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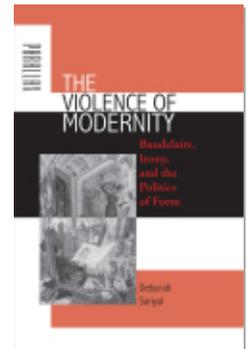
The Violence of Modernity

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony, and the Politics of Form.

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, .

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Notes

Introduction

1. See Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, for an analysis of the emergence of a traumatized, “pathological public sphere” in the United States, as well as Geoffrey Hartman’s discussion of the desensitizing effects of the media, leading to attempts at self-definition *through* injury: “It is in pursuit of such defining memories that we abandon the issue of representational limits and seek to ‘cut’ ourselves, like psychotics who ascertain in this way that they exist. As if only a personal or historical trauma (I bleed therefore I am) would bond us to life” (Hartman, *Longest Shadow*, 152). For important work in this vein, also see Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*. Fredric Jameson’s essay on 9/11, “Dialectics of Disaster,” examines how the trauma of the event has led to the emergence of a homogeneous national affect operating according to the principle of a “lost innocence” that America should mourn. See also Judith Butler’s essays on the links between mourning and violence in the aftermath of 9/11 in *Precarious Life*, as well as Jacques Rancière’s analysis of the American war on terror in *Malaise dans l’esthétique*. From different vantage points, these thinkers investigate the ideological ramifications of our contemporary turn to the therapeutic registers of mourning and melancholy. Their voices are part of a broader critical scrutiny of the United States as a “trauma culture.”

2. This formulation is borrowed from Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*.

3. This point was brought home to me in an exchange with an undergraduate student who, when given the choice between discussing Flaubert and going to a teach-in and rally, chose literature over politics because her reading of Foucault led to the belief that personal resistance to political injustice was futile.

4. After an initial period of skepticism about the value of his oeuvre (rehearsed in the 1857 prosecution of *Les Fleurs du mal*), Baudelaire then became France’s representative poet. Nowhere is this official redemption more obvious than in his prominent place in the prestigious *Anthologie de la poésie française* (Paris: Hachette, 1961, 1974, 2000) edited by Georges Pompidou. See Elisabeth Ladenson’s forthcoming book on obscenity and censorship for a trenchant reading of the cultural significance of Baudelaire’s consecration as France’s national poet.

5. “J’ai essayé plus d’une fois, comme tous mes amis, de m’enfermer dans un système pour y prêcher à mon aise. Mais un système est une sorte de damnation

qui nous pousse à une abjuration perpétuelle ; il en faut toujours inventer un autre, et cette fatigue est un cruel châtement.” Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Pichois, 2: 577. Claude Pichois’s edition of Baudelaire’s *Oeuvres complètes* is hereafter cited in the text and notes as *OC*.

6. There is an enormous body of critical literature around the terms “modernity” and “modernism.” As Fredric Jameson recently argued, the concept of modernity is itself a trope: “[M]odernity’ is then to be considered a unique kind of rhetorical effect, or, if you prefer, a trope, but one utterly different in structure from traditional figures as those have been catalogued since antiquity. Indeed, the trope of modernity may in that sense be considered as self-referential, if not performative, since its appearance signals the emergence of a new kind of figure, a decisive break with previous forms of figurality, and is to that extent a sign of its own existence, a signifier that indicates itself, and whose form is its very content. ‘Modernity’ then, as a trope, is itself a sign of modernity as such . . . the theory of modernity is little more than a projection of the trope itself” (Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, 34). Bearing these caveats in mind, my operative definition of modernity in this book is the nexus of historical conditions characterizing post-1848 industrial capitalist France and modernism as the aesthetic movement responding to these upheavals by withdrawing into formal preoccupations. This latter view (of literature’s retreat into form) is interrogated throughout my analyses. For more extensive discussions of the concept of modernity, see Chapter 1. For an overview of dominant accounts of modernism that see Baudelaire as an inaugural figure, see the introduction to Chapter 2.

7. Reading Baudelaire as the poet of an ongoing traumatic modernity has unprecedented appeal in a contemporary urban culture haunted by the specter of terror. In “Les Sept Vieillards,” for instance, the poet-flâneur wanders through a squalid metropolis, his consciousness braced to parry the intrusions of a hostile world. He comes upon a decrepit old man whose gaze seems to distill the malevolence of the world. The old man replicates himself seven times before the poet’s transfixed eyes, like so many identical, menacing images serially unfolding on a television screen. The poet’s vulnerability to the forces of a hostile, incomprehensible world manifests itself as an epistemological crisis that leaves him in a state of boundless trauma, his soul dancing on a monstrous and shoreless ocean. This immobility before the old man’s replicated image finds an echo in our own sense of immobility before the monotonous unfolding of images of global violence. It may even resonate with our lived experience as we walk through cities with a heightened sense of the violence behind benign façades, of the fragility of our most solid monuments and landmarks. However, Baudelaire’s own reversals of power both in this poem and in others examined in this book challenge such a positioning of the subject as a passive victim, focusing instead on the ethical and political agency made possible by this experience of generalized vulnerability.

8. For an overview of “trauma” as a category that operates as a way of reading

history and literature, see LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. There are a number of scholars (especially feminists) currently deploying “trauma” as a political category that bridges the personal experience of psychic pain and the public realm of representation and praxis. See, e.g., Cvetkovitch, *Archive of Feeling*, who recognizes the risks of “taking on a discourse that has been dominated by medical and pathologizing approaches” but seeks to deploy trauma because “it opens up a space for accounts of pain as psychic, not just physical. As a name for experiences of socially-situated political violence, trauma forges overt connections between politics and emotion” (3).

9. Rancière, *Malaise*, supports the parallel I suggest throughout this book between the construction of modernism as a self-reflexive aesthetic of autonomy and the theorization of modernity as a crisis of representation to which literature bears a testimonial relation. Indeed, Rancière proposes that the “ethical turn” recently characterizing art as testimony to unrepresentable catastrophe is, paradoxically, an even more depoliticized version of modernism’s aesthetic autonomy. Art for art’s sake and its aesthetic promise of future emancipation has been displaced with a conception of art as testimony to an unrepresentable and ongoing catastrophe: “le tournant éthique n’est pas une nécessité historique. Pour la simple raison qu’il n’y a pas de nécessité historique du tout. Mais ce mouvement tient sa force de sa capacité à recoder et à inverser les formes de pensée et les attitudes qui visaient hier à un changement artistique ou politique radical. Le tournant éthique n’est pas le simple apaisement des dissensus de la politique et de l’art dans l’ordre consensuel. Il apparaît bien plutôt comme la forme ultime prise par la volonté d’absolutiser ce dissensus. La rigueur moderniste adornienne qui voulait purifier l’élément émancipateur de l’art de toute compromission avec le commerce culturel et la vie esthétisée devient la réduction de l’art au témoignage éthique sur la catastrophe irréprésentable” (172).

10. Chapter 1 traces the ongoing influence of de Manian reading strategies in current models that invest textual undecidability with historical weight and ethical value. This nexus of assumptions needs to be interrogated for a more nuanced view of how undecidability functions as a mode of critique and commitment.

11. This project is informed by and indebted to a generation of scholars who have worked between textual analysis and historical contextualization in powerful yet nuanced discussions of Baudelaire, modernism, and oppositionality. My readings of Baudelaire are implicitly (as well as explicitly) in dialogue with critical terms and reading procedures developed by critics such as Ross Chambers, Barbara Johnson, Marie MacLean, Suzanne Nash, and Richard Terdiman.

12. Sartre’s psychobiography of Baudelaire rehearses this split between poetry and prose. In Sartre’s view, Baudelaire abdicated his lucidity before the contingency of existence and values, choosing to retreat into the compensatory fictions of poetic form. Baudelaire thus stands in not only for the nineteenth century’s failure to meet the historical demands of its readership but for modernism’s retreat from the claims of historicity and praxis, a judgment that includes Camus.

13. This has become a standard account of Sartre's distinction between poetry and prose and, by extension, between aesthetic experience and political commitment. For an important reevaluation of the relations between aesthetic form and engagement, see Guerlac, *Literary Polemics*, who reconfigures the twentieth-century French critical landscape and dismantles the traditional opposition between poetry and action, under which a number of other oppositions stereotypically adhere. In a close reading of Sartre that uncovers proximities with the thought of Bergson, Valéry, and Bataille, Guerlac identifies at the heart of Sartre's theory of engagement a formulation of freedom that is grounded specifically in aesthetic experience: "Engagement is not opposed to belief in an absolute value of art. On the contrary, an equation of literature and the absolute is itself the very mechanism of engagement, and not just of literary commitment" (94).

14. The question of poetry's relationship to ethico-political claims remains a vexed issue in criticism. Since Bakhtin's theorization of dialogism and the novel, narrative tends to be privileged over poetry as a form suitable for an ethical relation and political commitment. See, e.g., Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, which posits the relation between narrative and ethics as a defining feature of prose fiction: "The fact that narrative ethics can be construed in two directions at once—on the one hand, as attributing to narrative discourse some kind of ethical status, and on the other, as referring to the way ethical discourse often depends on narrative structures—makes this reciprocity between narrative and ethics more binding, more grammatical, so to speak, and less the accident of coinage" (8). Newton provides an admirable account of narrative as an intersubjective and ethical armature, but several of his claims could be extended to lyric and prose poetry.

15. It should be noted that for Adorno, irony could not provide an adequate oppositional stance in our age of ideology: "Irony's medium, the difference between ideology and reality, has disappeared. . . . There is not a crevice in the cliff of the established order into which the ironist might hook a fingernail" (*Minima Moralia*, 211). See my discussion of irony in Chapter 1 for an overview of irony's vexed relations to critique, from Friedrich Schlegel to Paul de Man.

16. I borrow this distinction from LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.

17. As Thomas Trezise has noted in an important reassessment of Adorno's declaration and its fate in recent theory, the very use of "Auschwitz" in this interdiction of figural representation is self-consciously figural, since "Auschwitz" functions as a synecdoche for the Nazi genocide. See Trezise, "Unspeaking."

18. In his important recent work, Ross Chambers offers an account of testimony that—in its focus on the contestatory power of figuration and on testimony's performative transmission of a knowledge repressed—resonates with Adorno's view. *Untimely Interventions* suggests that testimonial texts bear a residual, inaudible message often banished to the margins of a culture (the ob-scene) in a disavowal or repression of these testimonies' constitutive belonging to the scene

they haunt. In a series of readings of texts attesting to distinct historical traumas (AIDS, World War I, the Holocaust), Chambers identifies common features of testimonials' power to haunt a dominant culture, such as the infractions of figural language and the disruption of temporality (the slippage, for example, between event and aftermath). The referential lack that testimonials represent through various forms of catachresis induces an interpretive excess, activating the "phantom pain" of a knowledge (of survival and aftermath) that is simultaneously feared and grasped by the reader. For Chambers, then, testimony rewrites "insignificant residuality" (that which culture wants to forget) into a "hypersignificant liminality" (xxiv), thereby agencing an ethical project: "Such an ethics is grounded in acknowledgment of culture's constitutive difference from itself, and consequently, in an understanding of phantom pain as a manifestation of the mutual *relevance*, the pertinence one to the other of culture and the cultural obscene, civilization and disaster. Figuration actualizes that relevance in the form of rhetorical manifestations that, as interventions of the im-pertinent and the untimely (the untimely and the un-timely), function as reminders of such pertinence. And conversely, the untimely and im-pertinent now turn out to be describable as names for the existential manner of being, within an aftermath culture, of the communitarian ethos, its haunting parasocial presence" (320).

19. The exclusive focus on the category of "victimization" in discussions of historical violence masks the ways in which a subject or state harbors complex links to the violence at stake. Such a view forecloses more complex inquiries into the underlying conditions that precipitate violence. As Judith Butler pointed out in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the recent deployment of terms such as "terror," "terrorism," and "terrorist" has posited America as an injured victim whose retaliation is not addressed as violence but as legitimate retribution and self-protection: "The United States, by using the term [terrorist], positions itself exclusively as the sudden and indisputable victim of violence, even though there is no doubt that it did suffer violence. But it is one matter to suffer violence, and quite another to use that fact to ground a framework in which one's injury authorizes limitless aggression against targets that may or may not be related to the sources of one's own suffering" (Butler, *Precarious Life*, 4). The following discussions of literary violence also attempt to point out the ethical and political limitations of such frameworks of injury and victimization in an effort to open up a more nuanced inquiry into the causes, effects, and representational logics of historical violences.

20. The opposition between Sartre and Adorno has been interrogated and rethought in a different direction by Susan Blood, who uncovers in Sartre's notion of "bad faith" a point of slippage between ethical and rhetorical questions that reopens an inquiry into the formation of the modernist canon: "bad faith must be understood in terms of the tension between engagement and aestheticism that Adorno regretted losing" (*Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*, 4).

Chapter 1: Baudelaire's Victims and Executioners

Epigraphs: Baudelaire, "Le Peintre de la vie moderne," in *OC*, 2: 690; Victor Hugo, letter to Baudelaire, October 6, 1859, cited in *OC*, 1: 1011; complete text at [www.chronologievictor-hugo.com/pages/corpi859\(4,1\).htm](http://www.chronologievictor-hugo.com/pages/corpi859(4,1).htm) (accessed July 11, 2005).

1. I shall not rehearse the enormous body of criticism and theory that turns to Baudelaire as a key point of reference for theories of modernity. Some by now classic formulations are Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*; Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*; Compagnon, *Cinq paradoxes de la modernité*; and Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*. See Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, for a genealogy of the concepts of modernization, modernity, and modernism. Also see de Man, "Literary History and Literary Modernity" and "Lyric and Modernity" for a critique of continuous, developmental models for modernist poetry through readings of Baudelaire.

2. See de Man, "Rhetoric of Temporality," an essay that I discuss at greater length later in the chapter, and Newmark, *Beyond Symbolism*. More recently, Ulrich Baer has argued that Baudelaire and Celan bookend the modern tradition in their testimony to singular experiences of trauma that "seem to exceed all existing frames of reference" (Baer, *Remnants of Song*, 1).

3. Leo Bersani, for instance, rereads Freud's theory of narcissism to argue that Baudelaire's poetry conveys the self-shattering *jouissance* of primary narcissism through which the ego itself is formed. See Bersani, *Baudelaire and Freud and Culture of Redemption* (47–102).

4. For the former, historical reading of modernism through the trauma of revolution, see in particular Dolf Oehler, Nathaniel Wing, Ross Chambers, and Richard Terdiman. For some readers, the treatment of 1848–51 as the traumatic crucible for literary modernism raises questions about the historical specificity of such periodizations. As Susan Blood points out, "if literary modernism originates in trauma, the trauma has already begun with Rousseau and its specific connection to the 1848–1851 period therefore needs to be rethought" ("Modernity's Curse," 148).

5. A dichotomy that LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* addresses as having traditionally been cast as one between "trauma" and "history." Klein, "On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse," 27–150, recasts this polarity as one between "memory" and "history" in what he terms our contemporary "memory industry."

6. Benjamin records early responses to Baudelaire's person in terms of a "physiology" of shock that foreshadowed his status as a modern precursor. "His utterances, Gautier thought, were full of 'capital letters and italics.' He appeared . . . surprised at what he himself had said, as if he heard in his own voice the words of a stranger. . . . I do not even criticize his jerky gait . . . which made people com-

pare him to a spider. It was the beginning of that angular gesticulation which, little by little, would displace the rounded graces of the old world. Here, too, he is a precursor” (Eugène Marsan, *Les Cannes de M. Paul Bourget et le bon choix de Philinte* (1923), quoted in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 248).

7. Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” 194. Fencing provides an image for the parrying of external shock, which is deflected and sterilized for composition into poetry. For Benjamin, to write poetry as a city dweller in the Second Empire is to undergo a traumatic series of encounters that can even unravel subjectivity altogether: “Baudelaire has portrayed this condition in a harsh image. He speaks of a duel in which the artist, just before being beaten, screams in fright. This duel is the creative process itself. Thus Baudelaire places the shock experience at the very center of his artistic work” (ibid., 163).

8. “Consciousness is not the only distinctive character which we ascribe to the process in that system. On the basis of impressions derived from our psychoanalytic experience, we assume that all excitatory processes that occur in the *other* systems leave permanent traces behind in them which form the foundation of memory. Such memory-traces, then, have nothing to do with the fact of becoming conscious; indeed they are often most powerful and most enduring when the process which left them behind was one which never entered consciousness” (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 27).

9. “That the shock is thus cushioned, parried by consciousness, would lend the incident that occasions it the character of having been lived in the strict sense. If it were incorporated directly in the registry of conscious memory, it would sterilize this incident for poetic experience” (Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” 162).

10. In a cogent meditation on Flaubert and Baudelaire’s treatment of time that is informed by Benjamin’s perspective on the shock experience and the decline of aura, Elissa Marder examines how “the trauma of the shock experience can account for important aspects of the structure of memory loss in Baudelaire” (*Dead Time*, 95). Her first chapter attends to representations of women in Baudelaire’s poetry and argues that women serve as “shock absorbers,” as buffers, defenses, or containers for the alienation and loss of the modern experience of time. My third chapter, “Bodies in Motion, Poetry on Stage,” offers a different account of the representation of women in Baudelaire, not as “shock absorbers,” but, rather, as sites for a rehearsal of dominant—and often violent—cultural logics that are demystified in his poetry. Marder gives a compelling account of the modalities of anxiety and disavowal (fetishism, addiction, misogyny) through which Baudelaire seeks to contain temporal and sexual difference. While I admire the elegance and reach of her analyses, such an approach sustains the portrait of a melancholy Baudelaire whose poetry reactively, even therapeutically, attests to the shock(s) of modernity, at the risk of overlooking his ironic engagement with the structures of power that create, sustain, and disguise the violence of modern experience. Furthermore,

while Baudelaire and Flaubert may indeed elucidate aspects of the “dead time” that Marder sees as central to the modern and postmodern historical experience, an important aim in my project is to show that the contestatory resonances of Baudelaire’s poetry also posed a productive challenge to contemporary views of temporality (as modernity and progress), and that his legacy continues to be “re-animating” by his readers across temporal horizons.

11. See Freud’s “The Aetiology of Hysteria” for an account of childhood sexual abuse in women as reactivated in later life and manifested through the symptoms of hysteria. Freud later repudiated this traumatic theory of hysteria and saw the hysteria of patients as signs of fantasy and desires rather than as symptoms of actual abuse. For a discussion of the therapeutic consequences of this repudiation, see Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 10–20.

12. Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” 167. Cohen, *Profane Illumination*, challenges this reading of Baudelairean trauma as symptomatic of a repressed encounter with the crowd that is unrepresented yet constitutive of poetry. She rightly notes that, on the contrary, representations of the crowd abound in Baudelaire, and particularly in the prose texts of *Le Spleen de Paris*. She also observes that Benjamin’s discussion of Freud and trauma is more relevant to the modern materialist encounter of Breton’s *L’Amour fou* and *Nadja* than to Baudelairean subjectivity. Also see Marder, *Dead Time*, 68–87, for an illuminating discussion of Benjamin’s commentary on “À une passante.”

13. Benjamin’s portrait of the poet as a “traumatophile” acknowledges this dialectical relation between poetry and history and the demystifying force of shock itself. His initial essay on “Paris of the Second Empire” opens with the image of Baudelaire as a kind of conspiratorial putschist, whose rhetorical jolts can be read parrying the unpredictabilities and contradictions of the Second Empire. Indeed, Benjamin points to Blanqui and Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte as political analogies for Baudelaire’s poetic practice. Yet it is precisely this type of homology drawn between poetic and social texts that led to Adorno’s famous critique of Benjamin’s lack of “mediation” in his presentation of the Second Empire.

14. Margaret Cohen’s analysis and comparison of the different stages of Benjamin’s writings on Baudelaire (including an excellent account of the divergence between Benjamin and Adorno) provide an important corrective to this tendency. Noting the “torsions” to which Benjamin subjects Baudelaire’s poetry for it to represent the “shock experience” in the revised and more psychoanalytic version of “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” she redirects critical attention to “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire” while underscoring the complexity of Benjamin’s treatment of representation (Cohen, *Profane Illumination*, 208–26).

15. Kevin Newmark suggests that, while Baudelaire brings into visibility hitherto undetected violence in figural structures that may be at work in the literary and social realms, the greatest critical violence might be the belief that rhetorical insight may be injected into social constructions in order to discover their hidden

violence. With de Man, he warns against investment in “pseudo-historical terms of resistance and nostalgia” that are “at the farthest remove from the materiality of actual history” (*Beyond Symbolism*, 222). In a more recent essay, however, Newmark is more explicit about the political possibilities opened up by Baudelaire’s rehearsal of representational violence. Reading *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* as a critique of the idea of representation as mimesis, Newmark suggests that Baudelaire’s portrait of Constantin Guys makes visible the violence of allegorical capture and, in doing so, offers a glimpse into the violence endemic to all systems of representations—since these are founded on operations of memory that inevitably abbreviate, diminish, and even erase, the particularity of the phenomena they represent. Poetry’s failure to fully represent itself and its other and its call to the violence of memory, rather than the force of history, interrupt systems of representation and open up unknown contestatory possibilities, or “the incognito of genuine revolt” (84). Yet Newmark cautions against a stable and univocal recuperation of such a tactic: “It is a violence, though, only in the sense that, always as an *image écrite*, it can strike all that it touches with a force of displacement powerful enough, as in the case of Baudelaire and Benjamin, to make other forces legible, and thus to enable anything whatsoever to happen, even nothing at all. It is therefore a real revolt and not a real revolt” (Newmark, “Off the Charts,” 84). See also Ellen Burt’s subtle deconstructive reading of Baudelaire, which argues that poetry’s appeal—and force—lie in its capacity to disintegrate reference, form, memory, and agency, to become—as Burt says of the censored poem “Les Bijoux”—a “self-toppling symbol” (*Poetry’s Appeal*, 217). Poetry’s power to unleash the disintegrating force of memory, for Burt, opens the possibility of unbinding history and politics from totalizing structures of intention, rhetoric, and ends.

16. Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” 194. Compared to Wordsworth’s treatment of the shock experience, for de Man, Baudelaire’s poetry forgoes the continuities and closures of narrative emplotment: “in Baudelaire, such moments appear only by instants as isolated shocks that can never be incorporated into a larger temporal duration” (de Man, “Allegory and Irony in Baudelaire,” 118).

17. To do justice to such moments of insightful blindness, Baer suggests, we must avoid the temptation of either violently historicizing the poem by locating “reference” in its blind spots or insisting on the radical indeterminacy of such moments: “In order to prevent the effacement of such moments, it is imperative to stress the variation in moments wherein history’s rumble is halted and wherein other voices—in the form of contested readings—can be heard” (Baer, *Remnants of Song*, 152). For Baer, then, “What is defeated and exposed in these poems is the ability to recognize a defeat as defeat (and thus to celebrate, endorse and appropriate it): to experience the failure of attributing meaning without instantly attributing meaning to it” (*ibid.*, 65). This Beckettian Baudelaire is not so far from Sartre’s condemnation of the poet’s passive bad faith and surrender to the comforts

of a loser-wins strategy, although in Baer's account this irrecoverable "failure" constitutes the ethical triumph of Baudelaire's poetry. For an alternate analysis of Baudelaire's "bad faith" and the value of failure in his poetry, see Susan Blood. In a reconsideration of Sartrean engagement, Blood reads the self-negating, "loser wins" impulse rehearsed in a poem such as "Le Guignon" and its many intertextual borrowings in light of a theory of human agency wherein poetry's self-negation and the failure of instrumental language bear witness to "the self-destructing character of human action on the largest of scales" (Blood, "Modernity's Curse," 155).

18. The paradoxes of modernism's retroactive periodization through the Holocaust are also noted by Jacques Rancière: "[O]n dit que l'événement inouï de l'extermination appelle un art nouveau, un art de l'irreprésentable. On associe alors la tâche de cet art avec l'idée d'une exigence antireprésentative normant l'art moderne comme tel. On établit ainsi une ligne droite depuis le *Carré noir* de Malevitch (1915), signant la mort de la figuration picturale, jusqu'au film *Shoah* de Claude Lanzmann (1985), traitant de l'irreprésentable de l'extermination" (*Malaise*, 164–65). Both Thomas Trezise and Jacques Rancière examine how the rhetoric of unrepresentability surrounding the Holocaust marks the convergence of an epistemological proposition and ethical injunction (see Trezise, "Unspeakable"). Rancière argues further that this fusion of impossibility and interdiction has yielded a totalizing concept of modern art as the testimony to unrepresentable experience: "Cela suppose une construction du concept de la modernité artistique, qui loge l'interdit dans l'impossible en faisant de l'art moderne tout entier un art constitutivement voué au témoignage de l'impensable" (*Malaise*, 167).

19. Giorgio Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz* illustrates the paradoxes of rereading the literary canon in light of the Holocaust. Agamben turns to Keatsian negative capability or the shame experienced by Joseph K. at the end of Kafka's trial as offering prophetic insight into the complex affective responses of the inmates of the concentration and extermination camps of Nazi Germany, but also as indications of a transhistorical condition inherent in human subjectivity. Comparing Keats, Kafka, and, elsewhere, Rilke's evocation of shame, to the blush of a young student from Bologna who is selected for arbitrary execution in Auschwitz (reported by Robert Anthelme), Agamben collapses an experience (the imminent execution of a youth) with literary precursors of this experience's purported affect (shame), while also conflating the atrocity of the real event's historical specificity (Nazi brutality toward Jews) with an affect constitutive of subjectivity itself.

20. Hanssen, *Critique of Violence*, 9. For an extensive and illuminating discussion of the distinction between violence, force, and power in Arendt, Foucault and Benjamin, see *ibid.*, chaps. 1–2.

21. In Baudelaire's work, the oscillation between *victime* and *bourreau* does not, however, suggest these to be interchangeable positions that may be collapsed into one another. My reading of Baudelaire's "L'Héautontimorouménos" will clarify the distinction between irony and trauma as models for reading this oscillation.

22. There is an enormous body of work on the notion of “structural” or “institutional” violence, which I shall not rehearse here. Among the central texts informing this particular project are Foucault’s *Surveiller et punir*, Camus’s *L’Homme révolté*, and Butler’s *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech*.

23. The term “counterviolence” resonates with the work of other Baudelaire critics who have teased out the modulations of oppositionality in nineteenth-century literature, and in particular, with Richard Terdman’s important work on counterdiscourse as “discursive systems by which writers and artists sought to project an alternative, liberating *newness* against the absorptive capacity of those established discourses,” which nevertheless “are always interlocked with the domination they contest” (*Discourse/Counter-discourse*, 13, 16). Counterdiscourses such as irony disrupt systems of representation from within. I am particularly interested in pursuing the contestatory dimensions of ironic discourses that deliberately *fail* to offer consolation or critique, that close off the very possibility of distinction or newness, attending instead to the complicity between their expression and other discursive forms of power. My focus is thus on counterviolence as Sartre understood it, that is, as a violence against violence, but that is conducted in the sphere of representations (Sartre, *Responsabilité de l’écrivain*, 54).

24. Judith Butler alerts us to the critical possibilities opened up by the citation and possible resignification of an injurious representation. In a discussion of hate speech, she suggests that “[a]n aesthetic reenactment of an injurious word may both *use* the word and *mention* it, that is, make use of it to produce certain effects but also at the same time make reference to that very use, calling attention to it as a citation, situating that use within a citational legacy, making that use into an explicit discursive item to be reflected on rather than a taken for granted operation of ordinary language. Or it may be that an aesthetic reenactment uses that word, but also *displays* it, points to it, outlines the arbitrary material instance of language that is exploited to produce certain kinds of effects. . . . The possibility of decontextualizing and recontextualizing such terms through radical acts of public misappropriation constitutes the basis for an ironic hopefulness that the conventional relation between word and wound might become tenuous and even broken over time” (Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 99–100).

25. Pierre Pachet’s *Le Premier venu* opens an important line of inquiry into Baudelaire’s political thought that has stimulated my approach to the poet’s scenarios of violence. Pachet attends to the conceptual operations by which the poet’s treatment of sacrifice (in the form of capital punishment, suicide, and solitude) unveils “la présence dans le monde contemporain d’une violence qui résulte de la mise en présence brutale de postulations individuelles incompatibles” (203). For Pachet, the resurgence of sacrificial topoi in Baudelaire unveils the arbitrary structures of distinction that characterize postrevolutionary market capitalism. The modulations of this archaic ritual in Baudelaire rehearse the mechanism through which social differences are constituted and legitimated: “On peut trouver ces

principes à l'oeuvre dans la pensée de Baudelaire : unité de la création, échangeabilité des individus. Peut-être à cause de son caractère barbare, anachronique et figé, le sacrifice (guerre, suicide, peine de mort) prend pour lui la valeur d'une mise en scène révélatrice. Par la publicité du sacrifice, la société se tient plus près du mystère qui la perpétue, du mécanisme par lequel elle sanctifie les différences entre ses membres" (129). My readings of "Une Mort héroïque" and "La Corde" in Chapter 2 pursue this line of inquiry in dialogue with Pachet's work, while drawing out the challenge that Baudelaire's ironic repetition of hidden sacrificial structures poses to postrevolutionary configurations of power.

For a suggestive essay that theorizes the violence of Baudelaire's irony as a re-configuration of the pain embedded in the discourse of the dominant, see Ramazani, "Writing in Pain." There are a number of resonances between our views of Baudelaire's irony as an oppositional discourse that meets violence with violence, although Ramazani's focus seems to be on the representation and reception of pain rather than on the rehearsal of violence. Ramazani speculates that pain and its fissured transmission from text to reader in Baudelaire might be read as an activation of the social wounds of Haussmann's Paris and as a desublimation of fictions of absolute power. This activation/desublimation opens a reading "that allows us to feel the other's pain, to feel it as our own, and to desire to suspend it—only insofar as the suspension of pain is not a forgetting of pain's aversiveness, not a conflation of the relative absence of pain with the presence (the 'presentation') of sheer invulnerability. Oppositionality in *Le Spleen de Paris* consists neither in textual violence, nor in the reader's interpretation of that violence as pain but in the resistance of the idea of pain thus constructed to appropriation as an idea of absolute power" (ibid., 223). Another extensive inquiry into violence and representation in Baudelaire is Thélot, *Baudelaire*, which brings René Girard's work to bear on select poems and the often-neglected corpus of *Pauvre Belgique !* and argues that Baudelaire's writings rehearse an originary sacrificial violence from which all language and social forms proceed. Thélot defines poetry as a language that assumes and reflects upon a violence inherent in language: "Appelons *poésie* la recherche, dans un poème, par laquelle celui-ci accède à la compréhension de lui-même, découvre son meurtre, et amèrement l'assume. Réalisation mais révélation du mal, la poésie est ainsi, soucieuse de vérité, un mouvement de compassion pour la victime du poème" (434). Thélot begins and ends his study with a reflection on Baudelaire's silence at the end of his life. He considers the poet's aphasia as a willed, meaningful return to an originary source of meaning, one that opens language up to alternate and nonviolent ends such as love and communication (233). There are some affinities between our readings of Baudelaire's poetry as a self-reflexive interrogation of linguistic and social violence (a phenomenon I shall address in terms of allegorical violence). Yet, while Thélot's view of violence as an originary condition yields insightful readings of the thematics of sacrifice in Baudelaire, his reading of the poet's aphasia as an invitation to imagine language

as a site of love rather than violence is carried out in a mythic, poetic, and trans-historical register that differs from the historical impetus of this inquiry.

26. For a discussion of the function of metaphor as transportation between lexical codes and the implications of such transfers for the relationship between rhetoric and history, see de Man's reading of "Correspondances" in id., "Anthropomorphism and Trope in Lyric." See also Newmark's illuminating commentary on this essay in *Beyond Symbolism*, 201–30.

27. We could also read "L'Héautontimorouménos" through the lens of sado-masochism. As Gilles Deleuze puts it, "The fact that the sadist has no other ego but that of his victims explains the apparent paradox of sadism, its pseudo-masochism. The libertine enjoys suffering the pain he inflicts on others; when the destructive madness is deflected outwards it is accompanied by an identification with the external victim. The irony of sadism lies in the twofold operation whereby he necessarily projects his dissolved ego outwards and experiences what is outside of him as his only ego" (*Sacher-Masoch*, 107). See also Blin, *Sadisme de Baudelaire*. For a discussion of the uncanny that reads the play of difference in the Baudelairean sado-masochistic scenario through Nietzsche, see Mehlman, "Baudelaire with Freud." For an analysis of sado-masochism as a manifestation of Freudian narcissism, see Bersani, *Baudelaire and Freud*.

28. In that sense, irony, like beauty, has no locus. Both are dislocated processes that act upon other selves and things: "Car j'ai, pour fasciner ces dociles amants, / De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles" (Baudelaire, "La Beauté").

29. Poe, *Complete Tales*, 270. Poe's text describes a palace that once stood proudly in "the Monarch Thought's dominion," and whose serene and ordered hierarchy made all things move musically "to a lute's well-tuned law" (270). The palace is then invaded by a spectral and discordant throng of laughers, a fall that is echoed in Baudelaire's representation of the sovereign subject as a discordant note in the divine symphony, and as one who belongs to the damned who are laughing in exile. For a de Manian reading of the Poe intertext in this poem, see Harter, "Divided Selves, Ironic Counterparts." For a discussion of the paradoxes of Baudelaire's canonization as practitioner of pure art (by Valéry) through his encounter with and translation of Poe, see Blood, *Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*, 42–46. Also see Suzanne Guerlac's analysis of Baudelaire's translation of de Quincy's *Confessions of an Opium Eater* for a reading of translation/rewriting as the performance of an "amalgamation of poet and critic" essential to Baudelaire's reworking of the sublime (Guerlac, *Impersonal Sublime*, 85–93).

30. The image of a throng that laughs but cannot smile is most poignantly illustrated by the figure of Melmoth in the essay "De l'essence du rire": "Et ce rire est l'explosion perpétuelle de sa colère et de sa souffrance. Il est, qu'on me comprenne bien, la résultante nécessaire de sa double nature contradictoire, qui est infiniment grande relativement à l'homme, infiniment vile et basse relativement au Vrai et au Juste absolus. Melmoth est une contradiction vivante. Il est sorti des conditions

fondamentales de la vie ; ses organes ne supportent plus sa pensée” (*OC*, 2: 531). Modernity, as figured by Melmoth, is a living, insoluble paradox. Baudelaire’s “double postulation” echoes Pascal’s “grandeur et misère de l’homme,” a doubleness that, in a fallen world, can only express itself as irony: the lucid appraisal of one’s fallenness wedded to the persistent vision of a possible transcendence.

31. For a reading of the ambiguities of Baudelaire’s ironic address in “Au Lecteur,” see Chambers, “Baudelaire’s Dedicatory Practice.”

32. For a lucid critique of this slippage between victim and executioner in Cathy Caruth’s account of trauma, see Ruth Leys: “But her [Caruth’s] discussion of Tasso’s epic has even more chilling implications. For if, according to her analysis, the murderer Tancred can become the victim of the trauma and the voice of Clorinda a testimony to his wound, then Caruth’s logic would turn other perpetrators into victims too—for example, it would turn the executioners of the Jews into victims and the “cries” of the Jews into testimony to the trauma suffered by the Nazis” (*Trauma*, 297).

33. By “traditional” I refer to definitions of irony faithful to its etymological root. *Eironia* (dissimulation) is exemplified by Socrates, the consummate *eiron*, who, feigning ignorance, demystified his disciples’ assumptions and brought out the contradictions in his opponents’ arguments. Traditional irony—termed “stable irony” by Wayne C. Booth, “normative irony” by Gary Handwerke, and “specific irony” by D. C. Muecke—designates the creation of incompatible meanings in an utterance with a corrective aim that is both intended by the ironist and intelligible to the reader. For a useful overview of theories of irony in relation to politics and ethics, see Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*. For a history of the term from Aristotle to the present, see Dane, *Critical Mythology of Irony*; Knox, *The Word Irony and Its Context*. Behler, *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity*. Booth, *Rhetoric of Irony* and Muecke, *Compass of Irony* exhaustively define the structure and significance of irony and offer nuanced taxonomies of the many forms of this trope. For a history of the reception of romantic irony in nineteenth-century French literature, see Bourgeois, *Ironie romantique*; Furst, *Fictions of Romantic Irony*; and Bishop, *Romantic Irony in French Literature*.

34. Literature is conceptualized by Schlegel as producing itself as it produces its own theory, as poetry and the poetry of poetry: “And it [romantic poetry] can also more than any other form hover at the midpoint between portrayer and portrayed, free of all ideal and real interest, on the wings of poetic reflection, and can raise that reflection again and again to a higher power, can multiply it in an endless succession of mirrors. . . . It alone is infinite as it alone is free; and as its first law it recognizes that the arbitrariness of the poet endures no law above him.” Schlegel thus places the French Revolution, Fichte, and Goethe on equal footing: “The French Revolution, Fichte’s *Theory of Knowledge* and Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* are the three greatest tendencies of the age. Whoever takes offense at this combination, and whoever does not consider a revolution important unless it is bla-

tant and palpable, has not yet risen to the lofty and broad vantage point of the history of mankind” (Willson, *German Romantic Criticism*, 126).

35. Kierkegaard, *Concept of Irony*, 257, 283. For the French response to Fichtean idealism and romantic irony, see Madame de Staël, “La Philosophie et la Morale,” in *De l’Allemagne*.

36. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 64. Both Hegel and Kierkegaard thus seek to rescue a dialectical, Socratic irony from the nihilism of Schlegel’s formulations. For an account of the importance of Hegel and Kierkegaard’s reading of Schlegel in the transmission of a “myth” of irony as a manifestation of Fichtean idealism into current theories of this trope, see Dane, *Critical Mythology of Irony*, chap. 4.

37. De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 301. Gary Handwerke terms de Manian irony “epistemological irony” and gives a critique of its misprision of Schlegel’s irony, which in Handwerke’s account, inaugurated an intersubjective theory of “irony of consensus” (*Irony and Ethics*, 1–17). The tension between irony and ethics is rehearsed in Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Although Rorty celebrates irony’s powers of redescription for awakening our imaginative identification with what is foreign to the self (an identification necessary for the avoidance of cruelty), he nevertheless views irony primarily as an aesthetic and nihilistic mode of self-perfection and advocates its “privatization.”

38. Terdiman discusses the nineteenth century’s turn to irony as a response to the erosion of utopian thought and elucidates the dialogical, contextual, and oppositional features of irony itself: “As deployed in the counter-discourses of the nineteenth century, irony can be understood as a rhetorical figure of the *dialogic*. It materializes the counter-term which any dominant usage seeks to suppress. Its function is to provide an alternative through which any element of the here-and-now may be shown as contingent, and thereby to subject the whole configuration of power within which it took its adversative meaning to the erosive, dialectical power of alterity” (*Discourse/Counter-discourse*, 76).

39. For a different approach to the structure and function of irony in Baudelaire, see Kaplan, *Baudelaire’s Prose Poems*, which examines the modalities of “Socratic irony” that inform the esthetic, ethical, and religious dimensions of *Le Spleen de Paris*.

40. Ecclus. 21:23, “vir sapiens vix tacite ridebit,” translated by Bossuet as “rit à peine à petit bruit d’une bouche timide.” The source in the Vulgate is thus significantly erased by Baudelaire.

41. See Claude Pichois’s note and reproduction of the Chennevières passage in question (*OC*, 2: 1344–45).

42. Pagan idols, for instance, remain sacred only because laughter is banished from their midst: “Je crois que l’antiquité était pleine de respect pour les tambours-majors et les faiseurs de tours de force en tous genres, et que tous les fétiches extravagants que je citais ne sont que des signes d’adoration, ou tout au plus de symboles de force, et nullement des émanations de l’esprit intentionnellement comiques” (*OC*, 2: 533).

43. The allusions to “horizons” and “thresholds” in the essay are numerous and suggestive: e.g., the “singuliers horizons” that a theological account of laughter would reveal, the “créations fabuleuses, les êtres dont la raison, la légitimation ne peut pas être tirée du code du sens commun” (*OC*, 2: 535). Melmoth’s very identity emerges from the tension between two thresholds: “Melmoth, l’être déclassé, l’individu situé entre les dernières limites de la patrie humaine et les frontières de la vie supérieure” (*OC*, 2: 534). Finally, describing the *comique féroce* of English pantomime, the narrator explains its poor reception by the French public with the assertion that “Le public français n’aime guère être dépaycé . . . les déplacements d’horizons lui troublent la vue” (*OC*, 2: 538). The comic thus transgresses and exceeds conventional conceptual and perceptual borders, opening up a world of dizzying possibilities. In the absence of a providential telos, however, in the historical time of modernity, which Baudelaire addresses, such an experience is not devoid of anxiety, as the author’s own vertigo suggests.

44. For an important analysis of the centrality of the comic in Baudelaire’s poetics of modernity that also contextualizes “De l’essence du rire” in terms of theories of the grotesque, the comic, and the sublime, see Hannoosh, *Baudelaire and Caricature*. Although Hannoosh focuses on Baudelaire’s art criticism and particularly the essays on caricature, there are a number of affinities between our readings of “De l’essence du rire,” especially her view that the essay is an inquiry as well as a performance of the comic that implicates the reader in the fall into duality: “Clearly, irony does not lead to synthesis or a stable recovered unity, nor is this in the Baudelairean scheme, its purpose; but as the recognition and realization of dualism, it may, like *dédoublement*, open the boundaries of the self, becoming the means by which others reach the same level of understanding and adopt the same course of action” (73).

45. The formulation is borrowed from John MacInnes.

46. Indeed, Schlegel’s conception of transcendental poetry holds as its telos an ultimate synthesis of ideal and real: “There is a poetry whose One and All is the relationship of the ideal and the real: it should thus be called transcendental poetry according to the analogy of the technical language of philosophy. It begins in the form of satire with the absolute disparity of reality and ideality, it hovers in their midst in the form of the elegy, and it ends in the form of the idyll with the absolute identity of both” (Willson, *German Romantic Criticism*, 130).

47. De Man, “Rhetoric of Temporality,” 214. There is a certain existential and romantic register characteristic of de Man’s earlier work in this claim to locate the “authentic” voice of romanticism in irony.

48. For further discussion of the *interplay* between the “comique significatif” and the “comique absolu” in Baudelaire’s writings on caricature, see Hannoosh, *Baudelaire and Caricature*, and Stephens, *Baudelaire’s Prose Poems*, 108–59. The opposition between these two forms of the comic recapitulates broader tensions in Baudelaire’s aesthetic theory. Essays such as “Le Poème du haschisch,” “L’Art philosophique,” and “Puisque réalisme il y a” oppose autonomous art to “l’hérésis

de l'enseignement," only to dismantle such oppositions and propose a more nuanced view of analytical critique in relation to visionary art. Baudelaire's "L'Art philosophique" recasts this opposition as one between "L'art pur selon la conception moderne" and "l'art philosophique." Like a primitive hieroglyph, philosophical art is legible and applicable to everyday life. Its antithesis is Kantian pure and disinterested beauty. Yet the author then argues that truly allegorical art (treated as legible and hence "pedagogical") is not simply a literal translation of ideas into images but a fluid corpus of poetic meanings, which the *reader* must actualize: "D'ailleurs, même à l'esprit d'un artiste philosophe, les accessoires s'offrent, non pas avec un caractère littéral et précis, mais avec un caractère poétique, vague et confus, et souvent c'est le traducteur qui invente *les intentions*" (OC, 2: 601). This activity of readerly translation distinguishes the *comique significatif* from the absolute comic. Baudelaire's understanding of the creation and reception of the artistic text as an act of translation that must invent the work's intentions, fully implicates the *comique absolu* with the *comique significatif*.

49. An example of this misprision is de Man's reading of a pantomime performance in the essay as exemplifying the pathological vertigo of the *comique absolu*. Baudelaire's account of this scene in no way indicates its affect to be pathological, mad, or even anxious. He describes an enchanting performance in which the characters' careless, graceful actions are regulated by a magical providence that choreographs their every move from above: "Tous leurs gestes, tous leurs cris, toutes leurs mines disent : La fée l'a voulu, la destinée nous précipite, je ne m'en afflige pas ; allons ! courons ! élançons nous !" (OC, 2: 541).

50. "Ses conceptions comiques les plus supra-naturelles, les plus fugitives, et qui ressemblent souvent à des visions de l'ivresse, ont un sens moral très visible : c'est à croire qu'on a affaire à un physiologiste ou à un médecin de fous des plus profonds et qui s'amuserait à revêtir cette profonde science des formes poétiques, comme un savant qui parlerait par apologues et par paraboles" (OC, 2: 543). The demystifying role of the ironist is particularly pronounced in Hoffmann's *Daucus Carota*, where a father whose daughter is smitten by the fabulous display of military splendor shows her "l'envers de toutes ces splendeurs," the seamy underside of an army sleeping in the barracks.

51. As de Man puts it, "it is a historical fact that irony becomes increasingly conscious of itself in the course of demonstrating the impossibility of our being historical" ("Rhetoric of Temporality," 211). Yet, this forceful separation is never clearly substantiated and justified: "at the very moment that irony is thought of as knowledge able to cure and order the world, the source of its invention runs dry" (218). "Both modes [the ironic and the allegorical] are fully demystified when they remain within the realm of their respective languages but are totally vulnerable to renewed blindness as soon as they leave it for the empirical world" (226).

52. "Extended by Baudelaire to encompass the entirety of the individual subject as well as of the nations and their mobile links, laughter comes to name the

fallen mode of all experience; it thus becomes another name for the radically secular, that is to say, nonteleological and indeterminate, mode of history” (Newmark, “Traumatic Poetry” 244).

53. Thus both Newmark and Baer criticize Benjamin for situating Baudelairean shock in a historical continuum that relies on chronological models of progression and change, since such models are precisely what the unlocatable nature of trauma calls into question. As Newmark states, “Reading Baudelaire’s own essay on the essence of laughter helps to disclose how even this picture of the more or less recently produced shock of modernity may have its roots in a traumatic experience that ultimately eludes temporal and spatial determinations even though these determinations remain inextricably bound up with it” (“Newmark, Traumatic Poetry” 253).

54. Our author obviously enjoys imagining the sorts of caricatures Virginie could have encountered in Paris on the eve of the Revolution: “un Gavarni de ces temps-là, et des meilleurs, quelque satire insultante contre les folies royales, quelque diatribe contre le Parc-aux-Cerfs, ou les précédents fangeux d’une grande favorite, ou les escapades de la proverbiale Autrichienne” (*OC*, 2: 529).

55. To be sure, writing, like trauma, escapes intentionality and historical grounding even as it reveals the linguistic, and hence fractured and differential, status of the subject itself. Yet one need not assign a specific intentionality to the essay’s voice to see that it performs (rather than symptomatically reveals) the contradictions of its conceptual categories.

56. Dominick LaCapra has also criticized the binarisms deployed in de Man’s reading of Baudelaire (irony/history, “comique significatif” / “comique absolu”). He points out that de Man’s “two world theory” situates what is excluded from social life within a “separatist” sphere of literature and culture and fails to address the dialectical relationship between text and praxis. Such a separation “conceals the role of ‘fiction’ in ‘actual life.’ More generally, it provides no critical, non-reductive basis on which to raise the question of the actual or the desirable interaction between literature or art and social life. Rather, it leads to the ideological conception of the status of the literary text that may (mystifyingly) see itself as the demystification of ideology—a conception that is a displaced, perhaps abortive form of transcendental metaphysics in the guise of pure figurality, or fiction. The result in criticism is to generate a seemingly impenetrable barrier between texts and contexts that, insofar as they are not literary or linguistic in a formal sense, are either ignored or deemed exotopic” (LaCapra, *Soundings in Critical Theory*, 105).

57. The caricaturists most praised by Baudelaire—Daumier and Goya—are those who mesh the visionary and fantastic with a contextual critique of historical and political reality. On Daumier’s *Massacre de la rue Transnonain*, Baudelaire says: “Ce n’est pas précisément de la caricature, c’est de l’histoire, de la triviale et terrible réalité” (*OC*, 2: 552). Similarly, Goya’s work lies at the threshold of the *comique absolu* and the *comique significatif*, meshing the pathological with the analytical

and creating a “monstrueux vraisemblable” in which “[l]a ligne de suture, le point de jonction entre le réel et le fantastique est impossible à saisir” (*OC*, 2: 570).

58. After surviving the guillotine, the Pierrot of English pantomime who is “bien plus avisé que le grand saint-Denis” (539), stuffs his head in his pocket instead of carrying it around. In an anecdote that makes its way into Alexandre Dumas’s *La Comtesse de Charny* and *Blanche de Beaulieu*, Camille Desmoulins allegedly said of Saint-Just, “Il porte sa tête avec respect sur ses épaules comme un Saint Sacrement,” to which Saint-Just is said to have responded, “Bien, et moi je lui ferai porter la sienne comme un saint Denis.” Desmoulins was executed with Danton on April 5, 1794. Baudelaire’s “English” Pierrot is thus nationalized and ironically embedded in the French revolutionary legacy. My thanks to Peter Dreyer for alerting me to this reference.

Chapter 2: Passages from Form to Politics

Epigraph: Baudelaire, “L’Art philosophique,” *OC*, 2: 598.

1. For a rigorous analysis of the paradoxes of Baudelaire’s consecration—from misunderstood poet of the nineteenth century to rehabilitated modernist hero—see Blood, *Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*, which identifies an allegorical structure in the history of Baudelaire’s reception that allows us to rethink the relationship between aestheticism and engagement in terms of Sartrean bad faith. This bad faith, she observes, is operative in Baudelaire’s poetry and essential to modernist consciousness itself: “Modernism requires both the recognition and the refusal of historical location. If there is no refusal of history, there can be no modernism, no production (however mystified) of the irreducibly new . . . the historical consciousness of modernism must be in bad faith” (27). Blood thus traces the structures of bad faith in Baudelaire’s canonization, teasing out the mutual implication of aesthetic and historical conditions that allowed Baudelaire to emerge as exemplary modernist. As she suggests in a reading of Valéry’s “Situation de Baudelaire,” the poet’s canonization was itself a performative process that concealed its historicity. For Blood, then, “Other histories of Baudelaire may be told, remain open for the telling. The canonical story of Baudelaire’s aesthetic success is rigorously an allegory, since it retains the potential to reverse its own narrative. Put another way, the story cannot transcend its own temporality: it itself is engaged in a temporal predicament even as it recounts the flight of Baudelaire’s poetry from the temporal into the symbolic realm” (*Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*, 13). Blood’s notion of the “caricatural mechanism” of Baudelaire’s poetry (94–122) has some resonance with my use of irony. Blood defines it as a self-alienating mechanism that confronts the subject with its ontological ambiguity, and by which the poems acknowledge and disavow their historicity, point out the failure of symbolic totalization, and open a relation between aesthetic and ethical responses.

2. Friedrich, *Structure de la poésie moderne*, 70. For Friedrich, Baudelaire artic-

ulates the historical shift from things to words, an irrealization that will find its consummate practitioner in Mallarmé. Friedrich's genealogy of modernism thus situates Baudelaire at the origins of a developmental process in which the loss of representational reality and the loss of self go hand in hand. See Paul de Man's critique of Friedrich and literary historians of the Konstanz school for the teleological investment of their "assumption that the movement of lyric poetry away from representation is a historical process that dates back to Baudelaire as well as being the very movement of modernity" in "Lyric and Modernity" (de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 183). For a dialectical reading of de Man's essay and its value for teasing out the challenges of periodizing modernity, see Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, 106–18.

3. Two distinct views are found in Claude Pichois's and Jean Ziegler's biography of the poet, which considers Baudelaire's republican fervor at the barricades as primarily a personal rebellion against his stepfather, General Aupick; and Burton, *Baudelaire and the Second Republic*, who offers a detailed account of the political influences leading to Baudelaire's early radical republicanism.

4. These facts and testimonies are recorded by Pichois and Ziegler in their thorough biography, *Baudelaire*. In a letter to Eugène Crépet, Jules Buisson recalls his encounter with Baudelaire on February 24, 1848, in the following terms: "Il portait un beau fusil à deux coups luisant et vierge . . . je le hélai, il vint à moi simulant une grande animation : « Je viens de faire un coup de fusil ! » me dit-il. Et comme je souriais, regardant son artillerie tout brillant neuve — « Pas pour la République par exemple ! » — Il ne me répondait pas, criait beaucoup ; et toujours son refrain : il fallait aller fusiller le général Aupick" (Pichois and Ziegler, *Baudelaire*, 257). Pichois is thus skeptical of readings that argue for a genuinely republican or revolutionary Baudelaire, and declares "Ce n'était pas pour la République qu'il se battait ; pas même pour la révolution. C'était pour assouvir son instinct profond de révolte. Sa fureur n'est pas politique ; elle est métaphysique" (257). This portrait of the poet as apolitical rebel has been challenged by a number of critics such as Dolf Oehler and Richard Burton. More recently, Virginia Swain's *Grotesque Figures* has traced Baudelaire's dialogue with Rousseau throughout his works in terms of an ongoing engagement with political utopianism. Her discussion of the continuities—as well as differences—between Baudelaire and Rousseau (particularly on allegory) writes Rousseau back into a historical period that either disavowed or recontained his subversive legacy. This account importantly nuances the historical shift Rousseau and Baudelaire have come to represent and brings into relief the political resonances of Baudelaire's theory and practice of allegory in the prose poems.

5. See Burton, *Baudelaire and the Second Republic*, for an impressively documented historical study of Baudelaire's political activity in 1848. Burton carefully maps the political influences informing the poet's thought in the 1840s and gives a detailed chronological account of his actions and writings during the Second Re-

public. On Baudelaire's fascination with Proudhon in 1848 and the significance of his republicanism, see Clark, *Absolute Bourgeois*, 141–77.

6. See Cohen, *Profane Illumination*, 220–26, for an excellent discussion of this image, and of the reciprocity it implies for the relations between Baudelaire, his historical terrain, and our perception of that terrain. Cohen's treatment of this image is part of an important argument that brings to the fore Benjamin's "Paris of the 19th Century" (which, as noted in Chapter 1, tends to be overlooked in favor of "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire") by reassessing the grounds of Adorno's objections to it. Cohen points out that, far from establishing unmediated relations between base and superstructure in his readings of Baudelaire, Benjamin in fact explores the relations between social fact and representational form: "He asks, that is, not how Baudelaire's work reproduces existing material conditions but rather how it inscribes reactions to material conditions in current representational circulation" (Cohen, 225).

7. See also Baudelaire's comment, "existe-t-il. . . quelque chose de plus charmant, de plus fertile, et d'une nature plus positivement *excitante* que le lieu commun?" (*OC*, 2: 609).

8. "« Eh ! quoi ! vous ici, mon cher ? Vous dans un mauvais lieu ! Vous le buveur des quintessences ! . . . Je puis maintenant me promener incognito, faire des actions basses, et me livrer à la crapule, comme les simples mortels. Et me voici, tout semblable à vous, comme vous voyez" (*OC*, 1: 352).

9. Sonya Stephens's illuminating study of irony in Baudelaire's prose poetry overlaps with the concerns of this book at several points, particularly on the contextualizing power of irony or self-reflexivity: "It is the self-reflexivity, the self-referentiality of the prose poem and its discursive strategies which is most powerfully oppositional, since these engage the reader in the perception of otherness without overt social confrontation" (*Baudelaire's Prose Poems*, 75). I concur with Stephens, moreover, on the subversive effects of Baudelaire's citation of commonplaces and the interpretive instabilities caused by his intertextualities. While there are similarities in our approaches to Baudelaire's prose poetry, particularly in the terms we use (irony, citationality, self-reflexivity), however, Stephens's focus is on the oppositional possibilities opened up by Baudelaire's transformation of genre and his emphasis on low discursive forms such as prose poetry, the "lieu commun," "poèmes-boutades," and caricature. My own approach seeks to foreground the oppositional force of Baudelaire's re-citation of specifically political vocabulary and to examine the convergences Baudelaire maps between art, politics, and violence.

10. I fully agree with Terdiman's analysis of the perpetual absorption of counterdiscourses by the dominant discourse, and his focus on the energetic plurality of Baudelaire's oppositional discourses, "as Baudelaire had sensed in his original characterization of the prose poem, there can be no decisive directionality in a guerrilla combat waged under these conditions. The only omnipresent, omnitem-

poral reality is the constancy of the struggle itself” (*Discourse/Counter-discourse*, 339). My readings seek to recover modalities of this struggle specifically through Baudelaire’s exploitation of the complicities binding dominant discourses to their “oppositional” others.

11. For a thorough and suggestive reading of the historical significance and class politics implicit in Baudelaire’s use of the ragpicker, see Burton, *Baudelaire and the Second Republic*, 220–75.

12. *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, 190. L. A Berthaud’s portrait in this “Encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle” explicitly describes the *chiffonnier*’s quest for detritus as the search for a “poétique chenille.” His catalogue of waste that will acquire market value resonates with Baudelaire’s own parodic allusions to poetry as a degraded commodity object: “Les débris de vaisselle, les lambeaux de torchons, les talons de bottes, les tessons de bouteille . . . tout est marchandise, tout a une valeur, tout est de bonne prise pour le chiffonnier. Avec ces ordures, il fera de l’argent, ce pauvre alchimiste, et avec cet argent, il trouvera de quoi se repaître ; et il ne crèvera pas de faim” (*ibid.*, 192).

13. For powerful readings of “Le Cygne” through the categories of memory, melancholy, and semiosis, see Chambers, *Writing of Melancholy*, 153–73, and Terdiman, *Present Past*, 110–47. Terdiman examines the conjunction between memory, history, and the sign in this poem as what he suggestively terms a “mnemonics of dispossession,” showing how the allegorical drift of “Le Cygne,” its nexus of intertextualities, attests to a historically situated anxiety about the stability of reference itself. Baudelaire’s bid for aesthetic autonomy is thus subverted by his poetic practice, which both asserts and denies the social determinations of art: “Absolutizing the present (the characteristic gesture of modernism) and absolutizing the cultural object (the effect of nineteenth-century formalism) are moves that seek to undo the instability of the sign. But for Second Empire culture such instability inevitably carries the mark of the conjunctural, of history. It is this *differentia specifica* that defines this period. So it should come as no surprise that Baudelaire, while forcefully asserting the aesthetic ideology that denies the links between a text and its social determinations, at the same time (though always in a different register) powerfully subverted precisely this position” (135). For Chambers and Terdiman, “Le Cygne” stages historical change under the sign of melancholy and nostalgia. Their attention to the conjunction between the aesthetic and the historical informs my readings of the self-reflexive turn in Baudelaire’s poetry. However, I wish to counterbalance the emphasis on melancholy, mourning, and nostalgia by attending to more active, contestatory, and ironic reinscriptions of the past in Baudelaire’s poetry. As I suggest in Chapters 2 and 3, Baudelaire’s rehearsals of the imbricated violence of social and aesthetic transformation can be read as active contestations rather than symptomatic inscriptions of historical change. For a reading of “Le Cygne” as a poem that remaps political space by staging incompatible visions of history and myth, see Burt, *Poetry’s Appeal*, 32–40. In the compelling

parallel she proposes between poetic and urban space, Burt views the critical gesture of “Le Cygne” as its refusal to subsume or repress the heterogeneity of the city: “Unlike narratives, which have to feign the narrator’s claims to have gone beyond an error, the poem takes everything the poet-as-garbage collector finds and dumps it in our lap—trash gilded along with lilies. It recollects all the chances refused in the appropriation of the city, and returns them in a last-chance speculation concerning the readability of the system and the crowd, forgotten in its heterogeneity” (37). For an alternative reading of allegory in “Le Cygne,” see Gasarian, *De loin tendrement*, 97–120, which treats the mobility, diversity, and theatricality of the poet’s identifications with his figures as signs of a lyric subject whose “self” is exiled into multiple metaphoric figures that emerge from writing itself rather than from historical loss. For Gasarian, Baudelaire mobilizes allegory, not to mourn the loss of the past, but to pursue multiple self-figurations and to create, through poetry, a reservoir of imaginary affects, intensities, and relations (259).

14. *OC*, I: 358; emphasis added. See also “Les Dons des fées,” where the utopian homology between self and state inherited from 1789 is parodied as the fairies’ incongruous gift of “l’amour du Beau et la Puissance poétique au fils d’un sombre gueux, carrier de son *état*, qui ne pouvait, en aucune façon, aider les *façultés*, ni soulager les besoins de sa déplorable progéniture” (*OC*, I: 306; emphasis added).

15. Wing, “Poets, Mimes, and Counterfeit Coins,” persuasively argues that the explosive novelty of Fancioulle’s performance constitutes a subversive interruption of the sovereign’s power and hence opens the possibility for a shift in the implicit consent upon which hegemonic power is based. I agree with Wing on several points: the partial complicity suggested between art and power, the spectacular originality of Fancioulle’s oppositional stance and its disruptive implications for the discursive contract upon which both artistic and political power is based. However, I believe the poem to offer two distinct modes of opposition: the defiance provided by idealist art, embodied by Fancioulle, and the conspiratorial, complicitous poetics modeled on Baudelaire’s *comique significatif*. The development of this contextual and ironic mode of contestation (as *self*-contestation) is central in “Une Mort héroïque” and other texts that similarly contaminate poetic idealism and political rhetoric, such as “Le Gâteau,” “Le Joujou du pauvre,” and “La Corde.”

16. Friedrich Schlegel’s treatment of irony as transcendental buffoonery is vividly embodied by Fancioulle’s performance: “There are ancient and modern poems that breathe, in their entirety and in every detail, the divine breath of irony. In such poems there lives a transcendental buffoonery. Their interior is permeated by mood, which surveys everything and rises above everything limited, even above the poet’s own art, virtue and genius; and their exterior form by the histrionic style of an ordinary good Italian *buffo*” (Willson, *German Romantic Criticism*, 115). “Une Mort héroïque” also provides an uncanny echo of Schlegel’s portrait of

“English wit” in an aphorism that tersely associates wit with madness, absolute freedom, and martyrdom, suggesting the irrevocable gap between idealism and reality. The absolute freedom claimed by the ironist-wit will lead him to commit suicide rather than surrender to the empirical conditions his stance negates: “In England, wit is at least a profession, if not an art. . . . They [the wits] introduce into reality absolute freedom, the reflection of which lends a romantic and piquant air to wit, and thus they live wittily, hence their talent for madness. They die for their principles” (Willson, *German Romantic Criticism*, 116).

17. Swain reads “Une Mort héroïque” in terms of Baudelaire’s revision of Rousseau’s “realist” conception of allegory into a more generative, open-ended figure for the grotesque (*Grotesque Figures*, 130–32). Chambers, *Writing of Melancholy*, 10–11, suggests that Fanciouille’s death provides an allegory of art’s defeat and self-censorship before the conformism of the bourgeoisie.

18. Poe, *Contes, essais, poèmes*, 171. Subsequent citations from Poe refer to this edition.

19. For readings of Fanciouille’s failure to perform the doubling characteristic of a truly comic art, see Hannoosh, *Baudelaire and Caricature*, 53–58, and Stephens, *Baudelaire’s Prose Poems*, 151–59.

20. The response to Fanciouille’s performance closely follows Baudelaire’s analysis of *le comique absolu*, which induces in the viewer “une hilarité folle, excessive, et qui se traduit en des déchirements et des pâmoisons interminables” (*OC*, 2: 535). Baudelaire will insist on the Englishness of this phenomenon in his national taxonomy of comic forms. His essay on English caricature addresses the hyperbolic violence of, for instance, Seymour’s caricatures, as such an example of “l’explosion dans l’expression” (*OC*, 2: 566).

21. According to Baudelaire, *le comique significatif* is also a specifically French phenomenon, reflecting a national predilection for analysis. On several occasions, Baudelaire alludes to the French sacrifice of beauty on the altar of politics and philosophy. Philosophical art appeals to the nation’s interpretive, analytical bent, as he states in “L’Art philosophique”: “La France aime le mythe, la morale, le rébus ; ou pour mieux dire, pays de raisonnement, elle aime l’effort de l’esprit” (*OC*, 2: 601). The French passion for analytical and decipherable art forms also indicates an obsession with politics. In his essay on Gautier, for instance, Baudelaire views the French thirst for legible allegories as the sacrilegious demand for a politicized aesthetic: “pour la France, le beau [n’est] facilement digestible que relevé par le condiment politique . . . le caractère utopique, communiste, alchimique, de tous ses cerveaux, ne permet qu’une passion exclusive : celle des formules sociales” (*OC*, 2: 125). In light of the repeated connection between rational analysis and political reading, the *comique significatif*, translated as a poetic mode of opposition, acquires complex political significances. The strategies of the *comique significatif* found in “Une Mort héroïque” mark an ironic concession to the poet’s readership, since the *comique significatif* promises the intellectual satisfaction of hermeneutic

disclosure and political legibility. Yet the narrator's elliptical and ironic statements both point toward an unrealized political content in the tale and thwart its legibility. Instead, we are presented with a wavering between the absolute, or symbolic (embodied by Fanciouille and untranslated by the narrator), and the significant, or allegorical—a contamination of poetic and political modes performed by the very narration of the poem.

22. In “The Legitimation Crisis: Event and Meaning in ‘Le Vieux saltimbanque’ and ‘Une Mort héroïque,’” Swain has addressed the truncated Horatian intertext as the symptom of a “legitimation crisis,” an undoing of cognition that occurs at all levels of the poem and to which the narrator's own self-censorship contributes, and she concludes that the undecideability of the poem's closure is characteristic of radical irony (as de Man defines it in his “Rhetoric of Temporality”). I propose a distinction between irony as a mode of (self-)representation doomed to its own cognitive unraveling, and irony as a performance, which preserves the contestatory force traditionally attributed to this trope.

23. For an illuminating discussion of conspiracy and suicide in Baudelaire's political thought, see Pachet, *Premier venu*, 25–58. Baudelaire intertwines suicide and conspiracy in a curious note: “Qui donc niera le droit au suicide ? J'ai cependant voulu lire, tant j'ai l'esprit critique et modeste, tout ce qui a été écrit sur le suicide. . . . Si les conspirateurs lâchent pied, plus d'intérêt dans ma vie. Je suis donc intéressé à ranimer la conspiration” (*OC*, 2: 592). Pachet suggests that the poet's obsession with conspiracy and suicide opens a reflection on the impossibility of contractual relations between individuals in the public sphere of a postrevolutionary, democratic community. The turn to occult or unreadable exercises of power (the illegibility of suicide, the secrecy of conspiracy) signals a crisis of individuation within the collective, one that can only be captured by negative articulation: “Suicide et conspiration se rejoignent comme les deux incarnations d'une même position de l'individu, d'un individu qui n'est ni totalement solitaire, ni vraiment lié aux autres hommes” (Pachet, *Premier venu*, 54).

24. Indeed, Baudelaire himself suffered from this censorship as he was publishing “Une Mort héroïque.” Two poems had already been refused by the *Revue nationale et étrangère* because of their potentially subversive political content. For an excellent reading of the political context of “Une Mort héroïque,” see Murphy, “Scène parisienne.” There are many affinities between our readings, particularly regarding Baudelaire's understanding of political intervention as a series of tactical positions that are always susceptible to mutating into their opposite, and of the poet's ambivalence about the collective—which, according to Murphy, dooms the poet's oppositional stance to a “révolte individuelle larvée” (57). It is also interesting to note that a large portion of the issue publishing “Une Mort héroïque” hotly denounces the excesses of the “pouvoir indépendant et irresponsable de la sûreté générale,” specifically the censorship of the press through the taxing of political journals (*Revue nationale et étrangère*, October 10, 1863).

25. The empire's discretionary police powers dramatically increased after the Carbonaro Orsini's attempt on the emperor's life in January 1858.

26. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, 15, conference on Baudelaire under the auspices of the *Décades de Pontigny* cited by the translator, Jean Lacoste. All subsequent references to Benjamin's work in French refer to this Payot edition.

27. I am certainly not alone in pursuing the thematics of sacrifice in Baudelaire. The importance of this archaic ritual for the poet has been treated with unparalleled insight by Pierre Pachet, who, inspired by Bataille and Girard, identifies an anthropology of sacrifice in Baudelaire's thought that reveals the unanimous violence at the genesis of all community, a violence that goes unrecognized in modern industrial societies: "Or, la caractéristique des sociétés industrielles modernes—dont le Second Empire, avec son mélange de brillant et d'efficacité un peu brouillonne, est peut-être bien l'illustration, tient sans doute à ce que l'unanimité sacrificielle y est inconnu : sinon dans les accès barbares que Baudelaire avait anticipé, dans lesquels le ressort sacrificiel, entièrement dénudé dans son mécanisme, ne peut que s'exacerber jusqu'à ce qu'une intervention extérieure en dénoue le charme. Dans les autres cas, c'est dans l'individu et autour de lui que se joue la scène de la mise à mort, c'est entre l'individu et la société restreinte qui rend sa vie possible que se décident continûment les exclusions et les répartitions que la grande machine sociale se charge de consommer et d'inscrire dans ses réseaux" (Pachet, *Premier venu*, 204). See also Jérôme Thélot's Girardian approach to "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" as emblematic of a community's emergence through the ritual murder of the scapegoat (Thélot, *Baudelaire*, 43–69).

28. Orr, *Headless History*, 30. See Swain, *Grotesque Figures*, which contests this assessment in a thorough investigation and revision of Baudelaire's debt to Rousseau.

29. "Just as Baudelaire adopts linguistic *lieux communs*, so he adopts the generic commonplaces of such newspaper and publishing items, which themselves adopt a clichéd discourse," Sonya Stephens observes. "All of this contributes to the effect of the citational, itself often used for parodic purposes by connecting and contrasting the parodic text with its model" (*Baudelaire's Prose Poems*, 89). For more detailed readings of citationality and its ironic effects in the prose poems (particularly in "Le Gâteau," "Les Yeux des pauvres," and "Le Joujou du pauvre"), see 86–107. Also see Hiddleston, *Baudelaire and "Le Spleen de Paris"*, 33–61, for an astute reading of Baudelaire's ironic deployment of commonplaces, aphorisms, and moral maxims in the prose poems.

30. See Chapter 5 for a more extensive reading of the poem with Camus's *La Chute*. For a reading of this poem in light of the Commune, which happened two years after its publication, see Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-discourse*, 316.

31. For a fuller discussion of Baudelairean prostitution, see the introduction to Chapter 3.

32. This notion of an excess that disrupts the bounded and utilitarian economy of the family and of the creative process lends itself to a reading through

Bataille's conception of the "excess" at the heart of poetry itself. See Bataille, *Littérature*, 27–47.

33. "Robespierre n'est estimable que parce qu'il a fait quelques belles phrases," Baudelaire declares (*OC*, 1: 680), repudiating any substantive affiliation to revolutionary politics. Yet during the active phase of his republicanism, Baudelaire actually joined the Société républicaine centrale founded by Blanqui in 1848. Claude Pichois notes that Baudelaire saw in Blanqui a Robespierre of the nineteenth century: "Blanqui, par la pureté et l'intransigence de son républicanisme, par la flamme révolutionnaire dont il était animé, devait être pour Baudelaire un Robespierre du XIXe siècle" (Pichois and Ziegler, *Baudelaire*, 260). For an analysis of Robespierre as a mediation between Rousseau and Baudelaire that attunes the poet to the tyranny of "freedom," see Pachet, *Premier venu*, 38–47.

34. Cited in David, *Fraternité et Révolution*, 127.

35. See Baudelaire's "La Solitude" for another instance in which fraternity is associated with commerce and violence. The poet figure derisively describes "les belles agapes fraternelles" as the collectivity's attempt to *co-opt* individual thought as if it were an economic category, a common good to be homogeneously distributed and consumed. In the 1855 version, the poet figure responds to the chattering and appropriating throng by ironically reifying his vision of the sublime as inalienable private property—"ce coup d'œil lui a conquis une propriété individuelle inaliénable"—thus mimicking the discourse he derides.

36. See Baudelaire's *Le Musée du Bazar Bonne-Nouvelle* for his appraisal of David's work, including *Marat* and *La Mort de Socrate*. No mention is made of *La Mort de Bara*, but the description of *Marat* is full of admiration, and it is suggestively called a "don à la patrie explorée" (*OC*, 2: 410). For a discussion of the cult of Bara, see Crow, *Emulation*. It is interesting to note—in the context of "La Corde" and its perversion of the relationship between mother and son—that Joseph Bara joined the army to support his widowed mother and was commemorated as an exemplary son.

37. Could we read an allusion to the guillotine's blade in the chilling detail of the painter's scissors cutting into the boy's neck? Baudelaire in fact, rather than *cou*, initially wrote *col*, which directly invokes *décollation*—beheading.

38. Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, 3: 4. For a discussion of the cannibalistic connotations of Mercier's description and more generally, of the psychosexual dimension of revolutionary symbolism and its rearticulation of the family as a paradigm for politics, see Hunt, *Family Romance of the French Revolution*. My thanks to Susan Maslan for pointing out this passage.

39. *OC*, 1: 132, a stanza to compare with Baudelaire's conflation of the bourgeoisie and the *peuple* in his description of the violence of the June days: "Les horreurs de Juin. Folie du peuple et folie de la bourgeoisie. Amour naturel du crime" (*OC*, 1: 679). The reference to "le peuple amoureux du fouet abrutissant," like the portrait of the blind, consenting audience of "Une Mort héroïque," conjures up

the poet's disillusionment with the overwhelming majority who supported the plebiscite legitimating Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état.

40. The allusion to the boys as twin brothers locked in vicious combat seems to parody familiar representations of "fraternité" as two cherubic boys locked in an embrace. See, e.g., the illustrations in David, *Fraternité et Révolution*, plates 17–18.

41. See Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1: 306 "Enfin je me rappelai le pis-aller d'une grande princesse à qui l'on disait que les paysans n'avaient pas de pain, et qui répondit : Qu'ils mangent de la brioche." Vicomte Louis de Roubiac quotes this very line in a letter to Marie-Antoinette from London in August 1793: "Il faut savoir que les misérables qui colportent cette infamie n'on même pas le mérite de l'avoir inventée : ils l'ont prise mot pour mot chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau, au Livre VI des « Confessions » ; . . . C'était donc un lieu commun qui circulait avant même votre naissance et que des misérables ont ramassé dans la boue où il était né" (www.dialogus2.org/MARI/quilsmangentdelabrioche.html [accessed August 21, 2005]). My thanks to Peter Dreyer for this reference.

42. Dolf Oehler reads this poem as an ironic meditation on the republican slogans of 1848 in the face of ongoing hunger and inequity, citing Pierre Dupont's *Chant du pain* as an intertext. I fully concur with Oehler's powerful, political reading of Baudelaire's textual provocations as "une protestation ciblée contre la banalisation du mal dans le quotidien bourgeois" (311), and as aiming to "mettre à nu la morale publique par le moyen d'une autodénonciation" (314), although I have some reservations about the one-to-one correspondences he sometimes draws between text and event, such as his reading of "Le Gâteau" as "une apologie secrète de la révolte de Juin" (328).

43. Baudelaire claimed that Joseph de Maistre (and Edgar Allan Poe) taught him how to reason. No doubt his readings of the ultra-Catholic de Maistre attuned him to the sacrificial dimensions of the French revolutionary experience (see Vouga, *Baudelaire et Joseph de Maistre*). Yet as we have seen throughout the readings of his poetry, Baudelaire's own resistance to the closure of systems and his fidelity to the sensuous particularity of lived experience were antithetical to a theological view of history as sacrifice. It is more likely that de Maistre attuned him to the sacrificial structures of secular modernity and its ideologies. I explore this notion further in Camus's own vision of history as terror in Chapter 5.

44. See Swain, *Grotesque Figures*, 132–38, for a divergent reading of allegory's significance in "La Corde." I agree with Swain's point that "La Corde" conveys Baudelaire's fascination with "the process by which allegory, arising out of death or loss, generates a supposedly meaningful and therefore marketable sign" (137). However, Swain reads the conversion of the rope into religious artifact and commodity not as a meditation on the converging violence of art and the market, but as a confirmation that "allegory is a valid escape from the misery and death that characterize the real. Converting 'la corde' from a suicidal instrument into a source

of fortune and good luck, allegory appeals to humanity's real, basic needs. . . . Baudelaire, I believe, finds welcome relief or solace in the escape it provides" (137–38). I have sought to convey instead Baudelaire's nonredemptive vision of allegory as a violent conversion of matter into meaning and value that operates in art, commerce, and the political imagination. I pursue the link between allegory and violence further in Chapter 3.

45. Pichois and Ziegler, *Baudelaire*, 269. See also Baudelaire's sketch for a prospective prose poem: "Poemes en prose (pour la guerre civile) : Le canon tonne . . . les membres volent . . . des gémissements des victimes et des hurlements des sacrificateurs se font entendre . . . c'est l'humanité qui cherche le bonheur" (*OC*, I: 371).

46. Linda Orr argues that Baudelaire's turn to violence in his poetry and notebooks is a vengeful and fruitless exorcism of his generation's past republicanism and its discursive debt to Robespierre, but also, more shamefully, to Proudhon and Michelet: "The Terror was wandering or erring in the nineteenth-century in the form of these misreadings, as errors that produced this gooey mess, worse than the terror itself, as far as Baudelaire was concerned. In fact he fantasized about resorting to his own terror as the only way of getting out of the twisted legacy of the Terror" (*Headless History*, 28). I concur with the general thrust of Orr's argument but would underscore that Baudelaire's ironic rewriting of that discourse deftly punctures its legitimacy in order both to critique the failure of republican idealism and to show how the misuses of its rhetorical legacy are precisely what blind people to the latent violence of their everyday practices, as the example of *commerce* suggests in "La Corde."

47. *OC*, I: 339. My thanks to Jared Stark, who discusses this anterior version in the chapter in his dissertation on Baudelaire's "La Corde." Stark notes a pun on *réel* in the suppressed paragraph—as a unit of currency, *un réel*, and as "real," and reads Baudelaire's decision to excise the final paragraph as a resistance to the logic of the marketplace and as a gesture toward a reality that cannot be reduced to a commodity. My reading is also indebted to conversations with John Mackay. The parallel suggested by Baudelaire between the poet and the hanged (which gestures back to Villon) transforms the poem into a symbolic scaffold of sorts, a "gibet symbolique où pendait mon image" ("Un Voyage à Cythère"). For a political reading of "Un Voyage à Cythère" that sees the "pauvre pendu muet" of the 1855 version as an allegory of the ritual killing of the Second Republic, see Burton, *Baudelaire and the Second Republic*, 312–19.

48. Barbara Johnson has formulated this predicament beautifully in a reading of the preface to Houssaye: "Ce qui vient en tête de l'ouvrage, c'est l'absence de tête ; oeuvre décapitée dont la tête n'est jamais là où on la cherche. Oeuvre décapitée, mais qui se situe justement dans la 'capitale,' la grande ville où le 'croisement d'innombrables rapports' tient lieu de centre, où la linéarité, toute serpentine qu'elle soit, se retourne et se recoupe pour n'aller nulle part, pour n'avoir pas de sens,

labyrinthe dans lequel « on s'égare précisément parce qu'on se retrouve au même point », le point de la plus grande insécurité" (Johnson, *Défigurations*, 28).

Chapter 3: Bodies in Motion, Texts on Stage

Epigraph: Baudelaire, "Mon coeur mis à nu," *OC*, 1: 677

1. Jameson, "Baudelaire as Modernist and Postmodernist," 255. As I argued in the opening chapter of this book, Baudelaire is a pivotal figure for such accounts of modernism and its "crisis of representation."

2. In his more recent thinking, Fredric Jameson has pointed out the instability and ideological valences of categories such as modernism and modernity, while suggesting the inevitability of these periodizing narratives. Aesthetic autonomy is further historicized as the product of late-modernist reading practices that coalesce in the mid twentieth century. See Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, pt. 2, "Modernism as Ideology," 141–210

3. The allusion to Judith Butler's important work on the performative force of discourse is deliberate. See Butler, *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech*. One strand of my argument is that the self-reflexivity or irony we associate with high modernism is an instance of literature reflecting on the power of its own discourse, its "production" of reference, and that this reflection on aesthetics can in turn be situated within broader institutional and cultural practices that interpellate bodies and subjects. Mallarmé aimed to paint not the thing but the effect that it produces. I suggest throughout this chapter that Baudelaire paints not the thing but the effects that produce *it*.

4. See, e.g., Valéry, *Degas, danse et dessin* and *L'Âme et la danse*, which offer compelling meditations on the translation of the human body across different media and performances.

5. Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute*, 2, Bernheimer demonstrates how authors such as Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Zola, the Goncourts, and others rehearse such contradictory mappings of the prostitute—as contagious abjection and as exemplary semiotic performer: "Balzac gives prostitution a variety of figural meanings based on processes of circulation and exchange among men alone. Perhaps the most radical of these processes involves the metaphorization of gender and genealogy so that the biological can be constructed and circulated as a male invention" (70). In Bernheimer's account, the prostitute exemplifies what elsewhere Naomi Schor has described as the status of femininity itself in nineteenth-century realism: "woman, that mobile unit, that empty square par excellence, wanders about the entire critical landscape . . . woman can be equated with the people, the body, or money, with all that circulates and/or is repressed" (*Breaking the Chain*, 29). Schor thus rightly cautions us against overdetermined readings of gender that replicate the very forms of reification that are under scrutiny.

6. For more on the iconography of the prostitute and her relations to capital-

ist modernity, see Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*, 79–146, and Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction*. For a reading of the female nude and the construction of “woman” in the nineteenth century as biological facticity, art object, and commodity fetish, see Brooks, *Body Work*, 123–61.

7. In *La Fanfarlo*, Baudelaire alludes to Balzac and to de Marsay’s cavalier dismissal of Paquita after a night of passion. Samuel Cramer feels none of the *ennui* of Balzac’s hero upon leaving La Fanfarlo’s abode: “jamais . . . il n’éprouva cette jouissance égoïste du cigare et des mains dans les poches, dont parle quelque part notre grand romancier moderne” (*OC*, I: 578).

8. De Marsay invokes this original as a contrast to the many copies of this fresco, turned into commodity by “un tas de bourgeois qui ne voient dans ce camée qu’une breloque” (Balzac, *Histoire des Treize*, 237). There is more than a little irony here in de Marsay’s celebration of Paquita as an authentic original to a fresco Balzac himself derived from Latouche’s *Fragoletta*.

9. On Balzac’s sociological inquiry into the nineteenth-century’s forms of sexuality, see Lucey, *Misfit of the Family*, which reads the conclusion of *La Fille aux yeux d’or* and the recognition of Paquita’s fidelity to the bloodline by both de Marsay and the marquise as superseding other considerations, such as her threat to de Marsay’s masculinity or infidelity to the marquise. Fidelity to the bloodline, then, invokes an alternate frame of values. It assumes that “[t]here is a possible place for and a possible way of recognizing and assimilating same-sex practices within an aristocratic ethos, especially when the family (with its ‘identité pleinement consciente’) is threatened from the outside” (Lucey, 122). For a discussion of oriental despotism in Baudelaire as a metaphor for the Second Empire and its repressed tyranny, see Chambers, “Poetry in the Asiatic Mode,” in id., *Writing of Melancholy*, 118–52.

10. Schor, *Breaking the Chain*, 136. Balzac’s famous description of the pension Vaucquer exemplifies this naturalization of the social, locating the characters’ essence in the body and its “natural” embedding in its milieu, such that Madame Vaucquer’s repugnant physique recapitulates her mores, beliefs, history, and fetid surroundings. Yet Schor has also observed the extent to which Balzac, along with the nineteenth century generally, “rehearses an interminable ‘crisis of distinctions,’ which is made manifest by the proliferation of effeminate male characters and viriloid female characters, not to mention the multiplication of borderline cases: androgyns and castrati” (30).

11. I use the term “commodity fetish” here in the classic Marxian sense, as an instance in which a relationship between men has taken the form of a relationship between things. This will be discussed further in my reading of “Une Martyre.”

12. For a discussion of the regulatory measures taken against prostitution and of salient cultural articulations of the topos of the prostitute in this context, see Corbin, *Filles de noce*, and Parent-Duchâtelet, *Prostitution à Paris au XIXe siècle*.

13. Baudelaire’s poet-prostitute enacts the principle of “De la vaporisation et de la centralisation du *moi*. Tout est là.” Gretchen Schultz reads this aphorism as a

code for sexual difference operative at all levels of Baudelaire's writing. The productive mingling or cooperation of these poles (which are also transcribed along the sexual polarity of masculine singularity and feminine dispersal) in figures such as the *thyrses*, for Schultz, opens "a new definition of the subject, in a specific prosodic context" (*Gendered Lyric*, 194). Her fine reading of Baudelaire's "La Musique" attends to the formal features of the poem (its heterometricity, spatial imagery, and rhythm) to suggest that Baudelaire's position in literary history (at the juncture between the Parnasse and symbolism) needs to be rethought in light of his dislocation of the gendered poetic subject: "Baudelaire's poetic ruminations on dispersal and constraint surpass fixed dichotomies and create a space for difference. By reaching back to an unlocateable subject, Baudelaire elides sexual categories and creates the possibility of a lyric practice free of confining oppositions, a possibility pursued by subsequent Symbolist poets" (207).

14. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Zohn, 58. "To be sure, insofar as a person, as labour power, is a commodity, there is no need for him to identify himself as such. The more conscious he becomes of his mode of existence, the mode imposed upon him by the system of production, the more he proletarianizes himself, the more he will be gripped by the chill of the commodity economy and the less he will feel like empathizing with commodities. But things had not reached that point with the class of the petty bourgeoisie to which Baudelaire belonged" (*ibid.*).

15. The narration of "Les Foules" thus follows the ironic principle of textual production identified in "De l'essence du rire": "l'essence de ce comique est de paraître s'ignorer lui-même et de développer chez le spectateur, ou plutôt chez le lecteur, la joie de sa propre supériorité et la joie de la supériorité de l'homme sur la nature" (*OC*, 2: 543). For Baudelaire, laughter is a symptom both of one's sense of superiority and of lucidity with respect to the mystification upon which that superiority rests. The self-irony that opens the text up to laughter is the sign of the "esprit philosophe" who resists the temptation of superiority and stages the fall of the poet-prostitute as both "victime" and "bourreau" of his own superiority. For an alternative reading of prostitution in Baudelaire as a pleasurable disruption of gender and genre, see Wing, *Limits of Narrative*, 19–40.

16. My approach to the female body as a key token for narratives of modernity is informed by Peter Brooks's wide-ranging and stimulating work on the body in modern realist narrative. In *Body Work*, Brooks introduces his inquiry in the following terms: "While resisting the (impossible) task of saying exactly what the body is, throughout I ask why and how bodies have been imagined and symbolized, and particularly how they have been made *key tokens in modern narratives*" (xii; emphasis added). Although my approach is not psychoanalytic, this chapter is in dialogue with important work by Schor, Brooks, Matlock, Ender, and Beizer on the semioticization of bodies and the somatization of representation and seeks to extend their analyses to a discussion of poetry.

17. Classic studies on the emergence of "visual culture" in late nineteenth-

century Paris include Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*, Barrows, *Distorted Mirrors*, Bowlby, *Just Looking*, Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, and Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*.

18. Baudelaire's comments on Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger* (a painting that motivated Balzac's dedication of *La Fille aux yeux d'or* to the artist) announces his own exercise of *ekphrasis* in "Une Martyre": "Ce petit poème d'intérieur, plein de repos et de silence, encombré de riches étoffes et de brimborions de toilette, exhale je ne sais quel haut parfum de mauvais lieu qui nous guide assez vite vers les limbes insondées de la tristesse" (*OC*, 2: 440).

19. See in particular Benjamin's *ZentralPark*, fragments 5, 14, 19, and 20, collected in id., *Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Lacoste.

20. The literary text's capacity for ideology critique remains a difficult and vexed issue in Benjamin studies. The split between psychoanalytic and materialist readings of Baudelaire via Benjamin is addressed in the opening chapter of this book. Here I point out that both readings limit the levels of textual agency and ethical-political contestation found in the poetry itself. These layers are difficult to theorize and can only be discerned, I believe, through close readings that attend to what is present—as well as absent—in the text, and to the dialectical reversals typical of Baudelaire's irony.

21. "Since the days of Louis-Philippe the bourgeoisie has endeavoured to compensate itself for the inconsequential nature of private life in the big city. It seeks such compensation within its four walls. . . . For the Makart style, the style at the end of the Second Empire, a dwelling becomes a kind of casing. This style views it as a kind of case for a person and embeds him in it together with all his appurtenances, tending his traces as nature tends dead fauna embedded in granite" (Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Zohn, 46). For a cultural history of the apartment in nineteenth-century Paris and London, see Marcus, *Apartment Stories*.

22. Benjamin describes this as an empathetic identification that fetishizes the commodity and invests it with a soul: "If the soul of the commodity which Marx occasionally mentions in jest existed, it would be the most empathetic ever encountered in the realm of souls, for it would have to see in everyone the buyer in whose hand and house it wants to nestle" (*Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Zohn, 55).

23. In his reading of "La Mort des amants," Fredric Jameson portrays a "post-modern" Baudelaire through these very categories: the disappearance of a human subject, of nature, and of referential frames, and their replacement with kitschy commodities, hyperbolically artificial interiors, and glossy surfaces that refuse to yield to depth. These elements create what he calls a "hysterical sublime" ("Baudelaire as Modernist and Postmodernist," 255). "Une Martyre" vividly displays the characteristics attributed by Jameson to a postmodern sensibility, while simultaneously returning to the price paid (both material and ethical) for this vision and experience, in an uneasy blending of registers that resists any one periodization.

24. An 1844 caricature by Grandville, *La Pêche à la ligne* (a title translated by

Susan Buck-Morss as “Fish fishing for people, using various desirable items as bait”), captures the scrambled configuration of humans, nature, and commodity (of anthropomorphism and reification) under high capitalism. In this drawing, a school of grinning fish, helped by a tree, dangle wine bottles, subscriptions, and watches over the heads of grasping consumers who are up to their shoulders in a river (reproduced in Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, 155).

25. The diminishment of things in both the process of allegorization and of commodification is repeatedly underlined by Benjamin. See, e.g., his statement, “La dépréciation du monde des choses dans l’allégorie est dépassée par la marchandise dans le monde des choses lui-même” (*Charles Baudelaire*, 215). For a fascinating analysis of Benjamin’s conception of allegory and commodity in relation to Grandville, Baudelaire, and the representation of history, see Hannoosh, “Allegorical Artist.”

26. The rising popularity of the *roman policier* during the Second Empire was in part due to Baudelaire’s translations of Edgar Allan Poe. “Une Martyre” itself contains echoes of “The Murders of the Rue Morgue,” where the Madame l’Españaye’s body is found virtually decapitated in her apartment.

27. For an intriguing treatment of women and sexual violence in Baudelaire, see Gasarian, *De loin tendrement*, chap. 1, “Les Femmes de Baudelaire,” which reads scenes of violence and violation as poetic attempts to communicate to women and to the “other” through wounds that dislocate the identity of both the masculine poetic subject and feminine object, muse, and reader: “Le sadisme du poète, en dernière analyse, serait d’ordre non pas érotique mais poétique: il aurait à voir avec le désir du poète de forcer la femme—mais aussi bien « l’autre », comme dit Deguy, c’est-à-dire tout lecteur—à entendre la poésie” (36). While Gasarian’s discussion of lyric self-figuration leads in a direction quite different from my project, his view of violence as a mode of interpellation is illuminating. My Chapter 4 addresses texts by women readers, historical subjects who “speak back” to Baudelaire’s symbolic as well as textual legacy. Their own textual “counterviolence” can be read as negotiating between “hearing” and “deafness” to the interpellative force of Baudelaire’s poetry.

28. Thélot astutely notes that Baudelaire’s Parisian scenes often take place in marginal sites that illuminate the functioning of the centre or capital: “« La Femme sauvage et la petite-maîtresse » découvre le devenir de la capitale—comme régression à la barbarie sur laquelle elle repose—dans ses marges, ses « faubourgs », où en s’altérant elle se dévoile” (*Baudelaire*, 75).

29. For an analysis of the gendered underpinnings of Parnassianism, see Schultz, *Gendered Lyric*, 83–139, which interprets the rigid formalism of the Parnasse and its emphasis on objectivity, immobility, and rigor as “a rejection of Romanticism’s perceived femininity and an attempt to reclaim poetry as a masculine domain” (84). Her analysis addresses the figures of “petrified femininity” in poets such as Gautier and Leconte de Lisle to argue that Baudelaire’s manipulation of the legacies of romanticism and the Parnasse (and their affiliation with femi-

nine/soft attributes and masculine/hard ones), indeed, his manipulation of form itself, dislocates the traditional “gendering” of lyric poetry.

30. In an illuminating commentary on the significance of the word *sauvage* in Baudelaire’s prose poems, Evans notes that “[t]hat which a culture rejects as ‘barbarian’ is also what helps to define that culture. In the prose poems, whenever *sauvagerie* is mentioned, whether it refers to individual behaviour which violates society’s unwritten codes or whether it serves as a way of designating an exotic, alien culture, it *always* furthers the central project of interrogating the values of contemporary nineteenth-century Paris” (*Baudelaire and Intertextuality*, 111–12). For an excellent analysis of the Napoleonic code on marriage, and its reverberations in nineteenth-century literature, see Catherine Nesci.

31. For an alternate reading of this poem as a reflection on the poet’s inescapable entrapment in literary imitation and counterfeit, see Thélot, *Baudelaire*, 137. For an illuminating analysis of the poem’s intertextual references and the ambiguity of its irony, see Evans, *Baudelaire and Intertextuality*, 62–65. Regarding the punitive violence of Baudelaire’s poem (and the association drawn between the poet and the husband), Evans astutely notes that “By ‘having it both ways’ the poem effectively interrogates underlying codes of masculinity and sententious didacticism whilst still situating itself as essentially masculine discourse. . . . By ironically undermining such discourse the prose poems call into question contemporary nineteenth-century assumptions about both *genre* and *gender* identity” (64).

32. Bartman’s remains were transferred to South Africa in May 2002. Baudelaire’s savage female is also reminiscent of Poe’s deadly orangutan in the “Murders of the Rue Morgue” and echoes Poe’s meditation on the fine line between man and beast in “Hop Frog” and the eight chained orangutans (see Chapter 2).

33. The remark about “that Hottentot Venus with a black cat” was made by Victor Fournel, cited in Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute*, 120. For a reading of Manet’s courtesan figure Olympia through the iconography of the Khoisanid, see Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, 76–109. For a more extensive treatment of the figure of the “black Venus” in the French literary imagination, see Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus*. Ann McClintock discusses the mapping of race in progressive narrative of the “Family of Man” in *Imperial Leather*, 40–56.

34. Richon, *Jeanne Duval et Charles Baudelaire*, 32, 234. Emmanuel Richon gives a detailed portrait of Jeanne Duval’s life and symbolic place in the imagination of Baudelaire’s contemporaries and explains the complexity of the poet’s treatment of “exotic femininity” in light of a hostile cultural context, noting that Gobineau’s *De l’origine des inégalités des races* and its condemnation of miscegenation (associated with Western degeneration) had appeared in 1853. It is also worth noting that in 1834, the young Baudelaire asked his mother to send him a copy of *Voyage dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique par le cap de la Bonne-Espérance* (1790), the travel journal of the naturalist François Levaillant, his great uncle, which contains descriptions of Khoisanid women.

35. The most comprehensive and multifaceted examination of this phenomenon is found in *Zoos humains*, ed. Bancel et al.

36. As Paul Greenhalgh puts it, “The actual presence of peoples of empire at exhibitions went back to 1851, when representatives of most nations of the British Empire were constantly in attendance at the Crystal Palace. The first time people could properly be called part of the exhibit, though, was in 1867, at the Paris *Exposition Universelle*, when various North African exhibits were presented as *tableaux-vivants*. An Egyptian Bazaar contained craftspeople and vendors, a camel stable had real camels and Arabic attendants, an authentic Tunisian Barbershop was open for business” (Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 85).

37. Raser, “Politics of Art Criticism,” 338. Raser argues that Baudelaire’s essay both shares and disavows the official ideology of the 1855 Exposition universelle, and by extension, the Second Empire’s alleged principles—by valuing universality and tolerance of cultural difference, and by establishing an appreciation of art and tradition rather than simply fetishizing progress: “Baudelaire is thus developing and amplifying a position articulated by the Second Empire, while disavowing its origin” (342). Yet when read in light of the colonial dimension of the empire (one that forces us to reread the alleged universalism of the Exposition and its discourse of internationalist harmony), it appears that more is at stake in Baudelaire’s essay than a relationship of unacknowledged debt to official ideology, a reiteration of its eclectic brand of universalism. Baudelaire illuminates a crucial, albeit repressed, dimension of the exhibition, namely, its symbolic legitimation of colonial expansion. And in this context, Baudelaire’s remarks on the instability of France’s position—or the French individual’s psyche—seem quite distinct from the imperial ideology.

38. Raser, “Politics of Art Criticism,” 344n5, rightly cautions us against seeing this internationalism in terms of current notions of multiculturalism: the European nations contributed the majority of the exhibits, although Argentina, Egypt, Brazil, Guatemala, Hawaii, and Mexico were also represented, along with Algeria and the other French colonies. See also Williams, *Dream Worlds*.

39. The first and third sections of Baudelaire’s essay appeared in *Le Pays*; the second was refused because of its critique of Ingres.

40. *OC*, 2: 580. Baudelaire’s allusion to Western decadence is a response to Maxim Du Camp’s hymn to progress, *Les Chants modernes*, published in 1855, the year of the Exposition universelle.

41. See, e.g., his “Études sur Poe,” where the critique of American-style materialism exposes the underlying savagery of civilization: “Brûler des nègres enchaînés, coupables d’avoir senti leur joue noire fourmiller du rouge de l’honneur, jouer du revolver dans un parterre de théâtre, établir la polygamie dans les paradis de l’Ouest, que les Sauvages (ce terme a l’air d’une injustice) n’avaient pas encore souillés de ces honteuses utopies, afficher sur les murs, sans doute pour consacrer le principe de la liberté illimitée, la guérison des maladies de neuf mois, tels sont

quelques-unes des traits saillants, quelques-unes des illustrations morales du noble pays de Franklin, l'inventeur de la morale de comptoir, le héros d'un siècle voué à la matière" (*OC*, 2: 327).

42. Baudelaire turns the self-affirmation of "progress" on its head. Like the proverbial scorpion that stings itself, human evolution is a regressive self-negation or suicide that will never yield the plenitude of satisfied needs: "Je laisse de côté la question de savoir si, délicatisant l'humanité en proportion des jouissances nouvelles qu'il lui apporte, le progrès indéfini ne serait pas sa plus ingénieuse et sa plus cruelle torture ; si, procédant par une opiniâtre négation de lui-même, il ne serait pas un mode de suicide incessamment renouvelé, et si, enfermé dans le cercle de feu de la logique divine, il ne ressemblerait pas au scorpion qui se perce lui-même avec sa terrible queue, cet éternel *desideratum* qui fait son éternel désespoir ?" (*OC*, 2: 581)

43. As Claude Pichois notes, the 1855 exhibit also housed a Chinese museum displaying a collection of art objects brought back by Montigni, an ex-consul at Shanghai and Ning-Po. It is worth noting that very few art critics showed Baudelaire's openness to cultural difference. Gautier, for instance, evoked the Greek *beau idéal* in contrast to the Chinese *laid idéal* represented in the Chinese museum.

44. The play on "conversion" is quite explicit in the passage, which ends with a reference to Sicambre, who once converted, burned what he once worshipped and worshipped what he once burned (*OC*, 2: 577).

45. Miller, *Nationalists and Nomads*, 165. My readings thus strive to nuance Miller's own positioning of Baudelaire as an architect of the French colonial imagination. In *Nationalists and Nomads*, 56–59, Miller proposes "Le Cygne" and "À une Malabaraise" as examples of Baudelaire's universalizing acceptance or outright rejection of the African subject. Baudelaire's poems are thus read as coordinates for a colonial imagination that either assimilates difference or excludes it. See Miller's earlier book *Blank Darkness* for a more extensive reading of Baudelaire's participation in the erasure of the African subject's specificity.

46. *OC*, 1: 1119. According to Claude Pichois, the prose version of "La Belle Dorothée" may very possibly have *preceded* its verse counterpart, since Baudelaire refers to the completion of the prose poem in 1861, whereas the lyric poem would not be published until 1864 (*OC*, 1: 1333).

47. "The black and the oriental are figments of an imaginary geography in Baudelaire's mind, into which one cannot read more precision than was written" (Miller, *Blank Darkness*, 120). Miller cites Baudelaire's use of the word *cafrine* as "typically Africanist in its arbitrary application of an inherited term to the totally unknown" (120), a statement that has led to a debate with Françoise Lionnet, who argues instead that the term *cafrine* is *not* an instance of derogatory Africanism, but rather, gives voice to the marginalized—if not silenced—Creole subject. See the end of my reading for a discussion of this last point.

48. Miller and Sharply-Whiting both argue that Dorothée's smile, directed at

metropolitan France, exemplifies the colonial subject's self-alienation as it is described in Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs*.

49. The allusion to Dorothée "being fanned" in her meager orientalist boudoir parodically rewrites "La Vie antérieure" and its final image of the slaves refreshing the languid poet's dolorous secret. For surely Dorothée has no slave at her disposal, although as we discover, she does have a secret, whose *douleur* remains unexpressed in the poem.

50. The sabotaging of such tropicalist stereotypes is significant given Baudelaire's deep appreciation elsewhere for the fertility of indolence (the *féconde paresse* of "La Chevelure," the languid rest at the feet of the *géante*). In the salon of 1859, Baudelaire pleasurably contemplates Eugène Fromentin's luminous and nostalgic African landscapes (*Bateurs nègres dans les tribus*, *Lisière d'oasis pendant le sirocco*, *Souvenirs de l'Algérie*, *Audience chez un Khalifat*) and especially *Une Rue à El Aghouat*, a painting that no doubt influenced the composition of "La Belle Dorothée," and that shows Algerian natives collapsed in the noontime heat, succumbing to a slumber that Baudelaire describes thus: "Il est présumable que je suis moi-même atteint quelque peu d'une nostalgie qui m'entraîne vers le soleil ; car de ces toiles lumineuses s'élève pour moi une vapeur enivrante, qui se condense bientôt en désirs et en regrets. Je me surprends à envier le sort de ces hommes étendus sous ces ombres bleues, et dont les yeux, qui ne sont ni éveillés ni endormis, n'expriment, si toutefois ils expriment quelque chose, que l'amour du repos et le sentiment du bonheur qu'inspire une immense lumière" (*OC*, 2: 650).

51. The disquieting force of this poem may have less to do with Dorothée's eventual exile in Paris in avatars such as the *négresse* in "Le Cygne" or "À une Malabaraise" than with the extent to which the native is already a state of exile and inhabits a phantasmagoria fashioned in the image of the European bourgeoisie. Explicitly presented as the African version of "La Beauté," "belle . . . comme un rêve de pierre" (Dorothée is "belle et froide comme le bronze"), her native habitat itself harbors uncanny resonances with the *métropole*: her charming little shack and the Sunday dances she attends are but cheap reflections of a well-appointed boudoir or a ball at the opera.

52. For different readings of Baudelaire as participating in an imperialist tropology, see Gayatri Spivak's "Imperialism and Sexual Difference" and Miller's *Blank Darkness*, 69–138.

53. Lionnet, "Reframing Baudelaire," 84. In *Blank Darkness*, Christopher Miller proposes that Baudelaire invented the word *cafrine* by adding the suffix *-ine* to the noun *cafre*, from the Arabic *kafir* (or "infidel"), thus overracializing and diminishing the black woman in a "double feminine" that "constitutes [Baudelaire's] most frankly Africanist scene" (122). In "Reframing Baudelaire," however, Françoise Lionnet takes issue with Miller's interpretation and argues that *cafrine* is a Creole neologism designating a woman of the black race. Baudelaire's inclusion

of local dialect in his poem “actually gives us the sound of the voice of the black woman herself” (72). For Lionnet, *cafrine* forges an encounter between French and Creole languages, colonial and local culture, male and female subject positions in a deconstructive gesture that prefigures francophone models of ontological and linguistic hybridity. Among the many issues at stake in this debate is the nature of the postcolonial archive. For example, where Miller consulted French dictionaries such as the *Littré*, Lionnet turns to *Le Lexique du parler créole de la Réunion*. Miller subsequently revisits the debate over *cafrine* and notes that Baudelaire may well have encountered the term long before his trip to the Mascarenes, in his great uncle François Levaillant’s *Voyage dans l’intérieur de l’Afrique par le cap de Bonne Espérance*. Miller concludes that “the heteroglossia of this word thus combines the voice of the Creole and that of the avuncular French archive—it encompasses, to use Lionnet’s terms, both the island female and the continental male. . . . To me this perfectly demonstrates in microcosm the necessity to recognize particularisms (including masters’ voices) within in analysis of hybridity” (*Nationalists and Nomads*, 222).

54. “Je suis la pipe d’un auteur / On voit à contempler ma mine / D’Abyssinienne ou de Cafrine/Que mon maître est un grand fumeur / Quand il est comblé de douleur / Je fume comme la chaumine / Où se prépare la cuisine / Pour le retour du laboureur” (*OC*, 1: 67).

55. Mallarmé, “Ballets,” in *Oeuvres*, 229–30. See McCarren, *Dance Pathologies*, for a provocative analysis of Mallarmé’s dislocation of gender in his writings on dance. McCarren argues that Loie Fuller’s semiotic rendering of the dancer’s body foils the masculine regime of scopic power and introduces a revolutionary mobility and indeterminacy in the conceptualization of gender.

56. This mediation of textuality and historicity has been brilliantly analyzed by Ross Chambers in terms of a “contextualizing self-figuration” characteristic of modernist writings. Chambers proposes that “self-figuration is always readable as an index of historicity and that its readability always functions as an invitation to interpret the textual enunciation (or “speech-act”) in a historical manner, in relation to social positioning. The paradox of modernism is that by marking itself in this way in relation to its historical context, the modernist text also calls attention to its desire for autonomy and to its attempts to escape from history by showing the contextual reasons that underlie them” (*Writing of Melancholy*, 13). Whilst my approach to irony has been deeply informed by Chambers’s important work on modernism and oppositionality, this project steers away from the modalities of melancholy and mourning and explores more self-conscious oppositional strategies. Rather than addressing Baudelaire’s texts as melancholy or duplicitous sites of repressed violence, I have sought to foreground the theatrical, even exhibitionistic, displays of violence as forms counterviolence.

57. Teskey, *Allegory and Violence*, 19. Teskey is commenting on Spenser’s *Faerie*

Queene and its depiction of Amoret's torture, as Busyrane the enchanter writes in her blood, as a moment in which the violence of the very process of allegorization is unveiled. As Teskey says of Dante and Spenser, however, certain poets reveal the resistance of allegory's totalizing capture: "The greatest allegorical poets do not simply transform life into meaning. They exacerbate the antipathy of the living to the significant by exposing the violence entailed in transforming the one to the other" (24).

58. The *Roman de la rose*, for example, sets up an allegory in which feminized matter—the rose—is conceptualized as both inviting and refusing its ravishment. In the next chapter, I show how Rachilde rewrites this particular scene and more generally, how her work may be read as an intervention that questions the sexual politics of allegory's separation of matter and form.

59. Ross Chambers's recent discussion of testimony as a flaunting of cultural hauntedness offers an illuminating lens for seeing how Baudelaire's spectacular violence "flaunts" the margins of a cultural formation by bringing to center stage its repressed, albeit constitutive, figures: "Flaunting is, par excellence, the gesture of visibility that requires reading, and the mediation therefore whereby the lacking object of representational or mimetic referentiality can be figuratively presented as an interpretive, that is, recognizable object—an object that haunts. And if haunting is a mode of cultural infiltration, the vehicle by means of which it infiltrates is inevitably, to some degree and always relatively speaking, spectacular and confrontational, therefore, because it is necessarily the performance of a state of impertinence . . . of the lack of pertinence that characterizes the inexplicable as well as the supposedly irrelevant and makes it an untimely manifestation when, unexpectedly, it shows itself to be relevant" (*Untimely Interventions*, 230)

Part II: Unlikely Contestations

1. According to Richard Burton, the encounter between the philosopher-poet and the beggar in "Assommons les pauvres !" prefigures a totalitarian hierarchy of power, in which theory (and ideology) is transmitted through systematic brutality: "Beyond 'Assommons les pauvres !' duo of *bourreau* and *victime*, demagogue and lumpenproletariat, a still more fateful sado-masochistic pairing—Führer and Volk—comes dimly into view" (*Baudelaire and the Second Republic*, 363). For a recent intertextual allusion to Baudelaire's poem, see David Fincher's film *Fight Club* (1999), in which an underground homosocial club attempts to start an anarchistic rebellion on the streets by beating up strangers until these finally fight back.

2. Maclean, *Narrative as Performance*, 175. Maclean's powerful readings of Baudelaire's prose poems as allegories of reception were central to my initial encounter with Baudelaire and continue to inform my thinking about text, performance, and performativity.

Chapter 4: *Matter's Revenge on Form*

Epigraphs: Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, “Projets de préface pour une édition nouvelle,” in *OC*, 1: 182; Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 332; Virginie Despentes in “Girls Just Want to End Oppression,” interview with Nigel Andrews, *Financial Times*, April 11, 2002.

1. As Rita Felski has pointed out, citing Marshall Berman’s influential account, modernity is persistently envisioned through masculine figures of quest such as the dandy, Faust, or the flâneur, which are opposed to the materiality and finitude of a feminized corporeality (Felski, *Gender of Modernity*, 1–10). Yet, as we saw in Chapter 3, such oppositions are dismantled in Baudelaire’s *mise-en-scène* of the conditions that produce a body marked by gender and race. This critical genealogy of the body’s production in aesthetic and urban modernity challenges dominant cultural assumptions about sexual difference. Its performative understanding of poetic and social discourse—as producing the bodies that they purport merely to designate—also, what is more important, offers a point of resistance to narratives of modernism as an essentially masculinist aesthetic movement predicated on the dissolution of reference and the erasure of the body. My discussions of Rachilde and Despentes—and their revisions of such masculine figures of quest—are offered in the hopes of opening this narrative up to alternate readings.

2. For a feminist counterviolent reading of Baudelaire by an English author, see Angela Carter’s “Black Venus,” a brilliant revisionist account of Charles Baudelaire’s relationship with Jeanne Duval from the latter’s perspective.

3. For a useful biography that situates Rachilde within the cultural current of her time, see Hawthorne, *Rachilde and French Women’s Authorship*, which also has a detailed discussion of the circumstances of the publication of *Monsieur Vénus* (89–99).

4. See Barbara Spackman for an analysis of the rhetoric of sickness and of its ideological inflections in Baudelaire and the decadent imagination.

5. For a discussion of the “*mise en discours*” of sexuality in nineteenth-century history, see Foucault’s *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 1, *La Volonté de savoir*.

6. There is a considerable body of criticism on the subject of hysteria in nineteenth-century France. For important interdisciplinary work on this topic, see Didi-Huberman, *Invention de l’hystérie*, Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction*, and Ender, *Sexing the Mind*.

7. The role-playing Eliante’s most compelling performance is, after all, the staging of her death. While juggling before her lover, she plunges one of the knives into her throat. The macabre final image of blood staining her throat like cosmetic paint may perhaps celebrate her embodiment of fusion between nature and artifice so cherished by the decadents. But her spectacular death suggests that if life is a stage, nevertheless, its scripts forbid such self-invention, masquerade, and play.

8. In *La Marquise de Sade*, for example, Mary Barbe awakens to the world’s violence through the trauma of witnessing the slaughter of a bull whose blood will

be drunk by her mother. Raised in a militaristic, patriarchal family, Mary in turn witnesses her mother die in labor so that her son may live, just as her father—a colonel under Napoléon III—dies at the front during the Franco-Prussian war.

9. For an analysis of Barrès's preface as short-circuiting—or providing an antidote to—Rachilde's subversive text, see Rogers, *Fictions du scandale*, 239–62. See also Janet Beizer's astute reading of Barrès's preface as a strategy of hysterization that participates in a broader nineteenth-century preoccupation that Foucault termed as a "mise en discours" of sexuality: "Barrès's comments on Rachilde (on the novel as woman) constitute a virtual mapping of the power/knowledge apparatus Foucault calls the 'hysterization of the female body': a three-pronged strategy by which a woman's body is equated with sexuality, appropriated by pathology, and identified with the social body (which I take to mean language, among other things)" (232). In an analysis of Rachilde's subversive use of italics in *Monsieur Vénius*, Beizer goes on to show that Rachilde's novel prefigures and ironizes its own reception, thus defamiliarizing the horizon of expectations set up by Barrès's preface: "*Monsieur Vénius* is about the male colonization of female textuality and of woman as textuality: it is a novel that parodies its own reception, writes the intrusive reader into its text" (Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, 232).

10. See de Man's reading of Rousseau's reworking of *Le Roman de la rose* in "The Rhetoric of Temporality," 202. For an analysis of the sexual politics of the allegory of the rose, see Guynn, "Authorship and Sexual/Allegorical Violence."

11. For a discussion of Platonic and Neoplatonic idealism as a privileging of matter over form that is embedded in a metaphoric of gender, see Teskey, *Allegory and Violence*, 14–31.

12. When faced with Eliante's refusal to disrobe before him, Léon provokes her by claiming she must have leprosy. Yet, while Léon adopts Baudelairean lenses to read the authentic body behind the glaze of fashion and cosmetics, imagining it either in terms of the marmoreal perfection of Baudelaire's "La Beauté" or the leprous decay of "Une Charogne," Eliante herself retains her impenetrable aura of mystery until her death.

13. Rachilde, *L'Animale*, 34. Hereafter cited as *A*, followed by the page number, unless source is clear from the preceding text.

14. The exquisite, gastronomical excesses that accompany Laure's conception are described as poisoning the blood that courses through her veins: "À l'état latent, ils infuserent dans ces veines bleues, vertes à force d'être bleues, tous les poisons sensuels avec la science miraculeuse des caresses et avec l'appétit de tous les amours" (*A*, 33). See Baudelaire's "À celle qui est trop gaie" (one of the condemned pieces), which concludes on the image of the poet wounding his beloved in order to infuse her with his venom (*OC*, 1: 157).

15. See T. J. Clark's discussion of the exchange between Baudelaire and Manet on the latter's *Olympia*: "*Olympia*, as Baudelaire described it in his letter, was a picture of a nude woman with a Negress and a cat. The poet pretended to doubt the

latter detail—‘est-ce un chat, décidément ?’—which might suggest that it was added to the picture after he left for Brussels, or simply that he raised his eyebrows at the thought of such an overtly Baudelairean gesture” (*Painter of Modern Life*, 85).

16. Laure describes Lucien Séchard to the priest in terms that are steeped in imagery from Baudelaire’s *charogne*: “Tenez, mon père, avez-vous rencontré quelque fois des chiens crevés sur votre chemin, le long d’un sentier, dans les champs ? J’en ai vu un, quand j’étais petite fille, près d’une ferme où je passais mes vacances, et ce chien mort avait les yeux bouffis, pleins d terre, garnis d’insectes grouillants, de brins d’herbe sèches. . . . Eh bien, mon père, le regard de mon amant est ainsi, je vous le jure, il a l’oeil du chien mort” (*A*, 93).

17. “La mécanique nous aura tellement américanisés, le progrès aura si bien atrophie en nous toute la partie spirituelle, que rien parmi les rêveries sanguinaires, sacrilèges, ou anti-naturelles des utopistes ne pourra être comparé à ses résultats positifs” (*OC*, I: 665).

18. For a decadent iconography of lions and felines engaged in bestial relations with women, see Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, chap. 9, “Gynanders and Genetics: Connoisseurs of Bestiality and Serpentine Delights: Leda, Circe, and the Cold Carresses of the Sphinx” (291–97). Rachilde is certainly not alone in exploring erotic connections between women and felines. See, e.g., José-Maria de Hérédia’s sonnet “Ariane” in *Les Trophées* (1893), a graphic depiction of Ariadne’s erotic ride on a tiger’s back.

19. “Un Dandy ne fait rien. Vous figurez-vous un Dandy parlant au peuple, excepté pour le bafouer ?” (*OC*, I: 684). The dandy’s stance of resistance is not without its contradictions, since it was precisely as a consumer of goods (clothes, toiletries, knickknacks) that he purported to challenge a consumer-driven market. For an analysis of the dandy’s relation to the marketplace, see Garelick, *Rising Star*.

20. Foucault argues that Baudelaire’s ironic heroization of the present exemplifies a specifically post-Enlightenment scrutiny of one’s historical mode of being. The dandy personifies this “modern” spirit of permanent critique, challenging the givenness of the self and the natural flow of history itself. Yet these modalities of resistance (to the vision of history as progress and of the humanist subject as an interiority to be discovered) are not political interventions with oppositional effects in the social domain. The literary text activates this spirit of permanent critique, but in modalities that resist transmission into the public sphere: “Cette héroïsation ironique du présent, ce jeu de la liberté avec le réel pour sa transfiguration, cette élaboration ascétique de soi, Baudelaire ne conçoit pas qu’ils puissent avoir lieu dans la société elle même ou dans le corps politique. Ils ne peuvent se produire que dans un lieu autre que Baudelaire appelle l’art” (Foucault, “Qu’est-ce que les Lumières ?” 571).

21. Several critics have offered compelling readings of *Monsieur Vénus* as an interrogation, if not a deconstruction, of established categories of gender. For Diana Holmes, Rachilde’s treatment of gender as a “free floating artifice” in *Monsieur*

Vénus deals a subversive blow to the compulsory order of sex and gender, such that, “Anti-feminist as she was, Rachilde’s work undermines contemporary orthodoxy on the gender divide” (165). Rita Felski reads this text as a “performance of the perverse” (*Gender of Modernity*, 193) and its theme of transvestism as a “governing metaphor for the formulaic, iterable, and hence transferable nature of gender identity” (200). Janet Beizer proposes that rather than merely inverting oppositions of gender and sexuality, Rachilde’s irony disperses the conventions that undergird such oppositions. Teasing out the multiple interpretations generated by the text’s citationality, its use of italics, and its framing by Barrès, Beizer illuminates the ambiguities of Rachilde’s mimicry of established discourses on sexual difference, such as the hystericization of the female body. Her careful attention to the interpretive volatility of irony itself and the resistance that such a mode poses to ideological readings, is consonant with my approach to irony as a counterviolence open to heterogeneous readings. What I wish to stress is the novel’s interrogation of the violence that inheres in decadent aestheticism (one worked out through Baudelairean intertexts, among other citational references). While my reading addresses the gender dislocations performed by this interrogation, it also seeks to recover an experience of shame and vulnerability embedded in the narrative’s portrayal of the violated body.

22. For a discussion of class as a repressed—if not disavowed—category in Rachilde’s text that problematizes her ludic play with other determinations of identity, see Felski, *Gender of Modernity*, 201–2.

23. For a detailed reading of the palimpsestic quality of Jacques’s body, see Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, 254: “In and of himself neither poet nor poem, artist or painting, he is instead a periodically reinscribed tablet or canvas passed back and forth in an ongoing conversation between Raoule and Raittolbe.”

24. Schor, *George Sand and Idealism*, 20, links Rachilde’s automaton to Villiers’s “L’Eve future.”

25. As Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 36, puts it, “Shame floods into being as a moment, a disruptive moment, in a circuit of identity-constituting identificatory communication.” Shame thus marks a simultaneous moment of painful individuation and of uncontrolled relationality.

26. This may be why Giorgio Agamben views shame as subjectivity’s most intimate tonality: “In shame,” Agamben suggests, “the subject thus has no other content than its desubjectification; it becomes oblivious to its own disorder, its own oblivion as subject. This double movement, which is both subjectification and desubjectification, is shame” (*Remnants of Auschwitz*, 106).

27. Virginie Despentes quoted by Marie-France Etchegoin in “Quand les femmes disent tout,” *Nouvel Observateur*, no. 1907 (May 29, 2001): 6.

28. See Alpozzo, “Roman rock,” for a commentary that associates Despentes with writers such as Charles Bukowski, and, more recently, Philippe Djian (author of *37,2 le matin*) and Vincent Ravalec: “Force est de constater que dans ces livres la

musique est omniprésente, que les histoires se déroulent assez souvent dans des milieux rocks, hards ou punks, et à l'image des romans de l'auteur nippon Murakami Ryû, ou de la prose de l'américain Denis Johnson par exemple, la vision apocalyptique du monde moderne, la violence ahurissante qui est insufflée dans les descriptions comme dans l'écriture, traduisent bien cette réelle déconnexion, ce réel désaveu d'une littérature convenue, c'est-à-dire, bon chic bon genre. On admettra alors, malgré ses récentes déclarations (Technickart n°61) que Virginie Despentes a tout de l'écrivain rock, version trash. De *Baise-moi*, en passant par *Les chiennes savantes* et aujourd'hui *Teen spirit*, Virginie Despentes écrit selon des critères de l'école américaine : découpage cinématographique de l'action, un débraillé volontaire de la syntaxe et du vocabulaire."

29. Ironically, the so-called apolitical nihilism of this generation has been instrumental in resurrecting the question of "engagement" and literature in the public arena. See, e.g., the scandal around Michel Houellebecq's novel *Les Particules élémentaires*.

30. As Stéphane Spoiden has remarked about the film version of *Baise-moi*: "Pour Despentes, la revendication féministe fondamentale, sous quelque forme et sophistication qu'on lui ait donné, a peu changé la condition des femmes depuis les années 60. Dans le contexte culturel des ouvrages de Despentes, c'est-à-dire la zone et la culture banlieusarde de base, où le mot féministe est tout à fait étranger, cela se traduit par la permanence des attitudes dans la vie de ses personnages (féminins) qui sont souvent maltraités ou qui se prostituent depuis leur jeune âge. Dans *Baise-moi*, cette situation est représentée pour une des protagonistes par un viol insoutenable et pour l'autre, prostituée, par un ras-le-bol de se vendre à des hommes qu'elle trouve infâmes. . . . [O]n aura donc affaire dans ce film à une répétition désespérée, hard et destroy (selon les termes désormais utilisés en France pour caractériser ce genre d'oeuvres) de ce même message de revendication égalitaire" (Spoiden, "No Man's Land" 104).

31. "Trois femmes s'emparent du sexe."

32. For a cogent critique of how the film version of *Baise-moi* falls short of the ethical dilemmas raised in the novel, see Reynaud, "Baise-moi: An Angry yet Feminist Reaction."

33. That Manu incarnates the most disparaging attributes assigned to women by Baudelaire is suggested at several points in the narrative, where she must play the "savage" to the "bcbg" persona occasionally donned by Nadine. At one point, Nadine remarks that Manu is disheveled like a homeless person. Manu responds, "C'est ma vraie nature qui revient au galop," to which Nadine replies: "Ouais, soit t'as le naturel très fort, soit t'a pas fait d'effort pour le vernis" (Despentes, *Baise-moi*, 213). Hereafter cited as *BM*, followed by the page number, unless the source is clear from the text.

34. Karla's shrill demand that she justify her passivity, read here as an inconceivable lack of regard for her personhood, is itself shown to be suicidal. As their

assailants drive away, she waves her fist at them, and they turn around and run her down.

35. See Laura Brown, “Not Outside the Range,” 100–112. See also Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, chap. 1. While I find the category of insidious trauma immensely valuable in addressing the intersections between psychic, bodily, and less visible, structural, forms of violence, I am nevertheless cautious about the over-generalization of trauma as a model for thinking about violence. Katherine MacKinnon’s work, for example, has been important in identifying the imbrication of sex and violence in law, culture, and everyday life. However, her emphasis on sexual violence as a ubiquitous trauma that defines gender itself risks positioning “women” exclusively in terms of their vulnerability to heterosexual violation, and consequently, through their victimization by sexual trauma: “Given the statistical realities [of rape], all women live all the time under the shadow of the threat of sexual abuse. . . . Given the statistical realities, much of women’s sexual lives will occur under post-traumatic stress” (MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*, 149). My thanks to Colleen Pearl for pointing out this passage and for illuminating conversations both on this issue and in relation to *Baise-moi*.

36. As Susan J. Brison has shown in her powerful book *Aftermath*, rape is a trauma that dismantles traditional philosophical conceptions of personal identity, which rely on the continuity of one’s memory of selfhood or of one’s body as a constant over time. Survivors of rape have undergone such a violation of their psychic and bodily integrity that they frequently describe this breach as dividing them into separate beings. Brison underscores the importance of creating personal, social, and institutional spaces for the victim to narrate the events to a community of witnesses. Speech, narrative, and audience play a crucial role in the integration of traumatic experience and the restoration of a sense of psychic cohesion. One of the questions posed by Desportes’s description of Manu’s rape, then, is what happens when a subject has no prior sense of psychic integrity, when violation is constitutive of that person’s emergence into social being? How are we to understand, or even feel compassion for an experience that takes us so far outside the range of normative views of psychic integrity and personal dignity?

37. In “Girls Just Want to End Oppression,” an interview with Nigel Andrews in the *Financial Times*, April 11, 2002, Desportes discusses the censorship of her film in relation to the trials of Baudelaire and Flaubert: “Maybe we were naïve, but we didn’t expect a fuss. Least of all in France which is supposed to be open-minded. We have a tradition of censorship—Flaubert, Baudelaire—but also of overcoming it.”

38. As Walter Benjamin noted, “The figure of the lesbian woman belongs among Baudelaire’s heroic exemplars.” For Benjamin, Baudelaire’s fascination with lesbians and their androgyny responds to a general cultural disquiet over women entering the workforce and challenging traditional conceptions of femininity: “The nineteenth century began openly and without reserve to include women in

the process of commodity production. The theoreticians were united in their opinion that her specific femininity was thereby endangered; masculine traits must necessarily manifest themselves in women after a while. Baudelaire affirms these traits. At the same time, however, he seeks to free them from the domination of the economy” (Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 318).

39. Despentès’s narrative may foreclose lesbianism, but it does represent incest. One of the characters, Fatima, has incestuous relations with both her father and, later, her brother, in a sexual configuration reminiscent of Baudelaire’s *L’Invitation au voyage* and its address to “Mon enfant, ma soeur.”

40. Despentès thus belongs to a new generation of feminists who refuse to condemn pornography and in fact redeem the pornographic medium as a space for the exploration of female desire. This is, of course, a striking departure from feminist condemnations such as that of MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, which argues for the inextricable links between pornography and sexual violence, between the representation and the enactment of violation. Despentès, however, questions this conflation of representation and practice and claims that the representation of violence through a medium such as cinema can serve as a critique of social life. For a series of interviews with female directors of films deemed “pornographic,” such as Breillat and Despentès—among others—who argue for the need to reclaim the medium for woman-centered explorations of sexuality, see Marielle Nitoslawska’s documentary *Bad Girl* (Cinema Guild, 2001).

41. Mazauric, “Culture populaire censurée,” makes this point in the context of the film version: “Quand les bourgeois parlent de la misère, la compassion et l’humanitarisme sont consensuels. Quand les pauvres en parlent comme ils la vivent, la misère est choquante et la violence, crue, dérange. Cachez donc ce film que l’on ne saurait voir, parce qu’il ose montrer un quotidien dont on ne peut décemment faire une oeuvre : chômage, racisme, sexisme, viol, crime.”

42. Again, Mazauric conveys the ideological stakes of Despentès’s hypernaturalist representation of violence: “Film vengeur, enfin, sur la démesure fantasmagorique et symbolique d’une réponse à la violence qui serait aussi violente que la violence elle-même. Dans une esthétique punk, en réponse à un univers sans éthique, la loi du talion qui règle notre monde peut provoquer cela, et nous pouvons nous préparer à cette extrémité : que reste-t-il des valeurs morales dont se targuent justement les censeurs de *Baise-moi* dans une société qui provoque et finalement admet cette misère-là” (ibid.).

Chapter 5: Broken Engagements

Epigraphs: Baudelaire, “Exposition universelle (1855),” *OC*, 2: 577; Camus, *Essais*, ed. Quillot and Faucon, 1427 (all further citations of Camus’s nonfiction refer to this edition, abbreviated as *E*).

1. For Camus, the notion of “étrangeté,” or disjuncture within and between

selves, forms the ontological and ethical basis for rebellion: “Le premier progrès d’un esprit saisi d’étrangeté est donc de reconnaître qu’il partage cette étrangeté avec tous les hommes, et que la réalité humaine, dans sa totalité, souffre de cette distance par rapport à soi et au monde.” *E*, 482.

2. By August 1945, Camus had declared that the purges were a complete failure: “il est certain désormais que l’épuration en France est non seulement manquée, mais encore déconsidérée. Le mot épuration était déjà assez pénible en lui-même. La chose est devenu odieuse. . . . L’échec en tous cas est complet.” *E*, 289–90.

3. See Camus’s essays on Algeria, gathered under the heading “Chroniques algériennes (1939–1958),” and in particular, “Algérie 1958” which dismisses the possibility of an independent Algeria, and proposes instead a federalist model that would give proportionate representations to Arab and French Algerians (*E*, 1011–18). Conor Cruise O’Brien’s *Albert Camus of Europe and Africa* gives a damning critique of Camus’s Eurocentric representation of Algeria, a critique taken one step further in Edward Said’s “Camus and the French Imperial Experience.” In an analysis that nuances Barthes’s designation of the style of *L’Étranger* as “écriture blanche,” Said argues that the neutrality of Camus’s style glossed over the contradictions of French-occupied Algeria. Camus’s literary output, for Said, is complicit with the imperialist, colonial project in Algeria: it “inflects, refers to, consolidates, and renders more precise the nature of the French enterprise there” (173). For a reevaluation of Camus’s “colonialism” that delves into the complexity of his representations of Algeria, see David Carroll’s forthcoming book, *Postcolonial Camus*. See also Carroll’s article, “Camus’s Algeria.”

4. Hoederer: “Moi, j’ai les mains sales. Jusqu’aux coudes. Je les ai plongées dans la merde et dans le sang” (Sartre, *Mains sales*, 200).

5. See Judt, *Past Imperfect*, 101–16.

6. The rift between Sartre and Camus dated back to the publication of “Humanisme et terreur” in *Les Temps modernes*, which Camus read as an apology for the purges. See Todd, *Albert Camus*, 423.

7. *E*, 628. Camus’s vision of dialectical materialism had been shaped by Kojève’s presentation of Hegel and of historical progress as a terroristic battle for sovereignty. For the influence of Kojève’s reading of Hegel on French intellectuals, see Descombes’s *Le Même et l’autre*.

8. In his notes to the Pléiade edition, Roger Quillot recounts this discussion of Camus’s *L’Étranger*: “Et le titre, dira-t-on ? J’avais, pour ma part, supposé que Camus l’avait emprunté à Baudelaire. S’il y avait eu emprunt, me répondit Camus, il était inconscient et de réminiscence” (Camus, *Théâtre, récits, nouvelles*, 1916). Subsequent references to Camus’s fictional works are to this edition, cited as *T*.

9. The circumstances of this rupture are well known. Jeanson’s negative review of Camus’s essay had appeared in *Les Temps modernes*, leading to a defensive response by Camus, which was addressed not to Jeanson, but to Sartre, as the director of the journal, who in turn wrote a public letter harshly criticizing Camus’s

prosecutorial methods in the letter itself (his refusal to address Jeanson was taxed as a form of rhetorical assassination). The ensuing exchange did not address the questions so urgently raised by *L'Homme révolté* but instead became a bitter *règlement de comptes* in which Camus was derided for his philosophical incompetence, historical naïveté, and ceremonious style. For a detailed examination of this breach, see Aronson, *Sartre and Camus*.

10. See Sartre, “Réponse à Albert Camus,” *Les Temps modernes*, no. 82 (August 1952) 352. Sartre’s “Réponse” is hereafter cited in the text and notes as *TM*.

11. *TM* 353. Sartre’s diagnosis of Baudelaire as a fruitless rebel rather than a revolutionary is replicated five years later in his indictment of Camus as a mere “abstraction de révolté”: “C’est au sein du monde établi que Baudelaire affirme sa singularité. . . . Mais précisément, il s’agit d’une révolte et non d’un acte révolutionnaire. Le révolutionnaire veut changer le monde, il le dépasse vers l’avenir, vers un ordre de valeurs qu’il invente ; le révolté a soin de maintenir intacts les abus dont il souffre pour pouvoir se révolter contre eux. Il y a toujours en lui les éléments d’une mauvaise conscience et comme un sentiment de culpabilité.” (Sartre, *Baudelaire*, 49–50). Camus’s Clamence will provide a spectacular illustration of this sterile rebellion steeped in bad faith and culpability. For a discussion of Sartre’s essay on Baudelaire and of the debate it sparked (notably with Bataille) on the definition of poetry, see Blood, *Baudelaire and the Aesthetics of Bad Faith*, 57–93.

12. The character of Jean-Baptiste Clamence has often been read as an exercise in self-mortification, in which Camus crucifies the persona Sartre attributed to him. See Roger Quillot’s commentary: “Puisqu’on le dénonçait, Camus allait clouer au pilori, non pas lui-même mais le personnage qu’on lui attribuait ; du même coup, l’injustice de ses contemporains éclaterait elle aussi” (*E*, 2011).

13. Sartre had already discussed Baudelaire’s famous “dolorisme” in his psychobiography of the poet. An astute reader, he had also noted traces of Baudelaire in Camus’s earlier works, traces that situated the former *résistant* within the tradition of French classicism and its hostility to history: “Bref vous restez dans notre grande tradition classique qui, depuis Descartes et si l’on excepte Pascal, est toute entière hostile à l’histoire. Mais vous faisiez enfin la synthèse entre la jouissance esthétique, le désir, le bonheur et l’héroïsme, entre la contemplation comblée et le devoir, *entre la plénitude gidiennne et l’insatisfaction baudelairienne*” (Sartre, *TM*, 347; emphasis added).

14. See Gay-Crosier, *Albert Camus*, for a timely reassessment of *L’Homme révolté* that underscores the importance of irony in Camus’s view of rebellion as a “négation affirmative.”

15. “Il est certain que si l’on veut creuser cette situation, on trouvera au fond de la pensée du rieur un certain orgueil inconscient. C’est là le point de départ : *moi*, je ne tombe pas ; *moi*, mon pied est ferme et assuré. Ce n’est pas *moi* qui commetrais la sottise de ne pas voir un trottoir interrompu ou un pavé qui barre le chemin.” Baudelaire, “De l’essence du rire” (*OC*, 2: 531).

16. *T*, 1515–16. “Ce n’est point l’homme qui tombe qui rit de sa propre chute, à moins qu’il ne soit un philosophe,” declares the analyst of ‘De l’essence du rire’ (*OC*, 2: 532). This declaration is echoed in Clamence’s portrait of laughter as the painful lucidity that only the contemplative mind can bear: “Voilà ce qu’aucun homme (sinon ceux qui ne vivent pas, je veux dire les *sages*) ne peut supporter” (*T*, 1516).

17. In his *Paradis artificiels*, Baudelaire describes the “victorieuse monomanie” engendered by hashish as a transformation of all phenomena into allegories of self-hood: “Expliquerai-je comment, sous l’empire du poison, mon homme se fait bientôt le centre de l’univers ? comment il devient l’expression vivante et outrée du proverbe qui dit que la passion rapporte tout à elle ? . . . Personne ne s’étonnera qu’une pensée finale, sùpreme, jaillisse du cerveau du rêveur : « *Je suis devenu Dieu !* »” (*OC*, 1: 436–37).

18. *T*, 1547–48. Clamence is also a degraded version of Caligula, who transforms his empire into a specular reflection of his desire. This specularity is explicit in the use of the mirror in Camus’s play: Caligula first erases all other figures in the mirror in a symbolic inauguration of his reign of terror, and at the play’s conclusion, smashes its surface. Caligula and Clamence descend from a romantic lineage of self-deifying Baudelairean despots. They illustrate the dangerous intersection of an aesthetics of existence with a politics of terror. *Caligula* explicitly associates the intransigent idealism of lyricism and logic with murder, and indeed the whole play could be read as a meditation on Cherea’s remark to Caesonia: “Nous discutons sur le point de savoir si la poésie doit être meurtrière ou non” (*T*, 43).

19. *T*, 1550. Anterior versions of *La Chute* emphasized the laughter of the interlocutor as a sign of resistance to Clamence’s myth of penitence: “Ne riez pas ! Assez ! Vous riez trop.” MS GO6 (10): 146 (Institut mémoires de l’édition contemporaine, Paris–Caen).

20. Shoshana Felman’s influential reading of *La Chute* identifies Clamence’s passivity before the drowning and his subsequent refusal to alert the authorities or to read the papers as recording the loss of a community of witnessing in wartime and postwar Europe. *La Chute* thus becomes a document of the erasure of history, as well as a testimony to the impossibility of representing history. Felman’s broader analysis of the unspeakable nature of the Shoah and the silence it induces shifts from de Man to Camus/Clamence, to Primo Levi, thereby suggesting that their distinct predicaments in the face of the Holocaust are somehow analogous. This point is made through a series of rhetorical displacements reminiscent of Clamence’s own erosion of such distinctions. See my Afterword for a more extensive discussion of the limitations of this approach. Dominick LaCapra has offered an alternative reading of *La Chute* that sees Algeria as its true hidden subtext in *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, 73–94. My own reading questions attempts to anchor *La Chute* in one particular historical framework, since the slippages between different contexts seem at the core of Camus’s reflection on the complex re-

lations between allegory and history. I discuss this point in greater detail in the conclusion.

21. For an in-depth comparison of Camus's political thought with Arendt's, see Isaac, *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion*.

22. For a fascinating cultural analysis of hygiene as a postwar trope of domestic modernization that both represents and represses France's displaced relations to its colonies (specifically Algeria), see Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, chap. 2, "Hygiene and Modernization."

23. This vision of the modern bourgeois subject's blind consent to his own subjection echoes Baudelaire's condemnation of the popular consensus before the empire's authoritarianism and the forces of market production, as we saw in Chapters 2 and 3.

24. This anecdote appears both in the essay on rebellion and in *La Chute*: "Le cri pur de la maternité est lui-même tué, comme chez cette mère grecque qu'un officier força de choisir celui de ses trois fils qui serait fusillé" (*E*, 589). "Savez-vous que dans mon petit village, au cours d'une action de représailles, un officier allemand a courtoisement prié une vieille femme de bien vouloir choisir celui de ses deux fils qui serait fusillé comme otage?" (*T*, 1481).

25. Camus's portrait of the intellectual as collaborator anticipates Primo Levi's analysis of the intellectual's defeatism before Nazism: "by his very nature, the intellectual . . . tends to become an accomplice of Power, and therefore approves of it. He tends to follow in Hegel's footsteps and deify the State, any State; the sole fact of its existing justifies its existence" (*Drowned and the Saved*, 143–44). Clémence's realism, or historicism (which legitimates a state of affairs because of its existence) was also central to Sartre's definition of the collaborator back in 1945: "Le collaborateur est atteint de cette maladie intellectuelle qu'on peut appeler l'historicisme. L'histoire nous apprend en effet qu'un grand événement collectif soulève, dès son apparition, des haines et des résistances, qui, pour être parfois fort belles, seront considérées plus tard comme inefficaces. . . . J'ai cent fois relevé chez les plus honnêtes professeurs d'histoires, dans les livres les plus objectifs, cette tendance à entériner l'événement accompli simplement parce-qu'il est accompli" (*Sit.*, 3: 52). Sartre argued that "[c]e choix de l'attitude historique et cette passéification continue du présent est typique de la collaboration" (*ibid.*, 54–55). A decade after this analysis of collaboration, Sartre's own position on ends and means in relation to communism was itself an instance of "historicism," only not through a "making past" of the present but, rather, through its "making future." As Bernard-Henri Lévy notes in his critique of Sartre's later politics and its betrayal of earlier philosophical positions, "Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur" indicts the very position that Sartre was to endorse as a communist "compagnon de route." Lévy points out the irony in his reading of Sartre's essay: "Mais la description, comment ne pas le voir ? peut s'appliquer de la même manière, sans en changer un mot, à tous les collaborateurs de tous les totalitarismes, jusques et y compris, bien sûr, le totali-

tarisme soviétique. L'auteur de ces lignes se reniera, bien sûr ! Et la question sera de savoir par quel mystère il pourra—si vite ! Quelques mois plus tard, à peine !—oublier cette démonstration lumineuse pour, s'agissant, justement, de l'URSS, « se placer pour estimer ses actes dans le plus lointain avenir » et « masquer le caractère insoutenable » des camps en « sautant quelques siècles », en les « contemplant de loin » et en les « remplaçant dans l'Histoire » (Lévy, *Siècle de Sartre*, 352).

26. See my discussion of *L'Homme révolté* and its critique of romanticism and terror as founded upon the plasticity of the human body.

27. This is particularly true by the time of the writing of *La Chute*, when Camus had been accused by Jeanson and Sartre of appropriating the voices of dead *résistants* for his argument in *L'Homme révolté*.

28. See LaCapra's reading of the Algerian subtext in *La Chute* in *History and Memory after Auschwitz* and Ungar's pages on Camus's novel in *Scandal and After-effect*. Both read the incident of the detention camp in North Africa as an allusion to French colonialism and argue for a historically differentiated reading of Camus's allegory, incorporating traumas other than that of the Holocaust.

29. For instance, Jeanine's ecstatic merging with the Algerian landscape in "La Femme adultère" provides an "embodied" solution to the otherwise unresolvable dilemmas of her position as an alien(ated) white, French-speaking woman on Algerian soil. For an excellent analysis of this tale and more generally of Camus's fictional Algeria, see Carroll, "Camus's Algeria."

30. Camus in 1951 had already evoked the massacre of the innocents in terms of the Holocaust, "La différence entre le massacre des Innocents et nos règlements de comptes est une différence d'échelle. . . . Voilà ce qu'est devenue la terre de l'humanisme que, malgré toutes les protestations, il faut continuer d'appeler l'ignoble Europe" (*E*, 726). Yet, as LaCapra has argued, it would be reductive to read *La Chute* primarily as an allegory of the concentration camps. The allusions to torture powerfully resonate with the reality of French measures in Algeria. By the time of the novel's writing, Camus was writing a series of articles on the unrest in Algeria for *L'Express* (between 1955 and 1956) and evoked the suffering of Arab Algerians in terms of cries that had fallen on deaf French ears: "Qui fermait ses oreilles aux cris de la misère arabe, qui a permis que la répression de 1945 se passe dans l'indifférence, sinon la presse française dans son immense majorité ?" ("La Bonne Conscience," *E*, 974).

31. See Alain Resnais's documentary *Nuit et brouillard* (1955) for images of such barracks in Auschwitz.

32. In 1956, when *La Chute* was published, Camus's indictment of complicity would have resonated with the French civilians' refusal to reckon with torture and repression in Algeria. Yet the treatment of the Algerian question in *La Chute* is more complicated than a mea culpa for the plight of Arab Algerians. It is likely that Clamence the *juge-pénitent* also represents intellectuals such as Sartre and Jeanson whose support for the FLN "sacrificed" the French Algerians in expiation

for France's colonial history: "Si certains Français considèrent que, par ses entreprises coloniales, la France (et elle seule, au milieu de nations saintes et pures) est en état de péché historique, ils n'ont pas à désigner les Français d'Algérie comme victimes expiatoires (« Crevez, nous l'avons bien mérité ! »), ils doivent s'offrir eux-mêmes à l'expiations. *En ce qui me concerne, il me paraît dégoûtant de battre sa coulpe comme nos juges-pénitents, sur la poitrine d'autrui*, vain de condamner plusieurs siècles d'expansion européenne, absurde de comprendre dans la même malediction Christophe Colomb et Lyautey. Le temps des colonialismes est fini, il faut le savoir seulement et en tirer les conséquences" (*E*, 897–98; emphasis added).

33. See, e.g., Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre*. Sartre's theoretical reflections on violence are highly attuned to the systemic reification of human beings under capitalist, colonial, and neocolonial exploitation. His defense of counterviolent practices deployed to restore a dispossessed subject's humanity is worth considering seriously in an era of perpetual war against terror. For a close and thorough investigation of Sartre's shifting theory of violence that also compares his stance to that of Camus, see Santoni, *Sartre on Violence*.

34. Sartre, *Responsabilité de l'écrivain*, 54.

35. These brief remarks on violence are made in the hopes of dislodging Sartre and Camus from the oppositions they continue to represent, between the "philosopher of praxis" and the literary moralist, between *engagement* and *témoignage*, and most recently, between the apologist and the critic of terror and terrorism. For the latter reading (of Camus as terrorism's critic), see Paul Berman's application of *L'Homme révolté* and its definition of totalitarian terror to Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. Berman's slanted account of terrorism as a new form of totalitarianism makes no mention of Camus's explicit critique of the systemic and invisible forms of terror wielded by an expansionist empire—represented by the Soviet Union in the 1950s and all too resonant with American unilateralism today. It is unfortunate that discussions of Sartre and Camus should continue to pivot on how history "gives reason" to one or to the other, as we see in Claudie and Jacques Broyelle's *Les Illusions retrouvées : Sartre a toujours raison contre Camus* or Bernard-Henri Lévy's more recent discussion of "l'affaire Camus" titled "Pourquoi l'on a, tout de même, raison d'avoir tort avec Sartre plutôt que raison avec Camus" (*Siècle de Sartre*, 415). It is more useful to consider these intellectuals together, and to negotiate between the positions they have come to represent, that is to say, between a philosophical and political approach to the problem of violence and an ethical as well as literary inquiry into its representational logics and human costs.

Afterword

1. These slippages are readily discerned in Felman's reading of *La Chute*, which transforms *le fait concentrationnaire*—the fact of the concentration-camp universe—into a transhistorical and metaphorical wound whose trace is to be found

in the gaps and silences of testimonies by survivors, primary and secondary witnesses, and fictional characters alike. For a critique of Felman's approach and its relations to trauma theory's deployment in Holocaust studies, see Sanyal, "Soccer Match in Auschwitz."

2. On the inexpressibility of human pain, see Scarry, *Body in Pain*.

3. "En somme, devant l'histoire et devant le peuple français, la grande gloire de Napoléon III aura été de prouver que le premier venu peut, en s'emparant du télégraphe et de l'Imprimerie nationale, gouverner une grande nation. Imbéciles sont ceux qui croient que de pareilles choses peuvent s'accomplir sans la permission du peuple" (*OC*, 1: 692).

4. As Sartre put it in his indictment of Camus's rhetorical procedures, "la terreur est une violence abstraite" (*Temps modernes*, 353).

5. The relations between violence and its representation remain a primordial concern for thinkers invested in connecting theories of power to the lived reality of its operations across the globe. In a timely reflection, Judith Butler expresses several aspects of violence—as a dynamic, interpersonal, and fundamentally corporeal condition—that I have attempted to pursue throughout the literary readings in this book: "Violence is surely a touch of the worst order, a way a primary human vulnerability to other humans is exposed in its most terrifying way, a way in which we are given over, without control, to the will of another, a way in which life itself can be expunged by the willful action of another. To the extent that we commit violence, we are acting on another, putting the other at risk, causing the other damage, threatening to expunge the other. In a way, we all live with this particular vulnerability, a vulnerability to a sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot preempt. This vulnerability, however, becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political conditions, especially those in which violence is a way of life and the means to secure self-defense are limited" (Butler, *Precarious Life* 29).

6. I am adapting Adorno's remarks on the critical power of autonomous art in the age of kitsch to a discussion of the critical power of ironic art in an age of terror: "Even in the most sublimated work of art there is a hidden 'it should be otherwise.' . . . As eminently constructed and produced objects, works of art, even literary ones, point to a practice from which they abstain: the creation of a just life. . . . Today every phenomenon of culture, even if a model of integrity, is liable to be suffocated in the cultivation of kitsch. *Yet paradoxically in the same epoch it is to works of art that has fallen the burden of wordlessly asserting what is barred to politics*" (Adorno, "Commitment," 317–18; emphasis added).