CHAPTER 2

Embracing Bad as Good via Internalization

Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.

Francois de La Rochefoucauld[1]

My specific interests in this chapter are philosophies and worldviews that, in strong opposition to the morality of the established institutions of their time, elevate bad to the level of goodness or even holiness, and in doing so they illustrate the surprising *flexibility* of moral definitions. As prominent examples of such revolutionary worldviews, I analyze the works of three authors who propose a radical dominance reversal of "bad," as defined by the societies in which they live, into what they define as "good." They do not remove, sublimate, or change an action as bad, but worship it just because, in their view, it holds value in itself. In his autobiographical work *The Thief's Journal* (1949), the French novelist Jean Genet appropriates Christian concepts to pursue alternative forms of "sainthood," celebrating theft, betrayal, and homosexuality as "virtues" instead of vices. Similarly, in his novel *The 120 Days of Sodom* (1785), philosopher Marquis de Sade worships crime as "the soul of lust." In addition, I analyze *The Satanic Bible* (1969), the codification of the Church of Satan, a religious organization dedicated to satanism established in San Francisco in 1966 by Anton Szandor LaVey. I analyze these works from the lens of Dialogical Self Theory (DST) as the primary conceptual framework of the present book. The conclusion is that these works advocate the worship of lust as a liberating act of "anti-positioning" against the dictates of the official religious institutions, which are accused of suppressing the vitality of bad in the self and preaching a hypocritical morality. I then explore more deeply the phenomenon of hypocrisy from the perspective of the psychology of morality and its relationship with moral multiplicity. Finally, some practical implications of the chapter will be outlined.
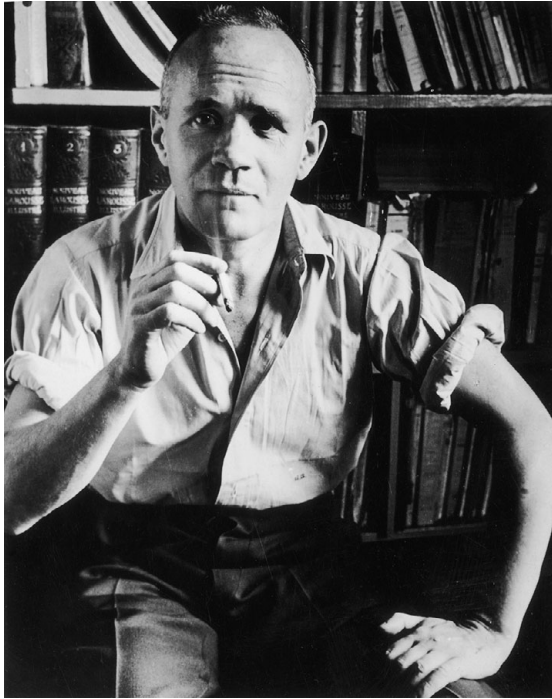
[1] Brainy Quote, November 29, 2022.

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Figure 2.1   French author Jean Genet (1910–1986).
Source: Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

Jean Genet and His Sainthood

Jean Genet (1910–1986; Figure 2.1)[2] was a French novelist, playwright, poet, essayist, and political activist. He was born to a twenty-two-year-old unwed mother and abandoned by her when he was thirty weeks old. He was placed with foster parents in a small village in the Morvan, a poor region in east-central France. At the age of thirteen he was sent to an educational center run by the public welfare system, from which he immediately ran away. After a series of problems in homes and institutions and arrests for theft, he was finally consigned, at the age of fifteen, to the penal institution of Mettray. It was there that he began to realize his destiny as a writer and as a homosexual and where he embarked upon

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[2] For biographies of Genet, see White (1993); Barber (2004). For a summary, see de Courtivron (1993).

the themes of honor and treason, domination and submission, authenticity and illusion as main issues of his writings. In *Miracle of the Rose* (1946), he gave an account of his experiences during a period of detention. He wrote this work in the solitude of a prison cell, on pieces of white paper the penal authorities furnished the convicts for making paper bags. This was followed by a period in which he traveled as a vagabond, thief, and prostitute across Europe, as recounted in *The Thief's Journal* (1949). As one of his biographers notes about Genet's life during the 1930s: "In every place he traverses, Genet steals: he cracks open the offerings-box in churches, offers himself for prostitution to older homosexuals and then robs them, and plans burglaries or drugs robberies with his associates."[3]

In 1949, Genet was threatened with a life sentence after a series of convictions. However, the famous French artist Jean Cocteau and philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre successfully petitioned the French government to prevent the sentence. In May 1967, three years after the suicide of tightrope-walker Abdallah Bentaga, one of his most favorite lovers, Genet himself attempted, after a period of depression, to commit suicide in an Italian hotel room with an overdose of sleeping tablets combined with alcohol. In a state of coma he was taken to a hospital, where he was eventually reanimated and where he recovered. Facing an imminent death after a diagnosis of cancer, Genet continued to travel, stubbornly refusing to stay in one place. While facing death, he finally returned to Paris, where he spent the last weeks of his life. Out on the streets of contemporary Paris, the traces of Genet's life and obsessions are still tangible: the Tarnier clinic, where he was born as an unwanted bastard in 1910; the walls of the Santé prison, where he was imprisoned several times between 1937 and 1943; and Jack's Hotel, where Genet died as an anonymous customer in 1986.[4]

As an ardent and restless traveler, Genet visited many places in the world, not only many cities in Europe, but also in Africa, where he claimed to have joined the French Liberation Movement. He traveled to the United States, where he came into contact with the Black Panther movement, and to Palestine, where he had a brief meeting with Yasser Arafat. His persistent drive to political action and alliances was also exemplified by his support of the German Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction) terrorist movement.[5] He was not only a restless loner in search of like-minded spirits, he also was an agitated wanderer in the space of his own mind. In terms of DST, he was continuously jumping through a

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[3] Barber (2004, p. 63).   [4] Ibid. (p. 146).   [5] White (1993).

contrasting and conflicting multiplicity of I-positions: from an abandoned child to criminal, traveler, homosexual, revolutionary, novelist, filmmaker, and playwright, never abandoning his manifold creativity.

Most central in Genet's life was his self-proclaimed position as a criminal that was not only dominant in his own life, but also reflected his view on the education of youngsters. This became particularly evident in a censored radio script *The Criminal Child*[6] from 1949, in which he complained about the efforts of well-meaning reformers to soften the strict living conditions in the penal colony of Mettray, where he himself was forced to stay after his arrest in 1926. Genet made it very clear that he admired Mettray as cultivating the violence of the young male inmates. He saw cruelty and violence as the poetic expression of the youngsters' affirmation of evil and rebellion. Obedience to the rules of the prison system would erase their individual differences. In contrast, rebellion would sharpen their individuality. Instead of being raised as interchangeable sheep, each of them should become a distinct hero-criminal. For Genet, crime itself was beautiful, and therefore he supported the cruelty of the unreformed prison system that would turn young people into hardened criminals. Genet clearly described his position as follows: "As for me, I've chosen; I will be on the side of crime. And I'll help children not to gain entrance into your houses, your factories, your schools, your laws and holy sacraments, but to violate them."[7]

Genet's radical and fierce anti-positioning against existing society as a whole was clearly revealed in an interview after the murder of President Kennedy, in which he expressed his sympathy with Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin: "Not because I have a particular hatred for President Kennedy; he doesn't interest me at all. But this solitary man who decided to oppose a society as strongly organized as the American society and even as Western society or even as every society in the world that rejects Evil." And he added: ". . . ah yes, I'd rather be on his side. I sympathize with him, but as I would sympathize with a very great artist who would be alone against all society, neither more nor less, I am with every man alone."[8] As this and other quotations suggest, Genet presented himself as an ardent advocate of the promotion of crime, but his defense of evil was not the expression of an isolated position in his repertoire. It was the *coalition* of evil and art, in the sense of being a novelist and playwright, that worked for him as an exaltation of his criminality.

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[6] Genet (2020).   [7] Ibid. (p. 72).   [8] Ibid. (p. 243).

This exaltation and the radical reversal of good and evil is even expressed in a coalition of acting as a criminal and addressing himself as a saint:

> Though saintliness is my goal, I can not tell what it is. My point of departure is the word itself, which indicates the state closest to moral perfection. Of which I known nothing, save that without it my life would be vain. Unable to arrive at a definition of saintliness – no more than of beauty – I want at every moment to create it, that is, to act so that everything I do may lead me to what is unknown to me, so that at every moment I may be guided by a will to saintliness until the time when I am so luminous that people will say, "He is a saint," or, more likely, "He was a saint."[9]

From this quotation it becomes clear that Genet doesn't act from one position only, I as a criminal, although it occupies the central place in his repertoire of I-positions. By combining it with I as a saint, he heightens it to the highest moral level and gives it a personal expression. Via a coalition of the criminal with the saint position, he realizes a radical reversal of the criminal position, regarded as despisable by the society in which he lives, but exalted to holiness in his personally constructed self. On a positional level, Genet's reversal in his private life is similar to the reversal phenomenon during carnival, as described in Chapter 1. Whereas carnival allows an officially permitted dominance reversal from a slave to a king as a ritual at the collective level, Genet aspires to a reversal from an officially despised criminal to saint as part of his idiosyncratic life project. Transferring energy from the saint position to the criminal position confirms and strengthens the latter one, including its subpositions (thief, male whore, gangster). In this way, he receives "sacrificing grace," which gives an extra boost to the vitality of his criminal position and to his self as a whole.

It should be noted that there is also a significant difference between coalitions in Genet's case and those in the treatment of carnival (Chapter 1). Whereas carnival allows for the emergence of coalitions of good and bad on the moral middle ground, for Genet coalitions are in the service of a reversal of bad into good, and therefore there is no moral middle ground in his case. The same applies for the reversals that are basic to the conceptions of Marquis de Sade and Anton LaVey, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The analysis of Genet's self-construction in terms of coalitions of positions can further be deepened by examining the role of others-in-his-self defined in DST as external positions, extended as they are to the

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[9] Genet (2004, p. 96).

outside world. More insight into that topic can be gained when we take philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's profound analysis of Genet's life project as a guide.

Sartre on Genet

Before we move to Sartre's analysis, let's have a look at what happens inside's Genet's mind when he is involved in his act of stealing. In his account, there are some elements referring to the relationship between his position as a burglar and his mental appropriation of the owner of the stolen material:

> And what happens during a burglary? Having broken the lock, as soon as I push the door it thrusts back within me a heap of darkness, or, to be more exact, a very thick vapor which my body is summoned to enter. I enter. For a half hour I shall be operating, if I am alone, in a world which is the *reverse* of the customary world. My heart beats loudly. My hand never trembles. Fear does not leave me for a single second. I do not think specifically of the proprietor of the place, but all my gestures evoke him in so far as they see him. I am steeped in an idea of property while I loot property. I recreate the absent proprietor. He lives, not facing me, but about me. *He is a fluid element which I breathe, which enters me, which inflates my lungs.* The beginning of the operation goes off without too much fear, which starts mounting the moment I have finally decided to leave. The decision is born when the apartment contains no more secret corners, *when I have taken the proprietor's place.*[10]

Compare this quotation with the portrait of Genet presented by his autobiographer, Stephen Barber, who depicts *The Thief's Journal* as a book of profound solitude, in which Genet recounts his travels on foot across Europe in the 1930s. Although he encounters various criminals with whom he has sexual relationships, he constructs for himself "an isolation cell" around his body, "since only that profound separation from every other human being can enable him to compound the aura of abject glory through which he survives."[11] However, as Genet's own description of his burglary suggests, he identifies with the absent but imagined proprietor, to such a degree that he *becomes* this person that is internalized as an external I-position in his extended self. Precisely at this point, Sartre's treatment in his celebrated book *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*[12] gives us a clue to unravel the complexities of Genet's mysterious inner world. Sartre poses

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[10] Ibid. (p. 71, emphases added).   [11] Barber (2004, p. 62).   [12] Sartre (2012, emphasis added).

this intriguing question: "Why does he demand disgust and rebuffs, the other's indifference, the tortures of jealousy and, in the end, the despair that comes from the certainty of not being loved?" Sartre then supposes: "And yet he must have something to gain by this. What is behind it all? For Genet [in Sartre's view], the answer is clear: love is a magical ceremonial whereby the lover *steals the beloved's being in order to incorporate it into himself . . .*"[13] When we accept this interpretation, Genet is not only a thief of materials, making them his property, but he "steals" even the beings he loves in order to transform them into external I-positions in his self. In Sartre's terms: "It is not so much the skin, the hardness of the muscles, the hair, the odor which stagger him and flood him with desire. It is, of course, all that, but all that as an embodiment of being, of his being. In that other who resembles him – or rather resembles what he would like to be – he at last sees himself as others see him." And he adds, "In loving that indifferent charmer with his body and soul, the abandoned child fulfills his impossible dream of being loved. For since he is the Other, it is he, he alone, who *is loved in the Other.*"[14] By *becoming* this position in his extended self, he experiences a form of self-love that he felt was lacking since his birth. For Genet, this interiorized other receives even a religious meaning. In his own terms, "In this way, I seem to recognize that over the act of stealing rules a god to whom moral actions are agreeable. These attempts to throw out a net, on the chance that this god of whom I know nothing will be caught in it, exhaust me, excite me and also favor the religious state."[15]

In Sartre's view, ever since his birth Genet has been "the unloved one, the inopportune, the superfluous. Undesirable in his very being, he is not that woman's son but her excrement."[16] He felt rejected and left by his mother, who wanted no longer to see her unnatural son. And with masochistic pleasure, Genet later compares himself to filth, to a waste product. The abandoning of a child signifies a radical condemnation. But Genet reacted to his condemnation by effecting an ethical and generalized inversion. He was, as he said, "turned inside-out like a glove."[17] The striking thing is that his erotic humiliations as a homosexual and his occupational risks as a thief were tinged with an aura of the sacred, which finds its expression as a coalition of I-positions: "the eternal couple of the criminal and the saint."[18] In this way Genet succeeded in escaping from the I-prison in which he was condemned to stay from the beginning of his

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[13] Ibid. (p. 83, emphasis added).　[14] Ibid. (p. 86, emphasis in original).
[15] Genet (2004, p. 10).　[16] Sartre (2012, p. 8).　[17] Ibid. (p. 81).　[18] Ibid. (p. 8).

Figure 2.2   Portrait of Donatien Alphonse François de Sade by Charles Amédée Philippe van Loo. The drawing dates to 1760, when Sade was nineteen years old.
Source: adoc-photos/Corbis via Getty Images.

life. In his own terms: "Saintliness means turning pain to good account. It means forcing the devil to be God. It means obtaining the recognition of evil."[19] The coalition of criminal and saint enabled him to transfer pain to moral goodness.

Marquis de Sade: Over-Positioning of Sex

"Imperious, choleric, irascible, extreme in everything, with a dissolute imagination the like of which has never been seen, atheistic to the point of fanaticism, there you have me in a nutshell, and kill me again or take me as I am, for I shall not change."[20] This frequently cited self-characterization of Marquis de Sade (1740–1814; Figure 2.2) may be one of the reasons why his work is perceived by some as an incarnation of absolute evil, as it advocates the unleashing of one's instincts even to the

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[19] Genet (2004, p. 94).
[20] Quoted by Simone de Beauvoir in her introduction to Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom*. See Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 12; pagination starts from the cover).

point of crime, whereas others admire him as a champion of total liberation through the satisfaction of desires in all forms. His celebration of excessive sexual aberrations may well explain why his writings were banned in France until the 1960s.[21]

Donatien Alphonse François de Sade was the son of the Comte de Sade, an aristocratic landowner in the south of France. His mother was a lady-in-waiting (court lady) to the Princess of Condé. Little Donatien was born into a privileged background, and, as the only boy in the family, he was doted on by a paternal grandmother and five aunts. In his early years, however, the most important influences were his father and his paternal uncle, the Abbé Jacques François de Sade, both of whom had a preference for a libertine lifestyle. Between the ages of ten and fourteen, he attended the Jesuit school of Louis-le-Grand in Paris, where he was trained by a young, gentle, and highly intelligent teacher, the Abbé Amblet, who taught him reading, arithmetic, geography, and history. At this school, the young Marquis became skilled in classical rhetoric and debating. In 1754, he began a military career, which he abandoned in 1763. In that year he married (arranged) Renée-Pélagie de Montreuil, the daughter of a high-ranking bourgeois family, a marriage that produced two sons and a daughter.[22]

Just five months after the wedding, however, Sade was arrested for the crime of debauchery, for which he became imprisoned. He was accused of shocking a young Parisian prostitute with talking about masturbating into chalices and thrusting communion hosts into vaginas. Moreover, he had frightened her with whips and other instruments. After three weeks of imprisonment, he continued his debauchery by committing a number of similar acts, including the flagellation and buggery of prostitutes and the sexual corruption of young women.[23]

In 1768, the first public scandal erupted through his affair with Rose Keller, a thirty-six-year-old beggar-woman from Alsace, who accused Sade of subjecting her to acts of libertinage, sacrilege, and sadism in his house at Arcueil. According to her, he locked her up and abused her sexually. She escaped and related Sade's unnatural acts and brutality to persons in the neighborhood and showed them her wounds. As a defense, the Marquis claimed she was a prostitute who had been well paid for her services. Nevertheless, he was imprisoned for six months. His sentences, however,

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[21] "Marquis de Sade," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/biography/Marquis-de-Sade, retrieved February 15, 2022. The colloquial term "sadism" is derived from Sade's name.
[22] Phillips (2005).   [23] Ibid. (p. 4).

did not stop his extravagant behavior. Four years later, in 1772, he and his valet organized a party with a number of young prostitutes in Marseilles. One of the women became seriously ill, which led to the suspicion that the Marquis had poisoned them, and the case was reported to the authorities. It appeared that Sade had given the prostitutes pastilles containing Spanish fly, a well-known aphrodisiac, with the intention of causing flatulence. Given Sade's fixation on the female buttocks and excrement, this effect undoubtedly gave him a perverse thrill. As the situation became more dangerous to them, the two men escaped to Italy so that they were out of reach of the French authorities. In their absence, Sade and his valet were condemned to death for crimes of sodomy and attempted poisoning. Their bodies were symbolically burned in effigy.[24]

As expressed in his Last Will and Testament of 1806, Sade wished to be buried in an unmarked grave: "... the traces of my grave may disappear from the face of the earth as I trust the memory of me shall fade out of the minds of all men save nevertheless for those few who in their goodness have loved me until the last and of whom I carry away a sweet remembrance with me to the grave."[25] Sade died of a pulmonary disease at the age of seventy-four. At the behest of his son, Armand, he was buried with full Christian rights in the small asylum cemetery of Charenton, where he had lived during the last year of his life. No trace remains of his grave today.

The 120 Days of Sodom: Cruelty Guided by Reason

Among Sade's main works is *Justine: The Misfortunes of Virtue* (originally printed in French in 1779), in which he describes the misfortunes suffered by the heroine from her failure to recognize that God is evil and that wickedness is the source of human activity. A parallel work is *Juliette: Or the Prosperities of Vice* (1797), in which the protagonist, Juliette, is involved in increasingly horrific manifestations of sexual violence, but unlike Justine she has a happy life. In these works the reader finds numerous references to contemporary philosophers such as Diderot, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Molière, and Machiavelli, signs of Sade's erudition that support his philosophical message.[26]

His philosophical message was also exposed in another main work, *The 120 Days of Sodom*, which he wrote when he was imprisoned in the Bastille

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[24] Ibid. See also "Marquis de Sade," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/biography/Marquis-de-Sade, retrieved February, 16, 2022.
[25] Phillips (2005, p. 112).   [26] Ibid. (p. 102).

in 1785. It was written down in microscopic handwriting on long, narrow rolls of paper that he glued together into a roll that eventually became forty-nine feet long and that he kept hidden in a hole in the wall of his cell. Then, ten days before the storming of the Bastille in 1789, Sade was suddenly moved to another fortress, and he had no opportunity to take his manuscript with him. To his great regret, he never saw *The 120 Days* again. However, later the manuscript was discovered and remained in private hands until the early twentieth century, when the German psychiatrist Dr Iwan Bloch published a first limited edition of the work.[27]

In *The 120 Days of Sodom*, four rich, libertine protagonists indulge in a four-month-long orgy of depravity, rape, and murder. This takes place in a remote medieval castle, high in the French mountains and surrounded by forests, detached and isolated from the rest of the world. The four main actors, so-called libertines, represent the four sources of authority and power in eighteenth-century France: the nobility, the church, the courts, and high finance. The largely negative way Sade portrays them suggests that the work is intended to be read as a political satire. In Sade's view, the four main protagonists represent the lusts and perversions of bankers, lawyers, priests, magistrates, landowners, and military officers, all old, rich, and powerful. Four accomplished prostitutes, middle-aged women, act as storytellers and function as intermediaries in the story. They have the task to tell anecdotes of their perverse careers in order to inspire the four principal actors into similar acts of decadence. Eight studs (French: *fouteurs*, "fuckers") are chosen solely because of the impressive size of their penises and their sexual potency. Eight boys and eight girls aged from twelve to fifteen have been kidnapped, chosen because of their beauty. They are all virgins, and the four libertines' plan is to deflower them, vaginally and especially anally. The narration of the stories and the communal orgiastic activities instigated by these stories take place in a main hall, designed in the shape of an amphitheater. Each storyteller sits on a centrally positioned throne when it is her turn to narrate, while the four protagonists occupy seats in four separate recesses, listening to the narratives before they enact them.[28]

The question arises as to whether we see in this and other tales of Sade the unobtrusive expression of a sick mind obsessed by sex, horror, and crime or the existence of deeper philosophical motivations and inspirations that drive him. Or to put it otherwise: Are *The 120 Days* to be seen as the wild irrational delusions of a frustrated outcast or is his work based on

[27] Ibid. (p. 62).   [28] Ibid. (pp. 62–72).

reason, albeit an unusual conception of reason? Sade is quite explicit on this: "I have supported my deviations with reasons; I did not stop at mere doubt; I have vanquished, I have uprooted, I have destroyed everything in my heart that might have interfered with my pleasures."[29] He claims reason even as the fundament of his philosophy when he writes about the difference between virtue and vice: ". . . the first is illusory, a fiction; the second is authentic, real; the first is founded upon vile prejudices, the second upon reason; the first, through the agency of pride, the most false of all our sensations, may provide the heart with a brief instant's titillation; the other is a veritable mental pleasure-taking, and it inflames every other passion by the very fact it runs counter to common opinions."[30]

Sade's claim that his morality is founded on reason starts from the assumption that moral good is justified by the law of nature that prescribes that strength is good and weakness bad. This justification of natural reason requires a dominance reversal, the concept that was already discussed in Chapter 1 of the present book and in our exposition of Jean Genet. As Sade remarks:

> If one were to raise the objection that, nevertheless, all men possess ideas of the just and the unjust which can only be the product of Nature, since these notions are found in every people and even amongst the uncivilized, the Duc [one of his characters] would reply affirmatively, saying that yes, those ideas have never been anything if not relative, that the stronger has always considered exceedingly just what the weaker regarded as flagrantly unjust, and that it takes no more than the *mere reversal of their positions* for each to be able to change his way of thinking too.[31]

More generally, Sade plays with dominance reversal and even applies it to a reversal of the sexes: ". . . the girls were costumed as sailors, the little boys as tarts; the effect was ravishing, nothing quickens lust like this voluptuous little reversal; adorable to find in a little boy what causes him to resemble a girl, and the girl is far more interesting when for the sake of pleasing she borrows the sex one would like her to have."[32] However, far from any emancipatory ideal, this reversal seeks a purely pleasure-enhancing effect in the otherwise extreme masculine Sadean world as symbolized by the absolute dominance of the four main male protagonists and as expressed in such passing statements as ". . . the boy is worth more than the girl."[33]

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[29] Quoted by Simone de Beauvoir in her introduction to Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 59; pagination starts from the cover).
[30] Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 75).   [31] Ibid. (p. 250, emphasis added).   [32] Ibid. (p. 413).
[33] Ibid. (p. 554).

At the same time, *The 120 Days* reflects the extreme sexism of the ruling class of eighteenth-century France as an expression of more general masculine power structures that continue to exist on a global scale in the world today.

Sade's Place in the History of Art and Philosophy

Certainly, it would be a misrepresentation of Sade's work if we would reduce it simply to an exposé of orgiastic sexuality and crime only or associate it stereotypically with the notion of "sadism," as this would neglect the importance of his contribution to art and philosophy over the centuries. In his book *The Marquis de Sade: A Very Short Introduction*, literary scholar John Phillips includes a highly informative chapter titled "Apostle of Freedom,"[34] in which he places Sade in the larger context of art and philosophy. In this section, I will refer to some of Phillips' insights, in particular to Sade as a precursor to postmodernism, which then will be followed by my interpretation of Sade from the perspective of DST.

Although largely ignored during the last two centuries, Sade's works continued to be read in private, and his influence on writers, artists, and thinkers throughout this period is undeniable. Even during the nineteenth century, when his reputation was at its lowest level, his shade hovered incessantly over all the century's major literary and philosophical movements. His works *Justine* and *Juliette* were secretly read and greatly admired by writers such as Gustave Flaubert, Charles Baudelaire, Algernon Swinburne, and many others. For the surrealist poet Guillaume Apollinaire, Sade was simply "the freest spirit who ever lived."[35]

Sade figures as a significant precursor of the work of sexologists and psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Richard von Krafft-Ebing, who were influenced by his systematic portrayal of what came to be known as "perversions." Likewise, Sade's scandalous yet unique elevation of the body over the mind precedes Nietzsche's emphasis on the Dionysian nature of human beings. Also, the poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault[36] expresses his appreciation of Sade when he critically discusses the disciplinary control of the body in the schools, prisons, and factories of the past centuries in service of a capitalist imperative that prioritizes work over leisure and renders the body as a commodity in the service of profit-making.

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[34] Phillips (2005, pp. 112–122).   [35] Quoted by Phillips (2005, p. 116).   [36] Foucault (2015).

American feminist Camille Paglia assesses the reasons for Sade's neglect with verve: "The Marquis de Sade is a great writer and philosopher whose absence from university curricula illustrates the timidity and hypocrisy of the liberal humanities. No education in the western tradition is complete without Sade. He must be confronted, in all his ugliness."[37] On the other hand, the French philosophers and novelists Albert Camus and Raymond Queneau were examples of commentators who were merely critical of Sade. From a political perspective, Queneau saw in Sade's ideas a pre-configuration of Hitler's and Stalin's concentration camps.[38]

According to John Phillips, Sade's texts have much in common with postmodernism. From a postmodern perspective, textual meaning is not fixed and dictated by the author but constructed by the reader and the result of interaction between reader, text, and intertext. In such writings, readers may discover a plurality of potential selves and constructed meanings flitting from character to character and from situation to situation. Identifications with the characters of a novel take place in the minds of individual readers rather than being preinscribed into the text, so that imagined dialogue with the characters of the text becomes possible. Because dialogue is inherently pluralistic, it works against the creation of a single, unified point of view. Sade's prose works offer a multiplicity of voices, physically represented on a stage as exemplified by the amphitheater in *The 120 Days of Sodom*. This multiplicity can be found abundantly in the Sadean text, which mixes and confuses genres, with fading boundaries between comedy and tragedy to which some readers will react with aversion, others with laughter. The text ripples with inconsistencies and contradictions that keep it open to multiple interpretations and accessible to dialogically responding readers. Therefore, Phillips continues, Sade's writings cannot really be considered pornography in a limited sense of the term. In spite of their extremes of obscenity and violence, their erotic potential is interwoven with irony, parody, and satire. In this way, "Sade created a corpus of writing of astonishing breadth and unparalleled complexity that shines a light into those dark corners of the human psyche from which most of us would prefer to avert our gaze."[39] He does so with skill, erudition, playfulness, and humor, qualities that entitle him to a place in the Western literary and philosophical tradition, according to Phillips. This apparent multiplicity that can be found in the reading and interpretation of his texts does not contradict my thesis that, *basically*, both in his life and works Sade puts his full weight on a personal project that aims for

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[37] Quoted by Phillips (2005, p. 116).   [38] Phillips (2005, p. 117).   [39] Ibid. (p. 121).

the reversal of what is seen as moral bad into a personalized moral good. This brings us back to DST.

Sade and Genet from the Perspective of Dialogical Self Theory

In both authors, Genet and Sade, we see elements of a *reversal* from moral bad, as defined by the mainstream moral standards of their time, into what they defined themselves as moral good. Genet did this, for example, in his plea for the penal colony Mettray as a place for cultivating the violence of young boys and his sympathy with the murderer of President Kennedy. Sade aimed at a reversal of virtue and vice: ". . . the first is illusory, a fiction; the second is authentic, real." Moreover, he acted as a reversal of Kant by using reason not as a path to moral good but, instead, as a basis for realizing the moral bad: ". . . the first [virtue] is founded upon vile prejudices, the second [vice] upon reason."

However, this reversal, including the intensification and justification of moral bad, was supported by *coalitions*. Genet elevated his criminal behavior to saintliness, as expressed in Jean-Paul Sartre's qualification of "the eternal couple of the criminal and the saint." Recall also Genet's own words: "Saintliness means turning pain to good account. It means forcing the devil to be God. It means obtaining the recognition of evil." Sade also was very explicit about the coalition of crime and pleasure: "Crime is the soul of lust. What would pleasure be if it were not accompanied by crime? It is not the object of debauchery that excites us, but rather the idea of evil."[40] Moreover, I believe that the main reason that both authors have received the attention and even appreciation of artists and scientists is in the coalition of crime and art as expressed in their otherwise shocking productions.

Such coalitions enable the self to become involved in a process of *transpositioning*, transferring energy form the one to the other I-position. In Genet's case, the transference of energy from a saint position to a criminal position further confirmed and strengthened his desire for excitement via crime. In Sade's writings, we can see a similar process of transferring energy from artistic creation to pleasure. In Beauvoir's terms: "He subordinated his existence to his eroticism because eroticism appeared to him to be the only possible fulfillment of his existence. If he devoted himself to it with such energy, shamelessness, and persistence, he did so

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[40] Genet, quoted by Simone de Beauvoir in her introduction to Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 44; pagination starts from the cover).

because he attached greater importance to the stories he wove around the act of pleasure than to the contingent happenings . . ."[41]

This transfer of energy stimulates a process of *over-positioning*: The energy was concentrated on one main position, crime in Genet's case and sexual excitement for Sade. They got into a state of overdrive by reaching a high degree of exaggeration of their main positions in order to reach unrestrained levels of pleasure and excitement as exclusive moral purposes. Because their energy was focused on their main position, not much energy was left for engagement in alternative moral purposes. This excessive and exclusive concentration, with the simultaneous lack of any effective counter-position, made them (creative) fanatics in their own realms.

As advocates of the reversal of bad into good, the two authors clashed systematically and frequently with the moral codes of the societies in which they lived and could only survive via a process of *anti-positioning*. They became complete outsiders in their communities and could maintain and develop their identities only via fierce opposition to mainstream institutions and moralities. Genet was a wandering loner in search of like-minded individuals or groups, such as the Black Panther movement in the USA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany. Later in his life, Genet remarked that all of his five novels had been written in prison, the price for his systematic anti-positioning.

Sade not only rejected religious dogma, but also all of the social and moral directives that derive from it. He became furiously engaged in the defense of atheism as a necessarily vigorous anti-positioning to the oppressive theism of his society. As he was regarded by the authorities and the people of his time as dangerous and subversive, he had to suffer persecution that often involved imprisonment, torture, and even the threat of execution. His position as a rebel and iconoclast impelled him to propagate his personal mission, for which he had to spend the best part of his adult life in prison.[42]

Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan

In their book *The Invention of Satanism*, Dyrendal, Lewis, and Petersen[43] show that the idea of a sinister, antihuman force allied with powers of darkness has been prevalent in nearly all known human societies. One of

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[41] de Beauvoir, introduction to Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 20).   [42] Phillips (2005).
[43] Dyrendal et al. (2016).

the most malevolent forms is the idea of the "night witch" as an antihuman power, often depicted as part of an upside-down society of dark beings. The values and goals of this dark society are the opposite of the prevailing norms, as they invert sacredness and attempt to corrupt or destroy everything of value. Often these witches have been accused of spreading disease, killing children and cattle, promoting sin, and being affiliated with evil forces outside the community.

In their profound discussion of satanism, Dyrendal and colleagues distinguish two main categories: esoteric and rationalist versions. *Esoteric satanism* is theistic and is inspired by the esoteric traditions of Paganism, Western Esotericism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, among others, culminating in a religion of self-actualization. The existence of Satan is usually formulated in platonic or mystical terms, although he is not necessarily worshipped as a literal entity. Rather than a god to be worshipped, Satan is understood as a principle to be followed as a path to individual enlightenment.[44]

Rationalist satanism is explicitly atheistic, materialistic, and hedonistic. Representatives of this tradition consider Satan as a symbol of rebellion, carnality, and individual empowerment. Their materialist philosophy is fertile soil for the formation of an alien elite that pursues indulgence, vitality, and rational self-interest. Although ritual practices are performed and forms of diabolical anthropomorphism play some role from time to time, they function as metaphorical and pragmatic instruments of self-realization. Rational satanism embraces science, philosophy, and intuition as sources of authority and considers nonconformity as the highest goal of the individual.[45]

Looking at the current landscape, it is notable that satanism was practiced in the late 1960s and early 1970s in a variety of subcultural streams. It coincided with the emergence of the counterculture of that time, including the early New Age, the rise of the Human Potential Movement, the sexual revolution, the salience of leisure and consumption, flower power, and the revolutionary tendencies in mass higher education. All of them are incorporated in the makeup of satanism, which can be portrayed as a subcurrent within that milieu, rising as a dark or sinister counterculture as part of Western "occulture."[46]

A most remarkable figure who gave, from the 1960s onward, organizational form to modern rationalist satanism was Anton LaVey (1930–1997; Figure 2.3), an American author and musician born of an American father

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[44] Ibid. (p. 6).   [45] Ibid.   [46] Ibid. (p. 3).

Figure 2.3   Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey.
Source: Bettmann/Getty Images.

and a mother of Eastern European origin. He was the subject of numerous articles in news media throughout the world, and he also appeared on many talk shows and in feature-length documentaries. According to some sources, he left high school to join a circus and subsequently worked, among other occupations, as a psychic and as a nightclub organist. He gained local celebrity in the San Francisco area as a dark, mysterious figure who rejected traditional Christian morality as hypocritical. He founded the Church of Satan on Walpurgis Night on April 30, 1966, and called himself its high priest. Three years later he published *The Satanic Bible*, his most influential work, in which he depicted the teachings and rituals of his church as a reversed religious institution.[47]

The Satanic Bible

LaVey's main work, *The Satanic Bible*, is a collection of essays, observations, and rituals, considered as the foundation of the philosophy and dogma of the Church of Satan. The "black pope" of this church, as he was

[47] *Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/biography/Anton-LaVey, May 14, 2022.

sometimes called in newspapers, praises the virtues of exploring one's own nature and instincts. He and his organization of contemporary Faustians presented themselves in two strikingly new identities. First, they sacrilegiously represented themselves as a "church", a term previously reserved for the branches of Christianity. Second, their black magic[48] was practiced openly instead of underground. In his works, LaVey realizes a radical reversal from what he considered as the false altruism of the mandatory love-thy-neighbor attitude and presents satanism as a blatantly selfish, brutal philosophy based on the belief that human beings are inherently selfish, violent creatures and that life is a Darwinian struggle for survival. This act of turning religion upside down is clearly expressed in the following text that is typical of his rebellious writing style:

> The first book of the Satanic Bible is not an attempt to blaspheme as much as it is a statement of what might be termed "diabolical indignation". The Devil has been attacked by the men of God relentlessly and without reservation. Never has there been an opportunity, short of fiction, for the Dark Prince to speak out in the same manner as the spokesmen of the Lord of the Righteous. The pulpit-pounders of the past have been free to define "good" and "evil" as they see fit, and have gladly smashed into oblivion any who disagree with their lies – both verbally and, at times, physically. Their talk of "charity", when applied to His Infernal Majesty, becomes an empty sham – and most unfairly, too, considering the obvious fact that without their Satanic foe their very religions would collapse. How sad, that the allegorical personage most responsible for the success of spiritual religions is shown the *least* amount of charity and the most consistent abuse – and by those who most unctuously preach the rules of fair play! For all the centuries of shouting down the Devil has received, he has never shouted back at his detractors. He has remained the gentleman at all times, while those he supports rant and rave. He has shown himself to be a model of deportment, but now he feels it is time to shout back. He has decided it is finally time to receive his due. Now the ponderous rule books of hypocrisy are no longer needed. In order to relearn the Law of the Jungle, a small, slim diatribe will do. Each verse is an inferno. Each word is a tongue of fire. The flames of Hell burn fierce . . . and purify![49]

LaVey emphasizes that the satanic religion has not merely taken the coin but has flipped it completely over. He is entirely and radically devoted to a reversed doctrine that he presents as a satanic philosophy that is not a white-light religion but a religion of the flesh, the mundane, the carnal,

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[48] Black magic involves practices associated with the devil or with evil spirits (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, www.britannica.com/dictionary/black-magic, retrieved June 8, 2022).
[49] LaVey (1969, p. 15, pagination starts from the cover).

Figure 2.4   The Sigil of Baphomet is the official symbol of LaVeyan satanism and the Church of Satan.
Source: Maksym Malcev/iStock/Getty Images Plus.

ruled by Satan and embraced as the personification of the "Left Hand Path" (Figure 2.4).[50]

Like in the lives and works of Genet and Sade, we see in LaVey's case elements of a radical *reversal* from moral bad, as defined in the society in which he lives, into moral good. In his own words: "The seven deadly sins of the Christian Church are: greed, pride, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, and sloth. Satanism advocates indulging in each of these 'sins' as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification."[51] This reversal, including the intensification and justification of moral bad, is supported by *coalitions*. Similar to Genet, who celebrated his position as a criminal as a coalition with his position as a saint, LaVey uses religious terminology to heighten his identity as a worshipper of the carnal: "Say unto thine own heart, 'I am mine own redeemer.'"[52] And he aspires to be "the true worshipper of the highest and ineffable King of Hell!"[53] Like in Genet's and Sade's works, these coalitions allow him to become engaged in a process of *transpositioning*, transmitting the energy of worshipping to his infernal position in order to breathe extra life in it.

LaVey arrives in a process of a structural *over-positioning* of his nonconformity by recommending satanism as a selfish, brutal view of life, guided by the belief that human beings are essentially violent.[54] Finally, like

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[50] Ibid. (p. 28).   [51] Ibid. (p. 25).   [52] Ibid. (p. 19).   [53] Ibid. (p. 91).
[54] Burton H. Wolfe in his introduction to LaVey (1969).

Genet and Sade, he is involved in a process of *anti-positioning* toward the morals of Christianity, as expressed in statements such as: "The pulpit-pounders of the past have been free to define 'good' and 'evil' as they see fit, and have gladly smashed into oblivion any who disagree with their lies."[55] As an advocate of the reversal of bad into good, LaVey systematically and necessarily clashes with the moral codes of the societies in which he lived.

Hypocrisy as a Challenge to the Mores of the Time

In the works of Genet, Sade, and LaVey, we find explicit or implicit criticisms of hypocrisy as a detestable aspect of the morality of their societies. Elaborating on this criticism, I will examine the phenomenon of hypocrisy as discussed in moral psychology and examine it from the perspective of moral multiplicity.

Writing about Genet's life and work, Jean-Paul Sartre notes that he (Genet) is living in a "strange society" in which individuals retain the trappings of striving for order and wish to disorganize it at the same time. Precisely because of "this hypocrisy," society presents an appearance of morals, values, rites, and prohibitions.[56] Criticism of society's hypocrisy is also apparent in Sade's work, as he savagely rejects the idea of submission to society's rules and he detests the hypocritical resignation that is adorned with the name of virtue. In submitting to these rules, people renounce both their authenticity and their freedom.[57] Most explicit is the theme of hypocrisy addressed by LaVey, who observed, from a young age onward, that "the Christian church thrives on hypocrisy, and that man's carnal nature will [come] out no matter how much it is purged or scourged by any white-light religion."[58] As a vital alternative he contends that Satan represents "undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self-deceit!"[59] According to LaVey's commenters, his work breathes a "consuming disgust for hypocrisy."[60]

Hypocrisy is not only a serious topic in counter-ideologies, like those of Genet, Sade, and LaVey; it has also gained the interest of researchers in the field of moral psychology.[61] Paying attention to their research findings has the distinct advantage that we can learn how hypocrisy functions in the

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[55] LaVey (1969, p. 15).   [56] Sartre (2012, p. 177).
[57] de Beauvoir, introduction to Marquis de Sade (1966, p. 72).   [58] LaVey (1969, p. 7).
[59] Ibid. (p. 57).   [60] Dyrendal et al. (2016, p. 83).   [61] Ellemers et al. (2019).

everyday lives of ordinary people and what means are available to reduce it (see the "Practical Implications" section at the end of this chapter).

In an influential study in the field of moral psychology, Batson and colleagues[62] started their experimental research by wondering whether the truism "moral principles motivate moral action" is really true. Although this maxim undergirds much teaching, preaching, parenting, and politicking, is there any evidence demonstrating that people who learn to value moral responsibility are more likely to act accordingly? In their doubts about the answer to this question, the researchers referred to some astute observers of the human condition such as the writers Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain, who, like Genet, Sade, and LaVey, noted that highly valued morals often serve another master, one who provides convenient and high-sounding rationalizations for one's self-interest. Intrigued by these considerations, the investigators provided their research participants with two tasks: a so-called positive consequences task in which each correct response earned a raffle ticket and a neutral consequences task that was described as rather dull and boring in which each correct response delivered nothing worthwhile. Participants were free to assign the tasks to themselves or to another participant. It was found that sixteen out of the twenty participants assigned themselves to the positive consequences task, even though in retrospect only one of them said it was moral to do so. Apparently, the actual behavior of the participants was not in agreement with their avowed moral norms. On the basis of this study and review of other research projects on the discrepancy between moral beliefs and behavior, the investigators concluded: "Given that, on the one hand, participants tended to express great adherence to moral responsibility in their self-reports . . . and that, on the other hand, when possible they acted in a way that had the surface appearance of morality yet still served self-interest, the label moral hypocrisy seems accurate – even unavoidable."[63]

Similarly, other researchers[64] became interested in another unsettling type of hypocrisy described as individuals' tendency to evaluate their own moral transgressions as substantially different from the same transgressions enacted by others. To investigate this assumption, they assigned their subjects to two different experimental conditions. In one of them, the subjects were required to distribute a resource (time and energy) to themselves and another person. They could do so either fairly (through a random allocation procedure) or unfairly (selecting the better option for themselves). After this manipulation, they were asked to evaluate the

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[62] Batson et al. (1997).   [63] Ibid. (p. 1346).   [64] Valdesolo and DeSteno (2007).

fairness of their own actions. In the other condition, participants viewed a collaborator of the researcher acting in an unfair manner and subsequently evaluated the morality of this act. Hypocrisy was defined as the discrepancy between the judgments of the same unfair behavior when committed by the self or by the other. It appeared that individuals perceived their own unfairness to be less objectionable than the same unfairness enacted by another person, a finding that suggests that the individuals applied, hypocritically, moral evaluations of themselves that were not in line with the ones they applied to others.[65]

Moral mandates are typically formulated at an abstract level, as illustrated by LaVey's criticism of the mandatory love-thy-neighbor attitude. This awareness stimulated research[66] in which abstract and concrete notions of morality were compared. Why is this difference relevant? When we think about actions and events in a concrete and specific manner, we tend to concentrate on the specific details of the situation and are focused on the immediate experience. Conversely, if we think in a more abstract and general manner about a certain action or event, we focus on more global, overarching features that are more distant from the specific situation. An example might be illustrative. Participants in this kind of research were informed that, during an unexpectedly difficult exam, an opportunity arose to dishonestly copy some answers from another particularly bright student, without the risk of being caught. It was found that participants with a concrete focus (it happens here and now) found cheating equally acceptable for themselves as for others, meaning that they did not show hypocrisy. Yet, participants with an abstract focus (it happens at some future point in time) believed cheating was more acceptable for themselves than for others, suggesting that participants with an abstract focus showed a higher degree of hypocrisy. The author of this study[67] concludes with a general warning. He hypothesizes that people who routinely think in an abstract manner about moral issues are more susceptible to hypocrisy. This is particularly disturbing as it suggests, in his view, that officials who routinely base their behavior on an abstract set of rules, such as judges, police officers, or priests, are themselves the most susceptible to hypocrisy.

So far, I have presented three instances of the reversal of bad into good as a central theme in the works of Genet, Sade, and LaVey. All three of them, with LaVey's voice being the most pronounced, criticize hypocrisy

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[65] For a treatment of hypocrisy in relation to the modularity of the mind, see Kurzban (2010).
[66] Lammers (2011).   [67] Ibid.

as a basic problem in mainstream religion and in the morals of their time. As a protest, they proposed the exaltation of moral bad as an equally one-sided alternative. In the following, I will argue that there is not simply one moral position at work in the self but rather a multiplicity of positions, in agreement with the basic thesis of DST that understands the self as a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions in the society of mind, with the potential of dialogical relationships among them. Following this path, I will examine the nature of moral multiplicity and arrive at the conclusion that, perhaps to the surprise of some readers, *a certain degree* of hypocrisy is unavoidable when one finds oneself in the field of tension of moral multiplicity.

What is judged as immoral in one situation is permissible in another one

One of my neighbors has the key to my house and takes care of my mailbox and plants when I'm gone for a couple of days. Suppose that on my return I notice that one of the ten bonbons on my table had been removed. In this case, I would not mind; rather, I would smile, because this act of my neighbor would be for me within the realm of the permissible.

A few years ago, I was standing in a supermarket in front of a large bowl of delicious-looking, multicolored sweets for sale. I could not resist the temptation to take one in my hands and was about to bring it to my mouth when suddenly, like a jack-in-the-box, a staff member of the supermarket appeared next to me and shouted: "We should not do that!" Entirely embarrassed and shameful, I asked her, after a short moment of hesitation: "Should I put it back?" "Yes!" she said adamantly. Although the financial value of the tiny sweet in the supermarket was less than the value of the precious bonbon on my table, I was aware that I had broken the rules. Apparently, the general command "you shall not steal" is highly flexible, often implicit, and, in its behavioral implications, situation-dependent to a significant degree.

Moral Multiplicity and the Problem of Hypocrisy

Social psychologists[68] have proposed a *moral-pluralistic approach* that allows us to see that we often find ourselves in situations in which *different* moral positions (they call it "values") are salient and that these positions can often come into conflict interculturally, interpersonally, and even intrapersonally. An important implication of this approach is that enacting

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[68] Graham et al. (2015).

upon one specific moral value might not be a normatively desired end goal for all people in all situations.

A most simple example of the simultaneity of conflicting moral positions is the phenomenon known as telling "white lies."[69] For example, people might tell their host that the meal they prepared was "great" or compliment a hairdresser that they like their unexpected "new look." Or Annabelle might invite her friend to have a look at the painting she has just finished. The friend thinks: "This is something my two-year-old daughter could make!" But she says: "Ah, your paining looks like a Paul Klee!" These little white lies that hide one's true evaluations are commonly told to ensure that the contact with an interaction partner proceeds smoothly without negative consequences for the relationship. That such lies are not infrequent was demonstrated in a consumer research project in which investigators administered a survey to restaurant guests. It appeared that 85 percent of the guests admitted to telling white lies when their dining experiences were not satisfactory but in fact told the server that their experience was good.[70]

What we usually call "tact" requires, certainly in situations of political disagreement and conflicts of interest, a subtle balance of being honest about one's purposes but, at the same time, avoiding any insult. This is well expressed in a statement ascribed to Winston Churchill: "Tact is the ability to tell someone to go to hell in such a way that they look forward to the trip."[71]

Telling white lies is a useful example of moving on the middle ground as the main theme of this book. Telling a white lie is located in a field of tension between honesty as a moral good and lying as morally rejectable. In the white lie scenario, good and bad coexist and even are reconciled. They allow the individual to keep the social relationship intact with only minimal dishonesty. The white lie is an acceptable coalition between two different positions: I as (slightly) dishonest and I as friendly.

In this context, we can ask: How are these findings related to hypocrisy? And, more crucially: What is the relationship between moving on the moral middle ground and hypocrisy? In order to answer this question, we have to realize that, as long as one is standing on the middle ground, there are at least two positions involved. In the example of white lies, one wants, at the same time, to be honest and friendly, but, as long as one is at this juncture, it is impossible to be either fully honest or fully friendly. One has

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[69] Argo and Shiv (2012).   [70] Ibid.
[71] Goodreads, www.goodreads.com/quotes/33365-tact-is-the-ability-to-tell-someone-to-go-to.

to, at least to some extent, concede to the moral requirements of both positions, resulting in a compromise in which the values of both positions are only *partly* realized. As none of the values can be expressed fully, a certain degree of hypocrisy is unavoidable. One values honesty highly, but in the actual behavior one is not fully honest. Or, one wants to be friendly to others, but one is not completely friendly.[72]

Also, at the societal level, a compromise between different moral principles is, in specific situations, inescapable. Take the example[73] of a finance minister who has compelling reasons to devaluate the currency of the country. This measure has been prepared in deep secret in order to prevent speculators on the money market abusing their foresight. However, a journalist, who has a suspicion about what is going to happen, asks the minister if she is planning a currency devaluation. The minister, who may be a very truthful person, firmly denies this. And surprise! The next day the devaluation actually takes place. So, it is clear that she lied. Yet, whereas in other cases a discovered lie of the minister would cause great commotion, both the public and the parliament have full understanding of the minister's course of action. If the minister had acted on the principle that one should always and everywhere speak in full honesty, she would later be accused of having damaged the country's welfare. Apparently, there are *specific* situations in which a person in this particular position has to get their hands dirty.

The "dirty hands problem" has been, in sociological circles, a much-debated issue since Max Weber's classic publication *Politics as a Vocation*,[74] in which he makes a distinction between the "ethic of ultimate ends" (sometimes also called the "ethic of conviction") and the "ethic of responsibility." In Weber's view, those who follow an ethic of ultimate ends act on the basis of their moral convictions. They don't feel responsible for the negative consequences of their actions because they are interested in keeping alive the flame of their pure (good) intentions. Weber considers the adherents of this ethic "quite irrational," as their actions do not take into consideration the possible outcomes of their behavior and decisions. By contrast, those who act according to the ethic of responsibility "take account of precisely the average deficiencies of people."[75] Hence, these politicians regard themselves as responsible for the potentially undesired effects of their actions (like in the example of the

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[72] See Andersen and Hovring (2020) for a view that emphasizes the value of hypocrisy for dialogical relationships.
[73] de Valk (2003).   [74] Weber (1946, p. 120).   [75] Ibid. (p. 121).

finance minister who had strong reasons to lie, at that particular moment, to the journalist).

Later commentators[76] have noted that Weber's discussion of the distinction between the two kinds of ethic is rather complex. On the one hand, he sees an "abysmal contrast" between the two kinds of ethic, arguing that "it is not possible to bring an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility under one roof . . ."[77] On the other hand, he claims that the two ethical orientations "are not absolute contrasts but rather supplements."[78] The two ethics, therefore, "seem to be both reciprocally implied and incompatible."[79] This observation has important implications for the concept of the moral middle ground as the main theme of this book. As I have demonstrated at the end of Chapter 1, we may find ourselves, in some situations and under specific circumstances, in a field of tension where moral good and bad are contrasting and conflicting but, at the same time, go hand in hand in mutually complementing ways. Or, to be responsible in a particular situation, one has to consider the *consequences* of one's decisions or actions, which makes it necessary to make concessions to the values to which one is dedicated. In order to act in a responsible way, the finance minister in our example has to find a compromise between her moral values and the equally valid moral demands of the situation. This means that, in such situations, a certain degree of hypocrisy is inescapable. In situations where it is required, an optimal use of hypocrisy helps us to avoid two pitfalls. First, when moral values are absent, the politician, or any power-holder, is at risk of sliding down the path toward opportunism, self-interest, and moral transgression. When, on the other hand, they act, always and in every situation, purely on the basis of their moral principles, they have to face the undesirable and potentially immoral consequences of their actions and decisions. In other words, to act in a responsible way means we are, in some specific situations, placed on the moral middle ground, where we are challenged to find the most optimal combination of moral good and bad.

What I want to argue is that, in some specific situations, acting in full agreement with some moral principle, without considering the undesirable consequences of this conduct, can be damaging to society. Actually, this is also valid for everyday situations in which pure honesty could cause damage to a significant other, with the risk that the precious relationship with this person might be broken. Moreover, in many situations not one

[76] See Pellizzoni (2018) for a review.   [77] Weber (1946, p. 122).   [78] Ibid. (p. 127).
[79] Pellizzoni (2018, p. 199).

but various values are involved; not only honesty, but also care! This value may justify the use of a white lie if it is considered necessary in a particular situation.

In my view, political scientist David Runciman[80] arrives at a conclusion that is worthy of consideration in this context: We should accept hypocrisy as an actual fact of politics but without resigning ourselves to it, let alone cynically embracing it. Instead of trying to eliminate and reject every form of hypocrisy, he recommends *distinguishing between harmless and harmful forms of hypocrisy*. The range in between those is huge and extends far beyond political discourse. At one end we can place a politician who preaches peace and dialogue in the service of useful image-building but, at the same time, relentlessly and systematically murders his political opponents. At the other end we see a person who is "keeping up appearances" to preserve a precious relationship.

The Danger of Acting on the Basis of Just One Moral Position

What happens when one's behavior is guided by just one moral position? In an article on the "dark side of morality," Skitka and Mullen[81] discussed events like the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. They wondered what could possibly motivate people to embark on such an incredibly horrific mission that involves not only a strong motivation to be a martyr for one's cause, but also a willingness to take the lives of untold numbers of innocent human beings. Without any doubt, the people at the front lines of these attacks had strong beliefs about their own cause. But what happened on the side of the American people?

Gallup polls in September 2001 indicated that many Americans were willing to forego numerous civil liberties or restrict the civil liberties of others in response to the terrorist attacks. The polls showed that 58 percent of Americans favored subjecting Arabs, including those who were US citizens, to more intensive security checks. Moreover, the polls indicated a widespread desire for vengeance: 92 percent of Americans supported taking military action and 65 percent endorsed going to war, even if it would be at the cost of American casualties.[82]

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80 Runciman (2008).   81 Skitka and Mullen (2002).
82 Ibid. Note that a Gallup poll taken at a later date might have given different results, since the time frame plays an important role here.

In their reflections on the responses of US citizens to the polls, the researchers[83] introduced the concept of "moral mandates," which they defined as "the specific attitude positions or stands that people develop out of a moral conviction that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral."[84] They propose that such moral mandates share the features of other strong attitudes – extremity, importance, and certainty – but they are imbued with moral conviction, which serves an added motivational and action component. Such conviction motivates them to strongly support waging war against nations that harbor terrorists or efforts to help those who were harmed by the attacks. Moral mandates are most likely to be expressed when people are under threat or when they feel the need to prove to themselves or others that their moral position is authentic.

At the time when I'm writing this book, the Russia–Ukraine war is already several months underway. Every day we are overwhelmed by an endless series of alarming messages and we – me and the people around me – are shocked by the continuous updates about atrocities and war crimes. The beginning date of this war, February 24, 2022, will be as deeply engraved in the memories of many of us as is the 9/11 terrorist attack. I wonder continuously what is going on in the mind of the man, President Putin, who decided to invade a sovereign state and not only kill many of the brave Ukraine soldiers and citizens, but also sacrifice many of his own innocent and ignorant fighters. What justifies in his mind all these atrocities, economic losses, and the far-reaching isolation of his country? (See Chapter 3 for an extensive exploration of Putin's worldview.) At this point, I restrict myself to the question regarding which positions might play a role in his justification of all these acts and consequences. I guess that at least three positions form a basis of his behavior: (1) Like many aggressors, he places himself in a *victim position* of the growing economic capacity of the EU and what he sees as the aggressively advancing NATO members that have enlarged their influence, even in countries that previously belonged to the Soviet Union; (2) as a response, he takes an *accusing position*, placing the EU and NATO as responsible for these developments, which allows him to take a strong anti-position and serves as a justification of his aggression and violence; and (3) he places himself in a *savior position*: Driven by the utopian ideal of restoring the Tsarist empire of the past and purifying the united Great Russia, he invaded successively Chechnya, Georgia, and Crimea, supported President Assad in Syria, and now has invaded Ukraine in order to "denazify" the country. Together, these positions

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[83] Skitka and Mullen (2002).   [84] Ibid. (p. 37).

may serve as Putin's justification of a war that is apparently supported by a considerable part of Russia's population, indoctrinated by a propaganda machine that tolerates no counter-position in the form of dissidence or public criticism. Is he involved in a process of over-positioning, as we have already noticed in the cases of Genet, Sade, and LaVey?

We have seen over the course of history that utopian ideals demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of a lack of moral multiplicity. Utopian ideals typically start from good or noble intentions, but, after their institutionalization, they may transform, via a process of over-positioning, into "giant monsters." As history abundantly makes clear, many social, political, and religious utopias have nurtured the illusion of complete purity, goodness, and perfection as the *end position* of an idealized society. This final salvation might be realized by transforming the imperfect society into a heaven of ultimate redemption. The Christian belief expects to achieve this final aim by promising an eternal afterlife, a mission that has produced institutions that caused rampant wars and led to the extermination of heretics, legitimized by the moral conviction that they were inherently evil. Communism, in its protest against religion as the opium of the masses, painted the vistas of a class-free society of freedom but ultimately led to the mass executions of the Stalin regime. The supremacist ideology of Nazism envisioned an ideal society in which only one race, the Aryan race, was depicted as a superclass, but this ideal resulted in the disaster of the Holocaust. Neoliberal capitalism preached the message of salvation of the free market but has resulted in worldwide exploitation of the earth, poverty of large parts of the world's population, and sharp economic divides. Some trends in Islam consider the original teachings of Mohammed "holy," but in their political manifestation they produced the horrors of killing "unbelievers." (For Putin's utopic ideal, see Chapter 3.) Taken together, many generations are educated by institutions spreading beliefs in "pure religion," "pure race," "pure liberty," and even the "pure ideology of the free market," all of them propagated as moral goodness but associated with a simultaneous blindness to their shadowy sides. These shadows should not simply be considered as undesirable side effects of a valuable aim, but as potentials inherent to the original, mono-positional ideal. The problem with such ideals is that they lack moral multiplicity and the dynamic influence of counter-positions that prevent any conviction or moral mandate from succumbing to a process of over-positioning of the original impulse. When thinking about utopias and their moral mandates, it may be relevant to quote social psychologists Walter Mischel and Harriet Mischel, who remarked:

> History is replete with atrocities that were justified by invoking the highest principles and that were perpetrated upon victims who were equally convinced of their own moral principles. In the name of justice, of the common welfare, of universal ethics, and of God, millions of people have been killed and whole cultures destroyed. In recent history, concepts of universal right, equality, freedom, and social equity have been used to justify every variety of murder including genocide.[85]

In order to avoid an unlimited process of over-positioning of the moral mandates of utopias and ideologies, the recognition and appreciation of moral differences, contradictions, and alternative points of view are needed as invitations to productive and innovative dialogue based on processes of positioning, counter-positioning, and repositioning (see Chapter 6).

At this point in the book, I want to emphasize that the recognition and awareness of the existence of a moral middle ground has the advantage that good and bad are brought close together so that they can "touch each other." This contact exists in the experience of conflict between them, seeing their contradictions, and feeling their tensions. Such contradictions might motivate people to "stand still" for a while to consider and reconsider the contradictions among their different moral positions and stimulate a dialogue that allows one to move from the one position to another and back so that there is opportunity for perspective change (for elaboration, see Chapter 5). This is very different from situations in which people adhere unthinkingly to abstract moral principles and, moreover, don't see the discrepancies between these principles and their actual behavior, as researchers in the field of moral psychology have demonstrated (described earlier in this chapter).

Practical Implications

On the practical level, I see three significant implications of this chapter for the development of human morality: the role of self-awareness, perspective-taking, and increasing moral multiplicity.

Self-Awareness

Explorations in the field of moral psychology show that self-awareness manipulations have been found to heighten awareness of discrepancies between one's own behavior and relevant personal standards, which has

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[85] Mischel and Mischel (1976), quoted by Skitka and Mullen (2002, p. 39).

the effect of creating pressure to act in accord with standards. Researchers[86] have found that self-awareness leads to a decrease in transgressing behavior. When subjects were given the opportunity to cheat on an anagram task while seated in front of a mirror and listening to their own tape-recorded voice, they cheated much less (only 7 percent of them cheated) than participants who did the same task but were not made self-aware (71 percent cheated of those who did not observe themselves in a mirror). Building on this research, Daniel Batson and his team[87] became interested in the question of what would be the effect of self-awareness on hypocrisy. They used the same positive consequences task already described earlier in this chapter, in which each correct response gave the participants a reward. The participants were free to assign the interesting task to themselves or to another participant. The investigators found that having participants assign the tasks while facing themselves in a mirror eliminated the moral hypocrisy effect. In that condition, the participants assigned the task to the other and themselves in a fair way.

Such results are relevant to the notion of the I-position in DST. I-positions, like I as fair or I as cheating, have the possibility of making actors become self-aware of these positions and the behavior that is associated with them. The I of the I-position serves as a "mirror" for the self: Is it morally right to do this and is my behavior in concordance with my moral standards? The I-ness of the I-position provides an opportunity for self-evaluation, self-reflection, and correction of one's actual position and behavior in light of one's moral standards.

Perspective-Taking

In a later study, Batson and colleagues[88] were interested in the question of whether perspective-taking could be a profitable way of reducing hypocrisy. Their strategy was inspired by a range of religious teachers, moral philosophers, and moral psychologists, with the religious prescription of the Golden Rule as the most well-known moral device: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (e.g. the gospel of Matthew in the New Testament: Matthew 7:12). This rule invites a form of perspective-taking in which you empathically place yourself in the other's position. Presumably, imagining how you would like to be treated provides the standard for how you should treat the other, leading you to consider the other's interests as well as your own. The investigators also referred to

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[86] Diener and Wallbom (1976).   [87] Batson et al. (1999).   [88] Batson et al. (2003).

philosopher Mark Johnson,[89] who emphasized the moral significance of perspective-taking in his analysis of moral imagination and argued that moral insight and sensitivity require one to imagine how it is to stand in someone else's shoes. Similarly, they mentioned the work of developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg,[90] who made perspective-taking or role-taking integral to his cognitive-developmental analysis of morality.

In their own research, Batson and colleagues[91] placed their subjects in a situation in which they could either accept a rewarding task (the already-mentioned positive consequence task) while the other participant received nothing or, as an alternative, change the assignment so they and the other both would each receive moderately positive rewards. In this situation, the results showed that imagining oneself in the other's position did significantly increase moral action. At the conclusion of a series of experiments, the investigators referred to a dimension that may be significant to moral behavior: the symmetry or asymmetry of the needs of self and other. Many situations of moral conflict are symmetrical, which means that your wishes and the wishes of the other are much the same. In such situations, putting yourself in the position of the other may not do much to help you to act in a moral way. You may focus on your own wishes, making it likely that you will ignore the wishes of the other, running the risk of acting in moral hypocrisy. In contrast, in an asymmetrical situation in which you are in a position of advantage, imagining yourself in the other's shoes has a higher probability of stimulating moral action, as was demonstrated in the experiment in which the other participant gets nothing of value. So, religious teachers, moral philosophers, and psychologists may be right that imagining yourself in the other's position stimulates moral action in agreement with one's own moral standards. However, as the aforementioned research suggests, this imagination is particularly effective in asymmetrical conditions.

Perspective-taking is basic to DST, particularly to the notion of the-other-in-the-self, which indicates the other as an external (extended) position in the self. This theory does not assume that actual others in one's social environment are automatically part of the extended self. Only individuals, groups, or aspects of nature that are appropriated by the self as having personal significance function as its external positions and evoke positive and/or negative emotions.[92] An important consequence is that, when the other is appropriated as part of the self and when there is an emotional involvement or attachment in the relationship with the other,

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[89] Johnson (1993).   [90] Kohlberg (1976).   [91] Batson et al. (2003).   [92] James (1890).

there is a higher chance that the individual will be willing to place themselves in the position of the other. However, when the range (bandwidth) of external positions is rather limited (e.g. the self is attached only to a small circle of family members or friends), then it is more difficult to take the position of the other, particular when the other is unfamiliar or seen as a "stranger."[93] In order to correct this social myopia, it makes sense to look for theoretical and practical ways to expand the moral circle in the external domain of one's position repertoire beyond one's limited group of significant others. And to realize this purpose, DST presents a model of four levels of identity associated with increasing circles of inclusiveness: the individual, social, human, and ecological levels.[94] This model has the potential of correcting a bias in mainstream theories of morality. Social psychologists, biologists, and evolutionary scientists have documented numerous examples of selfless and empathic behaviors as relevant to the origins of human morality. However, the main focus of such work is on the topics of fairness, empathy, or altruism in face-to-face contacts, in situations where individuals typically know and depend on each other.[95] Therefore, in order to expand morality beyond the individual and group levels, I will in Chapter 6 outline an extended identity model in which moral considerations at the human and ecological identity levels are paramount.

Moral Multiplicity

A general moral guideline for reducing hypocrisy is *avoiding basing one's moral mandates on one superordinate or end position*. Utopic visions in particular tend to culminate in an idealized end position that excludes any critical counter-position and, moreover, leads to deceptive forms of hypocrisy. The Christian rule "love thy neighbor" has not protected numerous people from the Inquisition, religious wars, and the mass killing of "heretics." Communism, which originally was egalitarian, finally produced a society in which unwelcome dissidents were punished by sending them to penal camps in Siberia. At the time of writing this book, news is spreading that Russian lawmakers have drafted legislation that punishes "false information" about the Kremlin's war in Ukraine with up to fifteen years in prison. Such measures not only cause anxiety across the whole nation, but also stimulate people to pay lip service to authorities in hypocritical ways.

[93] Schellhammer (2019).   [94] Hermans (2022).   [95] Ellemers et al. (2019).

In order to reduce hypocrisy, it is helpful to consider another moral position that is deviant from one's spontaneous impulses before making a decision and going into action. If one feels the tendency to act on the basis of *one* moral position, it is recommended to act *after* placing oneself in an alternative or conflicting position in oneself or in another individual instead of taking that position as the only mandate for action. As soon as moral positions are involved in mutual dialogical relationships, over-positioning in the direction of one exclusive end position is thus prevented. In such cases, different positions can, at an early stage, complement, criticize, and correct each other so that alternative moral pathways are not excluded or do not fall outside one's vision as a result of the moral blindness of a mono-positional stance.

From the perspective of moral multiplicity, the moral middle ground is a special case, as it is morally ambiguous. The examples of white lies outlined earlier in this chapter demonstrate that in such cases it is not possible to avoid hypocrisy entirely. When telling a white lie, one is not totally honest and not entirely friendly, but instead is somewhere in the middle. Therefore, I assume that hypocrisy cannot be avoided entirely in every form of human communication. I suppose that, from a moral point of view, it is better to strive to *deal* with hypocrisy than to eradicate it. Self-awareness, self-dialogue, and dialogue with other persons have the potential of generating new thinking and of stimulating the exploration of areas where potential answers to hypocrisy can be found.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed some of the main works of three authors as significant examples of visions that advocate a radical reversal from moral bad to moral good: Jean Genet, Marquis de Sade, and Anton LaVey. All three of them, most explicitly LaVey, accuse society of being morally hypocritical. Expanding on this characterization, I referred to empirical research vis-à-vis hypocrisy in the psychology of morality. This led to the presentation of a moral-pluralistic approach that allows us to see that we often find ourselves in situations in which different moral positions are prominent and can come into conflict with each other. Along these lines, I argued that moral pluralism is an essential characteristic of the moral middle ground. As a demonstration, I used white lies as an everyday example and referred to Max Weber's "ethic of responsibility" as a sociological concept that is particularly relevant to political leadership. Then, the mono-positionality of some utopian visions was criticized, as such

visions are focused on one ideal end position that does not allow counter-positions or alternative points of view to be expressed, thereby preventing the emergence of meaningful moral dialogue and dialogical selves. As practical implications of this chapter, I offered three guidelines for dealing with hypocrisy: the roles of self-awareness, perspective-taking, and the stimulation of moral multiplicity.