

# Invitation to Contribute — A Conversation about Unworking

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, Peer Illner

Dec 8th

Dear Mehdi Belhaj Kacem,

My name is Peer Illner and I'm writing to you as the editor of *continent*. *continent* is an anglophone journal that publishes quarterly on philosophy, theory and media art. We are currently planning a summer issue on the topic of *désœuvrement* [unworking/inoperativity]<sup>[1]</sup> and I would very much like to invite you to publish an article with us. I have been following your work on mimesis, art and the question of unworking for a long time. I believe that your treatment of these themes in the wake of Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe is unique and exemplary and I would love to count you among the contributors. You can find some information on *continent* here <http://continentcontinent.cc/>.

Kind Regards,  
Peer Illner

Dec 10th,

Bonjour,

It's a pleasure to contribute to your journal. Could you please let me know the maximum character count for the article?

Best,  
MBK

Dec 13th

Dear Mehdi Belhaj Kacem,

Many thanks for your swift reply. I'm really happy that you're up for writing something for us. The character count is flexible. Normally, our articles are around 8 pages long. However, you are very welcome to write more if you think this is too limited. Let's say a maximum of 15 pages would be acceptable. We are aiming for a deadline on June 1st.

Best wishes,  
Peer

Feb, 26th

Cher Mehdi Belhaj Kacem,

I was wondering if you write in English or French. In principle, you can write in either language. If you prefer to write in French, I will happily translate your article into English.

Best wishes,  
Peer

March 1st

Dear Peer,

I write in French.  
The deadline is in June?

Cheers,  
Mehdi

March 1st

Dear Mehdi,

Exactly. The deadline is June 1st. Feel free to write in French. In that case, I'll translate your article into English. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Best wishes,  
Peer

June 7th

Dear Mehdi Belhaj Kacem,

The deadline for submissions to the *continent* issue on *désœuvrement* has now passed. I am writing to see where you're at with your contribution. Would you still like to send us an article? If you need more time, I can negotiate an extension with the other editors. I am particularly happy to count you among the contributors.

Best wishes,

Peer

June 16th

Dear Mehdi,

Did you have time to think about your contribution to *continent*? The deadline is negotiable if you need a bit more time. Since I believe that with the current events in France your thinking around unworking is gaining a new urgency, I would really be very happy to count you among the contributors.

Best,  
Peer

June 18th

Dear Peer,

Yes, sorry. I'm a bit ashamed that I never got back to you. The whole thing is abysmal. I am really struggling to intervene sensibly around this notion of *désœuvrement* for reasons that I hope to explain in the text itself when I get it done. What is your new deadline?

MBK

June 20th

Dear Mehdi,

Thanks for your message. I'm really happy that you're still on board. What would be a realistic deadline for you? Can we say in two weeks, July 4th if that seems viable to you?

Best,  
Peer

June 22nd

Perfect. That's very generous of you. I'll make sure

that you'll have no regrets and that my text adds something new.

Cheers,  
Mehdi Belhaj Kacem

July 21st

Dear Mehdi,

I'm writing to ask you for a little status update concerning your article for continent. Are you making headway on the piece? If I push you a little, please understand that this is only because I'm really looking forward to reading your essay.

Best,  
Peer

July 28th

Dear Mehdi,

I'm writing again to ask you where you're at with your article. Are you advancing with it? I'd be grateful for a little status update. We have assembled all the articles and would really like to pass to the editorial stage soon.

Best,  
Peer

August 3rd

Dear Peer,

I am sorry to have left you without any news. As an independent writer and not an academic, I don't work like our intellectual civil servants. I have for instance barely written anything during the last four years and have only recently emerged from this drought. In short, I have lived four years of "désœuvrement". I really thought of answering you every day but I guess the theme scared me for being a bit too close to home. "Literature", rather than "philosophy" even if the motif of désœuvrement stems precisely from independent

writers (Bataille, Blanchot) who blurred this boundary. (I want to add that that's not at all what I'm doing. You can read what Steve Light has kindly written on my work on my website). I'm actually not sure if I have anything new to add to the theme. At the moment, my profound malaise has rather intimate reasons. I have nothing to add to what Nancy and Agamben have already said. Or perhaps I do, but my words will come out only once I will have completely left behind this productive crisis that has condemned me to inoperativity in the last four years.

Please forgive me my strange desistance

Sept, 8th

Dear Mehdi

Thanks for your honest message. I regret, of course, not being able to include you in the journal, even though I think I understand your reasons quite well.

Best wishes,  
Peer

Dear Peer,

Overwhelmed by the feeling of guilt that, since the very beginning (after all, I told you I'd contribute) literally devoured me at the idea of writing anything at all on the notion of *désœuvrement*, well, let us get the torture over and done with. After all, torture, like language, laughter and labour is humanity's own. There's the whole problem. It's even the only problem.

As you must have gathered from my last letter, unworking touches something very intimate in me. Something that comes from what one normally calls literature rather than philosophy. Brutally put but without wanting to offend anyone (Nancy, Agamben are those who today write the truest things on unworking), I could have kept my promise regarding a number of other concepts. However, in what concerns unworking, I couldn't possibly treat it as a "very interesting concept" and, like a professor, analyse it from the safe space of

academic distance. Instead, I am obliged, without even exactly knowing why, to, as Lacoue-Labarthe said, “give in to autobiography”. As I said in my last email, it is without a doubt not entirely insignificant that the notion of *désœuvrement* was firstly thought in the realm of literature and not by professional philosophers. Indeed, it was thought by independent writers who nevertheless count among the most significant thinkers of the 20th century: Certainly Bataille and Blanchot (but we can also see how the spectre of this thinking, even though never explicitly named, haunted the writing of Walter Benjamin, in particular in his wonderful *Baudelaire*).

Profound malaise therefore in that the thing – *désœuvrement* touches autobiography. A malaise that was redoubled by the insistence with which you pushed me to write on the topic and which I suspect to originate (perhaps wrongly) in the remark that Alain Badiou makes concerning me in the footnote close to the end of *Logiques des Mondes*, in which he claims that inoperativity constitutes one of the central themes of my work. However, this is simply wrong. I actually spoke only rarely of inoperativity, and I never said that my generation was “dominated by inoperativity and pornography” [sic], which is a completely meaningless statement (it’s enough to read Badiou’s recent thoughts on contemporary youth, that he has deemed necessary to share, to be reassured on this point). Having said this, someone who knows my work very well has asked me why the recent summary of my philosophy (I’m sorry, I haven’t found a better name for it), *La Transgression et l’Inexistant*, which you may have read, and which unites around forty of the key terms of my system (in the precise sense of the word) does not include an entry on ‘*désœuvrement*’.

It’s true that in the first *theoretical* text that I wrote a long time ago, which was very naively informed by all the the authors that I just quoted (apart from Badiou for reasons that I will explain), I argued that the unworked might constitute a new revolutionary class for our times. Today, I wouldn’t speak so much of class but rather of the strong concept of populism, as used by Laclau, which is compatible with the premonitory views of Benjamin. On the topic of unworking and revolution, one would also have to mention the situationists, in particular Debord and the view of unworking as politics but

also as *art*, in Debord’s case, art is also undoubtedly (auto)biographic. I am however at the moment emerging from my own inoperativity. (After four years of inactivity, I’m writing!) I could have therefore answered your request in the typically scholarly manner of writing on the imposed concept, as indeed most academic philosophers do (but not all of them, I’m thinking of Meillassoux and a few others), which in my mind is a bad thing for philosophy. If one has nothing to say, one should just keep quiet. So for me, this theme exceeds the frame of the purely conceptual and touches on something more intimate and biographical, maybe even on what Agamben calls *bare life*.

In my case, my malaise stems from a feeling of guilt towards the workerist visions of our academic Stalinism. (From the very beginning of our conversation, which started 15 years ago, Badiou got extremely aggressive whenever we spoke about the theme of unworking. If it was only for him, he would have filled entire railway cars with all these ‘unworked’ people to send them to labour camps). Our academic Stalinism teaches us that we’re either producer, bourgeois capitalist, or parasite (Badiou’s homicidal contempt for all inoperativity and the lumpenproletariat). “Either worker or thief”, Badiou told me years ago with his habitual sense of fine nuances. But this is really ridiculous because an academic is in no way a direct producer, not more than an independent writer anyway. Nancy and Agamben have long understood this. But neither Badiou nor Žižek.

However, the conviction that animates a thinker, academic or otherwise, is clearly that he or she works: that he constructs concepts and thereby participates in collective life, just as much as a farmer or a mechanic. This is also entirely my conviction and the whole point of my exoteric philosophical system (sorry, again, for this emphasis) is that in twenty years time *everyone* will use my central concept of *pléonectique* in the same way that people are using Plato’s *idea* from two and a half millennia ago or Marx’s *capital*. My pride prevents me from clearly defining this term that envelops the entire system (in a very concrete sense) of my thinking.

If I fail in this, then I’ll still die with a clean conscience. In the best case, my concepts have a public utility. Even during my recent inoperativity, I

didn't feel any less useful to the collective (no one, individually is indispensable, that's Stalin's *logion*: "The individual doesn't count") than a worker or a doctor (this petty bourgeois, as one said in Pol Pot's time. Pol Pot exterminated 93% of his doctors and teachers for this very same reason. And Badiou still supports this today if you push him a bit.

More and more collectives are formed today more or less secretly that refuse both work and parasitism. They learn to produce directly and to live off the lowest possible minimum. Concretely, I am thinking of the radical vegan communes that are much more numerous than one thinks and that constitute themselves in the countryside where I live half the year. They are a bit like modern day Franciscans. I don't support everything they say in their 'spontaneous philosophy' but something in what they do commands admiration or respect in the Kantian sense of the term. (If anyone a little stupid obeys without questioning what Kant says about his ethical precepts, you'd respect him infinitely more than a certain intellectual or pseudogiant of philosophy who in his private life represents the farcical inverse image of everything he says about Truth and the Good.) They join gesture and speech and are thus different from all these brilliant or ingenious thinkers who claim to teach universal lessons but are pathetically incapable of doing what they preach. The latter thus never really say what they are really doing with their own concepts. This last point is a dilemma for me. I don't always live entirely in accordance with what my philosophical work suggests as an ethics (but I'm currently trying to pick up the courage to do so). I am therefore a bit like them (the professional thinkers and not those militant vegans who left everything behind, their work, their family and society to live according to the ethical precepts that they profess publicly, which is precisely not the case with our professors) and it's from this dramatic paradox that I try to take leave. If my thinking could meet those who do what they say, perhaps in addition to saying what I do, I'd finish like them by doing what I say. In any case, I admire them much more than our philosophers and intellectuals who are strong in their words and weak in their actions. Chatterboxes running their mouths, all of them.

I am able to deliver all the analytical concepts that reflect precisely the ethics and the practice of all

these inoperative, but not parasitical collectives that are currently constituting themselves. That's why I'm currently forcing myself to break with the academic writing style (I'm not pretending that 95% of philosophical life since Kant has not taken place at universities. Bataille and Blanchot also never pretended this) and to try, like Marx or Nietzsche, to make the most sophisticated concepts accessible to people other than academics (which is not intended to exclude them either but we'll talk about this another time). The fact that philosophy has become almost exclusively academic means that it has for a long time now only spoken to itself. It's in this closure that we can see its political sterility (not to say its senility) easily recognizable through its booming declarations that pretend to be acts of terrorism. The only exception today is Laclau. I'll speak of all this soon in more detail but this 'academic closure' of philosophy is everything but another question of 'inoperativity'. Forgive me for, yet again, having put this word into quotation marks out of modesty. I'll explain the reason for this semantic veil, to allude to Derrida at the end. But finally, without further ado, you'd never say of a cat that lazes around in the sun all day that it's inoperative. We'll see that everything takes place here. Man is an animal that works, which is why we can only say of him that he's inoperative (We don't speak of unemployment when talking about bees or ants).

This concept has taught us not only decisively but also premonitory, almost despite itself (Benjamin, Bataille, Blanchot, Debord), what has been wonderfully summarized by Nancy: That the absence of the work in art (in literature and elsewhere) is reflected politically in the refusal of the productive imperative. This is already stated by the very concept of unworking but even its thinkers (Nancy included) weren't aware of it. Beyond all that has already been written on it, unworking today means denial of *necessary* production. Not only does community not realise itself as work (Nancy) but in a more oblique way, the premonitory sense of unworking was (and this has only become obvious in the last few decades) that productivity (or what our mediatized political language calls growth) is as such criminal and suicidal. First at the level of the species and then at the level of everything that lives.

It is precisely this *real* that indivisibly constitutes our modernity that the hysterical adherents of the meta-

Stalinist *real* won't recognize. They thus happily short-circuit the radical left's only possibility (ecology) to rally its energies. Luckily they only do so at the *university*, which limits the damage to the academic context.

Man is an animal that works. We have known this dimly for a long time ("For we are God's fellow workers", St Paul *dixit*) and clearly since Hegel. There doesn't exist a single other animal of the same class (mammals) that works. There are insects (ants, bees etc.) that work monotonously (always the same task since tens of millennia; In the anthropological closure, there are millions of different jobs, but which all tend towards what? Hegelian-Marxism gave us the beginning of an answer: Towards antagonism *as such* and nothing else (no terminal goal at all like the philosophers including Hegel and Marx thought). We are God's fellow workers means that we are all *just* workers and the historical lapse in St. Paul's phrase is today spread out all around us. It's the technological Leviathan that ironically satisfies all the requirements that would have been necessary to define God (cf. transhumanism). This Leviathan is our total work of art. And this is why some terrified people among us have started to deconstruct it. This is the meaning of the rehabilitation of Wagner by some against his philosophical condemnation by Nietzsche (as Lacoue-Labarthe said, when Wagner describes the vegetation around Bayreuth, he's describing Nazism with fifty years advance on its actual emergence), by Adorno and Lacoue-Labarthe. They are telling us that if Wagner had given birth not to Hitler but to Stalin or Mao, there would have been nothing to add to the analysis (If, as Heidegger thought the Nazis had listened to Hölderlin rather than Hitler, German National Socialism would have been presentable). This is why against their most creative colleagues, the same people have started to condemn the political motif of unworking because they prefer the artistic theme of the work (preferably the great work). What Hegel himself could not see (neither could Marx, hence the illusion of production as necessity, literally as "second nature" that already Plato and Aristotle but not Epicurus believed in) is that not only did work proceed from the most fundamental ethical violation (slavery) but also that at its end the facticity of work would become criminal in the genocidal and exterminationist sense of the word: Here's the one and only problem of the beginning of this century. Seen from this angle, we have to

place the *exterminationism* of Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot etc (and therefore the philosophers that openly back this *exterminationism*, just like Leo Strauss inspired the strategists of George Bush) at exactly the same level as the delocalized American and European *exterminationism* (occidental and capitalist) or as the *exterminationism* of fascism. Like an Industrial Rock group from my youth said: *No one is innocent*.

This is the oxymoronic and therefore tragic sense that, following Schurmann and Lacoue-Labarthe, I have given to the adjective *conceptual* in my work. This is captured by the often cited and never understood terrible and atrocious phrase that was written above the entrance of the Nazi concentration camps: "Work liberates". This phrase does not only concern the factual Nazis, that would be too easy. The phrase is a monstrous lapse not only of the Nazis but of humankind as such as monstrous.

A chimpanzee, a cat, a larvae not to mention a tree or a rock don't work. Hegel's originary scene of anthropogenesis, which is confirmed by all contemporary anthropology since Lévi-Strauss is at the root of what, in my philosophical system I have called canonically *evil*. What is evil? Simply put, evil is the worldly creation of suffering that didn't exist in the animal kingdom. Find me a single case of torture exercised by animals. In other words, this supernumerary suffering is created by work and only by work. By slavery in the Hegelian sense: Without originary slavery (and this is confirmed by all contemporary anthropology and biology), no "generic humanity" to get excited about at the university.

Which form can we give to inoperative art? I gave a little hint in my work and with a bit too much autobiographical naivety in *La transgression et l'inexistant*: Play. Why? Because despite a few exceptions, (solitaire, video games, playstation) the vast majority of games are played together with other people (in ways which are just as varied as the games themselves. Team games, one on one, one against everybody else, everyone against one etc.) It's one of the biggest repressions in the history of philosophy that the Greeks considered play, most notably the Olympic Games as the highest form of art. Much more noble than tragedy, music or architecture. And why does play indicate the direction of inoperative art? Precisely because

play engages a *community* of players and because in a game every player co-creates the work, which would be the game itself. Except that, because they are several players, the game never becomes a work (the game takes its course) like it does in all other art forms. This, it seems to me is the political lesson we have to draw from the facticity of play: The inoperative art *par excellence* (and with varying success, contemporary art as that which unworks art is today in search of new games). But I admit that for the moment this intuition is nothing but philosophical: Another utopia.

But, you will tell me, dear Peer: "See, you have something to say regarding unworking!" No doubt. But I am not one of these detached academics who with his authority looks down on the dumb proletarians or teaches those willing students or even finishes by addressing the youth as if they didn't know anything themselves. Unworking is my most intimate drama. This is what I meant when I said it was autobiographical.

It's this fact of being torn apart by the consciousness of the fact that what I eat, the water I drink, the electricity that I use to write this text, the paper with which I wipe, or dry or blow my nose etc. is all produced by poorly remunerated workers but also through natural resources that are never even counted, as everyone knows. Workers like my alcoholic mechanic friend Tonio with his hands covered in motor oil that I ran into earlier. Or my deceased construction worker friend Patrick who killed himself aged fifty. When I think of them, I feel guilty, but only when I'm inoperative. When I am working, like right now, I am temporarily redeemed from all my sins.

But there's something else, which is the literary or autobiographical dimension, which in French we would describe as painful. All things considered, inoperativity is a kind of second-order mysticism. Just like one once (you never know a thing twice. No doubling) knew what it meant to be dead to society, unworking in a sense means assuming this death. Lacoue-Labarthe, always him, not accidentally defined literature in relation to Blanchot as the writing from someone who is dead (D.H. Lawrence's magnificent testimonial novella 'The Man Who Died' is a pleonasm of literature). This is the minimal but important difference that separates literature from religion. The latter's central theme with all its familiar consequences is

Resurrection (or in non-occidental countries Reincarnation). Literature on the other hand lets a dead person speak as a *dead person*. From Homer to Beckett via Calderon, from Sophocles to Artaud via Dante, from Orpheus to Kafka via Shakespeare, the verification is long and implacable. There's a terrifying forgotten film on Australian prisons in the 1980s called *Ghosts of the Civil Dead*. That's what I have been, dear Peer, for fifteen years. A ghost of the *civil*. Literature tells the story of someone who died (my death was in summer 2003) and who returns amid the living as a *dead person*. This is Odysseus and this is Oedipus and Antigone. This is Ovid and this is Hamlet, it's Montaigne and Rousseau, it's at the same time Proust (already dead) and Blanchot (always already dead). And, paradoxically (Lacoue-Labarthe has demonstrated this admirably) it is *here* and only *here* that we find the joy of being simply, biologically alive. This joy is also a second order joy. No animal can feel it, which is not saying anything at all about the animal kingdom's incredible variety and even less about humans' pretenses to superiority. Far from it, when we look at the paradoxical community of play. Animals can't appreciate a work by Titian or a quartet by Beethoven. However, most of them like to play. This is our community with them.

Since Benjamin, if not Hölderlin, we know that translation constitutes the central category of any consistent philosophy of history beyond any empirical use of the term. Even the great scissions of our history (Greek/Roman/German etc.). Every time a great translation (Of the Greeks by Cicero, of the Bible by Luther) determines single handedly a historical tipping point of the utmost importance and therefore a multi-secular epoch. But we should also be attentive to the small lapses in translation and therefore attentive to the translations that decide our immanent history. Thus, I recently learned that Agamben translated the term "désœuvrement", so central to his philosophy with "inoperativita". Something like inoperativity [inopérativité]. We immediately see the distance between these two terms: Quickly moving on, désœuvrement by all appearances seems to designate something of the order of the intersubjective human community whereas inopérativité seems to refer more to something like the objectal (what Agamben calls the dispositives). The Agambian désœuvrement would then be: The deactivation of what good old Heidegger called the gigantic technological machination. It seems to

me that with Agamben, we are not so much talking about a voluntarist deactivation of the technological machination but rather about revealing that even within its monstrous efficiency, our hegemonic technology is already inoperative, like the computer at the end of Kubrick's *Space Odyssey*. It's already senile. That's the subjective-objective *désœuvrement* that I try to indicate with the concept of play. This point deserves some ample elaboration, which I will undertake in my future work.

Suffice it to say, and this is confirmed by the recent revelation in the work of Agamben, that, as I've been thinking for a long time, Agamben and Nancy and Blanchot and Derrida and Schurmann and Lacoue-Labarthe are part of what it wouldn't be abusive to call a Left Heideggerianism, undoubtedly one of the most powerful currents of thought in the late 20th century. In one word, deconstruction. It is easily noticed that any great (post-Cartesian) philosophy takes roughly one century to fully unfold its effects. This is evident with Hegelian Marxism or Nietzscheanism to say nothing of Galileo-Cartesianism. For a long time, I've been saying to myself that if the truth and the effectiveness of metaphysics is the unflinching deployment of technology, then it follows that the deconstruction of metaphysics must take effect (to stay a little Hegelian) as the relentless dismantling of technology. Technological collapse of metaphysics? Not only. Germany for instance has shown us that one can voluntaristically dismantle nuclear power without provoking an economic catastrophe. One the contrary. It's towards all this that the concept of *désœuvrement* is pointing.

I finish on a pathetic-subjective, autobiographical-sacrificial note that for such long time prevented me from answering you. As I mentioned earlier, there is a kind of ecstasy in unworking in that - as everyone knows who has thought about it a bit- it's normal to *do nothing*. And that's exactly what I've been doing for the last four years. Take pleasure in doing nothing. "Enjoy life", as one says vulgarly to mean enjoy the miraculous chance of being alive and not live in a slaughterhouse, a military battery, a prison, a concentration camp, on the street etc. But quickly the Stalinist superego enters. Since we know very well that what we eat, what we use in terms of energy etc. etc. is brought to us through an invisible network of congeners that *do work*, have worked and will work for you and that the

minimal (and negative) ethics consists in showing solidarity with all those workers. And so you start working again because you know that this work (and its central concepts like the "pléonectique") will nourish the best of what this so-called generic humanity has to offer in the grave conflicts that are coming our way.

And still, I can't stop myself from thinking that even in those moments when my work makes me most proud that in fact whenever one works, and it doesn't matter what that work is (there's naturally a huge difference between a gardener and a trader, a cow breeder and a CEO, in other words, a slave and a tyrant), one participates in *the worst*. This is due to the fact that the facticity of evil, all the atrocities that humanity has unleashed on the earth since its apparition (of humanity, not the earth) stems from the simple *facticity of work*. A tragic double bind. As Kierkegaard would say, work and you will regret it. Don't work and you'll regret it. You'll have regrets in either case.

You can't not be guilty, whether you work or 'are' unworked. Maybe, unworking, to be an un-worker (in the exact sense that Beckett spoke of depeoplers) constitutes the political task for our coming generations in the coming century. An oxymoronic verb that renders the most radical passivity active, inoperativity.

To give you an idea of why the topic of *désœuvrement* pains me so much, I'm concluding by citing the introduction to an extraordinary conference, hosted by Lacoue-Labarthe on the theme of the autobiographical in Derrida, which overwhelms me whenever I read it.

"My dear Jacques,

I had sworn not to give in to it, to do everything in my power to avoid it, and to not allow myself to be drawn in. A sentence, slightly overemphatic, but obstinately recurring, put it plainly to me: I don't want to succumb; I don't want this endless return of the same demons; I don't want this kind of eternal repetition. Before long however, I realized that it was impossible. Strictly impossible. Then, another sentence, just as emphatic, I'm afraid began to voice itself in me: I'll yield to autobiography; I'll make that sacrifice. And when I understood that eventually, in order to make a start, I would have to utter this sentence publicly, it



immediately seemed clear to me that the right course to follow was simply to let the formidable phrase that had thus come to the fore echo in all its harmonic depth: I'll make that sacrifice. And leave it at that. I think – I know – that you will understand. And you, Jacques first and foremost."

Voilà, dear Peer. Your insistence has flattered and mortified me enormously, it has excited me and made me feel guilty. I hope that this text clarified a little bit why. And of course you can publish our emails in *continent*.

Mehdi Belhaj Kacem.

[1] Various translated as unworking and inoperativity, in the present exchange, both terms are used as translations of *désœuvrement*, depending on context. Unworking is used to denote a more active stance or disposition, whereas inoperativity is used to refer to the more passive state of being unworked. For a discussion of the translation issues related to unworking, see Pierre Joris' "Translator's Preface" to Maurice Blanchot's *The Unavowable Community*. Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1988), xxiv.