

Maurice Blanchot and Space as Opening: Revelations of the Impossible

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Abstract

In describing literature and writing, from his early publications collected in *Faux pas* to some of his later texts, Maurice Blanchot evokes, from many perspectives, the limits of textual space, where it might reveal an opening. It would be this textual space as opening, which writers like Rilke, Broch and many others would pursue in an experience which is extreme, in a sense impossible. Such would also be the case of the poet Orpheus, who, in search of Eurydice in *L'Espace littéraire*, is dispersed. However, in *L'Entretien infini*, with reference to Emmanuel Levinas, Blanchot revisits the opening of language, in writing about radical alterity and the ethical relation to the opening of infinite transcendence. In *L'Entretien infini*, Blanchot also discusses Nietzsche's limit-experience and fragmentary writing, as well as a paradoxical space relating to Nietzsche's eternal return and revelation. What is the importance of these changing spaces in Blanchot's trajectory of writing? Might they trace an opening beyond metaphysics, such as Jacques Derrida has elaborated in many texts?

Keywords: *Blanchot, Derrida, Orpheus, opening, literary space, circle, nostalgia, difference, deconstruction*

Etrange bonheur, obscur savoir dont Hofmannsthal aussi nous a parlé: 'Qui connaît la puissance du cercle ne redoute plus la mort', et Rilke, qui est de la même famille: 'J'aime quand le cercle se referme, quand une chose se rejoint en l'autre.' 'Il n'y a rien de plus sage que le cercle.' 'L'anneau est riche par son retour' (Maurice Blanchot).¹

♦ *(il) l'ouverture interdite: c'était cela qu'indiquait ce nom à peine un mot et qui le désignait d'une manière si éminente en ne désignant personne et encore par une indication indirecte qui toutefois semblait se rapporter de plus en plus indirectement à ce point précis, déterminé-indéterminé, un vide d'univers. (Maurice Blanchot).²*

le sens est en fonction du jeu, il est inscrit en un lieu dans la configuration d'un jeu qui n'a pas de sens (Jacques Derrida).³

In considerations on literature and writing, from the early collected articles in *Faux pas* to the later publications, Maurice Blanchot evokes a vast array of different spaces, whose boundaries are rarely clear-cut. Blanchot often describes, from various perspectives, writing which designates an opening, exceeding all confines. Such a space of the text is evident for example in 'Mallarmé et l'art du roman', in *Faux pas*, where the poet's search culminates in an impressive expression of nothingness, silence, in the words which begin to open: 'Les images se sont éteintes. Les métaphores se sont

¹ Maurice Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), 185.

² Maurice Blanchot, *Le Pas au-delà* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 32.

³ Jacques Derrida, 'De l'économie restreinte à l'économie générale. Un hegelianisme sans réserve,' *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 382; original emphasis.

dissipées. Les mots sont entrouverts. Il n'y a plus, au sein de l'esprit, qu'un poème désormais incorruptible qu'une complète nécessité semble avoir réduit à l'absence et qui, pourtant, se reconnaît dans cette absence comme l'image – dernière image – de la plénitude et de l'absolu.'⁴ In the opening of textual space, language would expose its absence, a glimpse of the absolute might be realized, a revelation might take place, in an instant uncovering the eternal. However, the discovery of such an opening is not straightforward. In many of Blanchot's texts, the writer's experience is extreme, in a sense impossible, for it often entails, in the pursuit of the absolute or the unknown, a perilous passage, in which the space of life and death, the real and the imaginary, are indistinguishable. At the limits, it would be necessary for the writer to recount or render such a journey, perhaps to set about telling everything, as in the monumental work of Sade, or perhaps to speak as the voice engulfed in the abyss or as an affirmation of dispersion. Importantly, in Blanchot's texts, writing is incessant, unfinished, often pointing to an opening of textual space, a kind of excess, whose revelation is by no means simple.

In this article, I propose to examine, in close readings, a few of Blanchot's texts in order to trace a trajectory showing some of the diverse ways in which the opening of the space of language is elaborated. Firstly, I consider 'La littérature et le droit à la mort' in *La Part du feu* (1949), in which the conception of literature would be more about closure at the end of history, however, the significance of this piece is evident in Blanchot's re-evaluation of such a position. Following an analysis of some texts in *L'Espace littéraire* (1955) and *Le Livre à venir* (1959), I make mention of the opening of transcendence, with reference to Emmanuel Levinas in several writings in *L'Entretien infini* (1969). Finally, I discuss the opening of an unfathomable circular space in relation to Nietzsche and the eternal return. What is the crucial importance of the multiple ways in which Blanchot describes the opening of textual space, in contrast to closure, at the end of history, which is put forward in a few of his early texts? Why might space as opening be relentlessly revisited in Blanchot writings? Drawing on some of Jacques Derrida's texts, among others *L'Écriture et la différence*, I emphasise in my readings the way in which Blanchot rethinks the opening of textual space in relation to the process of writing, the play of language and dissemination.

The Question of Literature

In 'La littérature et le droit à la mort', in *La Part du feu*, Blanchot writes about the actions which can be performed by an author. 'Que peut un auteur? Tout, d'abord tout.'⁵ If freedom of speech oppresses him, he can create freedom and a world in which the slave is master, although this immediate abstract freedom is not the true realization of freedom. It is 'global' negation which goes beyond enclosed walls and time, in this sense achieving a certain opening. 'Sa négation à lui est *globale*. Elle ne nie pas seulement sa situation d'homme muré, mais elle passe par-dessus le temps qui dans ce mur doit ouvrir les brèches, elle nie la négation du temps, elle nie la négation des limites.'⁶ Referring to Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and Alexandre Kojève's *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, where the idea of the Book and the end of history are

⁴ Maurice Blanchot, *Faux pas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), 193.

⁵ Maurice Blanchot, *La Part du feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 306.

⁶ Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 306.

fundamental,⁷ Blanchot outlines various stages of the writer's work in the manifestation of the question of literature. Thus, if the writer recognizes himself in the revolution, Sade, solitary and yet a public figure, at once completely confined and yet entirely free, in a way epitomizes this movement: 'Sade est l'écrivain par excellence, il en a réuni toutes les contradictions. Seul: de tous les hommes le plus seul, et toutefois personnage public et homme politique important. Perpétuellement enfermé et absolument libre, théoricien et symbole de la liberté absolue.'⁸ Nothing more than a writer, Blanchot remarks, he nevertheless shows life as passion, cruelty and madness – in short all of it. Although unknown, Sade produces an enormous amount of work, which is immediately comprehensible: 'son œuvre n'est que le travail de la négation, son expérience le mouvement d'une négation acharnée, poussée au sang, qui nie les autres, nie Dieu, nie la nature et, dans ce cercle sans cesse parcouru, jouit d'elle-même comme de l'absolue souveraineté'.⁹ Of course, the circle is of consequence at the end of history, as everything would be revealed and nothing would remain to be done. Blanchot's conception of literature, in which Sade figures and which is tied to the Revolution, describes circularity.¹⁰

The question of literature is about the advent of truth and meaning (*sens*), yet also the destruction of things in language and the emptiness of death. It follows a circular movement, which merely reveals an ambiguity, where the terms are the same but opposed.¹¹ In short, it is about the revelation of everything in its totality in the closure of a circle and the disappearance of any exit. The question of literature, in Blanchot's rethinking of Hegel and Kojève, concerns 'that life which bears death and maintains itself in it';¹² literature is thought in terms of a phenomenology, in which it would manifest itself in its identity in the double meaning of language.¹³ The ambiguities of

⁷ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, *Werke in 20 Bänden*, 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969-1971); Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel. Leçons sur La Phénoménologie de l'Esprit* professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études, réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau (Paris: Gallimard, 1947). Kojève writes: 'le Livre est le résultat de l'activité du Sage, qui, en tant qu'Homme et Citoyen de l'Etat parfait, intègre toute l'évolution historique de l'humanité. Ainsi, cette histoire elle-même n'est en fin de compte que l'histoire du Livre, ou plus exactement de l'évolution du Savoir qui mène à ce Livre', 386; original emphasis.

⁸ Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 311. See also Blanchot, *Lautréamont et Sade* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1963); 'L'insurrection, la folie d'écrire' ('L'expérience-limite', 3), *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 323-342.

⁹ Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 311. Kojève notes: 'le contenu du Livre n'est pleinement révélé qu'à la fin du Livre. Mais puisque ce contenu est le Livre, lui-même la réponse donnée à la fin à la question de savoir ce qu'est le contenu ne peut être rien d'autre que l'ensemble du Livre. Ainsi, arrivé à la fin il faut relire (ou repenser) le Livre; et ce cycle se répète éternellement', 393; original emphasis.

¹⁰ See also Kojève, 391-393 and 145-149; Hegel, 36.

¹¹ Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 330.

¹² Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 330; translation mine: 311. Hegel states: '[...] Aber nicht das Leben, das sich vor dem Tode scheut und von der Verwüstung rein bewahrt, sondern das ihn erträgt und in ihm sich erhält, ist das Leben des Geistes. Er gewinnt seine Wahrheit nur, indem er in der absoluten Zerrissenheit sich selbst findet.' Hegel, 36.

¹³ 'Dans ce double sens initial, qui est au fond de toute parole comme une condamnation encore ignorée et un bonheur encore invisible, la littérature trouve son origine, car elle est la forme qu'il a choisie pour se manifester derrière le sens et la valeur des mots, et la question qu'il pose est la question que pose la littérature.' Blanchot, *La Part du feu*, 331. See also Rodolphe Gasché, 'The Felicities of Paradox: Blanchot on the Null-space of Literature', *Maurice Blanchot: The Demand of Writing*, ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 34-69; Derrida, *Séminaire. La peine de mort*, vol. I (1999-2000), ed. Geoffrey Bennington, Marc Crépon and Thomas Dutoit (Paris: Galilée, 2012), 164-177;

meaning are less about a play of language than about the total revelation of literature. It is noteworthy that in his commentary to Hegel, Kojève states: ‘ce mouvement-dialectique qui est Temps ou Histoire, c’est-à-dire en fin de compte histoire de la *connaissance* humaine ou de la Philosophie, – ce mouvement-dialectique est un mouvement *circulaire*. La Science, qui révèle ce mouvement en tant qu’achevé, doit donc être *circulaire*, elle-aussi’.¹⁴ The elaboration of the dialectical movement of history, revealed as accomplished, provides a source for Blanchot’s conception of literature in ‘La littérature et le droit à la mort’. However, the idea of the complete manifestation of literature, tracing a closed circular path at the end of time, is radically brought into question subsequently in his writings, which by contrast affirm in different ways, beyond knowledge, an opening of the unknown.

Such an opening is important in Georges Bataille’s perspectives on Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and he underlines crucial problems in Hegel’s work, particularly concerning closure and the limits of absolute knowledge. Moreover, in his reading of Bataille’s *Méthode de méditation*, among other texts, Jacques Derrida emphasizes the fact that Hegel’s conception remains within the ‘restricted economy’, within the circulation of meaning and value, without consideration of the opening in which it is inscribed. The ‘nous’ of Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes*

développe le sens ou le désir de sens de la conscience naturelle, celle qui s’enferme dans le cercle pour *savoir le sens*: toujours d’où ça vient et où ça va. Elle ne *voit* pas le sans-fond de jeu sur lequel s’enlève l’histoire (du sens). Dans cette mesure, la philosophie, la spéculation hegelienne, le savoir absolu et tout ce qu’ils commandent et commanderont sans fin dans leur clôture, restent des déterminations de la conscience naturelle, servile et vulgaire. La conscience de soi est servile.¹⁵

Along with Bataille, Derrida points to the endless play which underpins Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, undermining the notion of absolute knowledge, for beyond its closure is an opening or a tearing, which remains without acknowledgement.¹⁶ It must be recognized that the movement of literature which Blanchot describes in ‘La littérature et le droit à la mort’ would also show the circulation of truth and meaning, whose ambiguities would be revealed in a closed circuit without exit. However, the closure of this conception of literature is untenable and the question

Dominique Rabaté, ‘La littérature comme question’, *Cahier de l’Herne ‘Blanchot’*, ed. Eric Hoppenot and Dominique Rabaté (Paris: L’Herne, 2014), 261-266.

¹⁴ Kojève, 391; original emphasis.

¹⁵ Derrida, ‘De l’économie restreinte à l’économie générale. Un hegelianisme sans réserve’, 406; original emphasis. See also Georges Bataille, ‘Méthode de méditation’, *Œuvres complètes*, 5 (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 191-228 and Bataille, ‘Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice’, *Etre et penser. Cahiers de philosophie*, no. 40 (1955) – *Deucalion*, 5, ‘Etudes hégéliennes’, ed. Jean Wahl, 21-43.

¹⁶ In relation to Bataille’s remarks, notably on Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* about the impossibility of the vision, or indeed revelation, in which one might emerge from the ‘tissue’, as it involves death (‘En un sens, la condition à laquelle je *verrais* serait de sortir, d’émerger, du “tissu”, Bataille, ‘Méthode de méditation’, 205; original emphasis), Derrida states: ‘Il y a donc le *tissu* vulgaire du savoir absolu et l’ouverture mortelle de l’*œil*. Un texte et un regard. La servilité du sens et l’éveil à la mort. Une écriture mineure et une lumière majeure. / De l’une à l’autre, tout autre, un certain texte. Qui trace en silence la structure de l’*œil*, dessine l’ouverture, s’aventure à tramer l’“absolu déchirement”, déchire absolument son propre tissu redevenu “solide” et servile de se donner encore à lire.’ ‘De l’économie restreinte à l’économie générale. Un hegelianisme sans réserve’, 407; original emphasis. See also Bataille, ‘L’Expérience intérieure’, *Œuvres complètes*, 5, 129; Blanchot, *La Communauté inavouable* (Paris: Minuit, 1983), 23-24.

of literature necessarily demands to be rethought in relation to the opening which exceeds this closure. Blanchot's insistence, in later texts, on the play of writing points to the opening beyond this comprehension of literature at the end of history, to the boundless play in which, as Bataille and Derrida indicate, the history of meaning is in effect inscribed.

The Search for Unity

In contrast to the play of language, affirmed in many of Blanchot's later publications, and also the realization of literature conceived as the circulation of meaning in 'La littérature et le droit à la mort', writing in various texts in *L'Espace littéraire* and *Le Livre à venir* involves the discovery of the origin of the work. It would be about the disclosure of some point at which the words would vanish and everything, or perhaps nothing, would be revealed. It is a relentless quest to attain a space which would exceed the work. Many authors are in search of that opening, where the work would speak the silence of its origin, its profound truth, and they toil assiduously, in life and facing death, towards that single achievement. However, the revelation to which they aspire often disappoints or may be fleeting. It is not surprising that the opening of literary space is often closely tied to the space of death, to which Blanchot devotes many pages, notably the section 'L'œuvre et l'espace de la mort' in *L'Espace littéraire*. Here Blanchot writes about Rilke, the revelation of the visible in the language of the invisible and the 'Open': 'L'Ouvert, c'est le poème. L'espace où tout retourne à l'être profond, où il y a passage infini entre les deux domaines, où tout meurt, mais où la mort est la compagne savante de la vie'.¹⁷ While the poet may approach this space, in truth it is difficult to capture and one may never know what transpires. Continuing on from his reading of Rilke, Blanchot evokes the space of the poem as a large circle and unceasing metamorphosis:

l'espace orphique auquel le poète n'a sans doute pas accès, où il ne peut pénétrer que pour disparaître, où il n'atteint qu'uni à l'intimité de la déchirure qui fait de lui une bouche sans entente, comme elle fait de celui qui entend le poids du silence: c'est l'œuvre, mais l'œuvre comme origine.¹⁸

Paramount in the poet's work is the approach, the opening of space, 'art itself as origin or again the experience of the Open, the search for a true dying'.¹⁹ Perhaps in death, in an unfathomable return to the starting point, might the poet's endeavour be achieved.

In designating the opening of literary space, Blanchot explores aspects of the work of art in relation to truth and being, as put forward by Martin Heidegger, in particular in 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes'. The work of art, indeed poetry, would be fundamentally about an opening. Heidegger states: 'Das Wesen der Kunst, worin das Kunstwerk und der Künstler zumal beruhen, ist das Sich-ins-Werk-setzen der Wahrheit. Aus dem dichtenden Wesen der Kunst geschieht es, daß sie inmitten des Seienden eine

¹⁷ Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 184; original emphasis. See also Jean-François Mattéi, 'L'Ouvert chez Rilke et Heidegger', *Noesis*, 7 (2004); <http://noesis.revues.org/28> [accessed 13 September 2015].

¹⁸ Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire*, 184.

¹⁹ Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire*, 202; translation mine.

offene Stelle aufschlägt, in deren Offenheit alles anders ist als sonst.’²⁰ Aspects of Heidegger’s writings on the work of art and also on Hölderlin²¹ resonate in *L’Espace littéraire*, where the opening of the literary work, perhaps giving onto another space, is often thought in relation to being. Blanchot also describes writing and fascination, where one moves from ‘Je’ to ‘Il’, to the anonymous, and into eternal recommencement – speaking when everything has already been said²² – where the thing becomes image, and then without figure. In this writing, where language stays in contact with the ‘absolute milieu’, is the opening which would reveal the presence of the absence of everything, ‘the opaque and empty opening onto that which is when there is no longer a world, when there is no world yet.’²³ The opening, after and before the world, is about literary space, being and solitude: ‘l’œuvre – l’œuvre d’art, l’œuvre littéraire – n’est ni achevée ni inachevée: elle est. Ce qu’elle dit, c’est exclusivement cela: qu’elle est – et rien de plus. En dehors de cela, elle n’est rien.’²⁴

Blanchot’s story of Orpheus tells of a search for the essence of the work, the poet’s journey into the depths, his unfinished task of returning with Eurydice to the world and dispersion. Orpheus’ descent into hell is associated with the opening of the night at the very beginning of ‘Le regard d’Orphée’ in *L’Espace littéraire*: ‘Quand Orphée descend vers Eurydice, l’art est la puissance par laquelle s’ouvre la nuit.’²⁵ It is Eurydice whom Orpheus would bring to the light of day, yet this work to bring her back to him can only be accomplished by not turning around to face her.

Eurydice est, pour lui, l’extrême que l’art puisse atteindre, elle est, sous un nom qui la dissimule et sous un voile qui la couvre, le point profondément obscur vers lequel l’art, le désir, la mort, la nuit semblent tendre. Elle est l’instant où l’essence de la nuit s’approche comme l’autre nuit.²⁶

The gaze of Orpheus would break the law and the limits which keep Eurydice confined, as it would be directed towards ‘the *other* night, dissimulation which appears’, towards Eurydice, the ‘presence of her infinite absence’.²⁷ It is this opening which Orpheus would show, however Eurydice necessarily returns to the shadows, as Orpheus cares to turn back, ‘the essence of the night, in his gaze, reveals itself as inessential’.²⁸ Orpheus’

²⁰ Martin Heidegger, ‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes’, *Holzwege, Gesamtausgabe, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914-1970*, 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 59.

²¹ On language and poetry, see Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache, Gesamtausgabe, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976*, 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985); *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung, Gesamtausgabe, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976*, 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996). See also Blanchot, ‘L’itinéraire de Hölderlin’, *L’Espace littéraire*, 367-379.

²² Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 16.

²³ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 27-28; translation mine.

²⁴ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 10-11. See also ‘La solitude essentielle et la solitude dans le monde’, *L’Espace littéraire*, 341-344.

²⁵ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 227.

²⁶ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 227; original emphasis. See also Gerald L. Bruns, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 70-77; Kevin Hart, *The Dark Gaze: Maurice Blanchot and the Sacred* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004). Some of the issues raised here have also been discussed in a different context, see Caroline Sheaffer-Jones, ‘Figures of the Work: Blanchot and the Space of Literature’, *After Blanchot: Literature, Criticism, Philosophy*, ed. Leslie Hill, Brian Nelson & Dimitris Vardoulakis (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 189-204.

²⁷ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 229; original emphasis ; translation mine.

²⁸ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 228; translation mine. See also 229-230.

turning around would be the eclipse of the work, ‘the nostalgic return to the uncertainty of the origin’.²⁹ If writing is about a certain opening of space, there is no simple revelation and the search for ‘the essence of writing’,³⁰ necessarily remains ungraspable. The poet’s work revolves around an impossible pursuit, in which the work might be sacrificed in view of another space, which cannot simply be shown in the open.

At the beginning of *Le Livre à venir*, in ‘La rencontre de l’imaginaire’, Blanchot turns to Ulysses’ encounter with the song of the Sirens, with the strange and perilous sounds calling from the abyssal depths. It is as if this were the opening to the true source of song, however, ‘that space where singing would truly begin’,³¹ is again most elusive, for the very notion of a true source is not simple. Many authors in *Le Livre à venir*, among them, Joubert, Rousseau, Proust and Virginia Woolf, often strive towards a point at which their work might be the opening of another space. Sometimes, notably in relation to Proust’s and Joubert’s writings, Blanchot discusses the space of the work conceived as a sphere; it is as if this all-encompassing figure represented the immensity and yet also the empty space of the world. However, the search for unity may well bring nought and the space of death might again be the only realization of this nostalgic dream. In his analysis of Hermann Broch’s central work entitled *La Mort de Virgile* about the great Latin poet, Blanchot notes: ‘La recherche de l’unité a été la grande passion de Broch, son tourment, sa nostalgie: l’unité, l’espoir d’atteindre le point de fermeture du cercle, lorsque celui qui s’est avancé assez loin reçoit le droit de se retourner et de surprendre, comme un tout uni, les forces infiniment opposées qui le partagent.’³² At such a turning point, it is as if it were possible to grasp everything as a unified whole. For Blanchot, Broch writes, in *La Mort de Virgile*, not only about a personal experience but about a myth capturing the knowledge of Western civilisation. As for many other authors, Blanchot depicts Broch’s belief that he will reach ‘the unique point of presence where, in absolute simultaneity, the infinite of the past and the infinite of the future will open up to him’.³³ The point would be the opening of space, where past and future would be unified in a simultaneous presence. It is as if the space of death, at the end of the journey, opened onto the point of departure in a mythical revelation.

The nostalgia for unity and for a point at which language would show an opening and a vision of everything is subsequently brought into question from various perspectives by Blanchot, notably in his readings of Nietzsche and also in his insistence on language and a notion of radical alterity, to which I allude briefly here. Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas’s writings, in several texts of *L’Entretien infini*, among them ‘Parler, ce n’est pas voir’ and ‘Connaissance de l’inconnu’, Blanchot writes neither about a search for unity, be it a never-ending quest or a fleeting achievement as in *L’Espace littéraire* or *Le Livre à venir*, nor about Hegel, Kojève and the manifestation of literature at the end of history, but rather about radical alterity which would always

²⁹ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 232; translation mine.

³⁰ Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire*, 234; translation mine.

³¹ Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir*, 9; translation mine.

³² Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir*, 177.

³³ Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir*, 182; translation mine. See also 183 and the note in which Blanchot makes mention of Nietzsche’s thought of the eternal return in relation to his commentary on Broch and ‘l’espérance cyclique qui veut que la fin soit le commencement’.

have undone any conception of a unified whole. Language would be a non-dialectical experience affirming the relation in which the Other exceeds me. With reference to Emmanuel Levinas's *Totalité et infini*,³⁴ Blanchot discusses exteriority in which the transcendent relation to the Other would be primordial, the ethical relation of a metaphysics preceding ontology. In the 'epiphany' of the Other, whose presence is revealed in the nudity of the visage, is the opening of transcendence, which goes beyond the horizon and is neither visible nor invisible.³⁵

The opening of transcendence would be the foundation of communication and, in 'Tenir parole', Blanchot writes about 'language ['une parole'] which would maintain, in its irreducible difference, foreign truth ['la vérité étrangère'], that of the Stranger, who, in his very language is the presence of strangeness'.³⁶ What is emphasised in language is the presence of radical alterity and difference, which cannot be comprehended within a logic of the same. While entering into 'the play of communication', the language of alterity enters 'as language ['parole'] out of play',³⁷ thus it is not appropriated in communication but rather affirms its separation and non-contemporaneity.³⁸ The detours of language are thought as the transcendent relation, as a dissymmetrical space of communication, a kind of 'curvature of that space' without reciprocity.³⁹ In writing on radical exteriority and separation, on infinite transcendence, Blanchot refers to Levinas's writings and describes the opening to the unknown which exceeds the horizon and cannot be appropriated. This position contrasts markedly with Blanchot's earlier texts concerning the revelation of absolute knowledge or the pursuit of unity, where alterity would in effect be reduced to the same.

The Play of Writing

In his readings of Nietzsche in *L'Entretien infini*, notably in 'Réflexions sur le nihilisme', whose third and final section concerns fragmentary writing, and in 'Sur un changement d'époque: L'exigence du retour', Blanchot brings into question the search for unity from a different perspective. He repeatedly draws attention to the unknown, rather than to its revelation, echoing Nietzsche in the words '*I love ignorance of the future*' and in the necessity to speak and write 'in the direction of the unknown'.⁴⁰ In the law of return, at stake is the very sense of meaning realized at the end of history:

³⁴ Levinas states: 'L'infini paralyse le pouvoir par sa résistance infinie au meurtre, qui, dure et insurmontable, luit dans le visage d'autrui, dans la nudité totale de ses yeux, sans défense, dans la nudité de l'ouverture absolue du Transcendant.' Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini. Essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 173. See also Bruns, 105-121.

³⁵ See Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 74-77; Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, 12-18. In a reading of Blanchot, Levinas writes about absolute exteriority, 'Le regard du poète', *Sur Maurice Blanchot* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1975), 17. In relation to Levinas and transcendence, see in particular Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 82-83; Derrida, 'Violence et métaphysique. Essai sur la pensée d'Emmanuel Levinas', *L'Écriture et la différence*, 117-228 and with reference also to Blanchot, Derrida, *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), 20-21; 32-33.

³⁶ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 90. See also Blanchot, *L'Écriture du désastre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 36-38.

³⁷ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 91; translation mine. Blanchot also writes: '*nommant le possible, répondant à l'impossible*', *L'Entretien infini*, 68; original emphasis.

³⁸ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 80.

³⁹ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 80; translation mine. See also Levinas, *Totalité et infini*, 266-267.

⁴⁰ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 404, 245; translation mine. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* ('*la gaya scienza*'). Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe von Nietzsches Werken und Briefen

L'ignorance de l'avenir: la fin de l'histoire: la loi du retour. – Parler de la ‘fin de l’histoire’, c’est seulement poser la question de la place d’une telle parole, désormais sans contenu, puisque, dès que l’histoire s’achève, la parole perd le sens, la direction que seule lui donne la possibilité de l’accomplissement historique.⁴¹

Blanchot focuses on words necessarily ‘without content’ in the passage to the limits, in the infinite transgression and madness of writing, which trace an opening beyond the conception of absolute knowledge. What is brought into question is ‘the logos which says the whole’⁴² and the world thought in terms of visibility, light and knowledge, as ‘being which would be the opening of light’.⁴³

In ‘Nietzsche et l’écriture fragmentaire’, Blanchot insists again on language which is neither visible nor invisible and where chance and enigma would not be abolished:

déchiffrer (interpréter) l’énigme, est-ce simplement faire passer l’inconnu au connu ou tout au contraire le vouloir comme énigme dans la parole même qui l’élucide, c’est-à-dire, par-delà la clarté du sens, l’ouvrir à ce langage autre que ne régit pas la lumière ni n’obscurcit l’absence de lumière?⁴⁴

The opening is not about a point of essential accomplishment, but rather what is in play is writing which always differs, maintaining its enigma. ‘Interpréter: l’infini: le monde. Le monde? Un texte? Le texte: le mouvement d’écrire dans sa neutralité.’⁴⁵ With reference to Mallarmé, Blanchot underlines the dissemination of language, the spacing in the play of writing;⁴⁶ in place of a search for the origin of the work is an affirmation of the dispersion of Dionysius, in the detours of language, pursuit and rupture.

Most importantly, Blanchot signals two types of language in Nietzsche’s texts: philosophical discourse and, beyond it, a radically different writing: ‘un langage tout autre, non plus celui du tout, mais celui du fragment, de la pluralité et de la séparation’.⁴⁷ In effect, a double approach is necessary to mark the problematic step beyond philosophical discourse and to arrest a certain nihilism in which the world is simply conceived as presence, in an undisclosed light cast upon it. Describing Nietzsche’s thought about the world and language, which thinks beyond that which it can possibly think, Blanchot emphasizes ‘ce “plus”, ce “surplus” qui précède et suit toute parole’ and states:

Pour Nietzsche, être, sens, but, valeurs, Dieu, et le jour et la nuit et le tout et l’unité n’ont de validité qu’à l’intérieur du monde, mais le ‘monde’ ne peut se penser, ne peut se dire comme sens, comme tout: encore moins comme outre-monde. Le monde est son dehors

(eKGWB), Digital version of the German critical edition of the complete works of Nietzsche edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, ed. Paolo D’Iorio, published by Nietzsche Source; available at <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/FW-287> [accessed 26 September 2015]; Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 404-405.

⁴¹ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 405; original emphasis.

⁴² Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 233; translation mine.

⁴³ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 53; translation mine.

⁴⁴ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 251.

⁴⁵ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 252.

⁴⁶ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 242. For another perspective, see Derrida, ‘La double séance’, *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 199-318.

⁴⁷ Blanchot, *L’Entretien infini*, 228; see 250-251. See also Leslie Hill, *Maurice Blanchot and Fragmentary Writing: A Change of Epoch* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012).

même: l'affirmation qui *déborde* tout pouvoir d'affirmer et qui est, dans l'incessant de la discontinuité, le jeu de son perpétuel *redoublement* – volonté de puissance, éternel retour.⁴⁸

Blanchot draws attention to an exteriority in relation to the world, which is not an opening to another space but rather an excess or doubling in play in the world: 'Le monde est son dehors même'.

In writing about the eternal return and the paradoxical revelation at Sils Maria, Blanchot underscores the affirmation of the play of the world, beyond presence. He asks whether it is one of those 'pseudo-thoughts', not knowledge but a semblance of thought which is impossible to think – a revelation of nothing – and emphasizes that Nietzsche's singularity is at stake in such an affirmation. Blanchot states:

la révélation de Sils Maria n'est pas celle de Nietzsche, d'une individualité unique parvenant à une vérité unique, en un lieu unique, à un instant de singularité et de décision; elle est l'affirmation même; celle qui ne fait qu'affirmer et affirmer l'affirmation et, dans celle-ci, maintient ensemble la répétition et la différence, l'oubli et l'attente, l'éternité et l'avenir.⁴⁹

It is a limit-experience, not in the first person, indeed the affirmation of a surplus outside unity and exceeding absolute knowledge, such as Blanchot indicates in writing about Bataille, non-knowledge and the play of thought and chance.⁵⁰ In relation to Nietzsche's thought of the eternal return, Blanchot considers not only the impossibility for Nietzsche simply to speak in his own name but the delirium of this thought, beyond any biographical deliberations about Nietzsche's madness:

Le 'délire' ne constitue pas, certes, cette simulation délibérée – ou non délibérée – dont plus tard, au moment de la folie manifeste, on a crédité la raison de Nietzsche: le 'délire' est cette manière d'absence où se détruit l'identité de Nietzsche qui, formulant le *tout revient*, ouvre alors le cercle, en marque le point de singularité (celui où se définirait la non-circularité du cercle) par où la fermeture coïncide avec la rupture.⁵¹

Blanchot describes an ungraspable, aporetic figure, where the formulation of the eternal return, the paradoxical point of its singular revelation, would be a circle, whose opening might also be its closing. He stresses in this way the impossibility of communicating '*everything returns*' at a specific point or moment in time and thus the necessary paradox of an affirmation which does not speak the final word, always differing from itself, 'at a mobile point of extreme non-coincidence'.⁵² In the mobility of such a 'point', where the opening and the closing of the circle are impossibly maintained together, what is in play is not the revelation of presence. Blanchot writes about the eternal return and its affirmation by intermediaries in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, about the return which is already a detour: 'le seul sens d'une telle

⁴⁸ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 245; original emphasis. From a different perspective, see also Jean-Michel Rey, *L'enjeu des signes. Lecture de Nietzsche* (Paris: Seuil, 1971).

⁴⁹ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 409.

⁵⁰ See in particular Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 308-311 and also Bataille, 'L'Expérience intérieure', 66-69; 'Sur Nietzsche. Volonté de chance', *Œuvres complètes*, 6 (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 7-205.

⁵¹ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 415. See also Blanchot, *Le Pas au-delà*, notably 26-27; original emphasis.

⁵² Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 414; translation mine. See also Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux*, rev. edn. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1978).

nouvelle, c'est cette exigence de différer qui la porte et qu'elle porte: comme si cela ne se disait qu'en différant de dire'.⁵³

In conclusion, by tracing a trajectory in relation to the opening of textual space, I highlight not only the way in which Blanchot is always engaged in rewriting and displacing his texts, but that the reworking of his positions in itself marks a certain 'step beyond'. In Blanchot's writings on Nietzsche, among others, in *L'Entretien infini*, it is apparent that the idea of closure put forward in 'La littérature et le droit à la mort' is radically brought into question, namely the conception of literature realized in its totality, at the end of history, in a movement akin to the realization of absolute knowledge in Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. In 'Nietzsche et l'écriture fragmentaire', Blanchot insists not on the necessity of saying everything, but on the detours of writing and the impossibility of such a revelation of truth and meaning. Blanchot also profoundly reconceives the nostalgic search for the opening of literary space in *L'Espace littéraire* and *Le Livre à venir*. In their work, Rousseau, Joubert, Proust, Rilke, Virginia Woolf, Broch and many others would strive to the limits. Often this would entail the quest for an opening, where the work would tell everything or would participate in the disclosure of the truth of being. The poet Orpheus also goes to great lengths in his endeavours. In the attempt to bring Eurydice – the dark hidden point of art – back to the light, in *L'Espace littéraire*, Orpheus does not simply capture that elusive point, where the unknown might be exposed in the open, revealing the presence of an absence. The discovery of such a 'point' of revelation, as if at the completion of a full circle in a journey, is fraught with difficulties. Above all, in the literary space of the writer or the poet Orpheus, there is always the opening to endless dispersion, in which the circular path to return is forever inescapably in jeopardy. At the 'point' of revelation is the abyssal opening of space, the infinite scattering of the text.

In 'Réflexions sur le nihilisme' and 'Sur un changement d'époque: L'exigence du retour' in *L'Entretien infini*, Blanchot emphasizes the problem of expressing the revelation at Sils Maria, its singularity and 'everything returns'. In a different way from the evocation of the circle in Broch's work, Blanchot writes about the opening of a circle at a point of singularity, where its closing would also be the breaking of the circle; it is as if it were in a sense the illusion of a circle. In this aporetic figure, Blanchot emphasizes, in the revelation, the enigma where singularity and the eternal return, finitude and the infinite, fiction and testimony⁵⁴ are brought together. It is as if the circle, its eternal turns, could only be thought together with its interruption, the obscurity of the unknown necessarily inscribed in it at every point. In 'L'interruption. Comme sur une surface de Riemann', in *L'Entretien infini*, Blanchot states: 'Ecrire: tracer un cercle à l'intérieur duquel viendrait s'inscrire le dehors de tout cercle...'⁵⁵ In

⁵³ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 414; original emphasis. See Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Die sieben Siegel. (Oder: das Ja- und Amen-Lied.)', *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe von Nietzsches Werken und Briefen (eKGWB), Digital version of the German critical edition of the complete works of Nietzsche edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, ed. Paolo D'Iorio, published by Nietzsche Source; available at <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/Za-III-Siegel-1> [accessed 26 September 2015].

⁵⁴ On this question, see in particular Derrida, *Demeure. Maurice Blanchot* (Paris: Galilée, 1998); Ginette Michaud, *Tenir au secret (Derrida, Blanchot)* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), 60-83; Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, 'La Contestation de la mort', *Agonie terminée, agonie interminable. Sur Maurice Blanchot*, suivi de *L'émoi* (Paris: Galilée, 2011), 91-117.

⁵⁵ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 112.

contrast to Sade, whose immense work of negation at the end of history is represented in 'La littérature et le droit à la mort' by an endlessly circular movement of sovereignty, the delirium of the revelation at Sils Maria marks an absence and a loss of identity of Nietzsche, an affirmation of the unknown. In 'Nietzsche et l'écriture fragmentaire', Blanchot insists once more on the endless play of the world, on the infinite dispersion of fragmentary writing. However, if Blanchot's reflections on Nietzsche and the play of the world move beyond Hegel's conception of absolute knowledge, as well as Kojève's commentary on it, they mark its limits, without simply moving outside it. This echoes Bataille's transgressive gesture in which an opening is designated, beyond the finality of absolute knowledge, that is to say, the bottomless play, which is not simply revealed.

Crucial to Blanchot's considerations on Nietzsche and the eternal return is difference, the play of writing, as opposed to the attempt to reveal presence in the clarity of a visible form. In Blanchot's readings of Nietzsche, Derrida's *L'Écriture et la différence* and deconstruction of metaphysics are no doubt fundamental, along with the writings of others.⁵⁶ In 'La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines', in an analysis of Lévi-Strauss and structuralism, Derrida notes that the notion of play disrupts presence, which is always already inscribed in a chain of substitutions. Setting out two different ways of thinking play, although it is not just a matter of being able simply to choose one to the exclusion of the other, Derrida contrasts nostalgia for the origin with Nietzsche's affirmation of the play of the world without origin:

Tournée vers la présence, perdue ou impossible, de l'origine absente, cette thématique structuraliste de l'immédiateté rompue est donc la face triste, *négative*, nostalgique, coupable, rousseauiste, de la pensée du jeu dont l'affirmation nietzschéenne, l'affirmation joyeuse du jeu du monde et de l'innocence du devenir, l'affirmation d'un monde de signes sans faute, sans vérité, sans origine, offert à une interprétation active, serait l'autre face. Cette affirmation détermine alors le non-centre autrement que comme perte du centre. Et elle joue sans sécurité. Car il y a un jeu *sûr* : celui qui se limite à la *substitution* de pièces *données et existantes, présentes*. Dans le hasard absolu, l'affirmation se livre aussi à l'indétermination *génétique*, à l'aventure *séminale* de la trace.⁵⁷

In opposition to the impossible search for presence or for a centre, there is another side to thinking play: its affirmation, without a centre, revealing nothing but the play of difference in the infinite digressions of writing. In the infinite moves within a closed field, there is no totalization but a 'surplus', which Blanchot also describes in 'Nietzsche et l'écriture fragmentaire'. Derrida writes: 'ce mouvement du jeu, permis par le manque, l'absence de centre ou d'origine, est le mouvement de la *supplémentarité*'.⁵⁸ Clearly, play is not oriented towards being,⁵⁹ but rather presence and absence are thought as a function of the play of the text.⁶⁰ Difference would be an opening of space

⁵⁶ See in particular Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 240-241; 255.

⁵⁷ Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence*, 427; original emphasis; 428.

⁵⁸ Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence*, 423; original emphasis. See also Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967), 203-234.

⁵⁹ 'Il n'y aura pas de nom unique, fût-il le nom de l'être. Et il faut le penser sans *nostalgie*, c'est-à-dire hors du mythe de la langue purement maternelle ou purement paternelle, de la patrie perdue de la pensée.' Derrida, 'La Différance', *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1972), 29; original emphasis.

⁶⁰ Derrida states: 'Le jeu est toujours jeu d'absence et de présence, mais si l'on veut le penser radicalement, il faut le penser avant l'alternative de la présence et de l'absence ; il faut penser l'être

which limits metaphysics and exceeds it, an opening, to which Bataille also points, beyond the totalization of absolute knowledge.⁶¹ In a sense, the opening is a repetition and displacement of the closure of absolute knowledge conceived by Hegel, since the end, the revelation at the end of history, returns, at once revisited and exceeded in the play of writing. Thus, the gesture in which this closure is rethought or transgressed, is not merely about turning the page on metaphysics but about tracing its limits to underscore an opening, which is at once an end and a beginning, 'la fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture'.⁶²

It is evident in particular in Blanchot's writings on Nietzsche that the opening of textual space is to be thought not within a search for presence, but rather as a step beyond the closure of metaphysics, as Derrida has elaborated in many texts.⁶³ In their incessant detours and recommencement, Blanchot's writings assert difference and plurality, in a trajectory drawing, among others, on Hegel, Heidegger, Levinas and Nietzsche. In the repetition and displacement is an affirmation of the infinite play of writing. With reference to Levinas, in *L'Entretien infini*, Blanchot also emphasizes the impossibility of the search for unity. In 'La question la plus profonde', he distinguishes between the question of everything and a question which is not centred on unity and sameness. In this question, 'le tout est égard à l'autre, ne se contentant pas d'être tout, mais désignant l'autre que tout (ce qui est absolument autre et ne peut prendre place dans le tout), affirmant donc le Tout Autre où il n'est plus de retour au même.'⁶⁴ Alterity is irreducible, rendering totalization impossible, a position in stark contrast to the closure of the question of literature, revealed in its true meaning at the end of history in 'La littérature et le droit à la mort'. It is imperative to underscore therefore the ways in which Blanchot revisits the notion of opening and points beyond the revelation of everything to various configurations of the unknown.

The affirmation of an opening to the Stranger or the unknown contests the advent of meaning and truth at the end of history, as in the manifestation of the question of literature, which would repeat itself, in its identity, in a closed circuit. The very notion of event as revelation needs to be reconceived. There remains an opening or a space of the unforeseen, which cannot be comprehended in relation to literature thought along the lines of a phenomenology of spirit. Importantly, in *Spectres de Marx*, Derrida discusses the event and notably a democracy to come, which are not thought in terms of an occurrence which will take place as a 'future present' or as the future of a 'living

comme présence ou absence à partir de la possibilité du jeu et non l'inverse.' *L'Écriture et la différence*, 426.

⁶¹ See Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie*, 6 ; Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, 41. See also Denis Hollier, 'De l'au-delà de Hegel à l'absence de Nietzsche', *Bataille*, ed. Philippe Sollers (Paris : U.G.E., 1973), 75-96.

⁶² See Derrida, 'La fin du livre et le commencement de l'écriture' *De la Grammatologie*, 15-41. Derrida asserts that Hegel is not just the thinker of the horizon of absolute knowledge, but also of difference; 'dernier philosophe du livre et premier penseur de l'écriture', 41.

⁶³ See notably Derrida, 'La Structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines', *L'Écriture et la différence*, 409-428; *De la Grammatologie*, 15-41; *Marges de la philosophie*, 3-29. See also the discussion in Caroline Sheaffer-Jones, 'Blanchot and a Certain Step of the Dance', *Futur*Fall: Excursions into Post-Modernity*, ed. E.A. Grosz, Terry Threadgold, David Kelly, Alan Cholodenko and Edward Colless (Sydney: Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney and Futur*Fall, 1986), 97-105.

⁶⁴ Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 25. Levinas states: 'L'itinéraire de la philosophie reste celui d'Ulysse dont l'aventure dans le monde n'a été qu'un retour à son île natale – une complaisance dans le Même, une méconnaissance de l'Autre.' *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1972), 40.

present'. Rather, the event is grounded in spectrality, in a 'logic of the phantom' which exceeds dialectical logic; without this aporetic 'experience of the impossible', there would be no event nor justice.⁶⁵ In this context, Derrida writes about a 'strange concept of messianism without content, of the messianic without messianism, which guides us here like the blind'.⁶⁶ It is not about an event which would be the coming of the Messiah, but about the opening to the unknown or the coming of the other, which does not just take place at a point in time, or beyond the world, and cannot be thought as presence. In *L'Écriture du désastre*, Blanchot also considers a certain spectrality of the event in writing about the messianic. 'Le messianisme juif (chez certains commentateurs) nous laisse pressentir le rapport de l'événement et de l'inavènement'.⁶⁷ 'Sensed', although not known exactly, is that which ties the event to the non-event, to an excess or doubling, as in the paradoxical revelation of 'everything returns' or 'everything comes again', represented in a kind of obscure circle, at once intact and broken, imaginary and real, eternal and singular.

The question of literature is not simply about the coming of truth and meaning in a revelation at the end of history, for as Bataille and Derrida underline, there is an opening beyond the closure of metaphysics. To find some point after and before the world, where the work would reveal its fundamental being, also entails an impossible search for unity. Rather, writing would be about a revelation, which shows the opening of a different spectral logic. In the rewriting of his texts, in turning around, Blanchot always affirms a step beyond and the impossibility of presence in the detours of writing. There is a notion of opening, hospitality,⁶⁸ which exceeds the horizon, in Blanchot's insistence on exteriority, with reference notably to Levinas's *Totalité et infini*. It is not a reduction to the same or a search for unity but an affirmation of alterity. Indeed, in the incessant writing of his many texts, Blanchot draws attention to the opening of space as the necessary play of dispersion, as the affirmation of difference, perhaps what Derrida calls the 'ouverture messianique à ce qui vient, c'est-à-dire à l'événement qu'on ne saurait attendre *comme tel*, ni donc reconnaître d'avance, à l'événement comme l'étranger même, à celle ou à celui pour qui on doit laisser une place vide, toujours, en mémoire de l'espérance – et c'est le lieu même de la spectralité'.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ See Derrida, *Spectres de Marx. L'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1993), 108-112; original emphasis; translation mine. See also Derrida's discussion of the logic of the phantasm, Blanchot and the 'neutre': 'Il n'y a donc pas de logique ou de *logos* du fantasme, du fantôme ou du spectral. A moins que le *logos* lui-même ne soit précisément le fantasme, l'élément même, l'origine et la ressource du fantasme, la forme et la formation du fantasme, voire du revenant.' *Parages* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2003), 293; original emphasis.

⁶⁶ Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, 112; translation mine. See also Derrida, *Force de loi. Le 'Fondement mystique de l'autorité'* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 60-61.

⁶⁷ Blanchot, *L'Écriture du désastre*, 214 and in relation to the Messiah, 'Quand un commentateur dit: c'est peut-être moi, il ne s'exalte pas par là, chacun peut l'être, doit l'être, ne l'est pas', 215. See also *Le Pas au-delà*, 185; Derrida, *Parages*, 9-108; Hart, *The Dark Gaze*; Eric Hoppenot, *Maurice Blanchot et la tradition juive* (Paris: Kimé, 2015); Jean-Luc Nancy, *La Communauté désavouée* (Paris: Galilée, 2014), 113-160.

⁶⁸ See in particular Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*, 89-93. Jacques Derrida writes: 'Levinas propose de penser l'ouverture en général à partir de l'hospitalité ou de l'accueil – et non l'inverse. Il le fait expressément. Ces deux mots, "ouverture" et "hospitalité", sont à la fois associés et disjoints dans son œuvre. Ils obéissent à une loi subtile. Comme toute loi, elle appelle à un déchiffrement prudent.' *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas*, 44. See also Derrida, *Apories. Mourir – s'attendre aux 'limites de la vérité'* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 64-80.

⁶⁹ Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, 111; original emphasis.

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Maurice Blanchot și spațiul ca deschidere. Revelații ale imposibilului

În descrierea literaturii și scriiturii, începând cu publicațiile timpurii grupate în volumul *Faux pas* și sfârșind cu textele târzii, Maurice Blanchot evocă, din mai multe perspective, limitele spațiului textual, unde deschiderea poate fi revelată. Acest spațiu textual ca deschidere ar putea fi acela unde scriitori precum Rilke, Broch și mulți alții ar căuta o experiență care este extremă în sensul imposibilului. Acesta ar fi de asemenea cazul poetului Orfeu, care, în *L'Espace littéraire*, dispare în căutarea lui Euridice. În *L'Entretien infini*, cu referire la Emmanuel Levinas, Blanchot revizitează deschiderea limbajului, atunci când scrie despre alteritatea radicală și relația etică cu deschiderea unei transcendențe infinite. În *L'Entretien infini*, Blanchot discută de asemenea experiența-limită a lui Nietzsche și scrierea fragmentară în opera acestuia, precum și spațiul paradoxal în legătură cu „eterna întoarcere” și revelația la Nietzsche. Care este importanța acestor schimbări de spațiu în traiectoria scriiturii lui Blanchot? Ar putea să ilustreze o deschidere dincolo de metafizică, așa cum Jacques Derrida a elaborat în mai multe texte?