

LETTER ON WALTER BENJAMIN¹

Pierre Klossowski, translated by Christian Hite

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

*This letter by Pierre Klossowski was written in response to an inquiry by Adrienne Monnier, who, in 1952, was preparing to publish a French manuscript of Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in the journal *Mercure de France*.² Monnier, owner of the bookstore "La Maison des Amis des Livres" at 7 rue de l'Odéon, had become close friends with Benjamin while he was living in Paris in the 1930s and had been given the manuscript of "The Storyteller" by Benjamin himself after she had helped secure his release from an internment camp in Nevers, France at the end of 1939.³ (Benjamin would later write in a letter: "I am in Adrienne Monnier's debt . . . She was indefatigable in her efforts on my behalf and absolutely determined.")⁴*

*That Monnier would write to Klossowski about this manuscript—a French version of Benjamin's "The Storyteller"—makes sense given that Klossowski was known as Benjamin's French translator, having translated "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" in 1936 for Max Horkheimer's *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, the journal of the Institute for Social Research.⁵ And indeed, one of the interests of Klossowski's letter here is his recollection of the difficulties of translating that "Work of Art" essay, including Benjamin's dissatisfaction with Klossowski's first version.⁶ Benjamin, after all, was himself a translator (having translated Baudelaire and Proust), so the collaboration of Benjamin and Klossowski (a translator of Kafka and Hölderlin) was bound to turn into a kind of delirious *mise-en-abyme* (translators translating translators), at least for Klossowski who, in his letter, playfully mocks Benjamin's visceral response to "French syntax."⁷ This*

early encounter with Benjamin's "Work of Art" essay (and its motifs of reproducibility, repetition, and copying) no doubt set the stage for Klossowski's later radicalization of these motifs in his own writings on simulacra, or what Michel Foucault calls that "wonderously rich constellation so characteristic of Klossowski: simulacrum, similitude, simultaneity, simulation, and dissimulation."⁸ In fact, in the late-1960s, not only Foucault, but Gilles Deleuze⁹ and Maurice Blanchot¹⁰ would also come to recognize in Klossowski's work a radically counter-intuitive meditation on the primacy of "the second" ("image," "copy," "repetition," "double") vis-à-vis the supposedly self-present identity of the origin(al). Or as Blanchot writes of this Klossowskian motif (which would subsequently become a dominant motif of "poststructuralist theory," i.e., a sort of Nietzschean affirmation of "the simulacrum" without original, without God, without nostalgia): "the image must cease to be second in relation to an alleged first object and must lay claim to a certain primacy, just as the original and finally the origin will lose their privileges as initial powers."¹¹ But is it possible to imagine that Benjamin's encounter with Klossowski was equally transformative?

Although much has been made of Benjamin's encounter with surrealism (including speculations about his friendship with André Breton),¹² little has been made of his documented relationships with Pierre Klossowski, Georges Bataille, and their groups of the 1930s: Contre-Attaque, Acéphale, and the Collège de Sociologie.¹³ No doubt, this critical oversight is due in part to Benjamin's own superb essay on "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia" (1929),¹⁴ which has tilted the scale towards surrealism whenever the topic of "Benjamin and the French avant-garde" is broached. And yet, one of the interests of Klossowski's letter here is how it attests to Benjamin's frequent—if ambivalent—participation in the goings-on of Bataille's inner circle. Indeed, as Klossowski would elaborate elsewhere:

I met Walter Benjamin in the course of one of the meetings of Contre-Attaque, the name adopted by the ephemeral fusion of the groups surrounding André Breton and Georges Bataille in 1935. Later, Benjamin was an assiduous auditor at the Collège de Sociologie, an 'exoteric' emanation of the closed and secret group Acéphale, which crystallized around Bataille soon after his break with Breton.¹⁵

Benjamin, in fact, was scheduled to deliver a lecture for the Collège de Sociologie as part of their 1939-1940 series but, as Allan Stoekl has noted, "the war broke out in September, putting an end to the Collège."¹⁶ Perhaps what remains most remarkable today, however, is that Benjamin's presence at the Collège seems to have gone unnoticed (then and now). As Denis Hollier pointed out long ago:

It is undeniable that, for us, Benjamin's frequentation contributes a lot to the aura of the Collège. But is it because of his presence—or because this presence went unnoticed? Benjamin was there and no one recognized him. When you think that "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" was to be read at the Collège, you wonder. And you wonder also knowing it never was.¹⁷

One of the impetuses for publishing a translation of Klossowski's short letter on Benjamin is to stimulate such "wonder." What happens, for example, when we add the "Benjamin-Bataille-Klossowski" constellation to the more familiar "Benjamin-Adorno" and "Benjamin-Scholem" constellations? Such a provocation is not to

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suggest that Benjamin saw eye to eye with Bataille and Klossowski. Indeed, as Klossowski writes in his letter here, he and Bataille were “in opposition to Benjamin on all fronts.” And Benjamin, no doubt, was equally suspicious of them. As Klossowski would elaborate elsewhere:

Disconcerted by the ambiguity of the “Acéphalian” atheology, Walter Benjamin objected with the conclusions he had drawn from his analysis of the German bourgeois-intellectual evolution—namely, that in Germany “the metaphysical and poetic upward valuation of the incommunicable” (a function of the antinomies of industrial capitalist society) had prepared the psychological terrain favorable to the expansion of Nazism. He then tried to apply his analysis to our own situation. Discreetly, he wanted to hold us [Klossowski and Bataille] back from a similar downfall . . . [H]e believed we too risked playing the game of a pure and simple “pre-fascist aestheticism.”¹⁸

Such suspicions, however, should not put a damper on the “wonder” of certain shared affinities, the sort of things that would perhaps help us trace another picture of “Benjamin”: i.e., “eroticism,” “prostitution,” “pornography.”¹⁹ Like Bataille, whose body of work includes the infamous *Story of the Eye* (1928),²⁰ and Klossowski, whose corpus Blanchot once called a “mix of erotic austerity and theological debauchery” (not unlike Sade’s),²¹ and Deleuze called a “superior pornography” (a “unity of theology and pornography”),²² Benjamin, too, took an interest in what he called “A State Monopoly on Pornography” (1927).²³ Stressing the inextricable intertwining of “scatological wit in the monastery language in the Middle Ages” (SMP 73), Benjamin notes the futility of trying to “banish” such excesses (SMP 73); rather, “the downward torrent of language into smut and vulgarity should be used as a mighty source of energy to drive the dynamo of the creative act” (SMP 73). Indeed, as Benjamin goes on to argue, the harnessing of this technology of arousal should not be left to hacks:

For this reason, we call for a state monopoly on pornography. We should demand the socialization of this not inconsiderable source of power. The state should administer this monopoly and should ensure that this literary genre is the exclusive prerogative of an elite group of important authors The writer should be given a license to supply authorities with a specified percentage of the statistically calculated demand for pornographic works He is not a sewer worker, but a pipe layer in a comfortable new Babel. (SMP 73-74)

If such a vision calls to mind the French socialist, Charles Fourier (Sade’s contemporary), this would not surprise Klossowski, who, on more than one occasion (including his letter here), has emphasized the importance of Fourier’s “hedonistic materialism” for Benjamin.²⁴ Thus the latter’s “vision of a society blossoming in the free play of the passions” is, according to Klossowski, symptomatic of Benjamin’s nostalgic desire “to reconcile Marx and Fourier”:

With the common ownership of the means of production, the abolished social classes could be substituted by a redistribution of society into affective classes. Instead of enslaving affectivity, a free industrial production would expand its forms²⁵

Whether nostalgic or not, it is clear that Benjamin and Klossowski both share a certain interest in the constitutive relationship between forms of affectivity and experimental social structures (whether small scale, as with Acéphale, or large scale, as with Fourier's "Phalanstery"),²⁶ to the extent that these experimental social technologies of affect, as we might call them, render the supposedly isolated "responsible ego" null and void. Deleuze once said that "Klossowski's entire work moves towards a single goal: to assure the loss of personal identity and to dissolve the self,"²⁷ what Benjamin called "that most terrible drug—ourselves—which we take in solitude."²⁸ This, I think, is the (impossible) challenge of the "Benjamin-Bataille-Klossowski" constellation—a challenge best taken up with laughter:

A laughter without sadness and without sarcasm that asks for no spiteful or pedantic participation, but on the contrary asks for the giving up of personal limits, because it comes from far away and, traversing us, disperses us in the distance (a laughter in which the emptiness of a space resounds from the limitlessness of the void).²⁹



Dear Miss,³⁰

No, I had nothing to do with the translation of *Leskov* ["The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov"] by our dear Walter Benjamin. My collaboration was limited to the translation of his very remarkable study on *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*. This text, of which he had given you a copy, I believe, deserves to be republished. But it should be entirely reworked—at least I think so. Indeed, Benjamin, estimating my first version to be too loose, had begun to retranslate it with me. The result of this was a perfectly unreadable text due to the fact that it copied exactly certain poor German expressions for which Benjamin accepted no transposition. French syntax often literally gave cramps to this unwavering logician. I remember this sentence from Joseph de Maistre: "He [Voltaire] delivers his imagination to the enthusiasm of hell which lends him all its forces to drag him to the limits of evil," and whose construction infuriated him.³¹

I met Benjamin when I was involved in the Breton-Bataille agglutinations, shortly before joining Bataille in *Acéphale*, all the sort of things that Benjamin followed with as much consternation as curiosity.³² Although Bataille and I were then united in our opposition to him on all fronts, we listened to him with passion. There was in this Marxist-leaning, or rather, extreme criticist, a visionary whose imagery was as rich as Isaiah's. He lived torn between the problems that only historical necessity would solve, and images of an occult world that often imposed itself as the only solution. But this is what he deemed to be the most dangerous temptation. Thanks to it, though, Benjamin possessed a profoundly poetic nature; and yet because he was even more profoundly moral, he deferred it rather than rejecting it. He waited for the total liberation with the coming of universalized play in the sense of Fourier, for whom he had boundless admiration.³³ I do not know a man today who has lived so intimately in the Paris of Saint-Simon and Fourier. He had a prodigious knowledge of all esoteric currents, and the most remote secret doctrines seemed through him to achieve an artisanal esotericism that would disclose to us, at any moment, arcane mysteries.

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Such are the resonances that my memory of him provokes. Without doubt, I am mixing up many things here that should rather be separated. I wouldn't be able to cite you in this case any concrete references for all of this. But I remain persuaded that Benjamin is one of the greatest unrecognized thinkers of our time whom horrible circumstances have contributed to assimilating in the minds of many to the category of "Marxist theorist"—a category from which he clearly distinguished himself by a powerful originality. Would you know, by any chance, what happened to the diaries from which he used to read passages to me, particularly those dreams that were so moving?³⁴ I lament this loss whenever something makes me think about him. And I am quite curious about the portrait that you will give of him.³⁵

PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI (1905-2001) was a translator, artist, and writer of several texts, including *Sade My Neighbor*, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, and *The Baphomet*.

NOTES

1. TN: This letter was originally published as “Lettre sur Walter Benjamin, in the *Mercure de France* 315 (1952), 456-457. It is reprinted in Pierre Klossowski, *Tableaux Vivants: Essais Critiques, 1936-1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), Translation rights granted with kind permission from the Klossowski Estate and Éditions Gallimard © Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 2001. Thanks to Arne De Boever for assistance with this translation.
2. The French manuscript of Benjamin’s “The Storyteller” (“Le Narrateur: Réflexions à propos de l’oeuvre de Nicolas Leskov”) was published in the *Mercure de France* (1952), along with Monnier’s reflections on Benjamin (“Note sur Walter Benjamin”) and Klossowski’s letter of reply to Monnier (“Lettre sur Walter Benjamin”). Klossowski’s “Letter” and Monnier’s “Note” are reprinted in Pierre Klossowski, *Tableaux Vivants: Essais Critiques, 1936-1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 81-87. The German version of Benjamin’s “The Storyteller” was originally published in *Orient und Occident* (October 1936). See Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov,” trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 143-166.
3. See Adrienne Monnier, “Note sur Walter Benjamin,” in Pierre Klossowski, *Tableaux Vivants: Essais Critiques, 1936-1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 81-85. See also Hans Sahl, “Walter Benjamin in the Internment Camp,” trans. Deborah Johnson, in *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 346-352.
4. See Walter Benjamin, *Briefe*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno and Gershom Scholem (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966), 827-835.
5. See Walter Benjamin, “L’Oeuvre d’art à l’ époque de sa reproduction mécanisée,” trans. Pierre Klossowski, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5 (Paris: Alcan, 1936): 40-68. At this time, the Institute for Social Research was based in New York, Horkheimer having fled Frankfurt with the rising tide of Nazism, while his journal, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, was being published in Paris by Alcan. International and multilingual in scope, Horkheimer’s *Zeitschrift* regularly (and no doubt intentionally) published essays in English, German, and French. In fact, the other featured essays in the 1936 issue containing Klossowski’s translation of Benjamin’s “Work of Art” essay include Margaret Mead’s “On the Institutionalized Role of Women and Character Formation” (in English) and Herbert Marcuse’s “Observations on the Theory of Essence” (in German). Each essay is followed by brief summary either in English and German, English and French, or French and German, for readers who don’t read the language in which the essay is published. So, clearly, Benjamin could have published a German version of the “Work of Art” essay in Horkheimer’s journal had he chosen to, but, by seeking out a French translator (Klossowski), Benjamin seems to have been trying to break into the Paris intellectual scene in which he was then immersed. As Benjamin notes in a letter to Alfred Cohen (January 26, 1936): “The translation of this essay will be in the hands of an especially talented man; in spite of this, given the subject matter, any translation will probably be difficult to accomplish without harming the text. On the other hand, I feel that the publication of the text in French is something much to be desired in view of my position here.” See *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910-1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. Manfred Jacobson and Evelyn Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 519. Although Benjamin, in other letters, speaks of his desire to publish a German version of the “Work of Art” essay in *Das Wort* (a journal then based in Moscow), he also notes that the French intellectual scene at the time is extremely suspicious of “all things German.” See Letter to Margarete Steffin (October 1935), in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*, 511.
6. For example, Klossowski’s French translation, “L’Oeuvre d’art à l’ époque de sa reproduction mécanisée,” appears to have been the source for Harry Zohn’s English translation, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217-251, which has since been “corrected” by the translation of two other versions: “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version)” trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 101-133, and “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Third Version),” trans. Harry Zohn and Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings: Volume 4, 1938-1940*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 251-283.
7. In addition to translating Benjamin, Kafka, and Hölderlin, Klossowski would go on to translate works by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, among others.
8. Michel Foucault, “The Prose of Actaeon” [1964], trans. Juan García Ponce, in Pierre Klossowski, *The Baphomet* [1965], trans. Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sartarelli (New York: Marsilio, 1998), xxvi-xxvii. Foucault’s essay was originally published in *La Nouvelle revue française* 135 (March 1964), 444-459.
9. See Gilles Deleuze, “Klossowski or Bodies-Language,” in *The Logic of Sense* [1969], trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 280-301. Originally published in *Critique* 214 (March 1965), 199-219.
10. See Maurice Blanchot, “The Laughter of the Gods,” in *Friendship* [1971], trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 177.
11. Maurice Blanchot, “The Laughter of the Gods,” 177. Deleuze, in his essay “Klossowski or Bodies-Language,” puts

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it another way: “repetition does not presuppose the Same or the Similar—these are not its prerequisites. It is repetition, on the contrary, which *produces* the only ‘same’ of that which differs” (289). This Klossowskian motif of the primacy of “the second” (without the original), or the primacy of “the repetition” (without the identity of that which is supposedly repeated), also brings to mind Jacques Derrida’s writings on “the supplement” in the late-1960s. Interestingly, though, Klossowski doesn’t show up explicitly in Derrida’s writings until his so-called “ethical turn,” particularly around the notion of “hospitality.” For Derrida’s readings of Klossowski, see Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 83-85 & 121-131; and Jacques Derrida, “Hospitality,” trans. Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki* 5.3 (December 2000): 3-18. In this context, see also Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

12. See, for example, Margaret Cohen’s “elaboration of Benjamin and Breton’s Gothic Marxisms” in *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 11. Cohen never mentions Benjamin’s friendship with Klossowski, and she also quickly dismisses his relationship with Bataille to make her case for Benjamin’s “surrealist Marxism” (3).

13. The exception here, of course, is Denis Hollier’s edited collection, *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), whose “Appendix” includes a translation of Klossowski’s “Between Marx and Fourier” (1969), another important letter on Walter Benjamin. From Hollier’s collection we learn that when *Contre-Attaque* disbanded, Bataille decided to form (with friends who had participated there, including Klossowski) a “secret society,” whose intention was to be expressed, in part, via the journal *Acéphale* (1936-1939). The *Collège de Sociologie*, founded in March 1937, was to be somehow the external activity of this “secret society,” making itself felt through a series of lectures by, among others, Bataille, Klossowski, Roger Caillois, Michel Leiris, Alexandre Kojève, and (scheduled though never delivered) Walter Benjamin.

14. Walter Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia” [1929], trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 177-192.

15. Pierre Klossowski, “Between Marx and Fourier” [1969], trans. Susan Z. Bernstein, in *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Reflections*, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 368. Originally published as “Entre Marx et Fourier,” *Le Monde* (May 31, 1969). Also reprinted in Denis Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 388-389.

16. See Allan Stoekl, “Introduction,” in Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), xxi.

17. Denis Hollier, “Foreword,” in *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), xxi.

18. Pierre Klossowski, “Between Marx and Fourier,” 368-369.

19. On “the social play of eroticism,” for example, see Walter Benjamin, “Convolute O [Prostitution, Gambling],” in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 489-515, where Benjamin writes: “In prostitution, one finds expressed the revolutionary side of technology” (493). Why? In part because prostitution represents a revolt against the “laws of nature” (sex solely for natural reproduction in marriage): “The sexual revolt against love not only springs from the fanatical, obsessional will to pleasure; it also aims to make nature adaptable and obedient to this [technological] will” (Benjamin 493). Against the natural origin of things, then, “the prostitute” is for Benjamin ultimate figure of the threshold: “Prostitutes . . . love the thresholds” (494).

20. Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye* [1928], trans. Joachim Neugroschel (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987).

21. Maurice Blanchot, “The Laughter of the Gods,” 170. Both Klossowski and Bataille, of course, would take an interest in the texts of the Marquis de Sade. See Georges Bataille, “The Use Value of D. A. F. de Sade” [1929], in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 91-102; and Pierre Klossowski, *Sade, My Neighbor* [1947], trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991).

22. Gilles Deleuze, “Klossowski or Bodies-Language,” 282.

23. Walter Benjamin, “A State Monopoly on Pornography” [1927], trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings, Volume 2, 1927-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 72-74. Hereafter cited in the text as SMP.

24. The description of Fourier’s socialism as “hedonistic materialism” is Benjamin’s. See Walter Benjamin, “Convolute W [Fourier],” in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 628.

25. Pierre Klossowski, “Between Marx and Fourier,” 368-369.

26. “Phalanstery” is Fourier’s term for collective dwelling units, which would house between 1500-1600 people, organized according to passion attraction. As Benjamin notes: “The phalanstery can be characterized as human machinery. This is no reproach, nor is it meant to indicate anything mechanistic; rather, it refers to the great complexity of its structure [Aufbau]. The phalanstery is a machine made of human beings.” See Walter Benjamin, “Convolute W [Fourier],” in *The Arcades*

Project, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 626-627.

27. Gilles Deleuze, "Klossowski or Bodies-Language," 283.

28. Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," 190.

29. Maurice Blanchot, "The Laughter of the Gods," 170.

30. TN: Adrienne Monnier (1892 - 1955) was one of the first women in France to found her own bookstore. In 1915, she opened "La Maison des Amis des Livres" at 7 rue de l'Odéon, which became a gathering place for writers like Paul Valéry, André Gide, and the German *émigré*, Walter Benjamin. An essayist, translator, and bookseller, Monnier launched the journal, *Navire d'Argent*, in June 1925, publishing her translation of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"—T. S. Eliot's first major poem to appear in French. (Her lover, Sylvia Beach, opened the Shakespeare & Co Bookstore, and later published James Joyce's *Ulysses*.) During World War II, Monnier interceded with the French police on Walter Benjamin's behalf, helping to secure his release from internment in a "*camp travailleurs volontaires*" [camp for voluntary workers] at Clos St. Joseph in Nevers, France. In 1955, Monnier committed suicide by taking an overdose of sleeping pills.

31. TN: See Joseph de Maistre, *Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg* (8th ed. 1862), Vol. 1., where we find the following passage: "To admire Voltaire is the sign of a corrupt soul; and if anybody is drawn to the works of Voltaire, then be sure that God does not love such an one. Divine anathema is written on the very face of this arch-blasphemer . . . he [Voltaire] surrenders his imagination to the enthusiasm of hell, which lends him all its forces; Paris crowned him, Sodom would have banished him" (243; emphasis added).

32. TN: "Agglutination" is a rather significant word choice here for, among other reasons, its bio-medical connotations. From the Latin, *agglutinare*, to glue (L. *ad*, to + *gluten*, glue), the word "agglutination" has come to mean: (1) the clumping together of red blood cells or bacteria, usually in response to a particular antibody, and (2) the adhesion of wound surfaces in healing. Of course, the figure of "the wound" [*blesure*], and its ambivalence as stigmata, was crucial to Georges Bataille's idiosyncratic notions of "communication" and "community," particularly as manifested in his groups of the 1930s: *Contre-Attaque*, *Acéphale*, and the *Collège de Sociologie* (the latter two with Klossowski). Indeed, as Bataille writes: "The more perfect, the more isolated or confined to ourselves we are. But the wound of incompleteness opens me up. Through what could be called incompleteness or animal nakedness or the wound, the different separate beings *communicate*, acquiring life by losing it in *communication* with each other." See Karmen MacKendrick, "Sharing God's Wounds: Laceration, Communication, and Stigmata," in *The Obsessions of Georges Bataille: Community and Communication*, ed. Andrew J. Mitchell and Jason Kemp Winfree (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 137. For more on "the *Acéphale* community" and its "negation of the isolated being," see Maurice Blanchot, "The Negative Community," in *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Station Hill Press, 1988), a text written in response to Jean-Luc Nancy's reading of Bataille in *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991). See also Roberto Esposito's analysis of the bio-political implications of "community" (in Bataille, and elsewhere), including its insidious etymological link to notions of "immunity," in *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

33. TN: On Fourier, see Walter Benjamin's "Convolute W [Fourier]," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 620-650. Benjamin, of course, entrusted his manuscript of *The Arcades Project* [*Das Passagen-Werk*] to Georges Bataille, who hid it in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France during the Second World War.

34. TN: See, for example, Walter Benjamin, "Diary Entries, 1938," trans. Gerhard Richter and Michael W. Jennings, in *Selected Writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 335-343.

35. TN: See Adrienne Monnier, "Note on Walter Benjamin," in Pierre Klossowski, *Tableaux Vivants: Essais Critiques, 1936-1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 81-84. Monnier's "Note sur Walter Benjamin" was originally published in *Mercure de France* 315 (1952), along with Klossowski's "Lettre sur Walter Benjamin."