition of Sade, which includes the mid-century contemporaries, Bataille, Genet, but also the late 19th-century author, Lautrémont.²¹ The right-hand column, which defends singularities against Hegel, is multi-voiced, maybe even choric, and its multiplicity of voices as well as the plurality of the voice of Genet himself,²² accounts for the effectiveness of its tactical strikes against key aspects of Hegel's system, which is a system of self-legitimation as it is of total disclosure. As this tradition is recalled, so also is the history of its negotiation with Hegelian discourse. Insinuated is not only Sartre's hagiography of Genet,

profit. The escalation of rhetoric, however, does not proceed without the kind of prompt provided by Bataille's essay 'The Use-Value of D. A. F. de Sade.'

²⁰ *Glas* continues to highlight these aspects of Hegel and thus Bataille's critique. For Hegelianism as an economy of exchange (rather than expenditure), see *Glas*, 133-34, 140, 243 *inter alia*. For sacrifice and its yield, see *Glas*, 242-42, 258. One can view *Glas* as a rhetorical escalation in which the autology of Hegelian discourse is interpreted under the aspect of consumption or digestion (pp. 71, 73, 150-51), its totally other – its heterological other – under the aspect of excretion and waste (115).

²¹ Lautrémont's *Les chants de Maldoror* provides for both Blanchot and Bataille the main circuit between Sade and the twentieth century. *Maldoror* rather than Baudelaire's *Les fleurs de mal* or Rimbaud's *Saisons en l'enfer* provide the full economy of evil as the search for the impossible beyond reason and beyond the Christian God whose death has to be recognized and yet continually requires overthrowing.

²² Voices other than that of Genet and the history of commentary (e.g. Sartre (13-4)) and interpretation (e.g. Bataille (219-22)) are heard in *Glas*. In a text full of allusions to literature, the names of Proust (186-87), Poe (154-58), Mallarmé (150-53), and Ponge (120) stand out. Unlike Hegel's, whose texts are accused of operating in term of the same, it is understood that Genet's texts speak in different voices, bespeaking different points of view. Put in other terms, Derrida is convinced that Genet articulates a heterology that is other than the autology of Hegel and the Christian tradition. It bears reminding, however, that when Bataille first sanctioned heterology, it flew under the banner of Sade.

but also Sartre's attempt to meld together Sade and Hegel in *Being and Nothingness*.²³ Insinuated also is de Beauvoir's and Klossowski's apologies for Sade.²⁴ At work then in the right-hand column and its relation to the left, is nothing less than the entire French history of the construction of Sade and tentative efforts at relating Sade to Hegel. *Glas* performs the judgment that the relation can only be negative. While it does not theoretically indemnify this – nor could it given the pragmatic nature of the deconstruction – nonetheless, it never once raises the question as to whether this tradition, put so violently into opposition with Hegel, does not itself inscribe an economy of a similar magnitude of violence, albeit one that cannot so easily conceal its secrets. 'Genet' is a synecdoche, and the topographical relation between the left hand and right hand columns constitutes the real of the relation between Hegel and the Sadean tradition in two different but related senses. In one sense, *Glas* could be thought to stage the conflicted estimates of the relation between Hegel and Sade which is one of the marks of French literary and philosophical thought in the twentieth century. In another sense, however, *Glas* could also be thought to raise the question of whether in the face-off of columns, as the proper name for a tradition of singularity and exceptionality, 'Genet' does not in some respect mirror Hegelian speculation and as such figure an alternate economy of violence.

²³ Sartre is at his most Sadean in *Being and Nothingness*, especially in those sections in his analysis of intersubjectivity. There, by way of conversation with Hegel's account of the master-slave and Kojève's rendition of it in his famous *Lectures*, Sartre rules out recognition as a result. Recognition is unrealizable, community impossible. The master-slave relation is ineluctable. In the light of Klossowski's analysis of Sade's understanding of nature, it would be worth inquiring about the Sadean texture of Sartre's analysis of the relation of the *cogito* to what is outside of it, what Sartre availing of Hegelian language calls the "in itself" (*en soi*).

²⁴ I have spoken already to Klossowski. De Beauvoir is the other apologist. See her 'Must We Burn Sade?' in *The 120 Days of Sodom and other Writings*, pp. 3-64. This essay originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* (1951-2) as "Faut-il brûler Sade?" figures Sade as an Enlightenment figure, albeit a problematic one. This essay is at once written in the wake of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1945), and interpretively has a polemic agenda. The former is signaled in de Beauvoir's framing Sade's agenda as the affirmation of autonomy and self-consciousness in world (both social and natural) that thwarts it. The latter is indicated in de Beauvoir contesting Camus's correlation between transgression on the individual scale with Facism in the political arena (25), and by her contesting of Klossowski's view that Sade's view of nature is in excess of a naturalists such as La Mettrie. Sade is not religious in any way, Christian or otherwise (59-60). De Beauvoir's legacy is continued by Angela Carter in *The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). Here Sade is figured as the anti-pornographic liberator precisely in and through his depictions of excess which refuses mythologizing the object of desire.

Derrida can be thought to refuse the second question with about as much force as he accepts the first.

Importantly, this is not the same question as whether ‘Genet,’ as a series of discursive tactics, will not in due course – and maybe even immediately – falls prey to some kind of discursive or even ontotheological economy. On Derridian grounds this is inevitable. The issue here is whether the discourse of ‘Genet’ can be thought to express a more local Sadean logic or encyclopedia, and whether in the face-off Derrida is sufficiently vigilant with respect to this prospect. Understood purely pragmatically, even if Derrida says nothing about the semiotic or semantic horizon of the rhetoric deployed by Genet, he remains unimpeachable. Hegel has been defined as the target, and not for the first time.²⁵ But, of course, unimpeachability is itself a problem on Derridian grounds, because it is part of the vocabulary of immunization from critique, to which Derrida consistently objects.²⁶ Does or could Genet’s scatology be regarded as mirroring in crucial ways what it is disturbing? More specifically, could it mirror the violent economy of Hegelian dialectic by being constituted by an economy of violence, or by being unable to de-constitute itself as an economy of violence, since all the discourses on which the writings of Genet depend cannot themselves cut loose from a lexicon and grammar of erotic sovereignty. Moreover, if ‘Genet’ were not allowed exclusively to be the point of view, and he, as well as Hegel, could be taken in a more radical glance of a third, what consequence would that have with respect to the status of the relation between Hegelian thought and the Christian tradition? The interpretation of the relation enacted in and by the Left-Hand column fills out the suggestion made in ‘White Mythology’ that Hegeliansm is the other side of Christianity constituted by

²⁵ Obviously Derrida’s ‘différance’ is intended to counter not only Heidegger’s ontological difference, but also Hegelian difference which as *Unterscheid* serves only as a way-station to reconciliation (*Versöhnung*), which involves a reduction to the same. In his famous essay in *Margins of Philosophy*, 1-27, Hegel shows himself familiar with the founding French scholarship on Hegel by Alexandre Koyré (13). Crucially important is Derrida’s essay ‘The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology,’ in *Margins of Philosophy*, 69-108.

²⁶ See ‘Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of “Religion” at the Limits of Reason Alone.’ This essay originally written in French in 1996 was translated into English by Samuel Weber in 1998. See *Acts of Religion*, ed. with intro. Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 4–101, esp. 80-2.

metaphor – but metaphor precisely as *meta-phorein*.²⁷ Derrida understands well that *Vorstellung* is not picture thinking.²⁸ Rather it is positing, enacted as a metanarrative, that is already on its way to self-justification. In major texts such as the *Phenomenology* (section 7), the *Encyclopaedia* (#564-574), as well as *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*,²⁹ Hegel consistently articulates its narrative content: the Trinity essentially schematizes the narrative which has Christ as its pivot. And Hegel fills out the narrative even more concretely by speaking to the communication of divine presence in eucharist and in a practice such as marriage; these specify as well as exemplify the trinitarian narrative. Precisely because 'Genet' provides a point of view that is not favorably disposed towards Christianity (or at least its standard forms), and that specifically his work constitutes a scandalous attack against such governing symbols as eucharist,³⁰

²⁷ The full title of this very important essay, is 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy.' This essay was first published in French in 1971 in *Poétique*. It was originally translated by F. C. T. Moore in *New Literary History* 6 no. 1 (1974). A new translation can be found in *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 207-71. See especially 225-26, 268-271. Derrida and Ricoeur are at odds here. In line with his view of metaphor, Ricoeur reads Hegelian *Vorstellung*, not only to be not univocal in itself, but also incapable of being reduced to the univocity of concept. For Ricoeur's specific reflection on the relation between representation and thought in Hegel, see 'The Status of *Vorstellung* in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion,' in *Meaning, Truth, and God*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1982), 70-88. For Ricoeur's more general point, see *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny, et al. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1977), section 7.

²⁸ Catherine Malabou grasps this point well in her *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. Elizabeth During (London and New York: Routledge, 2005). The Preface is a substantial and laudatory essay on Malabou's text. See vii-xxvii.

²⁹ Very different scholars would agree with this assessment. To consider only the recent literature, see Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 78-82, 92-8; William Desmond, *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?* (Adershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), chs. 3-5; Peter Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading of the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994). All of these scholars would also agree with Derrida that although the trinitarianism is not explicit in such early texts as 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate,' the seeds are laid down in Hegel's reflection on the relation of Father and Son.

³⁰ A similar point could be made about the 'creative' work of Bataille. People in orders are often found in sexually compromising positions in which they violate and are violated, and in which the instruments of their office, for example, the ciborium are desecrated. It is interesting that Derrida more or less totally ignores this more 'pornographic' aspect of Bataille's oeuvre. By doing so, he subscribes to a fashion of French interpretation which focuses on the writerly and semiotic dimensions of a writer's oeuvre. Of course, this trend is observable with respect to readings of Sade also. For all of its merits, this tends to be exclusively the mode of reading of Sade deployed by Roland Barthes. This exclusion of the

there is a sense in which Christianity and speculation are pressed even closer together. Indeed, one is tempted to speak of pulverization. Certainly, Derrida never entertains the suspicion that Hegel might have cooked the books - indeed constituted Christianity as the book in the pejorative sense when he claims that he provides a proper, indeed, the proper interpretation of Christianity, which is fundamentally Johannine in character.

VIOLENCE OF HEGELIAN SPECULATION AND REPRESSION OF SPECULAR VIOLENCE

Glas is an engagement with the mode of thought obsessed with, because constituted by the need for, completeness. Derrida quotes tellingly a passage from ‘The Need of Philosophy’ (1799), which is one of Hegel’s earliest writings, and contemporaneous with the more famous ‘Spirit of Christianity and its Fate’: “Duality is the force of the need of philosophy” (*Entzweiung ist der Quelle des Bedürfnisses der Philosophie*). This driving force is at the same time, however, the very “power of unification” (*Macht der Vereinigung*) (95). Philosophy is at once a response to a need that would put it in debt and a denial of need and debt that takes the shape of a declaration of autonomy (96). Derrida suggests that this early declaration is inaugural for the Hegelian system as a system of “absolute knowledge” (*absolut Wissen*), which announces that it rests on a presupposition that it, nonetheless, constitutes (96). Derrida captures the dynamic brilliantly:

In its own proper position, philosophy *presupposes*. It precedes and replaces itself in its own proper thesis. It comes before itself and substitutes for itself. A *pro* movement: we would be tempted to translate the fundamental concept of *Voraussetzung* by pro-position or pro-thesis, rather than by presupposition as it usually does (96).

semantic dimension of Bataille’s and Sade’s discourse has not gone without mention or criticism. For criticisms of Bataille on this point, see Michael Halley, ‘. . . And a Truth for a Truth: Barthes on Bataille, and ‘Transgression and the Avant-Garde: Bataille’s *Histoire de l’œil*,’ in *On Bataille: Critical Essays*, ed. Leslie Ann Boldt-Irons (Albany, NY.: SUNY Press, 1995), 265-81, esp. 213-33.

This early text provides the clue, then, as to how philosophy is presented, or rather presents itself, in texts that launch Hegel's philosophical career such as the *Difference Essay*, texts that define it such as the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*, specify it as the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right*, and texts that systematically crown it such as the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Philosophy is concerned with a self-mediating whole with respect to which there is no outside, no relation left unexplicated, and no singularity unaccounted for. This is precisely what *Glas* challenges, in the first instance spatially or topographically, by squeezing speculative philosophy's auto-verification of itself onto one side of the page, thus very much constituting it as a position that can be countered or balanced by another position or other positions.

It would not be going too far to say that *Glas* represents a coordinated, yet not fully systematic, series of strikes against Hegel that focus as much on the mechanism by which the self-reflected whole of absolute knowledge (*Savoir Absolut*) is achieved, that is, *Aufhebung*, as on the state of realization, although, of course, the two are inseparable. Derrida shows how the philosophical construct of *Aufhebung* is both supported and expressed by an interlocking group of features:

(1) By an entire apparatus of metaphors both natural and cultural. Natural metaphors are of two kinds, that is, organic and heliocentric. In the case of organic metaphors, *Aufhebung* is figured and carried forward essentially by two clusters, one cluster, the semiological (seeds etc) that functions to underwrite teleology (24-28, 73, 245), the other alimentary (115), in which the violence not apparent in the other organic code is made transparent in eating, ingestion, and digestion (115, 150-151, 236; also 71, 73). In the case of images of light, *Aufhebung* is first, and most generally, presented by exposing light's dialectical nature in that it can be shown that it produces itself through its opposite (77-78, 86-87, 238-9), and then more specifically by showing the relation between the commitment to light and the commitment to sacrifice (239-41) in which "all" is burned (241). By "all" is meant anything that passes for the singular, which includes nature or things in the natural world, time, Jew, woman, mother. The most salient expression of the code of culture is one that Derrida has borrowed from Bataille with so much gratitude, that of capitalistic economy in which,

happily, all investments (however counter-intuitive) yield a profit (30, 243,133-134, 249, 258). In *Glas* Derrida confirms rather than develops his earlier use of the concept of the economy to articulate *Aufhebung*, which involved among other things reading Marx and Hegel together. In the context of this text its function is essentially to support the organic metaphors, which are taken to truly underwrite the philosophical deployment of *Aufhebung*. It is the organic metaphors that also reveal more clearly the systemic violence of Hegelian system, summed up in the notion of 'encyclopedia' with its implication of a completed circle of knowledge (28) and the perfection of the syllogism (93).

(2) Spectacularly, *Aufhebung* is supported (a) in general by an interlocking of narrative and concept that modern philosophy has typically disavowed (14), but which, Hegel makes clear, alone makes philosophy possible (28-30), and (b) more specifically, by this narrative being identifiably Christian (33, 62, 92, 95, 211-14, 218, 237), indeed, trinitarian (28-32, 64-65). With regard to (a) of particular importance is the way in which in this very interconnection time's punctiliarity is elevated as it is denied (220), as are all tensed statements (222). The deletion and elevation of time devastates it, excludes it as "remains" and simultaneously denies exclusion (226). Derrida highlights Hegel's Parmenidean allegiances: What is not thinkable is nothing; what is nothing is not thinkable (see 43). With regard to (b) Derrida diagnoses that, for Hegel, what makes possible the mediation of the trinitarian narrative and concept is the Johannine Logos (75, 78). The Logos funds trinitarian thought (80, 87), the concept (77-78), and also and especially the articulation of love and its drama (34, 36, 56-58, 60). Whether articulated as Trinity or as Love, Logos inscribes a logoarchy (76) responsible for exclusion and thus violence. Formally, Logos is a "higher calculus without remain(s): what consciousness wants to be" (60). Materially, Logos excludes the singularity of the Jew (55, 75), illustrated in and by the centrality of divine command that cannot be rationally mediated (42), by the sublime (48), by the divine as secret and mysterious, and existence as uncanny (50-51). In particular, the Father and Son relationship, constitutive of John, and essential to trinitarian thought, excludes all thought of what is foreign to the divine on any level (31). Moreover, this relation both exploits and justifies the inequality of the

Father and the Mother (92, 222), and in general gives no space for the feminine (92), either conceived as nature or otherwise.³¹

This summary could itself be summarized by saying that as the acme of ontotheology and logocentrism – only now more clearly implicated with a particular religion that denies its particularity – Hegelian thought is a system of repression that is inherently violent. In a sense, the position articulated in *Glas* is continuous with 'From a Restricted to a General Economy,' even as the violence of absolute knowledge (SA),³² symbolized by the eagle, is greatly developed. Now, one could imagine Derrida drawing out the exclusions perpetrated by concept, syllogism, and encyclopedia, and engineered by *Aufhebung*, in the more conventional way of 'From Restricted to General Economy.' Given Derrida's essay on Hegelian semiology and the prioritization of the temporal, one has to understand that the topography of the page in itself represents a critique of Hegelian semantic and alethic assumptions. The structural contrast and relation between right and left-hand columns are crucial. For Derrida allows semiotic space – although not without some direction – to organize itself in a polemical way, with the scatological writing of Genet carrying the bulk of the critical load in pointing to *Aufhebung* as an operation of sanitation which at once purifies the singular and denies that this is its main business. Thus the presentation of Genet's celebrations of shit, excrement, holes, toilets, perforations, loss, non-seeing and ignorance, dark that is not a function of light, the bastard, the sexuality that is neither contained by convention nor the family, the co-implication of the sacred and transgression, the non-mediatable coincidence of the sacred and the profane, the lie and untruth as authentic etc. Just about all of Genet's major texts and even some of his minor ones are in play.³³ Above all,

³¹ For Derrida the exclusion of the feminine is ramified and does not consist in the refusal to give nature its due. For granting rights to nature can still be done on invidious metaphysical terms of a mere binary opposition that neither overcomes the logocentrism and the phallogocentrism that bedevils Hegel's articulation of *Geist*. Implicitly at work in the critique is the cipher of the *khora* that is neither a concept nor a name.

³² Here it is also necessary to keep in mind Derrida's great essay on Emmanuel Levinas, 'Violence and Metaphysics' in *Writing and Difference*, 79-153.

³³ The relative privilege of *Our Lady of the Flowers* and *Miracle of the Rose* is in part predicated on the opportunity the flower metaphors provide both in connecting up with Hegel's reflection on 'Flower Religion' in the *Phenomenology* (*Glas*, 2) and being exploited in elucidating relationships.

however, Genet's work serves as obsessive diagnosis about the "dirty secrets" of a would-be clean Logos and a kind of relieving of the force of repression (16). In the intended scattering of Hegelian Logos,³⁴ the violence of Genet's diction and syntax is presumed to have the effect of getting speculative discourse to admit to what is covered over and up in the re-collective operation of dialectic. Derrida's choice of Genet is strategic and pragmatic – although he shows himself capable of supplementing Genet by appeal to psychoanalysis.³⁵ Still, the discourse of 'Genet' is expressive of an identifiable concentration in the semiotic field with respect to which Derrida is cavalier, a discourse that calls to mind not only Blanchot and Bataille, who ponder, resist, and adapt Sade, but nineteenth century scatology, as well, of course, as Sade himself. In the deployment of a discourse, nothing prevents this discourse itself being a focus of another economy, one different from Hegel's, in being erotic and transgressive; certainly, not the conventional avowal of the principled inimitability of Sade.³⁶

None of Derrida's early work supplies us with a sufficient reason for thinking that in *Glas* he supports the kind of economy of violence associated with Sade, which finds encyclopedic expression in *120 Days of Sodom*. We can find even less warrant in his later, more Levinasian, works. In availing of Genet, Derrida follows the pattern of Blanchot and Bataille in titrating out Sade himself as far as is possible. But it is not simply that Sade's influence has been repressed; also repressed is the Sadean language, which, as Roland Barthes brilliantly exposes,³⁷

³⁴ The intended staging of the catastrophe of Logos closely recalls Blanchot, and especially his notion of 'disaster.' See *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986). As Blanchot wants to insist, "disaster" cannot be identified empirically with destruction; it is perfectly clear that it functions to undermine totality, which finds its supreme instance in Hegel.

³⁵ Derrida's positive relation with Freud, albeit a semiotic Freud, is of long-standing. See his 'Freud and the Scene of Writing,' in *Writing and Difference*, 196-231. Derrida's avowal of a semiotic Freud is formally similar to that of Lacan. Nonetheless, there is some reason to believe that on some points Lacan reveals a proximity to Hegel that makes him an object of critique. Derrida seems to have the same misgivings, as French Feminism does, about the eclipse of the Mother in Lacan's account of the oedipal relation.

³⁶ Bataille is typical in this respect. See *The Literature of Evil*, 114.

³⁷ See Roland Barthes; *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Wang and Hill, 1976), pp. 15-37; esp. pp. 26-30. This despite the fact that Barthes seems to be coy about thinking of Sade's semiotic code being semantic, or imagining its actual enactment. Still to be fair, Bataille also has some recognition of this. See *Literature and Evil*, pp. 121-22.

is as pendants diagrammatic and logical as it is provocative. In *120 Days* every species and differential of transgression is expressed in a universe whose one constant is that of master-slave:³⁸ the erection, to which Derrida so casually refers in *Glas*, is the nightmare in the castle in the Black Forest in which the aim of all debauchery – other than its reproduction – is the reduction of animate beings to the state of a corpse, maybe the “it” that corresponds in *Glas* to the stone, which the eagle either cannot or will not raise. The sacrifice of those in the slave position is both taken as a matter of course and elevated as a transgression; it is the coincidence of naturalism and sovereignty or the coincidence of naturalism and rebellion. Moreover, the logical nature of Sade’s discourse demands as an inevitable accompaniment the working of language: atrocity usually finds a long-winded prelude by a master and an equally long-winded postlude; only the victimizers speak. Here we are not dealing with a high-culture philosophical discourse such as Hegel’s that betrays its phallogocentric tendencies in its use of the terms ‘grasping’ and ‘penetration,’ but rather with language understood to be a prosthetic of violence. One could say in truth that Sade justifies the identity proposition “Discourse is Phallogocentrism,” whereas discourses like Hegel’s justify ‘phallogocentric’ applied as a predicative adjective.

Moreover, in Sade there is an even stronger connection between the totality of power and violence and ingestion and the alimentary. This is not simply because in Sade, food, as Barthes rightly suggests,³⁹ is coded as power, and where appetite for food directly corresponds to sexual appetite and the appetite for destruction of others. In the case of Sade ingestion is not a metaphor for consumption as it is for Hegel; consumption quite literally is ingestion. Moreover, the range of the edible does not end with the animals. Humans are on the food chain. Eating humans does not indicate a return to the state of myth in which eating puts one in contact with a sacred power: the purpose of eating is the verification of the non-entity of the eaten. More, consumption is so much the logic that nothing remains; there is nothing that cannot be eaten, including what Derrida refers to as the “remains,” that is, ‘shit’ and ‘excrement.’⁴⁰ Relative to

³⁸ In its own way *120 Days* is a kind of counter-Enlightenment *mathesis universalis*.

³⁹ Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 19, 124-25.

⁴⁰ Bataille acknowledged this in his early essay on Sade, ‘The Use-Value D. A. F. Sade’ in a way Derrida does not come close to acknowledging in *Glas*.

Hegel, this represents not only a literalization, but also an escalation of the consumption that Derrida fears justifies the sacrifice of human beings, and against which the Levinasian allegiances rightly rebel. The logic of consumption is that it creates shit and hides it by ingesting it (coprophagy).

Within the orbit of Sadean logic, which is a programmed routine of atrocity and verbiage, victims have no history, or only the fictive history that primes them for violation. They have been reduced to matter and extension, to their anatomical details, and especially their orifices. Whether in the Castle at Silling cut off from the world and the movement and heterogeneity of history, or just simply in the staging of acts of violation, time has been suspended even more violently than by the Hegelian concept which continues to recognize it even if only as recollected. Derrida yields easily to the post-Heideggerian interpretation of Hegel prosecuted in France by Kojève in which Hegel overcomes the promise of dialectic to affirm time and history.⁴¹ This promise is, of course, betrayed in the closure of history and its subsumption into the eternity. While one cannot rule out in *Glas* the view that subsumption renders eternity mobile, dynamic, and plastic,⁴² the emphasis falls on pure abrogation; paradoxically the coming to be of no-time. But Derrida never seems to notice that through its relation to violation, transgression also absolves temporality. The time of violation is no-time; the inverted or infernal *nunc stans*. In *Glas* Derrida, who is on the side of the victims, does not seem to comprehend that he is dealing with Sade or the specter which troubles a discourse all the more when it does not exercise vigilance. One can make a case for the “madness” of the concept, even as it struggles to overcome *die Anstrengung des Begriffs* that marks the Enlightenment. But, if Foucault is right, madness is the mark of Sadean discourse as an event – precisely one that is not marked or remarked by Derrida:

⁴¹ See *Glas*, 224-27. The overcoming of time in Hegel was one of the important aspects of Kojève’s critique of Hegel even as he articulated his political and historicist version of the German Idealist. In his criticism of Hegel on this score, he was dependent on the final sections of *Being and Time* in which Hegel’s view of the relation between time and Spirit at the end of the *Phenomenology* comes in for significant criticism.

⁴² This is essentially the interpretation of Hegel provided by Malabou in *The Future of Hegel* and not contested by Derrida in his Preface. In an important sense, however, Malabou’s interpretation is more redolent of the work of Jean-Luc Nancy than Derrida, even if the works of Nancy are almost never cited in her text. To be fair, in his Preface Derrida does seem to entertain a measure of exculpation in the case of Hegel that is not to be found in *Glas*.

Sadism is not a name finally given to a practice that is as old as Eros, it is a massive cultural fact that appeared right at the end of the eighteenth century, and which constitutes one of the greatest conversions of Western imagination: unreason transformed into the delirium of the heart, madness of desire, the insane dialogue of love and death in the limitless presumption of appetite.⁴³

Ignoring the specter does not damage the case that Derrida makes against the violence and unreason that is threaded through systems of philosophical thought pledged to totality and the infinite that is not merely a beyond (*Jenseits*) and only externally related to the finite. *Glas* can be considered to bring the Levinasian argument to bear against Hegel as it does that of Bataille.⁴⁴ And, of course, at the same time Derrida also continues to be instructed by Heidegger's narrative of ontotheology and logocentrism in which Hegel renders and justifies the archeoteleological ground of reality and guarantees real presence. We will shortly reflect on the interesting fact that in *Glas* Derrida abstracts Hegel from the specific history of philosophy that begins with Plato and considers speculative thought in light of its relation (both structural and historical) with Christianity. But the net result is, arguably, that Derrida too shows that it is possible to take philosophy and its story too seriously, perhaps to the point of fetishization. The consequence is a peculiar lack of historical sense, a failure to see contemporary discourses as determined by the complex event of the Enlightenment and the numerous reactions to it of which Hegel and Sade represent two emblematic responses. Derrida continues the French experiment, begun with Kojève and Hyppolite, of bringing Hegel to the French, without acknowledging, as other French writers suggest, that for better or worse, he might be seen binocularly with Sade.

⁴³ This passage from Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* is the epigraph that frames Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman*.

⁴⁴ Derrida's great essay on Levinas, 'Violence and Metaphysics' belongs to the same period of production as 'From Restricted to a General Economy.' Both precede *Glas* by a few years.

SCOTISM AND THE DOPPELGÄNGER EFFECT

In prosecuting its case against Hegel in *Glas*, Derrida offers a theological reading of a saturation none greater than which can be thought. In this sense *Glas* differs in appearance from the main line of French commentary with its predominantly Marxist line of interpretation, which was, however, capable of admitting that there were recidivist or reactionary elements in Hegel of a theological kind. Derrida's interest in underscoring the intrinsic nature of the connection of Hegelian philosophy and Christianity is quite other than the interest of Catholic thinkers such as Claude Bruaire, Albert Chapelle, and Emilio Brito,⁴⁵ who believe that Hegel is a resource for the reformulation of theological thought, Catholic theological thought in particular. The intrinsic relation between Christianity and speculative philosophy that Hegel's later work asserts time and again, and his early work enacts, is not questioned by Derrida. Indeed, throughout *Glas* the liaison essentially functions as unquestionable (56, 58, 62, 68, 92-93, 95-6, 200, 211-14, 218, 237). The following long passage is worth quoting in full:

Thus Christianity offers an example of a naturally speculative religion. Philosophy – speculative dialectics – will have been the truth of this religious representation of the speculative. Just as German, the naturally speculative tongue in certain of its truths relieves itself by itself in order to become the universal tongue, so a historically determinate religion becomes absolute religion, and an absolute religion relieves its character of representation (*Vorstellung*) in order to become absolute truth. This explains how Hegelian philosophy – through and through a philosophy of religion – could be read as an effect of Christianity as well as an implacable atheism. Religion accomplishes itself and dies in the philosophy that is its truth, as the truth of past religion . . . (32)

⁴⁵ Emilio Brito, *La Christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983); Claude Bruaire, *Logique et religion chrétienne dans la philosophie de Hegel* (Paris: du Seuil, 1964); Albert Chapelle, *Hegel et la religion* 3 vols (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1963-71). Of these three, Brito is by far the most conscious of Hegel's theological limitations.

As indicated already, in *Glas*, for Derrida, Hegelian *Begriff* not only has an indelible narrative structure (14), but this structure is trinitarian through and through (28-32, 64-5, 80). Narrative structure, however, as Derrida notes, does not commit Hegel to the time of narration (220-1) so much as indicate a restless dynamic of exit and return (28) that provides the blueprint for Hegel's adoption of the 'Father' and 'Son' language:

Mediation: the return (close) by self that overcomes division and loss. The relief of the two in(to) the three, unity's self-return. The father divides himself, goes out of himself into his son, recognizes himself in the son, and finds himself again, recounts himself in this revenue (28).

Here Derrida offers more the product of Hegel's speculative transformation of the Christian representation of the Trinity than the process of *Aufhebung*, which does not simply elevate but also annihilates – here in particular any sense of the independence of 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Spirit,' as well as any sense of personhood. In doing so, Derrida amplifies the Christian embargo against talking about divine emanation and processes in terms of tensed categories. Moreover, Derrida recognizes that in Hegel from the 'Spirit' Essay to *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trinitarian process is not confined to the order of a pure infinity, which gets labeled as abstract; it concerns the infinity that defines itself through the finite (30), the light that defines itself through darkness (30, 87, 241), and the life that defines itself through death (30, 230-1). This means that it is in the finitude of the Son, especially as this finitude reaches its nadir (also zenith) in darkness and death, that the drama of the Trinity gets played out. In a powerful expression, Derrida states that for Hegel "Jesus is the diaphragm of the divine light. His body subtly seals off passage" (87).

Of course, trinitarian process does not end with the Son, but rather with the Spirit that mediates the sending and the sent as well as the meaning of Christ's presence and disappearance (31). Derrida speaks to both the cultic and ethical (*Sittlichkeit*) media of this mediation of presence that is ongoing in history. Specifically, he speaks to Hegel's appropriation of the Christian idea of the eucharist (68-71) as well as the valorization of the family in *Sittlichkeit* (4, 6, 7, 10-21), which is supported by Hegel's trinitarian schematization (29), but which also funds it. Derrida does not suggest how and why the eucharist becomes so

important in Hegel as a mediation of Spirit, as other Hegel commentators have done,⁴⁶ nor does he avert to the fact that the Spirit's promotion is predicated on the principled exclusion of resurrection or better its elision into the community (*Gemeinde*).⁴⁷ Nor does Derrida acknowledge the theological specificity of Hegel's commitment to the eucharist in which Hegel consistently distinguishes between the Reformed tradition of eucharist as merely memorial, Catholic transubstantiation, and the Lutheran view of real presence.⁴⁸ As is well known, Hegel favors the Lutheran view, dismissing the Reformed view as not rising to 'recollection' and the Catholic view as involving a kind of fetishistic magic. It is more than a little surprising then when Derrida links positively transubstantiation with a Hegelian understanding of eucharist (71).

This is not to hoist Derrida on a theological petard. The lack of an accurate rendition of Hegel's view of the eucharist is hardly fatal to Derrida's reading of Hegel's appropriation of, as well as understanding of, the eucharist, for it is unlikely that 'transubstantiation' is being used in the technical sense supplied by late medieval theology, and antecedently much more likely that it is being used as a mark for a chronic and exorbitant level of idealization of the material world authorized by Hegelian speculation.⁴⁹ The following passage proves confirmatory: "But the spirituality of the Christian Last Supper consum(mat)es its signs, does not let them fall outside, loves without remain(s). The assimilation without leftovers [*sans relief*] also satisfies itself" (71) Still none of this would touch Derrida's general point that Hegel thinks of the eucharist as a mode of *Aufhebung* that involves the annihilation of matter (68); considered thus its meaning extends well beyond its particular meaning in the cult or in the

⁴⁶ See in particular Walter Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Formation of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Michael Stewart and Peter Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 325-58.

⁴⁷ For a careful discussion of this elision in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion and the Phenomenology*, see Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 212-15.

⁴⁸ The most substantial discussion of this point is to be found in the third volume of *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* in that section of the text in which Hegel treats of the 'realization' of Christianity. See *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Vol. Ed. Peter Hodgson; tr. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Steward (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 333-39. But see also *Encyclopaedia* #552 for this contrast. Following Marion as well as Derrida, Malabou thinks that Hegel's reflection on the eucharist is not one item among others, but the nerve center of his thought. See *The Future of Hegel*, pp. 98-9.

⁴⁹ See *Glas*, pp. 77-80.

Christian community more generally conceived. Now while it is true that there is a gap between Christianity as expressed in the beliefs and practices of the Christian community and that of philosophy (222; also 92), this gap by no means gives Christianity any critical purchase on Hegelian thought: Christian representation (*Vorstellung*) anticipates its conceptual makeover, and in a sense is already informed by concept. Similarly, Christian practices – and marriage and the economy as well as eucharist is, for Hegel, a Christian practice – are ripe for philosophical legitimation.

The most remarkable feature of Derrida's reading of Hegel's speculative discourse is his insistence on its Johannine text or subtext. Although the Johannine characterization of Hegel's thought is not unusual in Hegelian commentary and criticism, few commentators, whether philosophers or theologians, have been as focused and as relentless on this score as Derrida. Hegel translates John into German (78), says Derrida, miming Heidegger who says that Hegel translates Plato and/or Descartes into German. Specifically, the Johannine mischief concerns the following: (1) The representation-concepts of Logos and Love that organize an entire archeoteological system, and (2) The Johannine understanding of the relation of Father and Son. Other Johannine features that play an important role in Hegel's *Aufhebung* of Christianity include (3) the Johannine metaphors of light and life, and (4) the Johannine view of the Last Supper. Since I have said something relevant already to (3) and (4) I will confine myself here to (1) and (2).

As the right-hand column of *Glas* plays the role of continually worrying Hegelian arguments and conclusions, it wrings from Hegelian texts the confession that in a paradigmatic way it is logocentric, indeed, the *ne plus ultra* of logocentrism. In *Glas* the relative privileges that the early Derrida accords Heidegger's genealogy, in which Platonism plays the role of corrupted source, is withdrawn. Moreover, it is obvious that Derrida now takes issue with Heidegger's legislation that 'ontotheology' applies to metaphysical discourses alone, and not to a liaison with religious discourse in which the integrity of philosophical discourses is compromised. Hegel, whom Derrida continues to believe with Heidegger, is unsurpassably ontotheological and logocentric, does not illustrate the scrupulous purism that Heidegger prescribes: Hegel negotiates with Christianity and insists that the negotiation is not only fruitful, but essential

to the very definition of philosophy. As Derrida points out, however, crucially the negotiation is conducted more or less on philosophy's terms. Philosophy surpasses and elevates Christian thought, and as it does so, the Hegelian concept appropriates the Johannine Logos (which may, of course, have its Platonic, Stoic or Philonic folds). John 1.1 "In the beginning was the Word" (*Im Anfang war der Logos*) (75) is regulative for Hegel. As John 1.14, and the subsequent Johannine narrative indicates, this Logos is dynamic and is tolerant of division and diremption (76). In division lies its power, for ultimately the Logos is a gathering of parts into a whole and thus its own self-collection into a reflective totality that leaves nothing outside and nothing unthought. The same holds for the Johannine Symbol-Concept of Love, whether as illustrated in the Fourth Gospel, where it involves 'sacrifice,' or in the essential statement of the First Letter of John: "God is Love" (4.6). Derrida marks throughout – almost as if he had before him the critical literature on this Gospel that worries about its anti-Semitism – how the deployment of this Symbol-Concept gives the Jew plenty to fear. He keeps coming back to its totalizing quality: Love is a process whereby the infinite comes to itself and leaves nothing outside (36, 42); and comes to include the Jew but only as always already Christian (54). Prepared to cosign Hegel's equation of Johannine Love with the Platonic trope of the non-jealousness of God from the *Timaeus* (211ff),⁵⁰ Derrida points out how the enlisted trope functions in a polemical context in which it is taken to defeat or delete the Jewish view of envy (215), which is intrinsically connected with the notion of secret (*Geheimnis*). As used by Hegel – although Derrida does not seem to allow any separation between Hegelian use and other kinds of Christian philosophical use – the trope helps to mark both the process of the self-appropriation of absolute knowledge (215) and the realization of its erotic drive towards self-satisfaction in and through negativity (58). The perfection of love is a result of a developmental process that admits to no loss, only gain. The perfection of love is the perfection of the infinite, and this requires not only that the infinite relate to the finite, but

⁵⁰ Derrida is extraordinarily prescient here. This trope, hugely important for Christian Neoplatonism, is also important for Hegel, and demonstrates his close relationship to this tradition. Hegel avails of the Neoplatonic trope on a number of occasions. See especially *LPR*, 103; *Enc* #564. Of course, for Christian, as well as non-Christian, Neoplatonism, the trope is expressive of divine as good or as Goodness itself. Goodness tends to diffuse or give itself.

that the infinite traverses the full extent of the finite in order to come to itself. This will necessarily involve suffering and even death.

Because John is crucial to Hegel's trinitarian reflection and especially the relation of Father to Son, from Derrida's point of view, Hegel's repressions and exclusions are John's repressions and exclusions and vice versa. As constituted by relation or relationality, the divine in John represents a violent rupture from the Jewish view that serves as its backdrop. This rupture is legitimated in Hegel's earliest texts and is a constant across his entire textual production, marking the *Phenomenology*, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, and the *Encyclopaedia*. No longer is one talking about the Father alone (31), the one who does not beget, or the hidden God (48, 50-51), but of the relation of Father and Son, which can be expressed in and by metaphors of seed (30), and that is transparent to reflection. In the semiological circuit – also logocentric circuit – of return, Derrida at once underscores the suspicious naturalism of this way of talking about the absolute, exploits the fact that the generosity of the Father yields a profit (30-31), and figures the image of 'play' to which Hegel sometimes recurs (31),⁵¹ by means of the autolic nature of the self-(dis)semination circuit (31). With 'Genet' pressurizing Hegel and John, the proper description of the latter would involve the most improper of loves:

This medium obtains the element of familiarity: God's familiarity with his own seed; the element of God's play with himself. The (infinite) exemplar gives himself by self-fellation, self-insemination, and self-conception, a finite son, who in order to posit himself there and incarnate himself as the son of God, becomes infinite, dies as the finite son (31).

But the Father-Son relation is not only organic; it is also metaphoric. Or rather it is the code for all metaphor (73) and rhetoric (64-65). If Derrida in a provisional way covered the relation between Christianity and Hegelian thought under

⁵¹ Recall the famous passage in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (#19) in which Hegel speaks about the 'play' (*Spiel*) of intra-divine love. Recall also that Hegel suggests that 'play' does not define Love. Love is serious, involves work, and sacrifice and alienation. This paragraph should be read together with Hegel's account in section 7 on 'Revealed Religion' of the necessity for the intra-divine Trinity to transcend itself into world. Derrida knows all of this, but simply wants to suggest that the seriousness of love is founded in the structure of play, and play is always already serious, because always already more than mere play.

metaphor in 'White Mythology,' now he wishes to suggest that the relation of Father and Son defines the pure form of metaphoricity: The Son *is* the Father precisely by being distinguished from the Father (and vice versa) (79-80). And Derrida now considers Johannine Christianity to define rhetoric as well as being defined by it. Rhetoric is not simply figure, but naming, in which the Father names himself by naming himself as Son and the Son names himself as Son in the name of the Father. It is clear that in using metaphor and rhetoric to explicate the relation of Father and Son constitutive of the Christian narrative and trinitarian thought alike and, of course, regulative even as sublated in concept (*Begriff*), that Derrida is investing in a Lacanian semiotic (29) to go along with the allusions to more orthodox forms of psychoanalysis (26). Now, whether the ethos of nomination actually captures John's Gospel or more nearly a Gnostic refiguration of John will occupy us shortly.

As the topography of *Glas* squeezes Christianity and Hegelian speculation together in the left-hand column, and effectively makes Hegel an alias for John, Derrida is able to press home his advantage. If Hegel fails, so does Christianity; if Hegel falls, so does Christianity; if Hegelian speculation is made to confess its totalitarian violence, so also is Christianity. Derrida marks the difference between narrative and concept, and representation and concept, but takes Hegel at his word that he has described these relations adequately. As he presses, he (re)presses the left-hand column and effectively silences the power of Christianity to demur, to insist that its triune personal God who, while dynamic, is not a process, and most certainly not one that is structured by an organic code. The noise that interrupts the rhythmic music of Hegelian dialectic makes him deaf to Christian insistence that precisely as revealed, the triune God is a mystery no less deep than the mystery (*Geheimnis*) of a unitary God of Judaism (and, of course, its modern counterparts).⁵² Nor is Derrida open in any way to the Christian insistence that divine love is neither self-satisfaction nor the drive to

⁵² For Derrida the modern philosophical counterpart of Judaism is Kant. No other figures are intimated. Certainly, neither Jacobi nor the early Fichte, both of whom are critiqued by Hegel in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802). No word of Scheleiermacher's texts, his early *On Religion* (1799) or his *The Christian Faith* (1821) being an object of Hegelian critique as peddling a view of the divine as ineffable. While Derrida's Hegel base is broad, he seems to be reluctant to take account of religious thinkers, who are not philosophers in the strict sense, with whom Hegel has crossed swords.

self-satisfaction, but rather gift of self in and as the finite, which again is mysterious, a mystery in fact protected by Chalcedon which in apparently positive language formulates a defense against language's tendency towards univocal determination. Derrida also shows himself closed to the prospect that the sacrificial nature of the suffering and death of Christ is a mystery of love that no concept is a match for; shows himself closed also to the possibility that in speaking to the enabling presence of Christ in the eucharist, the Christian community speaks precisely to a presence that is not its own, that strictly speaking belongs to the order of the impossible. And Derrida never gives credit to the Christian avowal of creation precisely as the order of singularity – which however is never pure singularity – for this risks being a construction of the logocentrism that is the object of Heideggerian and Derridian attack. In short, and conveniently, Derrida never once seriously considers that Hegel has fundamentally distorted Christianity by making it subject to *Aufhebung*, a Christianity which already even in the order of representation is logically so primed for sublation that it can and cannot recognize itself in the mirror. It can recognize itself insofar as the basic Christian narrative is left intact as well as the Trinity as a governing meta-symbol; it cannot insofar as everything is systemically out of joint. Derrida is right to style Hegelianism as a system of sanitation that cleans up 'shit,' but he fails to notice that Hegelian speculation not only cleans up vulnerable and unsanitary singularities, but that it also cleans up Christianity, first by a narrative smoothing in which 'event' is logically primed, and second by offering affidavits of reliability funded by the concept.

In an act of homage to Hegel, Derrida makes his reading of Christianity his own. This version of Christianity is at once more limpid and lucid than the confessional and historical versions, which are more untidy in their expression and less clear about what they speak. Rendered thus, Christianity becomes by implication the Baal of the sacrifice of singularities that biblical Judaism overcame. The irony is constitutive: Christianity moves beyond Judaism only by regression. Derrida, then, refuses to entertain that Hegel has got Christianity wrong, or that he is mistaken in his view that Christianity is at the antipode of the Unknown God.⁵³ Now, while it remains open to Derrida to say that even

⁵³ Derrida does not explicitly recall the passage, but see Hegel's famous reference to Paul's laudation of Christianity's overcoming the Unknown God in *Enc* #73. For similar statements,

negative theologies get inscribed in conceptual economies,⁵⁴ unless this inscription is a one-size-fits-all, it would matter a great deal what the extent of the reinscription was and whether it happens immediately or simply eventually. The gap or delay is the critical moment, because it is the moment of the possibility of critique. Derrida is blind to this gap, and is thus blind to the blindness of Christianity, which is more than the procedural blindness of Hegel governed by the guarantee of pure transparency and absolute knowledge.

GNOSTIC SYNTAX AND THE TOLERANCE OF HETEROGENEITY

Since Hegel's own day, and in part aided by his own exceptionally high opinion of Gnosticism,⁵⁵ from time to time Hegel's speculative system has been characterized as 'Gnostic.' Importantly, the originary text, F. C. Baur's *Die christliche Gnosis* (1835), not only insists that the Hegelian system is a religious

see *Enc* #36, 82. The overcoming of the anachronistic notion of the ground that is secret or secrecy itself is connected in the *Phenomenology* with a revision of the notion of the mystical (*das Mystische*) from secrecy into revelation itself (#722).

⁵⁴ As is well-known Derrida does precisely this in *Sauf le nom* (1993). See the English translation by John P. Leavey Jr. in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 34-85. See also 'How to Avoid Speaking: Denials.' in *The Language of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 3-70.

⁵⁵ Hegel's appreciation of Gnosticism is evident both in his historical account, his recall of the positive contributions of Gnosticism to central Christian ideas, and what might be called his Gnostic hermeneutical tactics in his major writings. With respect to history, see *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Vol. 2*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances Simson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995) (Reprint of 1894 translation by Paul, Trench, and Trübner in London), pp. 396-99. When it comes to Western contributions to the Trinity, according to Hegel, Gnosticism has the advantage on Augustine in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Neither Augustine, nor any magisterial figure, receives a mention in this text, while Hegel seems very interested in thinking through the relationship between Gnostic *Propater* and *Monogenes*, even as he makes moves to correct for the tendency to hypostatize moments (*LPR*3, 85-86). Similarly, Hegel avails of the Gnostic concept of *hylé* to indicate a more aggressive mode of opposition to intelligence and spirit than is typical in the Christian and Platonic traditions (*LPR*3, 87-9). Hegel gleaned what he knew about Gnosticism from August Neander's *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme* (Berlin, 1818). Finally, in *Enc* #24 Hegel provides a good example of Gnostic exegesis by concluding that the correct way to read the temptation story in Genesis 3 is to conclude that the serpent told the truth when he said that Adam and Eve would become God-like in eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

philosophy that has its roots in the discourses of the ancient world, but that it presents a speculative version of Christianity that should be regarded as completing rather than competing with the biblical text.⁵⁶ Comfortably adopting the role of Hegel's apologist, Baur argues for the systemic connection between a trinitarian metanarrative and the Hegelian concept, and makes the case that Hegel realizes what was implicit in ancient Gnosticism which maintained what should be maintained of biblical Christianity. Baur refuses to entertain, as such different 19th century religious thinkers as Kierkegaard and Franz Anton Staudenmaier did, that Hegel misinterpreted Christianity, indeed to the point of presenting a simulacrum. Now one could say that the genius of the second century theologian, Irenaeus of Lyon, consists in making precisely such a diagnosis of the generation of simulacra. In *Against Heresies* this is nowhere more evident than in Irenaeus's recourse to the notion of *methamortein* which speaks to a metamorphosis of salvation history that renders God.⁵⁷ In what amounts at once to a disfiguration and refiguration, the Christian story is subtended by another more encompassing story in which the particular episodes of the Christian story, the trinitarian prologue, creation, fall, incarnation and passion of Christ (redemption), the agon of history and eschatology are all changed in a fundamental way. The difficulty for the Christian community, however, is that the disfiguration-refiguration is not easily noticed. One can be taken in, and thus the necessity of intervention by someone who can describe the mechanics of the optical illusion and lay bear its hermeneutic protocols.

As we have seen, in *Glas* Derrida shows little capacity to imagine any gap between Christianity and Hegel's description of it, not to mention a gap so significant, and a pattern of change sufficiently systematic, to justify speaking of the construction of a *Doppelgänger*. In his interpretation of the relation between 'representation' and 'concept' Derrida simply accepts Hegel at his word that the movement from the first to the second is neither negative nor corrosive. Since the mediation between 'representation' and 'concept' is secured in Hegel's work by *Aufhebung*, obviously, this involves a particular interpretation of this master

⁵⁶ Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis; oder die christliche Religions-philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: Osiander, 1835).

⁵⁷ See *Against Heresies*, in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, ed. Allan Menzies (New York: Christian Literature, 1896), Bk.1.11

construct. Derrida knows well that formally *Aufhebung* means annihilation as well as preservation (*Enc* #96 zu),⁵⁸ and he makes, as we indicated, an occasional nod in the direction of what is annihilated when Christian ‘representation’ is taken into the sanctuary of *Begriff*, at once a truly holy place and a fortress with impeccable discursive defenses. But these amount to no more than gestures in a reading that emphasizes continuity. Christianity, ultimately defined by the Johannine writings, is already specular through and through and anticipates, even prehends, Hegelian speculation. Derrida, it turns out, then not only sustains Hegel’s weaker claim that there is a sufficient measure of continuity between biblical and/or confessional Christianity and speculative thought, but the stronger view that Christianity is Hegelianism *avant la lettre*. In the end, Hegel’s weaker claim reduces to the stronger, and it is the stronger claim that is complacently embraced in *Glas*.

Of course, Derrida’s embrace of this truth is hostile, since very much like Feuerbach and Marx, and perhaps also like Kojève, the association turns out to be fatal to Christianity. Arguably, however, one salient difference between Derrida and more generic brands of Left-Wing Hegelianism is that whereas in these other cases Hegelianism invalidates itself because of its ground in Christianity, in *Glas* Christianity is taken to invalidate itself when it is revealed as crypto-Hegelianism. As with Hegelianism, Christianity is a theodicy that produces “remains” that are unacknowledged, indeed ignored as accidents, as mere nothing(s). That Derrida, following Hegel, dismisses atheism as shallow hardly suffices to attenuate the obvious antipathy shown to confessional Christianity in the text. Negative interpretive tendency is nowhere more in evidence than in Derrida’s discussion of the Father-Son relation, which turn out to be as much – if not more – about John than about Hegel. Exploiting the symmetry he finds in Hegel’s discussion between reflections on the divine as such and recommendations in the order of *Sittlichkeit*, Derrida feels entitled to call on Freud, and even more Lacan. The latter is the perfect interpreter, since he is the unveiler of mirroring and nomination, both of which are central in the unfolding drama between the generative father and the generated son. In *Glas*

⁵⁸ Since he cites the *Encyclopaedia* so much, Derrida cannot but be aware of the famous passage in the *Lesser Logic* in which the double aspect of *Aufhebung* is spelled out with unsurpassed clarity.

Derrida does not inquire whether the mirroring interpretation of the Father-Son is more an effect of deep German Idealist commitments than a plausible extrapolation from the Gospel of John,⁵⁹ and, that in this respect, German Idealism is engaged in an operation of genealogy intended to legitimate a post-Kantian, and in some fundamental respects an anti-Kantian discourse of a realized eschatology and absolute self-knowledge.

Although Derrida fails palpably to be rigorously historicist here, this probably would not prevent him from being skeptical of the prospects of other kinds of ancient discourse, however speculative, to throw light on a post-Enlightenment discourse such as Hegel's, whose task is to justify the Protestant ground of modernity. And, undoubtedly, he would think of heresiological discourse as exclusionary and violent. My interest here is not to defend a heresiological discourse as such, but rather to raise the question of whether 'Gnosticism,' deployed as a taxon (which in principle is separable from negative evaluation), can also be extended from ancient discourses to speculative discourses in modernity.⁶⁰ What would get repeated is not something like a Gnostic *Urnarrative*, but rather a grammar that allows for a significant degree of variation. Needless to say, in appealing to this Gnostic narrative grammar, there would be a number of supplementary considerations. Three are especially important. The first is that legitimate use of the concept of 'Gnostic narrative grammar' depends on more than notional acknowledgment of the specificity of modernity, such that the difference between Hegel's speculative discourse and that of any ancient Gnostic system is different in kind than the difference between ancient varieties of Gnosticism. Second, and crucially, 'Gnostic narrative grammar' is a transformational grammar in that Hebrew scripture in general, and the Christian Bible in particular, is subjected to a systemic operation of distortion.⁶¹ This qualification of Gnostic, or better, Valentinian narrative grammar grounds what we have referred to as the *Doppelgänger* effect. Third, the activation of Gnostic

⁵⁹ See in this respect Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). See especially Part 1, 'Towards the Limits of Reflection,' 13-105, esp. 38-59.

⁶⁰ See Cyril O'Regan, *Gnostic Return in Modernity* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001).

⁶¹ One could also say that the operation is systematic as well systemic, since in its disfiguring-refiguring of the entire Christian narrative, it effects a transformation in value in the full gamut of Christian *theologoumena*: Trinity, creation, incarnation, church, and eschatology.

narrative grammar in speculative discourse is best understood in terms of the discursive field being overdetermined. More specifically, a speculative discourse being judged an instance of Valentinian narrative grammar does not rule out the presence of other kinds of discourse that can be put in some kind of positive relation with Christian discourse, for example, Enlightenment and Romantic progressive discourses, the discourse of apocalyptic and also the discourse of Neoplatonism. We see a good example of the last named discourse in Hegel's appeal to the trope of the 'non-jealousness' of the divine, an appeal, we have seen, Derrida underscores.

I realize that I am being more or less stipulative here. Since I wish to move to my conclusion that as *Glas* cannot control 'Genet,' and in fact cannot prevent the entire semiotic of Sade from coming into circulation and that he can be read as countering one form of Gnosticism with another, I will not provide the level of detail sufficiently to redeem the validity claims of the 'Gnostic return' thesis. But before I turn to my major remaining interpretive obligation, I wish to raise again the question of the legitimacy of Derrida's acceptance of the Johannine provenance of Hegel's reflection on the relation of Father and the Son. This time, however, I pursue the question not from the point of view of how the transcendental and post-transcendental regime works over the Fourth Gospel, the Prologue in particular, but rather from the point of view of hypothesizing a prior conjugation of the discourse of Father and Son that plays the role of a stand-in. One of the really remarkable features of *Glas* is that in its treatment of the relation between Father and Son, it seems more nearly to recall the account of the relation put forward in the *Gospel of Truth* than in the Johannine corpus. Particularly noticeable in the Valentinian text of the early centuries, which palpably represents a pastiche of each and every aspect of the biblical narrative, is the way in which Father, Son, and their relation is constructed in terms of the problematic of nomination. Two passages are crucial:

Now the name of the Father is the Son. It is he who first gave a name to the one who came forth from him, who was himself, and he begot him a son. He gave him his name which belonged to him; he is the one to whom belongs all

that exists around him, the Father. His is the name; his is the Son (*GT* 38; 7-15).⁶²

And to give himself a name is (the prerogative) the Father. The Son is his name ... The name of the Father, as the name of the Father is the Son (*GT* 39: 20-21).

Besides the pronomial ambiguity of the passages about which scholars of Gnosticism concern themselves,⁶³ there is another and more substantive form of ambiguity. On the one hand, the direction of naming is from the Father to the Son. It seems to be the case that it is in the Father that the power of nomination is invested. On the other hand, since the Son is the name of the Father, the power seems to be invested in the Son. Here there is an appearance of an anachronism. As the power of naming, the Son is before the Father, and has divested the Father of this power.

In Derrida's own powerful ruminations on nomination in *Glas* (79-80), which is conducted under the pretext of an analysis of John 1.1 "In the Beginning was the Word (*Im Anfang war der Logos*)" (75), he points to the metaphoricity of the Father-Son relation: The Son *is* the Father because in naming the Father names himself as Son, and to name oneself as Son is to name the Father. In either case, and to different extents, there is a displacement of the Father onto the Son that takes leave of the mysterious beyond, whether defined by Judaism, Kant, or negative theology. A particularly eloquent site of such displacement, not mentioned by Derrida, is the famous passage in the *Phenomenology* (#770) in which Hegel speaks of the Word uttered as involving the emptying of the Father. Similar passages can be found in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (*LPR*₃, 83). Now it is more than a little interesting that without any demurral from Derrida, Catherine Malabou suggests that for Hegel the template for his kenotic trinitarianism is provided by Valentinian reflection with which Hegel

⁶² The translation of the Coptic is by George McRae. See *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 37-49; esp. p. 47.

⁶³ See, for example, Benoit Standaert, 'L'Évangile de vérité: Critique et lecture,' in *New Testament Studies* 22 (1975), 127-70; also Joel Finneman, 'Gnosis and the Piety of Metaphor: The Gospel of Truth,' in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism. Vol. 1: The School of Valentinus*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 289-318. The latter essay is extraordinarily interesting in a number of respects, not least for attempting a Lacanian reading of the relation between Father and Son in the *Gospel of Truth*.

was familiar.⁶⁴ Malabou, then, very much becomes a witness against Derrida's connection of John and Hegel in *Glas* when she highlights Hegel's interest in Gnosticism. Foregrounding Hegel's important discussion in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*,⁶⁵ she points to the peculiarity of Hegel's interpretation of the Valentinian relation of Father and Son. Although apparently it is the unnameable Father, who precisely as the abyss (*Bythos*) not grounded by anything else, is the ground of all reality, read aright the Son, as the First-Born (*Monogenes*), is the foundation, for it is as Son the Father is expressed and made comprehensible.⁶⁶ In this sense the Son is the father of the Father and the ground of the ground.

Derrida's failure here is complex, and involves not taking into account the problematic of German Idealism, the possibility that the Johannine Prologue has been covered over by a prior nominalizing interpretation, and ambiguating about the status of Lacan, specifically whether the Lacanian echoes in Hegel's account of Father and Son are intended to indict or exonerate the German Idealist or for that matter indict or exonerate Lacan.⁶⁷ Now Hegel's Gnostic preferences are being pursued here with a view to whether there is something like an echoing or mirroring in the catastrophic discourse of 'Genet,' which, if not absolutely univocally, nonetheless in an important sense functions as synecdoche of the Sadean tradition. As intimated already, in terms of topography, the Sadean tradition bears a complex relation to Hegelian discourse and its history of effects.

⁶⁴ *The Future of Hegel*, 94-6.

⁶⁵ *The Future of Hegel*, 96

⁶⁶ I have used the convention of 'who' with respect to 'abyss' and 'first-born,' despite the differences between these terms and the more obviously personal interpretation of Father and Son in the standard Christian traditions.

⁶⁷ There is an obvious sense in which Derrida abbreviation of *Savoir absolut* to *S/A* that there is a recall of Lacan's abbreviation for the non-identical subject of *S/s*, that is the subject that is not coincident with itself and receives 'itself' from without. Lacan's classic expression of this is in *Ecrits*, and especially his reflections on the 'Mirror Stage.' One suspect that in this recall, in part at least the relation between Lacan and Derrida is positive. For the positive relation, see Mark C. Taylor, 'Refusal of the Bar,' in *Lacan & Theological Discourse*, ed. Edith Wyschogrod, David Crownfield, & Carl A. Raschke (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 39-53. At the same time, in Lacan the process of identification is a process that tends to be binary and eclipse the mother. Taylor notes the tensional place of the Mother in Lacan. Arguably, Derrida himself is more critical and tying Hegel and Lacan together in mirroring at the same time accuses both of repressing the Mother.

Derrida considers the space of encounter between discourses to be purely metonymic. This is a perception aided not only by the fact that the discourse of 'Genet' both interrupts itself and is interrupted by other first-order discourses, but that 'Genet' discourses generates meta-discourses and etymologies that occupy part of the textual space. The fact remains however that the space is structured by polemic, which suggests that the space is inflected by metaphor and thus by mirroring. This mirroring is, of course, more nearly mirror-imaging; indeed, just that kind summed up by Marx in the *German Ideology* (1844). The metaphoric inflection of space invites – even if it does not compel – the question whether the Sadean tradition itself might not be thought to illustrate Gnostic narrative grammar, but, obviously, in a quite different key to that of Hegelian speculation. This represents a perspicuous way of honoring Camus' intuition that there is something like a mirroring relation between Hegel and Sade, and both of these traditions are necessarily the object of a critique that comes from another place.

Although Camus' relation to Christianity is not such that it rules out beforehand that Christianity could play the role of the critical third, it is fair to say that it does not necessarily encourage it.⁶⁸ It is tempting to appeal to Levinas as a possible third, although this position has to face the twin difficulties that Levinas by and large avoids the Sadean tradition despite his encounter with Blanchot, and that Derrida is hardly persuasive when he deploys the Sadean tradition with the Levinasian presumption that they have similar anti-economic presuppositions and a similar list of high-culture targets. Still, Christianity has good *bona fides* as a possible third, since neither Hegel nor Derrida have proven that Christianity is more than accidentally involved in the Hegelian debacle. Indeed, we have argued that Derrida dogmatically sanctions Hegel's production of a "counterfeit double."⁶⁹ The question might be asked whether the Sadean tradition is in sufficiently close contact with the Christian tradition for the *Doppelgänger* effect to be possible in its case. Answering the question properly

⁶⁸ As Camus' novels, and especially *The Plague* makes clear, Camus has problems with Christianity. However, he also worries about the alternatives to Christianity in the modern world. Camus' critique of both Hegel and Sade in *The Rebel* is broadly humanistic.

⁶⁹ I am here not only translating *Doppelgänger*, but also showing support for the reading of Hegel provided by William Desmond. See his *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

would demand a sifting through not only the work of Sade himself and the entire semiotics of violation, but also investigating the ways in which the Sadean tradition continues the thematic of violence under the auspices of an inversion of Christianity. Obviously, the best that can be done in the confines of an essay is to provide the protocols for judgment rather than prosecuting an argument that has claims to validity.

As Klossowski observes, the works of Sade indicate a double rebellion, on the one hand, against the limits of nature and,⁷⁰ on the other, against the limits of convention defined by morality and in the last instance by Christian patterns of thought. While appropriating the naturalist and mechanistic traditions of Helvetius and La Mettrie, Sade then is anti-naturalist; while availing of the Enlightenment to critique sentiment and Christian presumption, Sadean anthropology is characterized by the anti-Enlightenment commitment to erotic sovereignty that distinguishes between those human beings that have ontological value (the debauchers) and those who have not (the object or abject of debauchery). It is precisely these facets of Sade's work that suggest to Klossowski a Gnostic heritage.⁷¹ In *Justine* and *Juliette*, according to Klossowski, Sade exhibits a nature not only indifferent to moral aim, but, as devoid of a scintilla of goodness, provoking – if not promoting – an outbidding in the order of evil that alone would indicate that a subject is not without remainder a victim. The very same texts also suggest an ineluctable hierarchy in which the possibility of exploitation involves its necessity: here 'can' implies 'ought.' Klossowski suggests that these axioms are made dynamic in narratives in which the obedience of heroes and heroines to nature involves outraging it. At the same time, there is continuous escalation, since the bar for rebellion is raised after every transgression. Importantly, the escalation has no foreseeable end, since all satisfaction is temporary, a mere postponement. The only limit to escalation and thus the limit of desire is death itself. The thanatology of Sade has two poles. One pole has been described already; the other is the death of the exploited, its reduction to the state of the corpse – it is impossible not to recall the

⁷⁰ This is one of his main points in 'Nature as a Destructive Principle.'

⁷¹ In *The Rebel*, it is quite clear in 'The Sons of Cain' chapter, Camus is responding to Klossowski's book, *Sade, mon prochain*. Camus admits that "Sade is our contemporary" (33), and he develops a "gnostic theory of a wicked demiurge" (33).

thanatology of *Glas* – which is at once the moment of infinite success and infinite frustration. With respect to the other, desire ambivalently wishes for a superiority that rules out recognition, and for recognition of another who is himself or herself one of the elect. With these dissatisfactions in mind, one can say in Hegelian terms that Sadean sovereignty necessarily instantiates the “bad infinite,” whose supreme instance is provided by Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*.⁷² I will return to the Fichtian characterization, but here it is necessary to make two important points. The first is that Klossowski finds no contradiction between escalation and the highly systematized nature of violation. Nothing in Sade puts these on a collision course, and both peacefully coexist with the “bad infinite.” The second is that Klossowski, obviously, does not think that the impossibility of satisfaction necessarily disqualifies Sade’s texts as “Gnostic.”

This last point deserves some development. It must be said that one of the ways in which the Hegelian system and/or encyclopedia ‘repeats’ the Gnosticism of the early centuries and/or exhibits Gnostic narrative grammar is that it repeats a systemically ironical form of the Christian metanarrative in which there is an important emphasis on the realization of a state of experience commensurate with one’s ontological status as perfect. That is, in Gnostic texts in general, and in Valentinian texts in particular, there is an emphasis on the pleromatic state in which knowledge and self-recognition suffer no impediment or lack. One way to read Klossowski is to suggest that this sense of narrative ending is not absolutely constitutive of the identity of Gnosticism; that essentially one could conceive of a principled emendation that indefinitely postpones the closure of transparency and self-recognition. In other words, a form of Gnostic narrative can be thought to have come into being which, as it forbids the distinction between truth and lie, also forbids the distinction between destination and perpetual deferral, between arrival and endless erring. Moments of insight would occur, although these would necessarily be transitory. Now, while we are dealing with opposites here, we may not be dealing with total opposites. Both classical Gnosticism and Hegelian thought think that the

⁷² Hegel’s repudiation of the “bad infinite” is an indelible mark of speculation as such. Thus, we would expect it to mark the very beginning of Hegel’s philosophical career in the *Differenzschrift* (1802) and *Glauben und Wissen* (1802). We are not disappointed in this expectation. Both texts deal in detail with deficiencies of the Third Proposition of the *Wissenschaftslehre* which substitutes “ought” (*Sollen*) for the “is” of identity.

realization of absolute knowledge is more than punctiliar. Interestingly, however, both make a distinction between the realization of knowledge that is self-knowledge and immortality. A Valentinian text such as the *Gospel of Truth* speaks to *gnosis* as involving an overcoming of a deficient epistemic state of forgetting and an existential state of lostness. There is not the slightest emphasis on the post-mortem. In the case of Hegel, the point is made sharply, and especially in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.⁷³ There disturbed by the 'durational' imagination of Christianity, Hegel inveighs against everlastingness. In ruling out this characteristic of knowing and self-knowing, ironically Hegel opens the door for a more episodic construal of the event of knowing (*gnosis*).

In terms purely of form, the proponents of erotic sovereignty, who are under suspicion of 'Gnostic return,' tend to repeat the form of the encyclopedia championed by Diderot and d'Alambert. This form of the encyclopedia projects a universal horizon for knowledge, indeed, provides a narrative for it, but it also insists on its serial and incremental quality. As this form is specified in the Sadean tradition, the intensity of the moments of knowledge is made emphatic. In the erotic coding of these moments, it is appropriate to think that intensity has become hysterical in the etymological sense of a rapture that is a rupture with the given. The erotic code is the code of transgression, and while it includes more than non-conventional sexuality, it is, nonetheless, typified by it. The sexual typification of the erotic code again raises the question of the relation of the Sadean tradition to Gnosticism. The possibility that Gnosticism can be coded erotically and typified in terms of sexuality is affirmed by Irenaeus. He sees clearly Gnosticism's antinomian predilection, and suggests that with respect to sexuality it can take either an ascetic or a libertine form. One can read Sade and his line as exercising the libertine option. This is surely the case with Genet, as it is with Bataille and Lautréamont. Of course, as this tradition does so, one could say that it also effects a transformation of Gnosticism formally similar to the kind of transformation called for by Marx in *Thesis on Feuerbach* (1844): unhappy with praxis being regarded merely as an application of a theory logically independent of it, it suggests the priority of the praxis over theory.

⁷³ See especially *LPR*₁, 195; *LPR*₃, 386.

It is not difficult to see Derrida's signaling out *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right* for special attention as continuous with Marxist inflection. *Glas* does more, however, than insist on the importance of 'objective spirit' as well as 'absolute spirit': it avails of *Sittlichkeit* and especially the economy and family life to interpret Hegel's esoteric teaching of 'absolute spirit.' This also means greater traction for the Sadean interrogation, which is more comfortable in its accounts of practices than in high theory.⁷⁴ In what amounts to something like a concerted 'ethical' reduction of Hegel enacted by *Glas*, the Gnostic ratio of Hegel is not relieved in any fundamental way. It is true that Hegel's affirmation of marriage in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Right*, as well as elsewhere,⁷⁵ is intended as a criticism of the ascetic interpretation of Christianity that Hegel finds bedeviling Catholicism. Nonetheless, under heavy pressure from the highly sexualized erotic sovereignty of the Sadean tradition, Hegel's highly bourgeois view of marriage reveals itself as a modern form of asceticism. It would turn out then that to the extent to which both Hegel and the Sadean tradition are ethically specified and ramified, they can be construed respectively as ascetic and libertine forms of the Gnosticism that have an afterlife in post-Enlightenment discourse.⁷⁶

'Can' is a weak word; the issue, therefore, is whether *Glas* actually displays the reality of a double return. It should be acknowledged that Hegelian speculation and the Sadean tradition in a sense mutually repel each other. This is not simply because Derrida avails of the Sadean tradition to upset theoretical Hegelian

⁷⁴ Not to say that it does not reach this level; in Blanchot and Bataille and in Derrida himself it reaches these heights.

⁷⁵ This affirmation of marriage makes its way into the *Encyclopedia*. Moreover, in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel makes clear how the affirmation of marriage is an affirmation of the Protestant principle.

⁷⁶ The scholar of Gnosticism, Hans Jonas, gives a powerful description of the antinomian virulence carried by libertinism in *The Gnostic Religion*, p.46: "The law of "Thou shalt not" promulgated by the Creator is just one form of "cosmic tyranny." The sanctions attaching to its transgression can affect only the body and the psyche. As the pneumatic is free from the *heimarmene*, so he is from the yoke of the moral law. To him all things are permitted, since the pneuma is "saved in its nature" and can be neither sullied by actions nor frightened by the threat of archontic retribution. The pneumatic freedom, however, is a matter of more than merely indifferent permission: through intentional violation of the demiurgical norms the pneumatic thwarts the design of the Archons and paradoxically contributes to the work of salvation. This antinomian libertinism exhibits more forcefully than the ascetic version the nihilistic element contained in Gnostic acosmism."

commitments to a pleromatic infinity undergirded by a Johannine and/or trinitarian code and its practical commitments to determinate forms of life, but also that implicitly Hegelianism questions the intuitionism and 'spurious infinite' of Derridian discourse and rules against erotic sovereignty and its zero sum logic of non-recognition, its sexualization (whether potential or actual), and its counter-practices and forms of life. But Derrida is unable to persuade that these discourses do not attract and precisely for the same reason. Still, one has to deal with the objection: where in a praxis, defined by eroticism, is the narrative emphasis so essential to the definition of Gnosticism of any sort, whether ancient or modern? In Derrida's presentation of Genet, for example, it is far from self-evidently present. Indeed, in *Glas* Derrida might be thought to take issue with Sartre's strong reading in which 'Genet' defines a system of transgression which both anoints and modifies its Sadean literary presuppositions. It anoints the prior tradition by suggesting that nature is amoral, that transgression, while fated, is an act of rebellion, that transgression is erotically and more specifically sexually specified, that it bears a close relationship to death, and that transgression is recursive.⁷⁷ It modifies it in the sense that erotic sovereignty undergoes a reversal, or at least a hollowing out, such that it occurs under the sign of its opposite, being used rather than being in a position of use. This inversion, about which Bataille complains,⁷⁸ nonetheless, keeps the fundamental Sadean model intact.

The etching of a narrative is more conspicuous in Bataille, whose work – all too dangerously from Derrida's point of view – seems to consort with the Hegelian narrative, effectively leaving it undecided as to whether he transcends or merely emends Hegelian narrative.⁷⁹ Bataille's dallying with negative theology,

⁷⁷ While with respect to the literary status of Genet (not fully separable from the life), Derrida could be thought to side with Sartre against Bataille, in fact he provides a very Bataillan reading of Genet, in which Genet figures as the disturber of the Hegelian system of knowledge along any number axes. At the same time, it is evident that in and through this blending, Derrida lines up with the Sadean tradition, and in a way ties himself to it. The crucial text once again is 'The Use-Value of D. A. F. Sade,' which bases heterology on the non-consumption that is excretion. In that essay, Bataille quotes Sade and proceeds to a glaring eisegesis: "Verneuil makes someone shit, he eats the turd, and then he demands that someone eat his. The one who eats his turd vomits; he devours the puke." Despite the asyndentony, there is no heterology here, as Bataille emblematically thinks there is, but absolute consumption.

⁷⁸ See his essay 'Genet and Sartre's Study,' in *Literature and Evil*, 173-208.

⁷⁹ This was Derrida's general criticism of Bataille in 'From Restricted to General Economy.'

which, in Derrida's view, fails to escape the orbit of Christian narrative economy, further exacerbates the narrative problem.⁸⁰ The "missing link" on the Sadean chain is provided by Lautréamont's *Maldoror*, which envisages a protagonist in violent rebellion against the order of nature that takes the form of violence, often of a sexual kind. The crucial point of the narrative is the pastiche of creator-legislator God of the Bible, who turns out to be an attenuated drunken fool. The reprise of the classical Gnostic motif of the 'arrogant archon,'⁸¹ suggests that Lautréamont has something like a Gnostic narrative in play as providing the necessary rationale for transgression. And to return to Sade himself, Klossowski himself maintained in *Sade, mon prochain* that such narrative elements frame Sade's own discourse. Thus, while it is true in Genet himself the narrative element is attenuated – and this may very well be the reason why Derrida recurs to him rather than Bataille – the outline of a Gnostic narrative that tells otherwise than the Christian story cannot be fully repressed.

When Derrida contrives in *Glas* to exhibit the return of the repressed in Hegel by means of Genet, he is unable to contain the return of Sade and his tradition in his rendering of Genet. As Genet worries Hegel, Sade is the unwelcome guest that Derrida cannot prevent appearing on the right-hand side of the page. *Glas* stages, then, the complex relation between Hegel and Sade, and does so necessarily obliquely, and only under the presumption that they speak entirely different languages. What Derrida sustains is that they speak very different idioms, and have very different lexicons, but he is unable to prove that they have essentially different grammars. As indicated already, the reason is not simply formal: any discourse will relate to another because of the requirements of discourse itself (thus the insidious 'logocentrism'). The reason is that he gives some warrant to believe that substantively both Hegelian and Sadean discourse are very different inflections of a common grammar characterized by a complex hermeneutic relation to Christianity in which Christian 'representation' is taken hostage by an alien discourse. While Derrida does not comment on the violence

⁸⁰ Even if in the end Derrida would want to exonerate Bataille of any kind of mysticism.

⁸¹ The pastiche of the creator-legislator God of Hebrew scripture is a commonplace in Gnostic texts. One could not have to look very carefully to find numerous instances in the literature. Two texts that provide particularly revealing scenes in which the would-be almighty Ialdabaoth (a corruption of Yahweh) gets his come-uppance and from 'on high' is designated as blind and foolish are *The Hypostasis of the Archons* and *The Origin of the World*.

done to Christianity in Hegelian interpretation, the violence is there. But neither does Derrida comment on whether the violence done to Christianity – by means of ‘Genet’ as a synecdoche for a tradition of transgressive discourse – also suggests a dependence on the discourse that is the object of parody. Nor does Derrida broach the question of whether the violence of interpretation is licenced by a semiotic of violence, which brings with it the alibis of sexual difference, Jew, otherness.

Now, if *Glas* exhibits the deep failure to think of the battery of strikes against the Hegelian system, which goes under the name of ‘Genet,’ being haunted by Sade and regulated by his semiotics, and shows little capacity to follow Kierkegaard in being suspicious of Hegel’s mediation of Christianity, this is not to say that its interpretation is not extraordinary in other respects. Its critique of the auto-constitution of *Geist* is one of the most sustained in all of modern philosophy, its ability to see the mutual reinforcement of the trinitarian elaboration of *Geist* and the realm of ethical life is as adroit as it is compelling, and its suggestion that Hegelian speculation’s victory over Kantian transcendentalism is intrinsically tied to Christianity’s surpassing of Judaism is powerful. But perhaps of even greater value is that *Glas* stages the relation between Hegelian and Sadean discourse. Of course, it does not do so intentionally, but, as Derrida would quickly point out, intention counts for nothing. The rhetoric of Genet is regulated by the specific semiotic of the Sadean tradition. Thus, as ‘Genet’ is a synecdoche of this tradition, *Glas* is a synecdoche of a specific French construction of the relation between Hegelian and Sadean. The construal is marked by a conspicuous lack of determination between considering Sadean discourse as totally other or as a proximate other vested with the power to explode or confirm. *Glas* performs the indetermination, which means that Sade cannot abrogate fully a relation with Hegel, cannot prevent his ‘bad infinite’ mirroring Hegel’s ‘good infinite’ – if only negatively – and cannot prevent in the right-hand column the appearance of a Christian *Doppelgänger*, whose presence in Hegelian texts Derrida refuses to acknowledge, even as the evidence cumulatively proves overwhelming.